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The Age of Migration in China

ZAI LIANG

IN THE PAST half-century the People's Republic of China has experienced a number of noteworthy demographic changes. During the 1950s and 1960s life expectancy at birth substantially increased. The 1970s and early 1980s were marked by a sharp decline in fertility. The late 1980s and the 1990s may be characterized as a period of great migration. Today in every major Chinese city migrants are found in many occupations—as taxi drivers, construction workers, restaurant workers, and petty traders in free-market enterprises. Migrants are changing the face of urban China.

For a long time, research on migration and urbanization in China was hampered by a lack of data. Questions on migration were not included in the first three population censuses of the People's Republic: in 1952, 1964, and 1982 (Goldstein and Goldstein 1990; Liang and White 1996). Since 1987, China has conducted several national surveys and censuses that request information on migration. Both the 1987 and 1995 China One Percent Population Sample Surveys included questions on migration, as did the 1988 China 2 per 1,000 Fertility and Birth Control Survey. These data sets allow researchers to analyze Chinese migration patterns using measures that are widely employed in the study of migration in other countries. Data from the various surveys, when used together, can illustrate the changes that occurred during 1982–95, a period when China was moving steadily toward a market-oriented economy.

This article uses data from the 1987 and 1995 China One Percent Population Sample Surveys to describe the patterns of migration during 1982–95. Evidence presented highlights the increasing importance of temporary migration since the late 1980s, as a direct response to the market reforms initiated in the late 1970s. Major patterns emerge in temporary migration; short-distance versus long-distance migration; migration flows among cities, towns, and rural areas; migrant destination choices; and reasons for migration. Finally, the effectiveness of the Chinese government's policy promoting development of small towns—referred to as "urbanization from below"—is assessed.

Market reforms and the erosion of China's household registration system

Since its implementation in the late 1950s, China's household registration system (*hukou*) has been a major determinant of an individual's life chances in China (Cheng and Selden 1994; Wang 1997). *Hukou* governs where one can live and the public benefits to which one is entitled. Until recently, an individual without an urban household registration status could not buy food or get a job in a city. Any individual who wanted to migrate had to obtain permission from local authorities in the place of origin and the place of destination. Under such conditions, it was difficult for an unauthorized migrant to survive in a city. As a result, China's household registration system was a major deterrent to rural-to-urban migration. Even before Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, the expression "one country and two systems" was apt (Wang 1997). An urban household registration status is highly desirable because of the benefits and subsidies it grants (e.g., related to housing, medical services, and access to foods that are difficult to obtain). Rural areas lack such amenities. Similar urban biases are found in other developing countries (Lipton 1977).

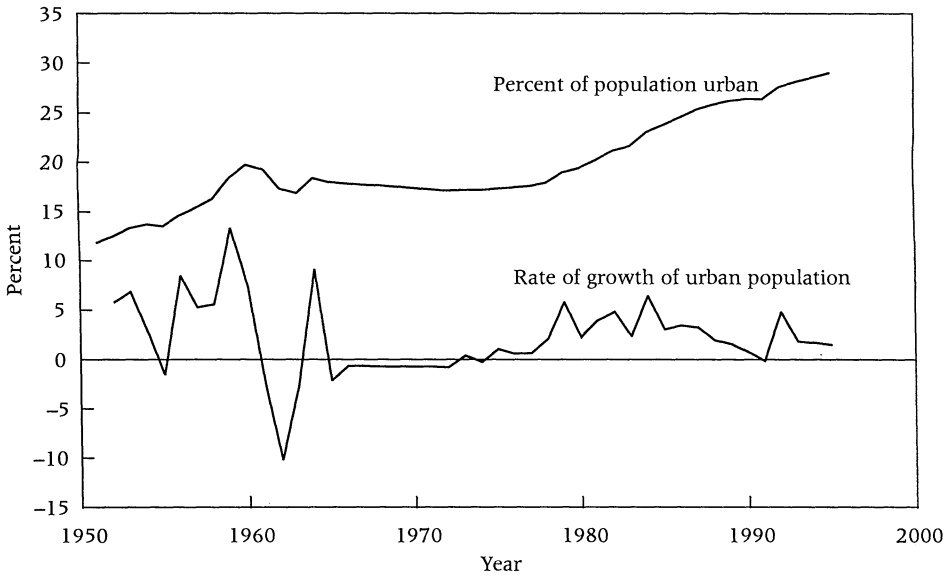
China's household registration system was very effective in stemming the tide of migration from the countryside and keeping the country's urbanization level relatively low. Figure 1 shows the level and rate of urbanization in China during 1951–95. The history of urbanization in the country can be divided into four stages. The first stage (1951–60) was a period of extensive rural-to-urban migration. This period coincides with the first Five-Year Plan (1953–57) and the Great Leap Forward that began in 1958. Following the Soviet model, a disproportionately large investment in heavy industries was made during this time. Peasants rushed to cities to work in booming industries. As a consequence, 20 percent of the population lived in cities by 1960. During much of this period a laissez-faire migration policy facilitated the movement of millions of people into urban centers.

The second period (1961–65) was one of sharp urban retrenchment. By this time, China's leaders had realized that the country's agricultural output would be unable to supply enough grain to sustain the urban population even at the level of 20 percent of the total (130 million in 1960). To reduce the urban population, they sent some 24 million workers, many of whom had originally migrated from rural areas, to the countryside (Chan 1994).

In the third period (1966–77) urbanization levels declined slightly as the rustication movement sent cadres, intellectuals, and young people to the countryside. The proportion of the population living in China's urban areas stabilized at around 17 percent.

The fourth period (1978–95 and apparently beyond) has been a time of substantial and sustained rural-to-urban migration and increasing urbanization. The transformation from former production teams to household

FIGURE 1 Urbanization in China, 1951–95



SOURCES: SSB (1994, 1997).

farming (or the household production responsibility system) has greatly increased agricultural productivity, thus decreasing the need for rural laborers (Li 1996). Other significant changes have also made migration much easier than before. Grain rationing coupons were eliminated and replaced by access to the free market. At the same time, the transition toward a market economy transformed the urban industrial structure and gradually created more employment opportunities in nonstate sectors of the economy. The mushrooming of joint-venture enterprises and other privately owned businesses has created a great demand for migrant workers. By 1991, 39 percent of employees in urban areas were working for non–state-owned work units (SSB 1997). These nonstate enterprises can provide migrant workers with temporary urban resident cards. Even without such cards, migrant workers can live in cities as long as they have the means to support themselves. As a result, migration, often temporary in nature, has increased significantly since the mid-1980s (Li 1996 discusses other factors conducive to migration). This article examines the major features of migration in the 1980s and 1990s.

