

Migration and Development in China: Introduction

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Migration and development are two highly interdependent processes. In China, economic reforms have unleashed over 200 million migrants who have moved across the county,¹ and they have contributed to growth and changes in the destination cities and places of origin. Indeed, postreform development in China has been a dynamic process through which remarkable economic success has been witnessed, but people's productivity, creativity, and choices have also broadened. After 30 years of rapid economic growth and urbanization, China's level of urbanization surpassed 50 percent, and its economy is entering a period of "new normal" with slower economic growth but greater attention to growth quality, social equality, environmental protection, and sustainable development. It is important to understand the relationship between migration and development, which will be useful for development and migration policy making.

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The relationship between migration and development has been a tricky question, as each affects the other. Many studies have been conducted on regional development and migration in China.² Some migration studies have attempted to identify the impact of social and economic development on migration especially determinants of migration.³ But no systematic study has examined the link between migration and development in China. Dramatic changes in the Chinese landscape of urban and regional development as well as the increasing scale of internal migration ask for detailed studies on the link between migration and development. Both macro and micro data can be used in the study using either a qualitative or quantitative approach. To understand the relationship between migration and development, the following issues can be explored. First is the process of migration and settlements in responding to urban and regional development. How do migrants respond to development opportunities, and what is their preference regarding acquiring a local *hukou* (户口 household registration) and settling down in urban destinations? Second is the issue of spatial mobility, social mobility, and social integration. Social status and social integration of migrants are important development questions. Third is labor market performance. The economic status and performance of migrants are also important issues in development. Last is the issue of migration and development. Does migration affect urban and regional development positively or negatively?

The articles included in this special issue advance the understanding of migration and development in China by addressing the above issues. This introduction summarizes the major findings and contributions of these articles and suggests directions for future research. The articles for this special issue were prepared by authors who presented at the “Migration and Development in China” session, sponsored by the China Specialty Group, Population Specialty Group, and Economic Geography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers (AAG),⁴ at the 2015 annual AAG meeting in Chicago on 21-25 April 2015.

Chen and Fan’s article explores a hukou-related conundrum: rural migrants do not want an urban hukou. Using data from the Floating Population Dynamic Monitoring Surveys 2010–2012, they found that more than 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they planned to stay at the destination city for at least five years, but only half of the respondents would wish to transfer their hukou to the destination city if there were no other conditions.

Chen and Fan show how the respective values of rural hukou and urban hukou have changed in recent decades. During the process of urbanization and development, the benefits tied to rural hukou have been increased dramatically, related largely to land value, including farming and housing land, and compensation for land requisition. In the meantime, the value of urban hukou has declined due to market reform and reduced state sponsorship of urban residents. Another reason is the mismatch between rural migrants' preference for large cities and hukou reforms' focus on medium-sized and small cities and towns. As a result, rural migrants prefer to keep their rural hukou status and engage in circulative migration. Chen and Fan conclude that as long as rural migrants have no reasonable and reliable means to access housing, employment, health care, education for their children, and social insurance in the city, they will continue to rely on rural contract land as their "root" and security for livelihood. This article shows strong ties between migrants and their rural origin. The findings have important implications for China's hukou reform and urbanization strategy.

Yang and his collaborators' article further analyzes the urban settlement intention of rural peasants in China. This study focuses on rural peasants in rural areas and thus complements other studies focusing on rural migrants living in cities. This study uses a data set of 4,116 rural peasants from the Chinese General Social Survey in 2010. Respondents living in the countryside and having not only rural hukou but also farmland at the time of the survey were asked to answer all survey questions. The respondents were located in 266 villages or neighborhood communities nested in 94 county-level units.

A multilevel framework for migration and urban settlement intentions is developed. The multilevel approach to migration intention not only combines individual, household, and contextual variables into quantitative models simultaneously, but also takes into account the interaction effects among variables at different levels. A multilevel logistic model is used to examine the role of individual, household, and contextual factors in determining urban settlement intentions of rural peasants.

