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Internal and International Migration in China under Openness and a Marketizing Economy

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**Internal and International Migration
in China under Openness and
a Marketizing Economy**

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During the last two decades of the twentieth century, globalization coupled with vast advances in transport and telecommunications has resulted in a far greater degree of population mobility, both within and between countries. Population movements across national borders have captured headlines, not only because the development is a reflection of rapid economic and political changes but because of the increasing complexity of these migrations. Some of these population movements were official, documented acts and followed the normal procedures of application and acceptance by the country of destination. However, undocumented population movements rapidly increased too, both in numbers and in the variety of destinations, in part fuelled by the easy availability and transmission of information.

A huge body of literature on migration exists, covering many countries of the world. Nevertheless, migration in China has not been studied to the same degree, because, for three decades between 1949 and 1978, the country had been following its own isolationist pattern of development; only in 1978 did it embark on a new policy of openness and reform.

China is the most populous country in the world, accounting for about one-fifth of humanity. Population mobility within the country, as well as internationally, has been significant in its implications for development in China and for what it may mean for other countries. This paper focuses on the causes, patterns, dynamics and consequences of internal migration in China. The impact of this process on Chinese cities is given special attention. The second part of the paper deals with China's international migration, which can be seen as both an extension of the histori-

cally massive internal movements and as rational responses to contemporary factors pushing people out of China, and pulling them toward certain attractive, target destinations. The conclusion draws together the implications from two decades of migration in China for planners in that country and for decision-makers elsewhere.

Internal Migration

Any discussion of internal migration in China must begin with its central socioeconomic institution — the *hukou* (or household registration) system, which has been in place since 1958, essentially to monitor, but effectively also to control, population movements (Chan et al., 1999). A household is registered as either a rural or an urban household, with very different entitlements to rations, housing and welfare benefits. Since the system was tied to the rationing of food, edible oil, clothing and other essential commodities at periods of resource scarcity, it has been a key institution that has affected the lives of almost everybody in the country. As changing from a rural to an urban residence would be permitted only under special circumstances, China's rural population was effectively tied down and urbanization prior to 1978 proceeded at a snail's pace. In its pre-reform period, China was spared the rapid urbanization witnessed in many other developing countries after the end of World War II, and its large cities for the most part had very modest population increases. In the Third Population Census of 1982, the national level of urbanization was recorded at only 20.6 percent, a small increase indeed in nearly three decades from the 13.3 percent recorded by the First Population Census in 1953.

Contrary to its depiction in the West, the *hukou* system was not designed as a system for blocking rural-urban migration. However, it did act as a *de facto* internal passport mechanism serving multiple needs of the state (Chan and Zhang, 1999). As urban residential status carried far more weight than did rural, a

rural resident in an urban setting was an illegal migrant whatever his length of stay — unless his residential status had been transferred. Thus, any study of migration in China must recognize a distinction between *hukou* migration (which carries residency rights) and non-*hukou* migration (which does not carry such rights). Table 1 shows the marked differences in the two types of migration. The rigid administration of the *hukou* system over the years has tightly regulated and controlled migration in China. The division between the rural and urban population has been sharp and arbitrary.

Causes

The *hukou* system is a product of Chinese socialism that has created a rural-urban divide, a dualism that determines vastly different life chances for those on either side of the nearly impermeable divide. The urban bias of China's development trajectory has been observed by many scholars (Kirkby, 1985; Roberts, 1997; Wong and Huen, 1998). Reduced rural incomes have resulted from the "price scissors" that keep agricultural prices clipped low. Rising agricultural costs have always lagged behind those of agricultural inputs. Some scholars hold the view that agriculture has long financed China's industrial development (Aubert, 1990:28). In fact, policies biased toward urban dwellers can be seen as the insurance the regime buys to ensure political stability by keeping the urbanites, especially the workers, contented (Oi, 1993:145).

The increasingly disparate nature of the rural and urban sectors is manifested in their respective income levels. The rural-urban income disparity grew from 1:1.17 in 1984 to 1:2.55 in 1994 (Li, 1996:1129). In 1995, annual per capita net income of rural households was 1,577.7 yuan compared with 3,892.9 yuan for urban households (SSB, 1996:281). To this rural-urban schism is added an equally deepening disparity between the coastal and interior regions. Under China's open policy, the coastal region has garnered the lion's share of foreign direct investment which has,

Table 1 *Hukou* and Non-*hukou* Rural-Urban Migrants

Characteristics	<i>Hukou</i> migrants	Non- <i>hukou</i> migrants
Household registration type and status	Non-agricultural and local.	Agricultural and non-local.
Entitlements to state-supplied social benefits and opportunities	Full.	From nil to temporary entitlements.
Legal urban residency status	Full status.	Illegal or temporary.
Socioeconomic sector	Mostly in the state sector.	Mostly in the non-state sector; also as temporary workers in the state sector.
Mechanism of effecting migration	Determined by bureaucratic decisions within plan limits.	"Spontaneous" based on personal contacts and market information.
Stability of moves	Permanent.	Seasonal or semi-permanent.
Level of principal migrants' labor skills	Skilled and low-skilled workers.	Mostly unskilled or low-skilled workers.
Employment type	Mostly permanent jobs.	Temporary or semi-permanent jobs in non-state enterprises; or self-employment.
Housing	Same as other urban residents.	Low-cost shelters or homeless.

Source: Adapted from Chan et al. (1999).

in turn, led to rapid economic and social transformations and a widening of the east-west, rural-urban divides.

The first sign of a thaw in this rigid rural-urban divide was the dissolution of the people's communes and the adoption of a household responsibility system in 1979. As part of the process,

rural households were allowed to keep individual plots and sell agricultural produce in the local market. The resulting issues of agricultural productivity, surplus labor and, in the march toward a market economy, the flood of rural migrants began to emerge.

