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Seeking *New Life* in Bangladesh: Do rural migrating youth "urbanize" after moving to the city?

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Abstract: Nowadays in Bangladesh, a number of the first educated generation of the rural societies are migrating to cities to get jobs, predominantly in the export-oriented garment industry which has strongly supported Bangladesh's economic growth. The population in and around Dhaka has dramatically increased with them, but their lifestyle and mindset of the new migrants do not seem to have urbanized yet. In this paper, I introduced four stories of young people who migrated from a rural village in Jamalpur to Dhaka either alone or with their families and analyzed how their urban lives are limited to be urbanized in terms of their lifestyles, networks, and their future prospects. Also, they could be formed not a distinct social class but "new urban working class" whose situations are unstable and newly affected by the global economy.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a young country, with more than half of the population under the age of twenty. Two main phenomena characterize today's young generation those who were born in 1990s in the country. First, the majority has grown up under a rapid expansion of mass primary education, particularly in rural areas, making them the first in their family to attend a formal school, so called "the first educated generation" (Minamide 2015: 34). Second, Bangladesh has been experiencing significant economic growth since the beginning of this century, due in large part to the export-oriented garment industry and remittances from overseas Bangladeshi migrant workers. As the majority of wage laborers in garment factories are in their early 20s, it can be said that the contemporary young generation has been directly contributing to the country's economic growth. Thus, according to the numbers, these two features seem to indicate that formal education has been successful in advancing economic growth at the national level.

However, as I have argued in a previous paper, these two features are not connected in any meaningful way as far as the life opportunities and choices of young people are concerned (Minamide 2015: 48). Young people do not intend to work in the garment industry; rather, after completing some level of education, they feel frustrated to work in the industry. Yet, their longing to migrate to the city, spurred

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by a "non-agricultural mindset," pulls them from rural to urban areas to seek opportunity, even if it means working in the labor-intensive garment industry. The experiences and transforming perspectives that this "first educated generation" have during their migration play a significant part in broader social changes in Bangladesh (Minamide 2015: 49).

In this context, my question in this paper is: does urban migration lead to urbanization, or not? Do the young people who migrate from rural villages to cities for work urbanize their lifestyle or their sense of belonging? If so, do they form a new social class in the city apart from their original one in their home village as a result of this urbanization? In the following sections, I will introduce some case studies of young people who migrated from a rural village to capital Dhaka for work. Although they cannot be defined yet as temporary migrants or as urban settlers, the process of how their individual lifestyles and mindsets transform is essential when we discuss subjectivity of urbanization.

2. Rural Youth and their Diversified Paths

From 2000 to the present, including year-long fieldwork both in 2000 and during 2003-2004, I have been conducting anthropological research in rural Bangladesh. Focusing on children's socialization and the impact of their educational experience on the course of their lives, I followed particular groups of children through their childhood to adolescence and early adulthood. Most of them were the first to be formally educated in their families. After graduating from primary school, the majority went directly on to high school, but not a few left before completing their secondary education. Their paths have gradually diversified, but on the whole many boys migrated to cities to work in garment factories, while many girls got married. Some live in the city by themselves or with their new families; others remain in the village. Not a few girls live in the village after marriage while their husbands live by themselves in the city.

During my long-term observation, I spent everyday life in a rural village in Jamalpur, the central northern district of Bangladesh. I attended a primary school that was founded in 1991 by a Bangladeshi NGO named Basic Development Partners (BDP). In 2000, I spent one year in a fourth-grade classroom studying with the students, my interlocutors. Since then, I followed the life courses of 38 children (19 boys and 19 girls): 22 students who were in the fourth grade in 2000, and 16 students who were in the fourth grade in 2003. Their family backgrounds were very similar; their parents mainly engaged in agriculture, either farming their own lands or as employees of landowners. Most of the children I followed were the first educated generation in their families, creating a huge gap in educational experience between them and their parents (Minamide 2015: 36-37).

i. Educational Experience

Figure 1 indicates the educational level attained by all 38 children according to enrollment levels. Although many of the children (30 of 38) who graduated from primary school went on to high school (secondary education), a significant number (9) left before completion. A total of 21 students completed secondary education up to tenth grade (17 without repeating a year and 4 with repeating in the middle). Five students went on to complete higher secondary education; three of these stopped their education once and came back after a few years.