In the next five years, more than 90 percent of the surveyed peasants do not intend to move to and settle down in the city. Close to two-thirds of the 411 peasants who intend to settle in an urban place chose small towns/cities as their destination. Large cities are a secondary choice. This is different from other findings that rural migrants like to settle down in large cities. Clearly, rural peasants are less keen than rural migrants to

move to large cities. The results also show that, at the individual level, peasants who are younger, are more educated, and have greater migration experience exhibit greater urban settlement intention. At the county level, the level of local economic development has a positive effect on peasant urban settlement intention.

The next three articles examine job market performance, social integration, and social and spatial mobility of migrants in one of the largest cities of China, Shanghai. Niu and his collaborators' article explores job-search methods of migrant workers in Shanghai. Many migrants use social ties to search for jobs, while those with poor social networks rely on labor market intermediaries in the host city. In large cities like Shanghai, a number of labor market intermediaries have developed that not only list job vacancy information but also provide preliminary screening of candidates and refer them to firms.

In this study, migrants are defined as temporary migrants without Shanghai hukou. Data came from a survey of migrant workers in nine suburban districts of Shanghai conducted in September 2006. The data include 924 valid samples. This study examines the patterns and determinants of migrant workers' job-search approaches after their arrival. The results show that nearly half of migrant workers find jobs through personal social networks and a further 29 percent find jobs through labor market intermediaries. The results also show that those who are male, lowly educated, and recently arrived tend to use labor market intermediaries to find jobs, and those who are female and have been in the city for a long time or whose origin is near Shanghai tend to use social networks to find jobs. This article reveals that even if formal job-search methods are available to migrants, the majority still rely on social networks in the job-search process. Only when they have limited social resources do they turn to labor market intermediaries. The authors argue that personnel social networks are the most efficient and trustworthy job-search channels for most rural migrants.

Wang and Ning's article examines social integration of migrants in Shanghai's urban villages. Data were collected by a sampling survey of the residents of urban villages in Shanghai from the end of 2010 to the beginning of 2011. Based on factor analysis, social integration of migrants is mapped on four dimensions: social relation integration, economic integration, psychological integration, and cultural integration. According to the factor scores, the overall level of social integration of migrants is not high, and economic integration is the lowest. The results of multiple

linear regression analysis show that the destination place factors of migrants exert more influence on social integration in urban villages than the individual factors. Individual factors play the most important roles in determining the status of psychological integration, while destination place factors are more helpful in explaining the variation in both economic integration and social relation integration.

Song's article explores the social and spatial mobility of new urban migrants in Beijing and Shanghai. It considers the relationship between social and spatial mobility of new urban migrants and residents, aiming to reveal the influences of the household registration system on the social mobility of China's new urban migrants. The data come from the *Blue Book of Youth: The Development Report on Chinese Youth* in 2013 and 2014 and from in-depth interviews. Song finds that new urban migrants are relatively vulnerable as the hukou system limits their access to social welfare and security. Meanwhile, new urban residents consider themselves lower-middle class in terms of consumption, and maintain certain flexibility to further establish their social and economic status. Song concludes that although city government in China has launched some related policies, they are insufficient to eliminate the physical and psychological gap between new urban migrants and residents. A phased abolition of the hukou system is suggested to reduce social costs and meet China's goals for social development and fairness.

Shen and Wang examine the relationship between urban competitiveness and migration in the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) and Pearl River Delta (PRD) in 2010. The study focuses on 25 cities in two regions. A total of 59 indicators are used to measure urban competitiveness, first, using a sustainable development perspective. This study shows the following effects of migration. The share of migrants in usual residents has a positive relation with urban competitiveness. The share of intraprovincial migrants has a more significant relation with urban competitiveness than the share of interprovincial migrants. The ratio of urban migrants to intraprovincial migrants has a significant relation with urban competitiveness. The ratio of skilled migrants to total migrants has a significant relation with urban competitiveness. Their findings shed light on the impact of migration on development in China.