When assessing the issue of agricultural productivity, one must take into account the alarming drop in China's per capita area of cultivated land, estimated to have fallen from 10 *mu* (or 0.165 acres) per agricultural worker in 1956 to 4 *mu* in 1985 (Davin, 1999:69). Yet the size of the rural labor force increased from 165 million in 1949 to 380 million in 1986 (Taylor, 1988:745). Rural China is estimated to have had a labor surplus of some 200 million by the mid-1990s (Li, 1996:1129). Even in the 1920s and 1930s, according to classic studies by Pearl Buck, the average able-bodied man in the countryside was idle for two months every year (Davin, 1999:68) and, with an increasing rural population, the problem would become more serious. In 1992, 73 percent of China's labor force worked in agriculture, producing 27 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), an employment structure deemed grossly out of balance with national output compared with economies at similar levels of development (UNDP, 1995). Rural surplus labor was a significant problem. Even in prosperous Guangdong, it was reported that, between 1979 and 1995, 12 million of the province's rural population moved into urban areas. Yet, of the remaining 25 million rural workers, 4 million were still considered to be surplus (Davin, 1999:70). The question of rural surplus labor became particularly relevant when there was an opportunity for labor to be more productively deployed in a marketizing economy, with migration being an option for consideration.

Indeed, migration is not a route to individual income maximization, but rather part of a household strategy. Many options are open to the peasant household in the allocation of its available labor supply, including subsistence production on one's own farm, casual labor on nearby farms, work in nearby towns and villages, seasonal migration to other agricultural areas, and circular or permanent migration to a major city or even another

country — and these options are not mutually exclusive (Roberts, 1997:262). Based on a detailed study of eight villages in different parts of China, it was found that many households and villages were increasingly, and paradoxically, forced to choose between retaining sufficient labor to undertake agricultural production or have their able-bodied members migrate in order to earn sufficient cash to subsidize the rising costs of agricultural production. Migration could be a supplement to agricultural and non-agricultural activities in richer regions, a subsidy for agricultural and non-agricultural activities in middle-income regions, and a substitute for agricultural and non-agricultural activities in poor and remote regions (Croll and Huang, 1997:140, 144). Consequently, with the adoption of the open policy and the subsequent changes in the countryside, China has unchained a huge peasantry, which has displayed a marked propensity to migrate.

Patterns

Based on the migration statistics of the China Fertility and Birth Control Survey of 1988, Liang and White (1996) calculated “provincial destination propensity” — a measure of the extent to which a province attracted migrants between 1950 and 1988. They found that, whereas inter-provincial migration was highly concentrated in the 1950s, it had become more evenly distributed and directed toward urban settings in the late 1970s, as economic reforms began to unfold. In the transition to a market economy, the highly directed and politically motivated migration pattern of a former era was greatly weakened. During the period 1985 to 1988, Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi received, respectively, 5.45 percent, 1.2 percent, 4.19 percent, 2.26 percent, 4.06 percent and 1.17 percent of China’s inter-provincial migrants. In addition, the authors found that age had a significant effect on the probability of inter-provincial migration, with those aged 20 to 24 the most likely to make such a move.

It has to be reiterated that, despite the distance of many of these inter-provincial moves, most of the individuals involved

were viewed as temporary migrants because of their non-*hukou* status — hence they are also referred to as the “floating population” (*liudong renkou*). According to a State Statistical Bureau survey of 150,000 laborers and the latest agricultural census in 1997, China had a floating rural population of 80 million, 34 million of whom had worked in cities for more than six months (Yang and Guo, 1996:773).

Using data from the inter-provincial migration sub-sample of the 1 percent sample of China’s 1990 Population Census, Chan and others (1999) found major contrasts between *hukou* and non-*hukou* migrants. The only similarity they shared, in fact, was that they were predominately male and in the age group 20 to 29. Otherwise, these were two distinct categories of migrant. In educational attainment, non-*hukou* migrants overwhelmingly possessed a junior, middle, or primary school background, but *hukou* migrants were disproportionately represented in the highly educated categories. Moreover, a higher percentage of non-*hukou* migrants were in the workforce than *hukou* migrants. *Hukou* migrants were also far more likely to be in professional and technical jobs, as opposed to 95 percent of the non-*hukou* migrants being employed at the clerical level or below. Furthermore, about 60 percent of *hukou* migrants came from urban areas, mostly from cities, in contrast to 78 percent of non-*hukou* migrants having come from the countryside and 87 percent being engaged in rural labor migration. Also, *hukou* migrants tended to be more “conservative,” covering shorter distances and originating from nearby provinces, whereas non-*hukou* flows were primarily from the interior to the coast, to major economic hubs such as the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong and leading metropolises, notably Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin. The main sources of migrants were a few populous provinces, namely Sichuan, Zhejiang, Shandong, Jiangsu and Hebei.

Many studies have uncovered patterns of internal migration in China not dissimilar to those found in other developing countries, despite China’s very different social and political environments. Job changes and family reasons are the two most

important causes of migration, with work reasons accounting for about half of all *hukou* and non-*hukou* migrants (Chan, 1999). Rural-rural migration was positively related to distance while out- and net migration is negatively related to education (Wan, 1995). In out-migration decisions, age and sex were the most important push factors while migrants' responsibilities at home was the most important pull factor. Younger individuals were more likely to migrate than older individuals, and the most likely to migrate were those in the age groups 16 to 25 and 26 to 35 years. Males were more likely to migrate than females. Being married lowered the likelihood of migration (Hare, 1999).

