

FAMILY OUTMIGRATION IN ISLA VERDE, BATANGAS CITY

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ABSTRACT

This research work is a description of the causes and the process of outmigration undergone by the families of Isla Verde, Batangas City, Philippines. The study aims to (a) know the characteristics and conditions of the selected family before the outmigration process in terms of the following variables such as: (i) family composition, (ii) family structure, (iii) residence, (iv) educational attainment of parents, and (v) source of income, (b) determine socio-economic conditions both in Isla Verde and the place of destination that influenced migration, and (c) describe the dynamics and process of outmigration of selected families of Isla Verde. Case study and descriptive methods of research are used to describe the dynamics of outmigration process of selected families of Isla Verde. It likewise aimed to look into the historical events and the social conditions of Isla Verde which influenced decision of the families to settle to new places. It primarily uses in-depth-interview in the collection of data. Results show that the following factors are influential in the decisions of the family to migrate: (a) family characteristics such as size, status, proximity of residence to the sea, and education of parents, (b) socio-economic conditions in Isla Verde which include transportation and communication facilities, and educational and occupational opportunities, (c) the process of outmigration of the family members, and (d) other influence that attract family migrants to the place of destinations. It is conclusive that Isla Verde is affected by the social changes as a result of progress and development of the Philippines. The continuous flow of migrants bring about decrease in the population of the area under study and make the place not among the government priority in pursuing programs. Factors for outmigration include economic, educational, familial and geographical conditions and the capacity of the people to migrate depends on their socio-economic conditions

Keywords: Family, Family Migration, Outmigration, Isla Verde, Migration.

INTRODUCTION

Modernization and global community ways of living influences the way on how migration happens. Though men are conveniently settled in a particular locality, a possibility of moving to another place is still very likely. Scott (in Perez and Asis, 1993 p. vii) noted that even before the colonization of the Philippines, Filipinos are already socially mobile utilizing their own skills and abilities to make their family secure in their livelihood, trading and socio-political well being. Large wave of international family outmigration happened from 1900 to 1965 when Filipinos were recruited for blue collar jobs in Hawaii and US West Coast (Medina, 1982, p126-127). When US Immigration Law of 1965 was passed, it was intensified by Filipino professionals who flooded the country bringing with them their family as migrants. Another wave of family migration in the Philippines were recorded between 1970-1980. These were the traditional movements from rural to urban which made a considerable increase in the population of key cities especially in Metro Manila. Significantly, there was also a migration pattern from key cities to less populated regions like in the provinces of

Mindanao. The theory of Ravenstein (1985, p 167-235) which is broadly acknowledged as the Laws of Migration remained the most acceptable issue for family migrations in the cases mentioned. Economic well being is still the most important consideration for social mobility. Industrial communities that provides better paying jobs keep on attracting the rural people to move with a promise of economic stability and better social for their family. Modern concepts of family outmigration observed by Hefti (1997, p 201-203) recognized the role of globalization and technological innovations in communication in the process of movement. It made interactions among family members easier making way for the step by step process of outmigration. This concept revived the traditional concept of push and pull migration theory.

Objectives

The study aims to (a) know the characteristics and conditions of the selected family before the outmigration process in terms of the following variables such as: (i) family composition, (ii) family structure, (iii) residence, (iv) educational attainment of parents, and (v) source of income, (b) determine socio-economic conditions both in Isla Verde and the place of destination that influenced migration, and (c) describe the dynamics and process of outmigration of selected families of Isla Verde.