Data and definitions

As noted above, data used in this article are primarily from the 1987 and 1995 China One Percent Population Sample Surveys. The 1987 survey, con-

ducted with the reference date of 1 July, was the first national sample survey to collect information on migration.[1] All individuals in the sample household were asked whether they had moved any time during the five years prior to the survey (SSB 1988). For interprovincial migrants, the provinces of origin and destination were identified; furthermore, origin and destination were grouped into three categories: city, town, and county (the last referring to rural areas). The reasons for migration were also recorded.

Designed as a mini-census between the 1990 and 2000 censuses, the 1995 China One Percent Population Sample Survey was conducted in October by the State Statistical Bureau of China (CPSSO 1997). With respect to migration, the 1995 survey collected the same information as in 1987, with one exception: information on reasons for migration was not recorded. For this question, I include data from the 1990 China Population Census.

One of the unique features of migration in China is the distinction between temporary and permanent migrants. Permanent migrants are defined as migrants who have obtained permanent household registration status at their place of destination; temporary migrants (often referred to as the floating population) do not have such status.[2] One can further divide temporary migrants into those who hold temporary registration cards and those who do not. This article makes no distinction between the two categories of temporary migrants.

The 1987 and 1995 surveys both define temporary migrants as individuals who do not have permanent household registration status at their place of destination and who have stayed there for at least six months.[3] Of course, the use of a six-month criterion to define a temporary migrant will miss migrants who stayed for a shorter period of time. But the six-month criterion captures those temporary migrants who stayed at their place of destination long enough to have had a social and economic impact. The similarity of definition of temporary migrants in the two surveys permits us to assess the extent of changes over time. One of the sources of confusion in migration studies in China is the different ways of defining and operationalizing the concept of temporary migration. For example, the 1990 Chinese census defines temporary migrants as individuals who do not have permanent household registration status at the place of destination and who had stayed at the place of destination for at least a year. Other surveys (such as the 1994 Beijing Floating Population Sample Survey) define temporary migrants simply as individuals who are present but not registered at the place of destination (Zou 1996).

The rise of temporary migration

Although scholars agree that the number of temporary migrants in China is on the rise, there is little consensus about its magnitude, with estimates varying from 50 million to 90 million. Shen and Tong (1992) used results

from a survey of seven cities in the late 1980s to derive a distribution for duration of residence at place of destination.[4] According to their calculation, 28.7 percent of temporary migrants had stayed at their place of destination for more than a year. Shen and Tong also used 1990 Chinese census data to calculate the number of temporary migrants who had stayed at their place of destination for at least one year. They further assumed that the distribution by duration for all temporary migrants in China would follow the distribution of migrants from the seven-city survey (which presumably covers temporary migration of any duration). On the basis of these assumptions and using data from the 1990 Chinese census, Shen and Tong (1992) estimated China's temporary migrant population to be around 70 million in 1990.

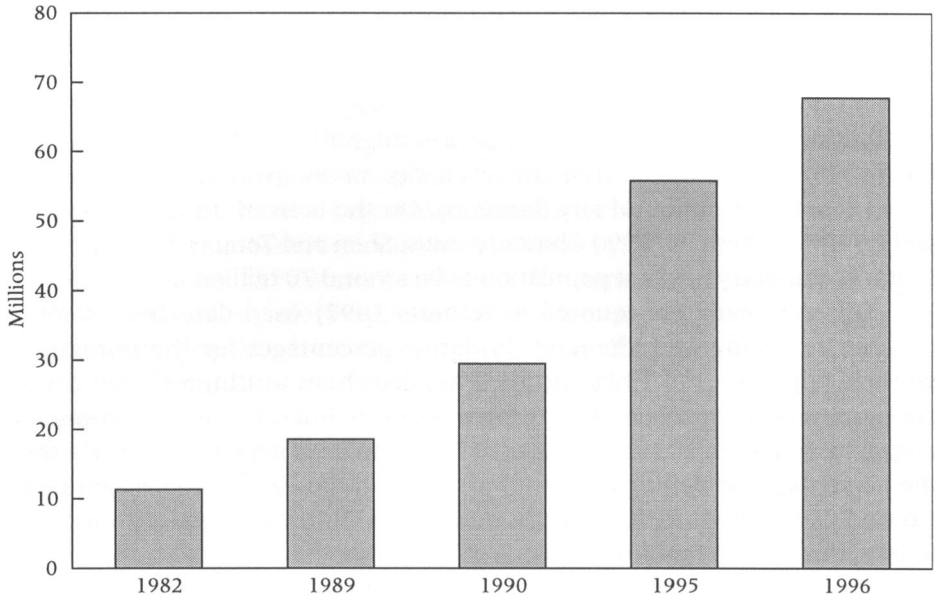
Other researchers (quoted in Roberts 1997) used data from sample surveys in Beijing and Shanghai to derive percentages for the temporary migrant population in 1994 and then applied them to China's 1990 urban population of 290 million. According to these estimates, China's temporary migrant population in 1990 was about 70–90 million, depending on whether the percentage for Beijing or Shanghai is used. Following a similar approach, Gu and Jian (1994) estimated the number of China's temporary migrants to be around 50–60 million in the late 1980s.

These estimates rest on some potentially problematic assumptions. For example, Shen and Tong's seven-city survey was conducted in three separate years (Guangzhou in 1990, Shanghai in 1988, and the other cities in 1989). One should note that the distribution of duration of residence for temporary migrants throughout China may not follow the distribution of duration of residence for temporary migrants derived from the seven-city survey. One can also question the extent to which these seven cities represent the several hundreds of Chinese cities.