Some scholars have argued that Chinese labor migration from rural areas to large cities is predominantly circular. For instance, Roberts (1997) has found that over half of the rural labor migrants in Shanghai's floating population in 1993 had been in the city for less than six months, and another quarter had lived there between six months and one year. Circular migration makes good sense for several reasons. First, Chinese peasants wish to keep one foot on the farm as security against unemployment, sickness and old age, because community-owned land is lost if not farmed. Second, a native place identity (*tongxiang*) is a critical component of personal identity in China. Third, internal migrants are required to obtain permission to move from one place to another and there are plenty of restrictions to discourage movement. Finally, most migrant workers have left their families behind in their place of origin, and those who have brought their families with them cannot afford decent housing and schooling for their children. A recent Ministry of Labor survey revealed that two-thirds of married migrant workers were separated from their spouses and 81 percent of the workers with children did not bring their children along (Zhao, 1999:778).

On the other hand, other scholars argue that rural-urban migration is *de facto* in nature, as migrants tend to stay in their place of destination even without legal rights. This is especially true in small towns, which are more tolerant of migrants. In the first place, the marketization of housing and basic food items is

extensive in small towns, allowing migrants to acquire daily necessities and live like local people. In addition, local cadres and residents in these centers are more likely to be relatively relaxed and tolerant of outsiders. This tolerant attitude cannot be found in large cities, which erect high institutional barriers against labor migrants who try to settle there permanently to prevent overcrowding and overburdening of the urban infrastructure (Woon, 1999:498-99).

As a subset of internal migration in China, female marriage migration has become increasingly important. It is a personal strategy adopted by young rural women to achieve upward social and economic mobility where other channels are extremely limited. Without the skills necessary to compete in the urban labor market, these rural women move primarily to rural areas in well-developed regions and provinces, such as in Jiangsu and Guangdong (Fan and Huang, 1998).

Dynamics

Internal migration in China since 1978 has been a rapidly changing phenomenon, evolving with and responding sensitively to policy pronouncements. The *hukou* system, however, constitutes the background against which many of the policy relaxations may be viewed. Migration can also be seen in the context of the country's urbanization policy, which has had as its cornerstone the control of the growth of the largest cities.

In the early 1980s, following the introduction of the household responsibility system in the rural areas in 1979, rural surplus quickly emerged as a problem needing to be tackled. A small town policy was advocated by the famous anthropologist Fei Xiaotong, who defined a new state policy on migration. Under this policy, peasants were expected to continue to live in their villages, while commuting to nearby small towns and cities to work in private, collective, or state-owned industrial and commercial enterprises. This is a process vividly described as leaving the soil without leaving the village (*litu bu lixiang*) and entering the factory

without entering the city (*jinchang bu jincheng*) (Kim, 1990; Wong and Huen, 1998). In 1983, the State Council allowed rural households to take up cooperative ventures in market towns without changing their residential status.

In 1984, the state made a landmark decision to relax its stranglehold on rural households. The State Council Circular on the Problem of Peasants' Settlement in Market Towns was issued to allow peasants with permits to move to officially designated towns or market towns for permanent settlement and to engage in non-agricultural activities, although they were not granted food rations. Such households were distinguished as "self-supplied grain households" (*zili kouliang hukou*) (Kim, 1990).

Since then, a series of measures have been put into practice to provide some semblance of control over the surging tide of rural-urban migrants. In 1985, the Ministry of Public Security issued the Provisional Regulations on the Management of the Temporary Residents in Cities and Towns. Under the new regulations, all migrants over the age of 16 who move to an urban area and live there for longer than six months must apply for a "temporary residence permit" (*zanzhuzheng*). People conducting business and staying for a long time in a given locality must get a "living away from home permit" (*jizhuzheng*) (Wong and Huen, 1998). In the same year, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress approved regulations requiring all citizens aged 16 and above to carry a resident card. In 1986, the first experiment with a "green card" (*luka*) took place in Qinlan Township in Anhui province, thereby creating a status between that of temporary and permanent household registration. Furthermore, in 1988 the local governments of Lai'an County and Quanjiao County of Anhui province began selling urban *hukou* by charging peasants a fee to change their household registration from agricultural to non-agricultural (Wong and Huen, 1998).

In the 1990s, the status conferred by urban *hukou* continued to be viewed as valuable by rural residents. Some coastal cities seized the opportunity to generate revenue by placing a price on residential status. In Hainan, Jiangsu province, a permit to stay in

cities cost 3,500 to 6,000 yuan in 1993. In the Pearl River Delta, the price tag could be as high as 20,000 to 30,000 yuan for suburban residence and as much as 50,000 yuan for a city permit, or 100,000 yuan if it was paid for by the employer (*Jingji Wanbao*, 22 June 1994, quoted in Davin, 1999:45).

In two of the major destinations for rural-urban migrants — Shanghai and Shenzhen — the "blue chop" household registration system was announced in 1993 and 1995, respectively, after the Ministry of Public Security instituted, nationwide, the "blue stamp" urban *hukou* (Chan and Zhang, 1999). A detailed comparison of the system in the two cities is shown in Table 2. The system adopted in Shanghai and Shenzhen is "more like a migration selection tool adopted by sovereign states in choosing immigrants than a domestic policy" (Wong and Huen, 1998:990). Gaining the blue label does not carry the usual welfare rights of full citizenship, such as food, jobs and housing. Thus, the cities concerned are not ready to reform the *hukou* system by breaking the link between the right of abode and welfare entitlement.

In 1995, the Ministry of Labor enacted a regulation requiring all migrant workers to possess "three certificates and one card" in order to stay in cities legally. These items included an identification certificate and the temporary residence certificate issued by police stations in originating counties and destination cities, respectively, and an employment certificate and employment card issued by labor bureaus of originating counties and destination cities to certify eligibility for employment and proof of employment in the cities (Zhao, 1999:777). The requirement of a residence permit for temporary migrants increased the incidence of corruption by the police, a situation reminiscent of a similar practice in Jakarta in the early 1980s. In any event, according to the Ministry of Public Security, only about 55 percent of the floating population had a residence permit. In Shanghai, only around 580,000 work permits were issued in 1995 out of an estimated working population of 2.8 million (Roberts, 1997:269).