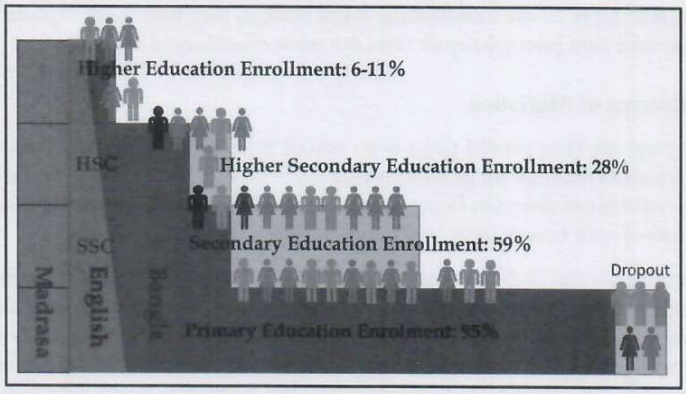

Figure 1: Mapping the Educational Experience of 38 children
Sources: BANBEIS 2011 & Author's Survey from 2000 to 2016

There are three streams in Bangladesh's educational system in terms of teaching languages: Bangla medium is the main stream; the secular Madrasa education system includes Arabic studies; and the English medium is a partially privileged stream. Although students can shift from one stream to another at any time, the majority of students in this study enrolled in the Bangla stream. NGO schools, which have had a strong impact on mass education expansion, are recognized only at the primary level.

Despite no direct correlation between their educational attainment and their ability to obtain specific jobs, none of the former students denied the importance of their educational experience, believing that it will contribute to bettering their future. Some regret having stopped their education in the middle; a few are still seeking opportunities to return to school for higher education. A boy who passed the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination and started working at a garment factory told me, "I studied at school in order to be a good man, not to destroy my life. Based on my educational experience, I can try my best to get a better life." Although they cannot imagine the specific benefits that their education will have to

their life courses, they produce the meaning of education by themselves and adopt it as they need in their lives.

One interesting feature of the first educated generation is that they are allowed to have their own perspective about their education, even at the primary level. Their parents, who have had no experience with school, tend to say, "Our children know about school better than us." I conceptualize this space as a "child-sphere" in which children, who are normally considered socially immature, are allowed to have their own principles and even to make "mistakes" against existing social norms (Minamide 2014). In the transforming social settings, they have more "sphere" to develop their own principles apart from the conventional social norms.

ii. Patterns of Migration

While there are clear parallel paths from school to urban migration for boys and from school to marriage for girls (Minamide 2015: 41-42, 46-47), these paths do not always occur in one direction from school to a job or from school to marriage. Some leave school once to seek work, and return to their studies later.

Despite the fact that 70-80 percent of the workers in Bangladesh's garment factories are women, the majority of urban migrants from my research area was boys. Only two among 19 girls are working in the city. The geography of eastern Jamalpur may explain this unusual situation; the land elevation of the area is relatively high compared to other districts in Bangladesh, and rice cultivation is active throughout the year. The seasonal labor migration to urban areas used to be common practice in Bangladesh during the rainy season when it was difficult to cultivate the land, but the lower risk of flooding in that area means that the people there have not needed to seasonally migrate (Minamide 2015: 36). Nowadays, however, since the demand for cash income has increased and job opportunities other than agriculture are limited in the village, men who are breadwinners in their families tend to migrate to the cities where they can get jobs in the labor-intensive market, particularly in the garment industry. Apart from extreme poverty cases, women do not migrate to work, but rather maintain their family lives in the village, which means that within the social context of this area, women working in the garment industry are viewed negatively as the "extreme poor."