From several nationally representative surveys and censuses, Figure 2 shows the stock of the temporary migrant population in 1982, 1989, 1990, 1995, and 1996.[5] In 1982, only 11 million temporary migrants were recorded. In the seven-year period from 1982 to 1989 the temporary migrant population increased by 7 million, or roughly one million per year. Then, in just one year (from 1989 to 1990), China's temporary migrant population increased by 11 million (almost 60 percent). The momentum accelerated in the 1990s. Results from the 1995 China One Percent Sample Survey show that there were 56 million temporary migrants in that year.[6] In 1996, the temporary migrant population increased to 68 million.

Table 1 lists the total number of temporary migrants in each province or municipality as of 1995. Beijing had almost 2 million temporary migrants and Shanghai had 1.7 million. The coastal provinces also had large numbers of temporary migrants (Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong, and Guangdong). Guangdong has the largest temporary migrant population (7 million) of all provinces, accounting for nearly 13 percent of the total temporary migrant population. During the recent period of economic transition, Guangdong

FIGURE 2 Estimated size of the temporary migrant population, China, 1982–96



SOURCES: SSB (1991, 1997); CPSSO (1997).

has been China's flagship province for economic development: three of the first four special economic zones (Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shantou) are located in Guangdong. Since 1978, the province has enjoyed an economic boom associated with its proximity to Hong Kong and the influx of foreign investors (Liang 1999). Examination of China's 1990 Population Census also showed that two of the largest interprovincial migration streams during 1985–90 headed to Guangdong (Poston and Mao 1998).

The extent to which temporary migrants have affected the local economy can be seen in the proportion of the population of a province composed of temporary migrants (see third column in Table 1). Beijing's temporary migrants accounted for about 15 percent of its total population in 1995. Shen and Tong (1992) reported that temporary migrants accounted for 13 percent of Beijing's resident population in 1988. Not surprisingly, Shanghai had the second highest percentage, 12 percent. As the largest metropolis in China, and particularly because of development in the Pudong area (east of the Huangpu river) since the early 1990s, Shanghai provides significant opportunities for migrant workers. Ironically, Beijing and Shanghai are two of the Chinese cities in which the government has sought to exert the tightest control seeking to moderate the influx of temporary migrants.

TABLE 1 Size and distribution of the temporary migrant population by province, China, 1995

Province	Total population (000)	Number of temporary migrants (000)	Percent of total population in province	Percent of all temporary migrants in China
North				
Beijing	12,901	1,891	14.7	3.4
Tianjin	9,704	1,033	10.6	1.9
Hebei	66,216	1,866	2.8	3.3
Shanxi	31,649	1,482	4.7	2.7
Inner Mongolia	23,492	1,746	7.4	3.1
Northeast				
Liaoning	42,137	2,241	5.3	4.0
Jilin	26,689	1,494	5.6	2.7
Heilongjiang	38,094	2,411	6.3	4.3
East				
Shanghai	14,582	1,704	11.7	3.1
Jiangsu	72,733	5,180	7.1	9.3
Zhejiang	44,467	2,323	5.2	4.2
Anhui	61,844	1,497	2.4	2.7
Fujian	33,289	1,925	5.8	3.5
Jiangxi	41,734	1,723	4.1	3.1
Shandong	89,625	3,191	3.6	5.7
Central and south				
Henan	93,544	1,742	1.9	3.1
Hubei	59,358	2,206	3.7	4.0
Hunan	65,865	1,892	2.9	3.4
Guangdong	70,516	7,075	10.0	12.7
Guangxi	46,684	993	2.1	1.8
Hainan	7,425	332	4.5	0.6
Southwest				
Sichuan	116,334	4,084	3.5	7.3
Guizhou	36,042	969	2.7	1.7
Yunnan	40,951	1,364	3.3	2.4
Tibet	2,465	70	2.8	0.1
Northwest				
Shannxi	36,093	1,003	2.8	1.8
Gansu	25,018	832	3.3	1.5
Qinghai	4,940	315	6.4	0.6
Ningxia	5,249	279	5.3	0.5
Xinjiang	17,057	920	5.4	1.6
China	1,236,697	55,785	4.5	100.0

SOURCES: CPSSO (1997): Table 7-1, pp. 538–539.

Several of China's coastal provinces (Liaoning, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong) have high proportions of temporary migrants. Guangdong again stands out: in 1995 10 percent of its total population was composed of temporary migrants. As many observers have noted, China's coastal provinces are the most dynamic economic regions in the country (Yang 1991). The flow of the temporary migrant population follows China's economic development strategy. In 1984, five years after the opening of four special economic zones, 14 coastal cities were designated as open development zones and granted the favor of special policies, such as tax incentives for joint-venture enterprises.

Although the spatial concentration of temporary migrants in large cities and coastal provinces has long been recognized, often overlooked are the substantial numbers of temporary migrants in nearly every province of China. For example, Sichuan, China's most populous province, had 4 million temporary migrants as of 1995. The northeast provinces of Liaoning and Heilongjiang both had over 2 million such migrants. Even some of China's remote provinces are attracting temporary migrants. In the northwest provinces of Qinghai, Ningxia, and Xinjiang, the latter two largely Muslim, temporary migrants constituted more than 5 percent of the resident population in 1995. In percentage terms this is higher than in some coastal provinces, such as Shandong, which has a much larger absolute number of temporary migrants.

The last column of Table 1 gives the share of temporary migrants for each province as a proportion of the total for the country as a whole. Again, in 1995 Guangdong had the largest share of China's temporary migrants (13 percent) and Jiangsu ranked second (9 percent). Although the proportions of temporary migrants in Beijing and Shanghai were large relative to their resident populations, they did not account for a high proportional share of the national temporary migrant population.