As part of a pilot scheme of comprehensive reforms in small towns and cities, in June 1997 the State Council approved a policy

Table 2 Comparison of the “Blue Chop” Household Registration System in Shanghai and Shenzhen

The system	Shanghai		Shenzhen	
	Two-tiered structure.	“Blue chop” status is awarded in exceptional cases.	Three-tiered structure.	“Blue chop” status is a prerequisite for permanent residency.
Eligibility	Meet either of the following three conditions: 1. Make an investment of at least US\$200,000 or 1,000,000 yuan for more than two years (Article 4). 2. Buy a foreign sale commodity flat with a construction area of above 100 m ² (Article 5). 3. Possess professional skills and make contributions to their enterprises (Article 6).		Meet either of the following four conditions: 1. Be employed in Baoan and Longgang Districts, have a good temporary household registration record, possess professional skills, be age 45 or below and satisfy the specific educational criteria (Article 18). 2. Be employed in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ), have good temporary registration record, be age 40 or below and satisfy the current cadres and workers recruitment requirements (Article 19). 3. For newly registered company, every investment of 1,000,000 yuan fetches one “blue chop” quota (Article 20). 4. Owners of companies in Shenzhen SEZ who have paid taxes of over 100,000 yuan (50,000 yuan in Baoan and Longgang) for 3 consecutive years (Article 21).	
Special types	Occupational “blue chop” household: 1. For Shanghai-based staff of state agencies from other provinces. 2. Cannot transfer to permanent residents.		Flat purchase household registration scheme: 1. Not subject to quota. 2. Only people who buy a commodity flat in Baoan and Longgang can apply (Article 6). 3. Can apply for permanent residency after holding the “blue chop” for one year.	
Entitlements	It is still regarded as temporary registration and holders enjoy the same benefits as permanent residents except for: 1. High school and university education. 2. Political participation. 3. No favored treatment in employment. 4. Ineligible for state housing.		Holders enjoy all of the same benefits as permanent residents except for: 1. Employment: unable to hold state-assigned jobs. 2. Ineligible for state housing.	
Quota	Followed the principle of “policy plus quota” (<i>zhengce jia zhibiao</i>). The municipal public security bureau sets the quota every year.		Based on a point-based grading system in which the municipal government announces the benchmark scores for the award. Total points = Basic points + Bonus points.	
The Flat Purchase Category	From August 1, 1996, people who buy a domestic-sale commodity flat for a minimum of 400,000 yuan measuring 80 m ² can apply for a “blue chop” household.		Buyers of commodity flats measuring 70-100 m ² qualify for three “blue chop” places. Buyers of commodity flats measuring 40-50 m ² qualify for one “blue chop” place.	

Source: Adapted from Wong and Huen (1998).

document from the Ministry of Public Security allowing 450 pilot towns and small cities to grant urban *hukou* for qualified rural *hukou* holders. This is indicative of the continuing efforts of the central administration to come to terms with the ever rising tide of rural migrants. Allowing them to settle in towns and small cities is compatible with the national urbanization policy of encouraging growth at the lower end of the urban hierarchy. Yet local governments are ambivalent about the new policy because they are not allowed to charge entry fees but are still expected to provide the same level of social welfare to the newcomers as to local formal urban *hukou* holders (Chan and Zhang, 1999).

Consequences

There is no doubt that rural-urban migration in China has unleashed huge amounts of human potential that have brought momentous economic and social changes to the country. Some researchers might argue that labor migration has benefited the interior of China as well as the coastal areas because labor efficiency and productivity has increased at both ends of the migration chain. Out-migration and the resulting reduction of surplus labor in the interior has inevitably led to the consolidation of farmland, making agricultural modernization and improved productivity possible. However, other scholars would argue that because of China's special characteristics, migrant laborers tended to contribute more to the well-being of their home communities (Woon, 1999:477). The consequences of migration can be examined at places of origin and destination.

Of the effects on the migration source regions, one of the most tangible and important is the cash contribution made by migrants through remittances or periodic return visits. According to a 1992 survey conducted by the Central Policy Research Office of the State Council covering six provinces with the largest number of inter-provincial migrants (Sichuan, Hunan, Anhui, Hubei, Henan and Jiangxi), the total annual revenue the six provinces received from the savings of the migrants amounted to 27 billion yuan.

Anhui received from its migrants a total of 1.5 billion yuan that year, accounting for more than a quarter of the provincial revenue of 5.51 billion yuan (Chang, 1996:207). Similarly, in 1993, six million migrants left Sichuan province and an estimated 6 to 10 billion yuan in remittances was received through banks and post offices. In 1994, remittances from labor migrants in Sichuan had risen to 15 billion yuan (Xue, 1999).

Many businesses in the migration source areas were owned by returned migrants or by their families. Returned migrants brought back capital, entrepreneurial know-how and contacts to their home villages. Returned migrants had also made economic contributions to their hometowns. According to official reports on Sichuan, 190,000 people came back in 1995, 340,000 in 1996 and more than 400,000 in the first half of 1997. In Fushun County, some 10,000 businesses with a total investment value of 200 million yuan have been set up by such returnees. In 1996, 4 percent of returned migrants in Sichuan had risen to positions of responsibility, and their total output was valued at 330 million yuan (Xue, 1999:15).

As in any migration source area, the process has tended to remove the youngest, most enterprising and best educated of the labor force. In China, too, young adults who remained behind were the least educated and least likely to engage in new initiatives. The population of the source areas became unbalanced, with disproportionate numbers of females, elderly and children (Davin, 1999:95). A comprehensive village study revealed that, after migration, the middle-aged and elderly were left to undertake farming, and in most cases the agricultural labor force was predominantly made up of women (Croll and Huang, 1997:139).