Boys left the village at various points, sometimes returning to the village once and leaving again (Minamide 2015: 41). Among 19 boys in total, ten boys are now working in and around Dhaka, and six live in the village.[2] Although they moved to Dhaka at different times, most of them are working in the garment industry under similar conditions. They were frustrated in the beginning to work under the same conditions regardless of their different educational levels (Minamide 2015: 42).

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[2] Two migrated to foreign countries and I have lost track of one boy.

How do these first educated generation migrants struggle and accept their life situation? Their changing situations and views reflect their life strategies and the process of urbanization, which I will turn to in the next section.

3. Youth Migrating from Rural to Urban Areas

Bangladesh's economy has grown at an annual rate of over 6 percent since 2000 and one of the main drivers of this growth is the export garment industry. There are over 5,000 garment factories in Bangladesh and the country is the second largest readymade garment exporter in the world. According to Ashraf, "The rapid expansion of the sector depended on a mass influx of workers from rural areas into Dhaka's factories and employs more than four million workers, of whom nearly 80% are women, and who are rated among the world's cheapest labour force" (Ashraf 2017: 82). Severe and problematic working conditions in the factories that have not seen proper improvement are not only discussed outside Bangladesh, but also within the society. Yet despite the reality and negative image of the factories, hundreds of thousands of young people from the villages who have no other options continue to migrate to work in them.

The young men who migrated from my research site have three main complaints about the working conditions in the garment industry: they have to work too hard for long hours, they get a very low salary, and their educational experience has no impact on getting a proper position or salary. They tend to recognize factory work as "temporary work" and plan to return to their home village soon.

However, while they struggle to earn money under serious conditions, their behavior and mindset has been changing. When they first began working in the city, they would come back home almost every month, bringing their salary. However, gradually the frequency of going home has been reduced to every three months, or only for annual festival breaks. Even if they do not go home, they regularly send remittances to their family through the domestic money transfer service. When they come back home for the festival, they take rest for a few days, but then tend to feel bored, saying, "There is nothing to do in the village."

Their lifestyle in the city is far different from that in the village. As Ashraf (2017: 81) mentions, their working time in garment factories is strictly controlled by timecards and they do not have physical freedom. Their time and space are completely divided between their workplace and their private residence. This is totally different from the lifestyle in the village, where people do agriculture tasks as they need according to their own schedule. At first the migrant youth found it difficult to adapt to the controlled lifestyle, but slowly they have gotten used to working during a specified time and completely resting on the weekends.

Compared with female workers, male workers tend to shift their workplace more frequently. Due to the lack of a promotion system within the factory, getting a job

at a new factory is the easiest way to increase their salary. Whereas their educational experience does not differentiate their salary when they first join the industry, their educational background together with their work experience can impact their negotiation when they shift to a new workplace. One friend who dropped out of school in the seventh grade and has been working for T-shirt printing companies for ten years regrettably admitted that he would receive a better salary if his resume included a Secondary School Certificate (SSC).

In order to examine the situation of young migrants and the transformation process they undergo in detail, I will now introduce four cases of youth who migrated from rural Jamalpur to Dhaka[3]. Although the number of cases is limited, these four stories should be typical of contemporary urban migrants in Bangladesh. How do they think about their lives in the city and what visions do they have of their futures? Based on following their paths from their childhood days, and meeting them from time to time for informal interviews, I will outline their family backgrounds, educational experiences, their comments on how they came to migrate, and their future plans.

Case 1: A single male migrant

Shamsu is the youngest son in his family. He has six elder brothers and no sister. His father was a farmer, but had already retired because of his age when Shamsu was a student at primary school. Shamsu was the best student in his class when he graduated from primary school, but he told me at that time that he would not be able to continue his education much higher because his parents had no money. When he was in the eighth grade, however, his second eldest brother migrated to work in the Maldives and started to send remittances to his family. With his brother's support, Shamsu was able to continue to study up to the twelfth grade and passed the exam for the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). He became the most educated among his brothers (one of them studied up to eighth grade; two of them dropped out in class four; and three of them had no schooling at all). The eldest brother is working as a *rikshaw* puller in Dhaka, the third and sixth one work at the local market selling rice, the fourth one is a farmer at home, and the fifth one drives a diesel car for villagers' transportation.