Short-distance versus long-distance migration

Some idea of the distances covered by migrants can be obtained by distinguishing migrants by origin—that is, whether their migration was interprovincial or intraprovincial, since the former is likely to have involved longer distances. In the rest of this article our analysis of migration patterns covers only migrants who moved anytime during the five-year period prior to either survey. This also means that we include both temporary and permanent migrants as they are defined in the 1987 and 1995 surveys. Table 2 gives the estimated size of the migrant population in 1987 and 1995, whether temporary or not, and the percentages within the total.[7] The modest increase in the size of the migrant population (both interprovincial and intraprovincial) from 30.5 million in 1987 to 33.2 million in 1995 masks the changes that have taken place, given the large increase in the number

TABLE 2 Size of the migrant population and distribution of intraprovincial and interprovincial migrants by province, China, 1987 and 1995

Province	1987			1995		
	Total (000)	Percent intra-provincial	Percent inter-provincial	Total (000)	Percent intra-provincial	Percent inter-provincial
North						
Beijing	866	62.1	37.9	1,340	48.2	51.8
Tianjin	174	23.3	76.7	490	54.4	45.6
Hebei	1,536	61.3	38.7	1,339	62.4	37.6
Shanxi	946	82.6	17.4	478	66.9	33.1
Inner Mongolia	737	77.2	22.8	932	70.5	29.5
Northeast						
Liaoning	1,286	75.6	24.4	1,601	72.8	27.2
Jilin	1,093	84.5	15.5	770	80.6	19.4
Heilongjiang	1,060	82.0	18.0	1,288	82.6	17.4
East						
Shanghai	649	42.1	57.9	1,689	57.0	43.0
Jiangsu	1,823	73.8	26.2	3,038	68.1	31.9
Zhejiang	914	86.4	13.6	1,218	61.8	38.2
Anhui	1,022	83.8	16.2	717	78.3	21.7
Fujian	544	83.4	16.6	996	65.4	34.6
Jiangxi	632	84.1	15.9	607	79.3	20.7
Shandong	2,061	73.4	26.6	1,941	72.8	27.2
Central and south						
Henan	1,159	77.2	22.8	1,030	73.8	26.2
Hubei	1,890	85.5	14.5	1,070	74.7	25.3
Hunan	1,438	84.9	15.1	1,213	82.3	17.7
Guangdong	2,536	88.0	12.0	4,090	52.4	47.6
Guangxi	730	91.9	8.1	925	87.0	13.0
Hainan	NA	NA	NA	232	55.2	44.8
Southwest						
Sichuan	3,677	89.4	10.6	2,367	83.3	17.0
Guizhou	667	82.9	17.1	564	73.0	27.0
Yunnan	747	85.9	14.1	836	75.3	24.7
Tibet	NA	NA	NA	70	48.8	51.2
Northwest						
Shannxi	1,010	77.7	22.3	694	76.5	23.5
Gansu	469	81.3	18.7	547	74.5	25.5
Qinghai	90	68.1	31.9	188	72.7	27.3
Ningxia	182	49.8	50.2	118	58.5	41.5
Xinjiang	557	63.7	36.3	845	33.0	67.0
China	30,533	79.3	20.7	33,230	67.9	32.1

NOTE: Data for Hainan and Tibet in 1987 are not available.
SOURCES: 1987 and 1995 China One Percent Population Sample Surveys.

of temporary migrants between 1982 and 1995. One can deduce from the data that there were many more intraprovincial than interprovincial migrants during both periods. By definition, interprovincial migration involves crossing province boundaries and often traveling long distances; therefore the cost of migration is likely to be higher than that involved in intraprovincial migration. The most notable change between the two surveys is the 68 percent increase in the numbers of interprovincial migrants, from 6.3 million in 1987 to 10.7 million in 1995. The number of intraprovincial migrants changed only slightly over the period, declining from 24.2 million to 22.6 million. For China as a whole, the number of interprovincial migrants as a proportion of all migrants increased from 21 percent in 1987 to 32 percent in 1995. This increase is partly the result of increasing interregional inequality in economic opportunities during this period. Regions with greater access to markets developed faster than other regions (Nee 1989). Indeed, on the basis of household surveys in China in 1988 and 1995, Khan and Riskin (1998) showed that interregional income inequality had increased markedly.

Of the 28 provinces (which account for 99 percent of the population of China) for which we have data,[8] 22 provinces (or municipalities) experienced increases in the percentage share of interprovincial migrants between the two surveys.[9] Among these provinces, Beijing, Shanxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, and Xinjiang exhibit particularly striking patterns of change. In Guangdong and Xinjiang, the proportions of interprovincial migrants as a percent of all migrants increased by 36 and 31 percentage points, respectively, as shown by comparing the 1995 survey with the survey of 1987. In the other four provinces (municipality in the case of Beijing), the corresponding increases ranged from 16 percentage points (Shanxi) to 25 percentage points (Zhejiang). That these coastal provinces saw large increases in the numbers of interprovincial migrants conforms to expectations, but the fact that more interprovincial migrants were registered in the northwest province of Xinjiang (565,800 in 1995 compared with 202,000 in earlier period) may be considered surprising. The largest numbers of migrants in Xinjiang originate from Sichuan province in the southwest. A recent report suggests that as many as 400,000 migrant workers, most of them from Sichuan province, travel to Xinjiang each year to pick cotton during the harvest season (Mer 1998). Many migrants also work in the mining industry in Xinjiang.

Answers to the questions of who participated in intraprovincial and interprovincial migration and whether there were any changes between the two time periods can be given through a two-step process. First, the distribution of places of origin by type of migrants (top panel in Table 3) suggests who contributed to the intraprovincial and interprovincial migration streams and whether the patterns have changed over time. Second, the distribution of types of migrants by place of origin (bottom panel in Table 3) shows

TABLE 3 Percent distribution of the intraprovincial and interprovincial migrant populations by place of origin and percent distribution of the total migrant population classified by place of origin between intra- and interprovincial migrants, China, 1987 and 1995

	1987			1995		
Place of origin	Intra-provincial migrants	Inter-provincial migrants		Intra-provincial migrants	Inter-provincial migrants	
City	13.5	35.4		36.5	19.0	
Town	16.4	4.9		10.0	7.8	
Rural	70.1	59.8		53.4	73.2	
Total (percent)	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0	
	1987			1995		
Place of origin	Intra-provincial migrants	Inter-provincial migrants	Total	Intra-provincial migrants	Inter-provincial migrants	Total
City	59.4	40.6	100.0	80.3	19.7	100.0
Town	92.8	7.2	100.0	73.4	26.7	100.0
Rural	81.8	18.2	100.0	60.7	39.3	100.0
Total (000)	24,221	6,312		22,569	10,661	

NOTE: Percent totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCES: 1987 and 1995 China One Percent Population Sample Surveys.

changes in the share of type of migrants (intraprovincial vs. interprovincial) for city, town, and rural residents. Although the top panel suggests that rural-origin migrants play the most important role in both interprovincial and intraprovincial migration flows, an interesting pattern emerges over time. In 1987, 70 percent of the intraprovincial migrant population was found to be of rural origin; however, this dominance dissipated over time, with only a little more than half being of rural origin by 1995. Migrants of city origin were more likely to join the wave of intraprovincial migration during the early 1990s than they were during the mid-1980s.