In the destination coastal cities, temporary migrants have provided the much-needed cheap labor to drive urban economic transformation, notwithstanding the severe pressure they also create on basic services (Li and Hu, 1991). They are heavily clustered in the so-called "3-D" (difficult, dangerous and dirty) occupations, which locals shun. Six trades are particularly associated with these migrants: construction, manufacturing, nurse-

maiding, marketing and services, cottage-style garment processing, and begging and scrap collecting (Solinger, 1999:206). These are jobs that can be characterized by long hours, poor working conditions, low and unstable pay and no benefits. The concentration of migrant labor in the construction industry is especially pronounced. For instance, in 1995 Shanghai had a migrant labor force of 1.8 million, of which 1 million worked in construction. Nationwide, only 3 percent of all long-term temporary migrant employees were in professional, cadre, or clerical positions, compared with 24 percent of urban permanent residents. Thus the urban labor market is sharply segmented (Wang and Zuo, 1999).

This segmentation is extended to schooling, housing and other social aspects of life. The children of migrants are likely to spend less time in school and to have inferior healthcare to children of urban residents, or possibly even to children of their area of origin. Data from Beijing showed that only 40 percent of migrant children in the 5 to 14 age group were enrolled in school, compared with 100 percent of local residents' children. In the 0 to 4 age group, 80.2 percent of migrant children had been vaccinated against polio, versus 95 percent of children of local residents (Davin, 1999:106).

Faced with official rejection of their presence in large cities, rural in-migrants struggle to make ends meet. They congregate together to meet their own schooling, housing, employment and other needs. The makings of a thriving informal community are found in many large cities, relying on the newcomers' ingenuity to innovate and make things work. Ethnic villages on the outskirts of Beijing have sprung up in an atmosphere of self-help, with the "Zhejiang Village" and the "Xinjiang Village" being examples of spontaneous reactions by recent immigrants to a hostile social environment. Indeed, these migrants are "peasants in the city" who are establishing their own identity in cities where they are not officially recognized and by making their presence felt, are slowly changing the rules of the game. They are, in a sense, a force in a new civil society.

Implications

Traditionally, China is a nation not known for high levels of internal population mobility. On the contrary, long-held social mores glorified the ideal of returning home rich and dying with one's ancestors — normally, in a village. In this light, the large-scale migration within China during the last two decades of the twentieth century is truly startling and revolutionary, all the more so because the population had been so highly controlled and managed in the preceding three decades. What implications can one draw, therefore, from this account of population movement in China during the reform period?

The emergence of a temporary or floating population estimated to be as large as 90 to 110 million is plainly a matter of national importance that has to be dealt with by planners and decision-makers at every level of the administration. Put simply, one in every 12 Chinese has been on the move within the country recently. The impact on large cities is already immense, for without the support of migrant labor, the urban and coastal transformation would not have been so rapid. Table 3 shows that the increase in the floating population of some of China's largest cities has been continued and rapid. In fact, the experience of the large cities has been seen by some as the forerunner of an even larger wave of rural-urban migration. By some calculations, rural China had a surplus labor of approximately 200 million (Li, 1996:1129). Given China's level of urbanization — only 30 percent at the close of the twentieth century — the potential for continued and rapid urbanization in the years ahead looms large.

The previous pages have highlighted the fact that, along with the introduction of a market economy, the state has loosened its former firm grip on population movements from the rural areas. Strong push factors from the countryside, as well as equally strong pull factors from the cities, have set in motion multitudes of rural migrants trying their luck in the booming cities. Yet when they arrive at their destination, they find rigid rules and a cold reception. Although their efforts and work have made urban life

more diverse, vibrant and interesting, they are not welcomed as permanent citizens. Some migrants have accepted their fate and returned to their villages after their sojourn in the city. However, many have remained and struggle to establish themselves where, under the present rules, they are not permitted. In the current transitional period where markets and citizenship collide, there is effectively a stratification of citizenship in the cities — true citizens, second-class citizens, ersatz citizens (outside the state) and non-citizens (Solinger, 1999:279). The Chinese city in its current state of flux is definitely more complex and fascinating but, for the “floaters,” it is a daily struggle.

The rapidly growing migrant population has placed severe strain on basic services in large Chinese cities. While some source provinces are making information available to promote inter-provincial migration — with the benefits of the consequent cash influx in mind — Guangdong has set up recruiting and information offices in several major source provinces, with “dissuasive ads” appearing in the local press to discourage migration. Stern measures are also being taken by some coastal cities against migrants. Beijing and Shanghai have forbidden migrants from working as taxi drivers, shop attendants, ticket sellers and security guards, and Zhuhai has built a fence 24 miles long and nine feet high to “close” the city (Roberts, 1997). These are examples of the very divergent views source and destination areas hold toward rural-urban migration.

Whatever the regional and rural-urban disparity and their differing stance on internal migration, the fact remains that population movements on the scale and speed at which they have occurred have had the effect of reducing regional income inequality and promoting national integration (Chang, 1996). For a huge country like China, internal migration is as important as policy instruments in achieving these two objectives. All of the policy relaxations on population movements so far have been built on the foundation of the *hukou* system. There is little evidence to suggest that power holders and urban citizens are about to give up what have been their exclusive rights since the

Table 3 The Growth of the Floating Population in Ten Major Cities of China (10,000 people/day)

City	1980	1981	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1992	1994
Shanghai		62	102		183		209			330
Beijing	30	39		90	105	115	131		150	167**
Guangzhou	30		50		80	114	117	130		
Tianjin			29	50	57	86	112			
Wuhan		25	35	50	81			75	120*	
Chongqing		16			48		67			
Chengdu		20	27	35		53		53		
Hangzhou	15		20	30		40		50		
Zhengzhou	8				25	31		37		
Taiyuan	8	10		13	23	26	29	36		

Sources: Li (1994); *Shanghai Star*, March 22, 1994, p. 2, April 15, 1994, p. 1.

Notes: * Refers to the floating population in Wuhan in 1990.