When he passed the HSC, Shamsu decided to stop his education and migrate to work in the city. He had lost his drive to continue studying since he could not imagine by himself what he would do even after higher education. His friends who had already started to earn money also gave him pressure in his mind. Just before he left for Dhaka, he told me, "After I got the HSC with my hard work, I feel sad to work at a garment factory and get the same salary as other workers who only graduated from primary school do." He got a job at first through his relative's

[3] All names are imitated for their privacy.

connection and started to work in the quality check section of a factory, receiving 8,000 BDT a month[4]. He also stayed at the relative's home during the beginning of his urban life.

Shamsu has shifted his workplace three times since he began working in September 2012 until January 2018. He worked for three years at the first factory and for 11 months at the second. He has been working at a third factory since August 2016. His position has always been a quality checker since the beginning, but he now receives a salary of 13,000 BDT per month. Once they enter the network of the industry, young workers seek out information about which factory is going to employ new staff with better conditions, and they try to get introduced to the new factory through friends and connections. When he shifted his workplace from the second to the third factory, Shamsu said, "Now I don't have any worries since I have skill. There are jobs if I have skill. I can move among the factories one after another for better conditions."

Usually single male migrants live in what is called a *mess*, a shared living house with several rooms. They rent a small room (with space only big enough to sleep in) individually or with another roommate, and share the cost of hiring a local woman to do their cooking. Sometimes housemates work at the same factory, sometimes they do not. Shamsu rents a room by himself and shares eating expenses with his seven coworkers. Interestingly, these coworkers are not only nearly same age, but they also share a similar educational level. Some of them have already gotten married, but have kept their families in their home village. Each of them has come from different districts, but all are from rural areas. On the weekend, they spend time together at a park or a market for rest and fun. Nowadays Shamsu goes back home to his village only for annual festivals, whereas he used to go home more often.

Although he seems to have adjusted his life and network to the city, Shamsu still plans to return to his village after some years. He is now seeking a marriage partner in the village. He does not intend to marry a woman in the city.

Case 2: A single male who migrated, returned, married, and migrated again

Zakir is the only son in his family. His parents live in the village, as does his elder sister and his younger sister. His father is a farmer who often asks Zakir to help during the busy season. Zakir tended to be absent from school while he was a high school student. As the only son in his family, he has more responsibility than Shamsu. After completing the tenth grade and passing the SSC exam, he stopped his education and migrated to work in Dhaka.

Zakir first worked for 18 months, but quit his job to return to the village. After spending some months in the village, he again left for the city. Soon after his second

[4] 1 BDT≒80 USD in 2012. The legal minimum wage was about 5,200 BDT in 2013.

migration, his father arranged his marriage in the village. His father told me at that time, "It would be a problem if he was disturbed by an unknown girl in the city." During the festival holiday in 2012, he came back to get married in the village and returned to the city again. Zakir's new wife stayed for a few months at his original home with his parents, but soon moved to live in the city with him. After staying six months in the city, she returned to the village when Zakir's mother became sick and she had to help with the family's household duties. After one year, she delivered their baby girl in the village.

Zakir's elder sister got married in Mymenshingh, the district neighboring Jamalpur, when Zakir was a high school student. Her husband had worked in the city. When Zakir migrated for the first time, his brother-in-law helped him to get a job and they lived together. When he migrated for the second time, however, he went by himself and tried to get job on his own. He included his educational certifications on his resume and submitted it to a garment factory hiring new staff. He was a bit nervous about whether he could get a job or not because he had no personal connection, but fortunately he was hired and started to work there.