A different pattern characterizes interprovincial migration. According to the 1987 survey, interprovincial migrants disproportionately came from urban areas (cities and towns). Although the urban population was 25 percent of China's total population in 1987, persons from urban areas (cities and towns) accounted for some 40 percent of interprovincial migrants in 1987. The high share of migrants of urban origin reflects China's continuing rural/urban divide. The urban Chinese not only enjoy special privileges associated with urban household registration status; they also have a higher degree of freedom to move. It is usually easier for migrants of urban origin to obtain household registration status at a place of destination than for

migrants of rural origin (Zhang 1994: 242). Given the higher costs associated with migration across province boundaries and the fact that per capita income in urban China is much higher than in rural China, migrants of urban origin are more likely to be able to afford migration from one province to another.

By 1995, nevertheless, migrants of rural origin were more heavily represented among interprovincial migrants. The decrease in the share of intraprovincial migrants of rural origin seems to be compensated in part by their greater participation in interprovincial migration (signaled by an increase from about 60 percent of the total interprovincial migrants in 1987 to 73 percent in 1995). The growing importance of rural populations in the stream of interprovincial migration is corroborated by findings in the bottom panel of Table 3. For example, in 1987 only 18 percent of migrants of rural origin were interprovincial migrants. By contrast, in 1995 the corresponding figure has more than doubled, to 39 percent.

This change suggests that China's household registration system presented less of a hurdle for rural migrants in the early 1990s than it did in the mid-1980s. Although official regulations concerning the household registration system remain in place, the authorities have found it almost impossible to strictly enforce the system. For example, it has become very easy to obtain local temporary registration cards, especially for employees of emerging urban enterprises. Migrant workers can work for joint-venture enterprises for as long as five years while in temporary resident status. Even when their temporary registration card expires, individuals can readily find new employment, thereby maintaining continuous temporary residence status. Additionally, food is widely available in the free market, and housing, if not provided by employers, can be arranged. In short, migrants can survive at their places of destination without much difficulty.

The social nature of the migration process also facilitates interprovincial migration and sustains its momentum (Massey and Espinosa 1997). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, migrants from certain provinces began to establish "ethnic enclaves" in particular labor markets (Ma and Xiang 1998).[10] This creation of a niche in many ways secures the continuing flow of migrants from certain provinces and makes it increasingly difficult to enforce household registration. Thus, even if some individuals fail to obtain temporary local household registration cards, they can manage to get a job through migrant networks—perhaps working as a household servant (as do many migrant women from Anhui province) or working in a restaurant or clothing shop for someone who comes from the same province.

Table 3 also implies that migrants from urban areas were more numerous than in previous years, especially for intraprovincial migrants. The mass media present the misleading impression that migrants come only from rural areas. The active participation of China's urban population in the wave

of migration, both interprovincial and intraprovincial, has gone largely unnoticed. The occupational distributions for rural and urban migrants may well be different, but urban dwellers actually have a higher propensity to migrate than rural dwellers.[11]

Intersectoral migration flows and "urbanization from below"?

Despite the continuing flow of migrants both interprovincially and intraprovincially, China's official urbanization policy remains "to strictly control the growth of the large cities, to rationally develop the medium-size cities, and to vigorously promote the growth of the small cities and towns" (*Renmin Ribao*, 16 October 1986; quoted in Ma and Lin 1993). Implicit in this policy are the assumptions that cities, especially large cities, have a limited capacity to receive migrants and that a large increase in the migrant population will result in crowded housing conditions, congestion, and perhaps social unrest, as has been the case for cities in many other developing countries.

Since its implementation in 1979, however, the household responsibility system in rural China has improved the efficiency of agricultural production and resulted in millions of surplus workers in rural areas (Johnson 1988; Lin 1988). Recent estimates indicate that there may be as many as 130 million surplus rural workers. Based on the rural population enumerated in the 1990 Population Census, this represents about 15 percent of China's rural labor force (SSB 1991). The estimated number of surplus rural workers was expected to climb as high as 200 million by the year 2000 (*Renmin Ribao*, 12 July 1995).

To avoid the urban problems experienced by some rapidly developing countries, Chinese policymakers and some scholars have advocated a general policy of "leaving the land, but not the rural areas." One concrete step toward implementing this policy is to encourage the establishment of rural enterprises in small towns so that rural migrants can work there instead of moving to cities (Duan, Wei, and Shan 1997). Using Guangdong as a case study, Ma and Lin documented major growth in the number of towns and their populations in the mid-1980s. Further, they argued that "[i]f this policy and the current pattern of town growth are allowed to continue for an extended time, the towns may form a second track of 'urbanization from below' to complement the dominant city-based track of 'urbanization from above'" (Ma and Lin 1993: 603).

The prospect of "urbanization from below" has both theoretical and policy implications. Because the survey used in Ma and Lin's study was completed in 1987, we have an opportunity to examine the extent to which urbanization from below occurred in China during 1982–95. If their thesis holds, the importance of towns as migrant destinations should increase over

time. Table 4 shows the percentages of the intersectoral migrant population according to origin and destination, by city, town, and rural location. The top panel (for cities) shows the distribution of the migrant population by these criteria. For example, among migrants in cities in 1987, 29 percent originated from cities and 62 percent from rural areas. Among migrants who originated from cities, as of 1987 60 percent were residing in cities and 14 percent in rural areas. Several patterns emerge from an examination of Table 4.

First, there has been a major drop in migration to towns whether from cities, towns, or rural areas. The share of city-to-town migrants declined from 26 percent in 1987 to about 9 percent in 1995 (right-hand side of the top panel), and the share of town-to-town migrants declined from 50 percent in 1987 to 19 percent in 1995. The largest drop is in the share of rural-to-town migrants. According to the 1987 survey, 41 percent of migrants originating from rural areas were living in towns; by 1995, however, the corresponding figure had declined to 9 percent. This finding is corroborated by migration patterns to towns. In 1995, 56 percent of the migrant population living in towns were from rural areas, compared to 71 percent in 1987 (left-hand side of middle panel). Where did rural migrants go in the 1990s? The lower panel of Table 4 shows that they moved increasingly to cities and other rural areas. For instance, according to the 1987 survey, 33 percent of migrants originating from rural areas were living in cities; that proportion increased to about 51 percent in 1995.