** Estimated data.

pre-reform period. Perhaps only when the market system has further matured, and when rural-urban disparity is further reduced, will the *hukou* system ultimately be abolished. In the foreseeable future, however, “urban China cannot afford to ‘open its borders,’ nor can it do without rural labor that crosses them. The Chinese seem to be walking a very fine line between social control and construction of the urban economy” (Roberts, 1997:281).

International Migration

China’s historic decision to open to the world again in 1978 meant increased trade and contact with foreign countries and, conse-

quently, emigration. Indeed, Chinese emigration on a massive scale dates back to the nineteenth century — a result of internal warfare, population pressure and social dislocation. Millions upon millions left the troubled and weakening country for distant shores, and Hong Kong, Macau and the treaty ports played a critical part in facilitating the exodus. But emigration tended to be highly localized, largely associated with the coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian.

The century between 1850 and 1949 was a period of sustained and large-scale emigration. The discovery of gold in the western United States, western Canada and southern Australia in the 1850s triggered the first outflow, which was to last for the next eight decades. From the 1970s, Singapore and the Malay states became a major destination for large numbers of migrants who were needed in the plantations and mines. Hong Kong became the principal conduit through which most migrants went abroad. Between 1850 and 1939, over 6 million people left China through Hong Kong alone. Before World War II broke out, between 8.5 and 9 million Chinese were already established in closely-knit and growing communities overseas, mostly in Southeast Asia (Skeldon, 1996).

After the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the period from 1950 to 1978 saw controlled or restricted emigration to foreign countries, primarily through Hong Kong and Taiwan, with the main outflow of population, again, through Hong Kong. In the 1950s Hong Kong received an average of 40,000 people a year and in the 1960s, 10,000, accompanied by occasional surges of population out of China, as occurred in 1962. Direct emigration from China to foreign countries was politically unacceptable and hence prohibited, with the nation going through endless political campaigns and in turmoil. The only permitted emigration was, in the 1950s, for students and scholars going to Soviet bloc countries to pursue education and, in the 1970s, for engineers and technicians to assist railway construction in Tanzania. Such limited-purpose emigration did not involve many people. While all was relatively quiet in terms of Chinese

emigration abroad, momentous policy changes were nevertheless occurring in the United States, Canada and Australia. In the 1960s, all of these countries — potential destinations for Chinese migrants — abandoned their long-standing immigration policies, all of which had overt racial overtones and favored white immigrants, and adopted more open and objective policies. This critical change paved the way for rapidly increased immigration to these countries in the subsequent decades (Skeldon, 1996).

Since China's adoption of an open policy in 1978, apart from the sweeping changes in internal migration analyzed earlier, no less important changes have occurred to facilitate international migration. The first important official move was in November 1985, when the Emigration and Immigration Law was adopted guaranteeing the rights of China's citizens to travel outside the country, even for private reasons. The result was a steady stream of emigrants, who can be classified into four categories that are not mutually exclusive: settlers, students, contract laborers and illegal migrants (Skeldon, 1996).

Settler Migrants

As a result of the more liberal immigration policies in the major destination countries, Chinese emigration to North America and Australia has been rapidly increasing since the early 1980s. In the fiscal year 1992-93, some 57,761 people from China entered the United States, a vast increase from the fewer than 80,000 who moved in the period from 1982 to 1987 (Skeldon, 1996). In the fiscal year 1996-97, the number fell to 27,852 and the migrants were destined for Los Angeles (the greatest number), then (in descending order) New York, San Francisco, Chicago and Newark (USINS, 1999). Many of these migrants have been engaged in "step migration," whereby Hong Kong acts as a "stepping stone" to the outside world. This is reflected in the fact that about 70 percent of the 75,000 who entered the United States from Hong Kong during the 1960s had been born in China, whereas in the 1990s, over 60 percent of those admitted from Hong Kong were

born in the British territory. While many Chinese emigrants left to join their families who had established themselves abroad, what is most interesting from the viewpoint of globalization is that many new migrants came from middle class families and qualified to enter certain countries as businessmen and entrepreneurs.

Transnationalism and transmigration involving financial, social and cultural capital are more complex and require new policies to deal with this emerging breed of migrants. Canada, for instance, has the Canadian Business Immigration Program, designed to attract the self-employed, entrepreneurs and investors. By 1985, Hong Kong had already become by some margin the most important origin of business immigrants in Canada. From 1989, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea became the leading countries sending business immigrants (Wong, 1997). Typically, Chinese capitalist transmigrants would do business in their preferred climate of Asia and lead an "astronaut" lifestyle after establishing their families in Canada. Taiwanese businessmen would rather leave their children in Canada, hence the term "parachute kids." The same process is played out in the United States, Australia and New Zealand, which are all preferred countries for Chinese emigrants to settle in. Transnational migrants are participants in global capitalism and have chosen to lead economic, social and cultural lives that are divided between at least two countries. They are the epitome of the citizens of a borderless world.

Student Migrants

Student migrants not only learn new technology and knowledge in a new country, they also transfer these attributes when they return home. If, on the other hand, they remain in their country of study, they often form the nucleus of a chain migration that may bring many of their family members to the adopted country.

With the exception of a limited number of students sent to Communist countries prior to 1978, Chinese students had been cut off from exposure to the West for many decades. The return of

Chinese students to western countries began slowly. In 1978, there were only 28 Chinese students in American universities. However, the tide began to turn strongly over the years. By the early 1990s, China was the leading source of foreign students in the United States, with some 44,360 students, or 10 percent of all foreign students in the academic year 1993-94. The concentration of Chinese postgraduate students in the United States is especially pronounced. Chinese students are also found in large numbers in other countries, such as Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. In Japan, there were over 12,500 students from China at post-secondary institutions, but some might have chosen this route to become migrant labor in an economy with a deficit of labor (Skeldon, 1996).