Zakir regularly sends remittances to his family in the village; his father was able to buy agricultural land and rebuild their house with these remittances. Zakir plans to do something in the village in the future. Recently he told me, "I will return to the village after earning money in Dhaka for a few more years, but I won't be able to do agriculture like my father. It's too tough! I will start some kind of agriculture-based business. I am thinking of cultivating fish in our ponds." He then asked me if I had any information about how and where he might be able to train for such a business.

When I saw Zakir and his wife in Dhaka, they also lived in a *mess*, renting a room attached with a bathroom. The kitchen and toilet were shared with other residents. His wife seemed to enjoy cooking with a gas stove in the city instead of cooking with firewood as she did in the village. When I asked them how their lifestyle was different in the city compared to the village, he answered that they spent more time together in the city since his life in the city was only at the workplace, market, and residence, whereas in the village he would spend time at home only after dinner late at night. Although they enjoyed their nuclear family life in the city, they do not intend to settle in the city. His wife also said, "I have nothing to do in the city, only staying at home the whole day long."

Case 3: A single female migrant who married in the city

Aki is from an extremely poor family. She lost her father when she was small, and lived with her mother and her maternal grandparents. She dropped out of school in class four and migrated to Dhaka with her mother in 2004, who got work as a housemaid. After a few years, Aki returned to the village and stayed at her grandparents' home for a while. In 2009, when she was about 15 years old, she

migrated to Dhaka by herself and started to work at a garment factory. From 2009 to 2015 she shifted her workplace twice and got married with a man who was from the same village also working in the garment industry in Dhaka. After she married, she shifted her workplace again to the factory where her husband works.

Aki operates a sewing machine at the factory and earns 10,000-11,000 BDT per month, including overtime pay. She works six days a week, from 8 am to 5 pm, and up to 8 pm if she has overtime work. She does not intend to continue work at the factory for very long. When I saw her just after her marriage, she told me, "Now we are working in Dhaka, but we will return to our village in the future. We want to buy land and build our house there. I have to keep some money too, since we have to have a baby and their education will cost. I should earn money now because I won't be able to continue to work once I get a baby."

Case 4: A married female migrant

Shahana has two brothers and one sister in her original family, and her parents are still alive. She was in the fourth grade in 2000. She continued to study up to the tenth grade, but failed her SSC examination. Just after taking the exam in 2008, her marriage was arranged by her parents. Her husband is from the nearby village; he is the third son with five siblings in his family. He has a HSC, while his other siblings have never attended school. At the time of the marriage, he was working at a garment factory in an EPZ (Export Processing Zone) in Chittagong, but Shahana stayed in the village. She soon gave birth to twins boys and after two and half years, she migrated with their sons to Dhaka, where her husband had shifted his workplace.

Unlike the previous case of Aki, Shahana does not work outside in the city, but is a housewife and mother at home. She does domestic piecework, sewing local women's clothes, and earns about 4,000 BDT per month depending on customer orders. Her husband worked at a garment factory in Dhaka, but two years after moving to Dhaka, his company was shut down and he lost his job. While he looked for a new job for two months, Shahana supported her family with her piecework. Her husband was successfully hired by another company in one of the EPZs in Dhaka and has been working there until now. The working conditions in the EPZ, particularly the work hours, are comparatively better than at other factories because they tend to follow the official rules of the industry. He works eight hours a day without overtime to earn 15,000 BDT per month.

Shahana and her family also live in a room in a *mess*, but with more furniture and household possessions, including her sewing machine and a television (See Photo 1). Their *mess* has twelve rooms apart from the owner's flat (See Photo 2). The room rent of Shahana's home is 1,800 BDT per month plus electricity costs. The kitchen and toilet are shared. Most of the rooms in their *mess* are rented by families, but a few are used by single men who are relatives of the families in that *mess*. There are

some couples with their unmarried children and a few mothers who work at a garment factory and stay with their children. Some couples work at the same garment factory as Aki. Three women, including Shahana, are housewives staying at home during the day, but she is the only woma n who does piecework at home.