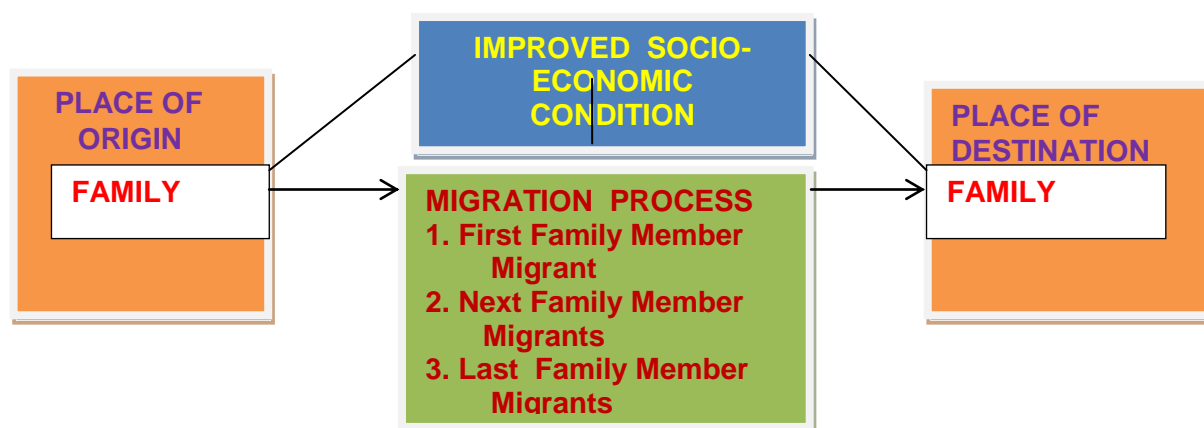


Fig 1. Dynamics of the Family Outmigration Process

METHODOLOGY

Utilizing historical and descriptive methods, this research on migration concentrated on the factors that primarily surrounds the outmigration process among the families in Isla Verde. Dealing with historical developments, economic and geographical issues, it went on deeper with the detailed description of the dynamics of the outmigration of the families. It selected five families and trace the reasons and patterns of movement as provided in the output of the in-depth interview process.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Historical Background of Isla Verde

Isla Verde is an island in Batangas City strategically located between the Province of Batangas and the island province of Mindoro, an area known as the “Center of the Center of Marine Biodiversity. It is 160 km away from Manila, and is estimated to be the home of at least 2000 families. The island is composed of six barangays

whose people's livelihood is based on agriculture, fishing, livestock and local shipping. From 1900 until 1980's, local shipping industry provides the most important source of livelihood in the area. Being at the geographical center of the country, its shipping business provides connection between Manila ports and several trading posts in the Visayas Region. Many people who learn important skills in shipping easily find works being employed as boat builders, seafarers, logistics providers for the local ships. Families who are economically advantaged owned the local ships and controlled the trading of goods from and to the nearby provinces. The local shipping brings economic growth to Isla Verde as manifested in the continuous increase in the number of local ships and the migrations of Visayans and Mindoreneans to the island. This developments made the island an important priority for the local government of Batangas City. A breakwater is constructed in Sampalocan trying to protect the docked local ships especially during typhoon seasons and by initially constructing roads that would make the island sufficient enough to become a municipality. After World War II, local ship owners purchased LCT (Landing Craft Tank) type ship and established port centers in the Visayas and in Manila making way for their family and the ships crew's family more mobile and capable of staying in the cities longer. This allow younger people to have their studies and permanently settle either in Batangas City or in Manila.

In the early 1970's the owner of the LCT died and the government restriction on operation of the local vessel made it difficult for other owners to compete with bigger shipping companies. People began shifting their industry by going to the cities to pursue higher studies, work and permanently settle in urban areas.

Family Characteristics and Conditions

Commonly the families are big whose number of children ranges from four to ten. Family size is based on the conventional notion that the more children are there, the more people will contribute for the family well being. They have high regard for their status in the community which they try to continuously maintain by seeking a better livelihood opportunities and better living condition in other places.

Table 1: Composition of the Families

Families	Composition	No. of Children	Total
1. Eulogio Perez	Nuclear	8	10
2. Alberto Perez	Nuclear	6	8
3. Marco Rayos	Extended	10	13
4. Mariano Roxas	Extended	4	7
5. Rene Reyes	Extended	4	8

The houses of the families are situated near the coastline making themselves more accessible to their means of livelihood –the local ships. It also make them see day and night the beauty of the nearby places and the passing vessels that could somehow invite the younger children to explore.

Traditionally, parents' educational attainment in primary education is enough to qualify for a skill-based works in local ships among men while women are not

necessarily expected to work. Fathers and some children have experienced serving local ships and earning considerable amount for the family.

Table 2: Fathers and sons position indicates their dependence on local ships for income

Family	Members	Position/Earnings in Local Ships
	Father	Chiefmate and Captain
1. Eulogio Perez	Son/s	Ordinary Seaman
	Father	Chiefmate and Owner
2. Alberto Perez	Son/s	Captain
	Father	Owner
3. Marco Rayos	Son/s	Captain
	Father	Trader of Goods
4. Mariano Roxas	Son/s	Seaman
	Father	Owner and Captain
5. Rene Reyes	Son/s	None

Socio-economic Conditions in Isla Verde

Isolated Isla Verde is far from other towns. There is no public market, tertiary schools, hospitals and local government centers. Other than barangay halls and elementary schools for each six barangays, three secondary schools are provided by the national government to very few students. The island is difficult to reach primarily because of lack of transportation facilities within Isla Verde and between other islands and places. Students reach schools by foot because no land transportation is available and the roads are not developed. The boat is the only transportation means from and to Batangas City without definite schedule of trips. There is no electric power in the island except for few who can afford a power generator and individual solar home panel. Prior to migrations of families communication facilities in Isla Verde is very limited. There is no telephone line system and very few could have television sets and transistor radios. Occupation opportunities in Isla Verde are limited. Agriculture-based work is common, fishing is seasonal and lack modern facilities, while small scale business and retailing is not so promising because of decreasing number of people due to migration. Many people remained dependent on income derived from the local ships. Educational opportunities are likewise limited. Once a student completed high school, he still need to pursue higher studies that is available only in cities. The globalization trend in the Philippines that requires industries to compete with international companies need skilled workers who are educated. In addition, working abroad keep on luring Filipinos even people of Isla Verde to leave the country.