Student migrants come from a more diverse range of locations. One recent study showed that over a quarter of student migrants originated from Shanghai, followed by Beijing, Fujian and Guangdong. Shanghai and Beijing are centers of academic excellence with their concentration of prestigious universities and research institutes and, as such, are in a better position to send students abroad, especially in postgraduate studies. It is also symptomatic of a recent broadening of the areas from which people migrate, from the traditional areas in southeastern China to the north. And in future, family reunification abroad, where student migrants decide to stay in their destination countries, will lead to more emigration from more areas in China.

One critical question relating to student migrants is whether and when they will return to China. So far, according to official Chinese sources, only about one-third of the 220,000 students from China who have gone overseas have returned, and the proportion returning from the United States is only about one-fifth (Skeldon, 1996). At present, the state of China's development, and the large discrepancy in earnings and in the quality of life between China and the western countries mean there is little temptation for student migrants to return. Moreover, in the aftermath of the Tiananmen events, the governments in North America and Australia made special provisions for Chinese stu-

dents to remain, further augmenting the numbers of Chinese students who remain there.

Contract Laborers

From the nineteenth century, China has been accustomed to sending contract laborers abroad, although indentured labor at that time was different from that of today. Such labor flow can generate income for the country, but the Chinese authorities have not pursued it to the extent of proactively assisting and recruiting labor to go overseas as some other Asian countries have. Considering China's huge population, the potential of contract laborers to meet foreign demands is almost inexhaustible. In any event, the importance of this form of labor flow has increased with China's policy of openness.

The supply of contract laborers to help Tanzania build its railways in the 1970s is one example that has been referred to. More broadly, by 1983, contract laborers abroad totaled 31,000 people, generating some \$31 million. Ten years later, the corresponding figures were 173,000 and \$6.8 billion (Skeldon, 1996). Over the past two decades, Hong Kong and Macau have hired contract laborers to work on their construction programs, such as the Hong Kong International Airport, housing projects and highway construction. Contract laborers in these cases has come primarily from Guangdong. Other construction projects in Japan, Singapore, the Middle East and elsewhere have recruited contract laborers from more diverse areas of China. While the supply of contract laborers to meet foreign demands is important, it is only one of the avenues by which Chinese go abroad.

Illegal Migrants

Illegal Chinese emigration has certainly received rather more attention in the rest of the world. The Golden Venture incident in Manhattan in 1993 and the recent deaths in container-ships on the west coast of the United States have dramatized the plight of these

migrants attempting to smuggle themselves into their dream country. Some sources have estimated that as many as 100,000 people a year were entering the United States illegally from China in the early 1990s (Skeldon, 1996). However, official sources in the United States showed that illegal immigration into that country was exaggerated, with the number of migrants ranging from 3,000 to 5,000 a year (*Seattle Times*, January 16, 2000). China was not even one of the top 20 countries in terms of illegal immigration into the United States.

Illegal emigration has become a lucrative business in China. Through organized international criminal syndicates, a passage out of China to the United States will cost \$45,000 to \$47,000. The route can be extremely circuitous and take several months, going via remote places such as Greenland and Vanuatu. Some 85 to 90 percent of the human cargo originates from Fujian, which has become the largest source of illegal immigrants to the United States (Lintner, 1998). Within Fujian, the influx has come from the Fuzhou area, including people from Changle, Fuqing and Lianjiang who have set their sights on New York's Chinatown. As many as 300,000 to 400,000 legal and illegal immigrants from this region landed on the American east coast between 1979 and 1995 (Wise, 1997; Crispin, 1999). Never before in humankind's history have so many people left in such large numbers in such a short space of time through clandestine means to so distant a destination — a virtual stampede.

One may wonder why so many people have risked their lives to go abroad illegally when life has improved so much in China. Several factors may account for it. Application to emigrate from China is still fraught with complications. Migrants harbor illusionary dreams about life in the United States and other western countries that do not reflect reality. These fantasies are taken advantage of by "snakeheads," who urge them to take the plunge, glossing over the dangers and consequences. Finally, local authorities often turn a blind eye to the exodus, as officials are not above corruption. A recent study found that many peasant families were ready to send their youngest and most capable

members abroad because with the onset of the market economy, they could no longer compete with newer, urban ventures better equipped and supported by foreign investment (Kwong, 1997). With the recent adverse publicity over human cargo smuggling, the authorities in Fujian have stepped up actions to stem the tide. Illegal emigration is reported to have declined markedly in 1998 and 1999.

Illegal Chinese emigrants also head for Australia, Europe, Japan and other destinations which, in their view, offer better prospects for them and their families. They are willing to risk their lives on the dangerous journey and to pay through sweat and tears over many years to discharge the burdensome debt incurred to make the trip. The high drama accompanying illegal emigration continues to be played out while the market economy in China still fails to generate benefits that percolate to the masses.

Conclusion and Discussion

Prior to 1978, China's population symbolized an intriguing paradox. While China had, and still has, the world's largest population, it was also the least mobile. Population was, for the most part, highly stable, with growth stemming primarily from natural increase. The *hukou* system was an extremely efficient mechanism to monitor and manage population, including its movements. The traditional rural-urban, coastal-interior gulf widened further during the three decades of Maoist rule after 1949. Geographical and historical causes that led to the initial disparity were accentuated by institutional and policy factors emanating from the state's desire to control freedom of movement and to ensure the submission of its citizens.

After China's decision to open up and rejoin the community of nations, the move toward a market economy was accompanied by a gradual relaxation of the policy of rigidly tying down rural residents. The agricultural sector began to reveal problems that had been exacerbated by the deepening influence of the market

economy. Some studies reveal agriculture to be the weak link in China's economy. What allowed the peasants to move was the recognition that labor mobility is a logical component of a market economy and can lead to greater equality in the rural and urban sectors. By lessening rural population pressure, migration has contributed to improved farm productivity, narrowed the income gap between the rural and urban sectors and increased interaction between rural and urban, and coastal and interior regions. From this standpoint, rural-urban migration in China has greatly furthered the goal of national integration which, given the country's size and socioeconomic disparities, still has a very long way to go.