Photo 1: Shahana's Household in Dhaka
Photo Credit: Author

Photo 2: Shahana's mess in Dhaka
Photo Credit: Author

When I visited Shahana in Dhaka in 2016, she told me, "When I migrated to Dhaka at first, I felt like going back home, but now I am used to and feel comfortable to live here in Dhaka. There are no family conflicts or gossip talking here. I was tired of it in the village!" Now she goes back home to the village only once a year for an annual festival, as her sons attend school in Dhaka. Sometimes they cannot go home even during festival holidays because transportation from Dhaka to the village becomes too crowded to move with children. Her husband sometimes goes back and brings rice from the village.

Her sons go to a secular Madrasa near their residence in Dhaka. When she decided to send them to a Madrasa, she asked me advice if it would be right to send them to Madrasa or not. She thought they can study both Bangla and Arabic there and will be able to shift to school in Bangla medium for their higher education in the future. Less cost at Madrasa than at other school also caused her school choice. I agreed and supported her decision. Her sons also attend a private coaching center to study after coming back from school, which costs 200 BDT per month for each of them. Her children's education was one of the main reasons for her to migrate to the city; she believes that the quality of education in Dhaka is better than that in a rural village because of the competition. Also, she told me that children do not study in the village, but they do in the city because their playing space is limited. Shahana's concern for her children's education is much stronger and more specific than that of her parents, which reflects a commonly-held perspective of the first educated generation toward the second generation. When I asked her if she taught her sons at home or not, she answered that she tried, but her sons did not want to listen to their mother's advice.

Despite Shahana's desire to raise her children in the city, her future plan does not include life in the city. She and her husband maintain their life in the city in order to make money for the children to study. Once their children become independent,

however, they plan to return to their village. They recently bought five cows in the village for 200,000 BDT; her father takes care of two, her father-in-law takes care of one, and they split the benefits of one cow with a neighbor who takes care of it. They have also built their own house in the village although nobody lives there yet. Despite complaining about the tight relationships with relatives and gossip in the village, Shahana wants to return to their village. She explained, "It would be better to live with our own property than to live in a rented house. And sometimes I miss the collective sense of the village community."

All of them told me that they planned to return to their home village in the future. The fact that they married or intended to marry within the village is a key factor in shaping their perspectives of their future. In the next section, I will discuss how these four cases illustrate the process, and limitations, of urbanization among the first educated generation. The possibility of their social class formation and mobility will be also examined.

4. Process of Urbanization?

The young migrants in this study remain unsettled between urban and rural life, between the city and the village. Rather than belonging to either place, it can be said that they are in the process of transforming their lives. As such, it is significant to examine their life strategies from their subjective points of view.

Before examining their urbanization, I would like to discuss the feature of their backgrounds. As already mentioned above, all four youths profiled in the cases are the most educated among their family (even Aki, who studied only up to fourth grade). Their contemporary situations are clearly different from the lives of their parents. While Aki's mother had also worked in the city, it was as a domestic worker. The parents of other three were farmers in the village. In this sense, their urban migration was not moderated or reproduced by the previous generation, but represents a new strategy.

How educational experience facilitated their migration strategies differs according to gender. The boys were conscious that their education should lead them to a "better life," something defined not by any concrete image, but rather as not involving agricultural work. On the other hand, the rural-urban migration of the girls was not undertaken by their own decision, and they have less recognition of the links between their educational experience and their migration. Yet, both of the girls are concerned for their children's education and it could be said that their experience at school has nurtured a sense of responsibility to educate the next generation.

Now, I would like to explore whether we can call their migration an "urbanization" of their lives. The four cases indicate migration-induced changes in three main realms: living space, time usage and perception, and human relations.