TABLE 4 Percent distribution of the intersectoral migrant population according to place of origin and destination, China, 1987 and 1995

Period	Migrants in cities originating from				Migrants originating from cities living in			
	Cities	Towns	Rural areas	Total	Cities	Towns	Rural areas	Total
1987	29.4	9.0	61.6	100.0	59.9	26.1	14.0	100.0
1995	40.6	10.0	49.5	100.0	80.6	8.7	10.7	100.0
	Migrants in towns originating from				**Migrants originating from towns living in**			
	Cities	**Towns**	**Rural areas**	**Total**	**Cities**	**Towns**	**Rural areas**	**Total**
1987	11.8	17.6	70.6	100.0	23.6	49.8	26.6	100.0
1995	26.8	17.6	55.6	100.0	65.6	18.8	15.6	100.0
	Migrants in rural areas originating from				**Migrants originating from rural areas living in**			
	Cities	**Towns**	**Rural areas**	**Total**	**Cities**	**Towns**	**Rural areas**	**Total**
1987	10.7	15.8	73.7	100.0	33.2	41.2	25.6	100.0
1995	11.6	5.1	83.3	100.0	50.8	9.3	39.8	100.0

NOTE: Percent totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCES: 1987 and 1995 China One Percent Population Sample Surveys.

What are the net results of this exchange of in-migration and out-migration for cities and towns? To answer this question, I conducted an analysis of changes in origin and destination between 1982 and 1995 and results are summarized in the Appendix Table. This exercise was done separately for the two time periods: 1982–87 (from Goldstein 1990) and 1990–95. For each time period, the top panel shows the estimated size of the migrant population according to origin and current place of residence. Net migration is derived from the top panel. For example, for the time period of 1990–95, there were 10.096 million migrants who moved from rural areas to cities and there were 1.098 million migrants who moved from cities to rural areas. Thus the net migration from rural areas to cities is 8.998 (10.096 – 1.098) million (see lower part of the panel for period 1990–95). According to the Appendix Table, cities showed a net gain of 5.8 million migrants and towns had a net gain of 7.2 million migrants during 1982–87. In contrast, during 1990–95 cities had net gain of 10.1 million migrants; towns had a net gain of less than a quarter-million migrants. Towns have been clearly losing the contest of attracting rural migrants. In sum, although migration to towns continued in the 1990s, their importance as migrant destinations has declined over time, a circumstance that undermines the thesis of "urbanization from below".[12]

A second pattern that emerges in Table 4 is the increase in city-to-city and town-to-city migration. According to the 1987 survey, 24 percent of migrants originating from towns were living in cities; by 1995, the figure jumped to 66 percent. Similarly, according to the 1995 survey, 81 percent of migrants originating from cities were living in other cities, as compared to 60 percent according to the 1987 survey. Overall, people in the early 1990s, regardless of their place of origin, were more likely than in the mid-1980s to select cities as their destination.

Among migrants to cities in 1995, 41 percent were from other cities; the corresponding figure for 1987 was 29 percent. A significant increase is also found in the share of migrants moving from cities to towns. Among migrants to towns in 1995, 27 percent were from cities, as compared to only 12 percent in 1987. The share of the city-origin population also increased slightly among the migrants to rural areas. Other evidence indicates that migrants from cities to towns and rural areas are often temporary. This suggests that migrants from cities to towns and rural areas are likely to be technical personnel, hired by industries in those places (Yang 1994).

Finally, the data in Table 4 indicate that during the periods considered, rural areas became less attractive as destinations for urban migrants, while they became more attractive for migrants from other rural locations. According to the 1987 survey, 14 percent of migrants originating from cities were living in rural areas; in 1995 the figure declined to 11 percent. The

share of migrants to rural areas from towns experienced an even sharper decline from 27 percent to 16 percent. Somewhat surprisingly, in 1995, 40 percent of migrants in rural areas originated from other rural areas, representing about a 14 percentage point increase compared to the corresponding share in 1987. This phenomenon, relatively new in China, suggests a novel type of migration pattern. Rural migrants from certain provinces are migrating to cities but holding onto their land in case their expectations are not realized.[13] As they attempt to establish themselves in the cities, they may hire migrants from other rural areas to plant and harvest certain crops on the rural land they have retained (Du and Bai 1997: 177; Huang 1997).[14] The main choices of destinations for migrants from rural areas seem to be cities or other rural areas, but not towns.

The uneven distribution of population and economic development in China is well known. The most densely populated provinces, with population densities reaching as high as 372 persons per square km in 1982, lie in the coastal regions in the east (Zhu 1994). In the rest of this section, I examine changes in destination patterns of interprovincial migrants during 1982–95.

Table 5 shows the migrants in each province as a percentage of the interprovincial migrant population in 1987 and 1995. In 1987, the top three destination provinces for interprovincial migrants, all located in the coastal region, are Hebei (9.4 percent), Shandong (8.7 percent), and Jiangsu (7.6 percent). Capitalizing on the advantaged geographic position of a shared boundary with Shanghai, Jiangsu had a head start in the initial stages of economic reforms. All three provinces enjoyed very strong economic growth during this period. For instance, from 1978 to 1988 per capita income in rural areas increased by almost 200 percent in Jiangsu province and by 252 percent in Hebei.[15]

By 1995 the most important destination province was Guangdong. With only 6 percent of China's population, Guangdong was home to about 18 percent of China's interprovincial migrants.[16]

Table 6 aggregates China's provinces into six regions to illustrate the broad geographic distribution of interprovincial migrants in 1987 and 1995. Among China's six administrative regions, two gained interprovincial migrants in 1995 as compared to 1987: the East and Central and south. The Central and south region's gain is primarily attributable to Guangdong. Another way to classify migrants is by location in the coastal and the noncoastal regions.[17] This classification is meaningful because of the dynamic economic development in the coastal regions, which contain about 40 percent of China's population. In 1987, 53 percent of China's interprovincial migrants were found in coastal provinces. This figure had increased more than 10 percentage points by 1995, when 66 percent were so located.[18]