Once allowed to leave their rural homes in the early 1980s, peasants were attracted by the traditional dream of seeking their fortune in the cities, a shift given further impetus by deteriorating economic conditions in the countryside. What started as a trickle quickly swelled into a flood. Peasants flocked to the cities, with every size of urban location that had experienced rapid economic transition becoming an obvious target. Large cities in the coastal region are the ultimate destinations, but getting there might entail step-by-step migration. The large and growing number of rural people descending on the cities has been likened, for its suddenness and forcefulness, to a peasant invasion and a tidal wave, and such flows are especially pronounced during the Spring Festival.

The coastal and urban transformation over the past two decades would not have occurred had China not allowed its peasants to leave their rural homes. They have been pushed by relatively unproductive agricultural conditions and pulled by thriving and multiplying economic opportunities. In large coastal cities, the peasant influx has provided an almost inexhaustible supply of cheap labor for construction and a wide range of urban services. However, peasants in the city do not fit into their new environment, since in addition to the predictable problems of economic adjustment and social acculturation, the *hukou* system is a built-in institutional barrier which rural migrants have been unable, on their own, to surmount. Systematically underprivileged, rural migrants constitute a visible and distinct sub-

class, second-class citizens with almost no rights or claims to the welfare and benefits that are taken for granted by permanent urban citizens.

In most of the large coastal cities in China, the presence of large numbers of rural migrants can be seen as a boon as well as a bane. On the one hand, these migrants provide ready and cheap labor to fuel mushrooming construction projects, diversify and enrich urban life, and work in many fields that are avoided by local people. On the other hand, they severely strain basic urban services and add an element of uncertainty to city life, with escalating crime rates and perhaps other manifestations of social disorder. The city invaded by rural migrants is evolving, physically, economically and socially. Although urban planning and official thinking barely take into account non-*hukou* migrants, the migrants make their presence felt by building communities within cities and spontaneous settlements reminiscent of similar developments in other developing countries. Yet in China, migrants and urban citizens are distinguishable as two separate economic and social groups which interact minimally. It is not uncommon to find large coastal cities where "floaters" account for 20 to 30 percent of the population. Thus, they are a force to be reckoned with and, even if they are not accepted as being formally part of the official urban population, simply by being in the city, they represent a powerful agent for change in contemporary urban Chinese life.

There is no question that internal population migration in China is now at its freest and its highest level in the past half century. As China continues in its trajectory of increasing openness, there is a likelihood of even further relaxation. However, the country has to tread a delicate line — upholding the time-tested *hukou* system while allowing gradual relaxation, or total freedom of movement. Taking the latter route would be a recipe for social disorder, since the rural population is huge and its sudden movement to the cities would spell disaster for their management and sustainability. With the further development of the market economy in China, there will be a continued clamor for a freer

flow of capital, skills and labor. This will be in keeping with the spirit of the World Trade Organization, to which China signed up in December 2001.

On the international front, China's emigration over the past two decades has been increasing, but the total numbers are meager in relation to its total population. However, as China continues on its path of economic transition, the growth of settler migrants in certain western countries will increase. International migration in the age of globalization is more complex, as it involves more countries, people and cultures. Capital can move instead of labor, or both can do so.

What should be underlined, perhaps, is that China will have the best chance of attracting its foreign students back home and of holding its population steady as an economically strong nation. Even in the rapidly improving economic conditions of the past decade, illegal emigration still periodically hits the headlines. Any instability in a country as large as China could result in significant outflows of population that could become an international destabilizing factor, which no nation, in an increasingly interdependent world, wishes to witness at any time.

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Internal and International Migration in China under Openness and a Marketizing Economy

Abstract

Since the adoption of the open policy in China in 1978, internal and international migration has taken on a new significance. Within the country, internal migration, previously strictly controlled under the *hukou* (or household registration) system, has witnessed progressive relaxations. This paper attempts, through a review and synthesis of the literature, to present the causes, patterns, dynamics, consequences and implications of internal migration.

International migration from China dating back to the nineteenth century has recently made newspaper headlines because of the exceptional circumstances under which it took place. Contemporary international migration is complex, involving more countries, people, capital and cultures. This paper discusses different migration streams in various categories, namely settler migrants, student migrants, contract laborers and illegal migrants.

This paper concludes on an optimistic note with the observation that, while internal migration is at its freest and most frequent now compared to the past half century, there is room for further relaxation. However, a delicate balance necessarily has to be struck between upholding the *hukou* system and allowing total freedom of population mobility. With regard to international migration, China is likely to participate more actively and in greater numbers as its economic transition further proceeds and globalization continues.

中國在開放政策和市場經濟下的 國內和國際人口遷移

楊汝萬

（中文摘要）

中國自一九七八年推行開放政策以來，國內和國際人口遷移出現了前所未有的重大變化。在國內，曾備受戶口制度嚴格控制的人口遷移，現已漸趨普遍。本文通過檢視和綜合相關的文獻，剖析國內人口遷移的成因、模式、動力、後果和意義。

中國的外向國際人口遷移可遠溯至十九世紀，近期由於特殊情況而出現事故，一再成為頭條新聞。現代的國際人口遷移情況複雜，捲入其中的國家、人士、資金和文化比過往為多。本文討論移民、留學生、合約勞工和非法移民等不同類型的遷移狀況。

和過去半個世紀相比較，國內人口遷移目前是最自由和頻繁，基於此一觀察，本文樂觀地認為此方面的人口遷移有進一步放寬的餘地。但是，在維持戶口制度和容許人口自由遷移之間，有需要取得恰當的平衡。另一方面，在經濟自由化和全球化的浪潮下，中國勢將更加積極參與國際間的人口遷移，移居海外者的數目也會愈益增加。