All four youths live in a rented house, or *mess,* in the city suburbs, not in the center of the city. Due to the rapid influx of migrant workers to Dhaka, housing options are limited and facilities are inadequate. Shahana, like most migrants, tries to maintain a proper living space with the necessary furniture and household goods within a very limited space. The remittances they send to their families in the village also consume a significant portion of their earnings. None of the four migrants have any intention of having their own property or house in the city. Rather, three of them are planning to develop property in their home village for their future. Thus, in terms of life space, their urban dwellings are seen as merely temporary.

When it comes to the migrants' daily schedule and use of time, as Zakir mentioned, urban life is clearly divided between work time and private time, and both strictly depend on one's job. This is a typical modern lifestyle and it can be said that these youth are the first generation in Bangladesh that has had to adjust their lives to a controlled schedule since childhood (at school). When they were children in a village, they were trained to come to school on time. Yet, because of the gap between their lives at school and in the village and at home, they were occasionally absent from school, for example during harvest season when they had to help their parents. Their teachers also understood their school absences as a social necessity. Their absence from work in their urban lives, however, cannot be excused by any private necessity; their salary would be cut if they do not appear on time. Accordingly, they have gradually adjusted their lifestyle to the wage labor system. As they become used to being controlled by the urban sense of time, they tend to loose the sense of time in village life. As Shamsu said, "there is nothing to do in the village" when he comes home for holidays. In this way, the youths' lifestyle in terms of how they spend time and perceive time has been urbanized.

The migrants' sense of their human relations is the most ambiguous aspect of their urbanization. Most of the workers in the garment industry have migrated from a village to urban areas by themselves or with their nuclear family. Like Aki, many couples work in the industry together; or like Shahana, wives stay at home to do housework and take care of children. On one hand, Shahana was enjoying her urban life apart from the tight relations of the village community. On the other hand, she also misses the collective relations of rural life. The migrants' urban networks are built to facilitate convenience, such as to get work or to share living spaces, but in most cases, they are temporal.

Regarding the social relations of rural-urban migrants, Ajisaka (2009: 8), one of the Japanese sociologists who introduced the concept of "rural-urban sociology," pointed out that people rely on various social relation mechanisms, such as mutual aid among relatives or fellow villagers, remittances, connections, local news, folklore, local dialects, and consciousness of their hometowns, when carrying out productive and reproductive social activities. He focused on "home-based associations" (*Dokyo-Dantai*) among urban migrants in Japan. People who had migrated from rural

villages to cities in Japan, particularly in the 1960s under rapid economic growth, tended to form *Dokyo-Dantai* with peers who migrated from the same district. They did not necessarily know each other when they lived in villages. Once they came to urban areas, however they started to join associations based on where they came from. These worked as a network for them not only to share any helpful information, but also to maintain their local identity through talking in local dialects, eating local foods, or enjoying folklore. They encouraged each other both practically and mentally to live in the cities. Interestingly, sharing and fortifying their hometown identity helped them to adjust to urban life.

In Bangladesh, although migrants maintain a strong sense of identity based on their original home, they have not created associations with others from their hometown. Rather, they individually establish very practical, but temporal, networks with coworkers who have a similar educational background and help them get better job opportunities. In order to maintain their local identity, they do not create or join an urban association. Instead, they go home as often as they can and focus on building their future in the village.

Thus, the young urban migrants from Bangladesh's rural villages focus on their urban lives only for work and to gain an income. If by "urbanization" we mean not only the population growth of cities or the expansion of urban areas, but also the phenomena of urbanizing social relations and interactions, then we can say that the urban social lives of the first-generation migrants remains limited. However, some parts of their lifestyle, such as how they perceive time, are gradually shifting. Although their future plans are imagined in their home villages, their lifestyles are gradually changing. If they really return to their villages in the future, their urban life may influence their rural life, and the lives of those around them.

5. "New Urban Working Class"

The lives of these new migrants have clearly been transformed when compared to those of the previous generation. Although all of the youths in this study recognize their urban lives to be temporary, how can they be defined as a social class?