Xu and his collaborators examine the determinants of labor market outcomes of migrants in urban China to understand how and why migrants perform differently in the destination cities based on data from a migrant survey conducted in Fujian in 2009–2010 with 3,011 valid

respondents. The sheer amount of migrant workers has altered the existing social and spatial structure of Chinese labor markets. The transformation from a distributive system to a market-like system has reconfigured the urban labor market structure and outcomes. They found a persistent, albeit diminishing, role of institutional factors and a growingly significant role of human-capital-related factors in migrant earnings. The importance of unconventional earnings determinants such as personal motivation and decision-making capacity in migrant labor markets in China is also revealed. The rewarding structure is significantly differentiated across male and female labor markets, and there is still substantial gender discrimination in migrant labor markets. The study contributes to debates on how a differentiated local labor market is shaped by rapid social and economic transformations in China.

To conclude, the articles in the collection shed new insights on the process of migration, social integration, and labor market performance of migrants, and the relation between migration and development. Over 200 million migrants are living in places without local hukou. Due to specific entitlements to interest and benefits in urban and rural areas, a high proportion of rural migrants do not like to transfer their hukou to urban areas. Rural peasants are less keen than rural migrants to move to large cities. In the meantime, migrants in Chinese cities face great challenges, and their social integration and labor market performance are affected by individual, household, and institutional factors. There is a persistent, albeit diminishing role of institutional factors and a growingly significant role of human-capital-related factors in migrant earnings. There is evidence for a positive relationship between migration and development.

Looking ahead, more case studies and more theoretically informed analysis can be done to extend the research reported in this collection to examine the social and economic outcomes and impacts of migration for both migrants and local residents in China. While migrants can contribute to economic growth as labor input, it is also important to consider the social cost of migration and the well-being of both migrants and residents. There is also an emerging generation of young migrants who are better educated, with a cosmopolitan outlook and a desire for high living standards.⁵ As China's urban economy becomes more and more sophisticated, many cities have introduced policies to attract highly skilled and educated people to enhance their competitiveness. The skilled migrants would have a more direct impact on urban and regional development.⁶ More policy studies are also needed to design proper migration

policy, hukou policy, and urbanization policy. Such policies need to be supported by integrated public service and social security systems. Then free migration in China may be realized eventually.

Notes

- 1 National Bureau of Statistics of China, "Statistical Communiqués on Major Data of Sixth National Population Census" (Beijing: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 28 April 2011).
- 2 Z. Liang, Y. P. Chen, and Y. Gu, "Rural Industrialisation and Internal Migration in China," *Urban Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 12 (2002), pp. 2175–2187; F. Cai and D. Wang, "Migration as Marketization: What Can We Learn from China's 2000 Census Data?," *China Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2003), pp. 73–93; Li Zhang, "The Right to the Entrepreneurial City in Reform-Era China," *China Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2010), pp. 129–156; C. C. Fan, "Interprovincial Migration, Population Redistribution, and Regional Development in China: 1990 and 2000 Census Comparisons," *Professional Geographer*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (2005), pp. 295–311; J. Shen, "Rural Development and Rural to Urban Migration in China 1978–1990," *Geoforum*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (1995), pp. 395–409; J. Shen and X. Yang, "Analyzing Urban Competitiveness Changes in Major Chinese Cities 1995–2008," *Applied Spatial Analysis*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (2014), pp. 361–379.
- 3 Yu Zhu and Wenzhe Chen, "The Settlement Intention of China's Floating Population in the Cities: Recent Changes and Multifaceted Individual-Level Determinants," *Population, Space and Place*, Vol. 16 (2010), pp. 253–267; J. Shen, "Error Analysis of Regional Migration Modeling," *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* (forthcoming); J. Shen, "Modelling Regional Migration in China: Estimation and Decomposition," *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 31 (1999), pp. 1223–1238.
- 4 The Association of American Geographers is now named the American Association of Geographers.
- 5 P. Ngai and H. Lu, "Unfinished Proletarianization: Self, Anger, and Class Action among the Second Generation of Peasant-Workers in Present-Day China," *Modern China*, Vol. 35, No. 5 (2010), pp. 493–519.
- 6 Y. Liu and J. Shen, "Spatial Patterns and Determinants of Skilled Internal Migration in China, 2000–2005," *Papers in Regional Science*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (2014), pp. 749–771; J. Shen and Y. Liu, "Skilled and Less-Skilled Interregional Migration in China: A Comparative Analysis of Spatial Patterns and the Decision to Migrate in 2000–2005," *Habitat International*, Vol. 57 (2016).