TABLE 5 Interprovincial migrants in a province as percent of all interprovincial migrants in China, 1987 and 1995

Province	1987		1995	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
North				
Beijing	328	5.2	695	6.5
Tianjin	134	2.1	223	2.1
Hebei	594	9.4	503	4.7
Shanxi	165	2.6	158	1.5
Inner Mongolia	168	2.7	275	2.6
Northeast				
Liaoning	314	5.0	435	4.1
Jilin	169	2.7	150	1.4
Heilongjiang	191	3.0	224	2.1
East				
Shanghai	376	6.0	727	6.8
Jiangsu	477	7.6	969	9.1
Zhejiang	124	2.0	465	4.4
Anhui	166	2.6	156	1.5
Fujian	90	1.4	344	3.2
Jiangxi	101	1.6	126	1.2
Shandong	548	8.7	527	4.9
Central and south				
Henan	264	4.2	270	2.5
Hubei	274	4.3	271	2.5
Hunan	217	3.4	215	2.0
Guangdong	305	4.8	1,947	18.3
Guangxi	59	0.9	120	1.1
Hainan	NA	NA	104	1.0
Southwest				
Sichuan	388	6.1	395	3.7
Guizhou	114	1.8	152	1.4
Yunnan	106	1.7	207	1.9
Tibet	NA	NA	36	0.3
Northwest				
Shannxi	225	3.6	163	1.5
Gansu	93	1.5	140	1.3
Qinghai	29	0.5	52	0.5
Ningxia	92	1.4	49	0.5
Xinjiang	202	3.2	566	5.3
China	6,312	100.0	10,661	100.0

NOTE: Data for Hainan and Tibet in 1987 are not available.
SOURCES: 1987 data from SSB (1988): Table 1-22, pp. 23–24; 1995 data from SSB (1997): Table 7-2, pp. 540–541.

TABLE 6 Interprovincial migrants in a geographic region as percent of all interprovincial migrants in China, 1987 and 1995

Region	1987		1995	
	Number (000)	Percent	Number (000)	Percent
North	1,389	22.0	1,854	17.4
Northeast	674	10.7	810	7.6
East	1,882	29.8	3,313	31.1
Central and south	1,119	17.7	2,926	27.4
Southwest	608	9.6	789	7.4
Northwest	640	10.1	969	9.1
China	6,312	100.0	10,661	100.0

NOTE: Percent totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCES: 1987 data from SSB (1988): Table 1-22, pp. 23–24; 1995 data from SSB (1997): Table 7-2, pp. 540–541.

Reasons for migration

The 1987 China One Percent Population Sample Survey includes information on reasons for migration. Although the question was dropped from the 1995 sample survey, China's 1990 Population Census also asked migrants about reasons for moving. In this section, I use data from the 1987 survey and the 1990 census to indicate changes over time in reasons for migration. The identical response categories used in both data sets make this comparison possible.

Table 7 gives reasons for migration as reported in 1987 and 1990, distinguishing whether migration was intraprovincial or interprovincial. In 1987 28 percent of migrants stated that they moved because of marriage and 16 percent because they were dependents of migrants. In other words, family reunification accounted for 44 percent of China's migrant population at this date. This is consistent with steps taken in 1980 to relax policies regarding movement of couples who have long lived in separate locations (Wang 1997; Zhang 1994: 248). The pattern, however, differs by type of migration. Marriage-related migration occurred much more frequently among intraprovincial migrants. This is especially true for women, a finding that is common in other countries (Skeldon 1986). For interprovincial migrants, the most common reason was job transfer (20 percent), which often results in a permanent move with secured household registration status at the place of destination. Fewer than 10 percent of all migrants reported business or factory work as reasons for migration. Given the fact that people who engage in such work are most likely to be temporary migrants, the small percentage suggests that temporary migration was not yet at center stage in 1987.

In the 1990 census, a new pattern emerges. Migrants who reported having moved because of business or factory work became the largest group (24

TABLE 7 Reasons for migration by type of migration, reported by migrants, 1987 and 1990

Reason	1987			1990		
	Intra-provincial migration	Inter-provincial migration	Total	Intra-provincial migration	Inter-provincial migration	Total
Job transfer	11.4	19.9	13.2	10.0	14.6	11.5
Job assignment	6.6	5.3	6.3	6.5	4.7	5.9
Business or factory work	9.3	9.6	9.3	22.0	29.4	24.4
Education or job training	8.0	9.0	8.2	15.3	7.8	12.9
Live with friends/relative	8.8	13.4	9.8	9.5	10.6	9.9
Retirement	2.2	2.5	2.3	1.6	1.5	1.6
Dependents of migrants	15.0	18.7	15.8	10.2	10.8	10.4
Marriage	30.8	15.5	27.7	14.3	14.2	14.3
Other	7.9	6.2	7.6	10.6	6.5	9.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

NOTE: Percent totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.
SOURCES: 1987 China One Percent Population Sample Survey and 1990 China Population Census.

percent); among interprovincial migrants, the figure approached 30 percent. Nearly half of interprovincial migrants cited a work-related reason for moving (job transfer, job assignment, and business or factory work). This change clearly indicates that migration was more likely to be a response to economic opportunities in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Although we do not have identical information for the 1995 survey, the fact that a large volume of temporary migration was recorded in that survey suggests that this job-related pattern of migration should hold for the mid-1990s as well.

Discussion and conclusions

Clearly, temporary migration in China is on the rise. Even by conservative estimates there were 68 million temporary migrants in China in 1996. That figure represents only those temporary migrants who have resided at the place of destination for six months or more; with a shorter time reference the number would of course be higher. The rise of temporary migration is, in large measure, the result of China's transition to a market-oriented economy and the continuing legacy of the household registration system. Although the magnitude of China's temporary migrant population may fluctuate over time, policymakers must realize that temporary migration (and migration in general) will be an important feature of China's ongoing transition to a market economy. In fact, the size of the migrant population is likely to continue rising—in light of projections that the surplus agricultural labor force will approach 150–200 million early in the twenty-first

century and in response to the formation of migrant networks linking origin and destination communities. Findings from a national survey place the total number of temporary migrants at 69.3 million in 1997, an increase of more than one million since 1996 (SSB 1998).[19]

Other distinct migration patterns are evident in this analysis. Over time, migration increasingly involves long distances and the crossing of province boundaries. Migrants from rural origins increasingly choose cities as destinations; there is no sign that this trend will abate in the near future. Interprovincial migrants continue to move to coastal provinces in large numbers. Migration is more and more driven by individuals seeking to engage in business and factory work. It is not an exaggeration to call this the age of migration in China.