In her work on the middle class in India, the Japanese economist Kiso (2012) indicates four factors that contribute to class formation in the city: income, professional/business network, educational level, and property. She also argues that class mobility can be captured by the following three transformations. The first transformation is that from agriculture to manual labor in the informal sector, and then to work in the formal sector. (Although this varies by caste and geography in India, in general workers in lower classes tend to remain within the informal sector even when they shift jobs or workplaces (Kiso 2012: 79)). The second transformation is that of an extended family structure to a nuclear one. Finally, the third transformation is that of a rise in educational attainment by generation.

According to Kiso's discussion, I analyze the class formation and mobility of my four case studies. All four earn income by working in the city and have built professional/business networks, although they seem to be primarily for temporary practical purposes only. All have some level of formal education, received in the village. As for property, they do not buy, or even try to buy, property in the city, but rather, like Zakir and Shahana, use their earnings to accumulate assets in the village. Thus, these conditions make it difficult to categorize them into an existing social class in the city.

How about their class mobility? Compared with the previous generation, the youths in this study have undergone all three of Kiso's transformations: job transfer, change in family structure, and rise of educational level. However, this does not exactly correlate to a rise in their social class; they have certainly avoided agriculture work, but their current work seems to be temporary both in the current reality and in their future plans. As for family structure, it is, like Zakir, sometimes divided between urban and rural. Many males migrate alone, maintaining their extended family structure in the village, while some, like Shahana, start a nuclear family life in the city. Since they have just begun to have their own children, it is still difficult to make conclusions about the rise of education levels by generation. However, they are very concerned about ensuring their children's education.

Given the above characteristics, it can be concluded that urban class formation and mobility has scarcely occurred among these migrants. However, although they are not satisfied with their current working conditions, factory work is clearly different from previously available jobs in the informal sector in urban areas, such as those of housemaids or cleaners who used to live in urban slums. While they may not be categorized into an existing urban class, they may instead be considered a "new urban working class" whose situations are unstable and newly affected by the global economy.

6. Conclusion

Members of the first educated generation of Bangladesh's rural societies are now migrating to cities in large numbers to get jobs. They predominately work in the garment industry, supporting the rapid economic growth of their nation. Whereas the population in and around Dhaka has dramatically increased and the urban area is expanding with the construction of factories and worker residences, the lifestyle and mindset of the new migrants does not seem to have urbanized yet.

In this paper, I introduced four stories of young people who migrated from a rural village in Jamalpur to Dhaka either alone or with their families. Of the four, the single young man seems to enjoy his lifestyle and network in the city the most. The couples with and without children are also managing their lives in the city with the

support of their urban network. Nonetheless, all of them see their future prospects in their home villages, and they do not have a sense of belonging in the city.

This lack of urbanization could be caused by the nature of the work in garment factories, which the majority of the rural to urban migrants engage in, but without their satisfaction or future hopes. They view the garment factory jobs negatively due to the bad working conditions, and have limited interest in continuing to work in the industry. In fact, the average age of workers in such factories has remained in the mid-20s since the 1980s, indicating that workers do not stay in the industry, but leave after working for several years. Since they do not have options outside the garment industry, they limit their urban lives to a short period of time and imagine their future in the village.

At the same time, whether they will it or not, their lifestyles gradually adjust to the urban context, and when they adopt their urban life, they start feeling bored in the village. In this regard, some of them may yet settle in the city, or some may bring their urban experience with them and transform their village lives. Although they migrate to cities because of no opportunity to earn money in rural villages, they imagine something new to do there with the resources they accumulate by working in the city. If they realize their plans, they have the potential to transform rural societies with the money, experience, sense, information, knowledge, and networks that they gain during their urban lives.

On the other hand, their children, who are growing up in the cities and have no childhood experience in the rural areas, may in the future settle in the city separate from their parents. It is among this "second generation" that we may begin to see a more clear and long-lasting urbanization of lifestyle and mindset.

Since the first generation is still in the process of negotiating their lives between rural and urban society, it is difficult to define their class or situation. Their perspectives, however, are valuable in elucidating the factors that promote urbanization.

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