Socio-economic Conditions in the Place Destination

There are three important place of destination among the families which left Isla Verde- Metro Manila, Batangas City and Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro. Most families outmigrated to Batangas City, though some family members extended through Metro Manila for studies and work. Only one went to Puerto Galera. The three places share something in common. Batangas City since 1970's is a fast progressing city because of the opening of the Batangas City port being the gateway to the CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) regional development

being pursued by the national government. Puerto Galera is becoming a major tourist destination among European and American tourist and development is at its peak. Metro Manila, the Capital region remains the most progressive. Places of destinations are all highly populated. Communication and transportation facilities are in place. There are markets, hospitals, government offices as well as tertiary schools except in Puerto Galera where students have to go to other urban centers for college degree. There are greater opportunities for work, recreation, education and other socio-economic well being. In the cities, people can enjoy the higher standard of living and the luxury of life they cannot enjoy in Isla Verde.

Family Outmigration Process

Families believe that by giving their children higher education they can have a better paying job. Since local shipping is gradually declining due to strict policy of the government and the strong competition in the business, families preferred other occupation for their children. When the children finished their degree and find a job, they prefer to settle in the cities. The usual process begins with the eldest, whether male or female leaving for the city to continue studies. Still supported by parents who derived their income from local shipping, the eldest would usually stay in the city where he/she has relatives to live with. In this case, the first migrant would still have the sense of security and the feeling of belongingness which is especially important in the early transition of being away from the family at an early age.

Children who starts outmigrating as early as 1970's take secondary education in the city while those who move in the 1980's take tertiary education because in the 1980's secondary schools in Isla Verde is already in place. The early male outmigrants in the 1970's also took local shipping related programs in college while in the 1980's, male outmigrants choose other business and medical-related degree instead. This shows the decreasing interests of the families on jobs related to the dying local shipping industry.

Table 3: Level of Fulfillment of the Family's Quest for Higher Education

Families	No. of Children	Children who finished degree	Percentage
1. Eulogio Perez	8	2	25%
2. Alberto Perez	6	6	100%
3. Marco Rayos	10	8	80%
5. Mariano Roxas	4	2	50%
6. Rene Reyes	4	2	50%

Transfer of responsibilities takes place among the children left by the outmigrant. The next child assumes the work of the eldest as he/she is preparing to pursue the same action of the latter undertakes. Because of difficulty in communication and transportation, interactions among the outmigrant and the family is limited. Seldom are the instances when the parents could visit the child in the city or the child visiting his family in Isla Verde because of financial restraints and weather conditions. It will not take too long before the next child also leave the family and join the eldest sibling in the city for the same reason of studying and work. The same adjustments will happen in the family but the transition period for the new outmigrant is less stressful because of the eldest who already have established independence in the city.

The other child would follow some years later and the whole process would be repeated until all the children settled in the city for permanent work and marriage. When this process is done, the working children would send their parents in Isla Verde the financial support as they may not be capable enough to earn a living enough to support the daily needs of aging individuals. There are instances when parents get sick and hospitalized in the city making them stay more frequently with their children and grandchildren in the city and leaving their house and belongings to their relative in Isla Verde.

As sending financial support, sickness and frequent hospitalization of parents become more difficult for the busy working children and the getting older parents, the children in consultation with parents, would usually keep their parents with them in the city and would permanently abandon their residence in Isla Verde. This completes the process of outmigration. Due to the long and slow process of migration and the continuous interaction among the family member outmigrants and those left behind in Isla Verde, socio-economic adjustments from the place of origin to the place of destination is not so stressful. It is further attributed to the fact that they have relatives in the cities. The outmigrants on few occasions especially during fiesta and other holidays are having chances of visiting Isla Verde. From time to time they repair their houses or ask other relatives to take care of it until such time that repair is not anymore possible.

CONCLUSIONS

The process of family outmigration in Isla Verde is affected by the composition, structure, residence, education and income of the family as well as the kinship relationship. Family outmigration pattern and process take slowly. The more are the family member, the longer is the process. The socio-economic status that families try to improve and maintain through education and well paying job is the biggest motivational factor that encourages the people to leave Isla Verde and look for better life. The local shipping industry that is expected to provide the most needed livelihood for the people of Isla Verde is incapacitated to resist the increasing government pressures and to face the challenges of competition brought by the modernization and global challenges. The continuous flow of migrants bring about decrease in the population of the area under study and make the place not among the government priority in pursuing programs. Factors for outmigration include economic, educational, familial and geographical conditions and the capacity of the people to migrate depends on their socio-economic conditions.

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