The massive scope of migration in the 1990s is unprecedented in the 50-year history of the People's Republic. In fact, migration in the 1990s was one of the most prominent demographic events in twentieth-century China. The volume of migration is helping to transform China from an agrarian society into a modern industrialized society, a change that is being felt worldwide in this era of globalization. In many places in China, migrants form the backbone of several industries—working in construction, joint-venture manufacturing enterprises, and the service industry; they also serve in managerial and professional capacities. Migration has created opportunities for social mobility for millions of Chinese people, especially peasants, and has begun to challenge the traditional hierarchy of social and economic stratification stemming from the rural/urban household registration status. The migration of peasants helps to reduce rural/urban inequality because rural migrants earn more money in cities and send remittances back to the countryside (World Bank 1997). Migration has become part of a strategy for survival for an increasing number of rural households: a 1994 survey suggests that as much as 18 percent of China's rural household income is derived from migrant remittances (Cai 1997). Return migration, although difficult to measure precisely, seems to play an increasingly important role in rural transformation. Findings from a recent nine-province survey of return migration show that "labor migration can not only enhance the transformation of rural farmers to commercial and industrial entrepreneurs, but also facilitate agricultural development" (Ma 1999: 29).

Behind the backdrop of China's large volume of migration is the rigid household registration system that prevents most migrants from becoming full citizens at their places of destination, especially in urban areas. Without urban household registration status, migrants still face many difficulties when they seek to marry, secure housing, or enroll their children in neighborhood schools (Solinger 1999). Yet now may not be the best time to relinquish the household registration system. After all, the differentials between rural and urban China are still pronounced. Meanwhile, recent changes in

state-owned enterprises have increased uncertainties and anxieties, fueled in part by reports that more than 10 million urban workers have been laid off as a result (Du and Bai 1997; Pan 1997).[20] The number of unemployed workers is likely to increase as state-owned enterprises take more drastic steps to increase efficiency and to compete in the global economy. These factors argue against rushing to a quick solution to the issue of the household registration system.[21] In the long run, however, concerted efforts must be made to accommodate China's newest urban citizens.

APPENDIX TABLE Size of the migrant population according to place of origin and current residence, 1987 and 1995 and estimated net migration flows between cities, towns, and rural areas 1982–87 and 1990–95

	Place of origin in 1982			
	City	Town	Rural	Total
1987 residence	**Number of migrants (millions)**			
City	3.296	1.017	6.943	11.256
Town	1.403	2.001	8.053	11.457
Rural	0.796	1.260	5.764	7.820
Total	5.495	4.278	20.760	30.533
Place of destination	**Net migration (millions) between 1982 and 1987**			
City	—	0.386	−6.147	−5.761
Town	−0.386	—	−6.793	−7.179
Rural	6.147	6.793	—	12.940
Total	5.761	7.179	−12.940	—
	Place of origin in 1990			
	City	Town	Rural	Total
1995 residence	**Number of migrants (millions)**			
City	8.278	2.038	10.096	20.412
Town	0.893	0.584	1.851	3.328
Rural	1.098	0.483	7.908	9.489
Total	10.269	3.105	19.855	33.229
Place of destination	**Net migration (millions) between 1990 and 1995**			
City	—	−1.145	−8.998	−10.143
Town	1.145	—	−1.368	−0.223
Rural	8.998	1.368	—	10.366
Total	10.143	0.223	−10.366	—

SOURCES: Data for top panel from Goldstein (1990); data for bottom panel are author's calculations based on CPSSO (1997): Table 7-5, p. 558.

Notes

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1 In 1986 the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences conducted a survey of 74 cities and towns (Day and Ma 1994). Although the survey was not a random sample of the Chinese population, it contains some important information on migration (e.g., income and education at the time of migration) that is not available from other surveys or censuses.

2 The term "temporary migrant" signals the fact that these migrants do not have permanent household registration status. Strictly speaking, it is a misnomer because many temporary migrants stay at their place of destination for months or years. Recently some researchers began to use alternative terms, such as "unofficial migrants," that more closely capture the meaning of the type of migrants being described (e.g., Goldstein, Liang, and Goldstein 2000). To be consistent with most previous work (Goldstein 1990; Goldstein and Goldstein 1991; Gu and Jian 1994; Yang 1994), I retain the use of "temporary migrants."

3 To be precise, temporary migrants in the 1987 and 1995 surveys include: individuals who have resided at their place of destination for six months or longer but have permanent household registration status elsewhere; individuals who have resided at the place of destination for less than six months and left the place of permanent household registration more than six months ago; individuals who are without permanent household registration status anywhere (SSB 1988; CPSSO 1997).

4 The cities surveyed are Chengdu, Guangzhou, Harbin, Jilin, Shanghai, Taiyuan, and Zhengzhou (Shen and Tong 1992).

5 Identical definitions of temporary migrants were employed in data collection for 1982, 1989, and 1990. This means that to be counted as a temporary migrant, an individual must have resided at the place of destination for at least a year or have been absent from the place of household registration for more than a year. Identical definitions for temporary migrants are applied to the 1995 and 1996 data (a six-month instead of one-year criterion was used). Because of these differences in data definitions, we need to note that: (1) the changes in the size of the temporary migrant population during 1982–90 can be assessed unambiguously and the same can be said for the period 1995–96; (2) the magnitude of change in the size of the temporary migrant population between 1990 and 1995, however, is overestimated. There are at least two advantages of using these data. One is that they are nationally representative samples, hence we are more confident about making generalizations to the Chinese population as a whole. In addition, even in the case of differences in definitions across data sets, we know the likely direction of the bias of the estimate.

6 The estimate of 56 million temporary migrants in China in 1995 covers only temporary migrants who have stayed at the place of destination for six months or more. A survey of temporary migrants in Beijing conducted in 1994 shows that some 37 percent of them had stayed in Beijing for less than six months at the time of the survey (Zou 1996). Assuming that temporary migrants in China as a whole follow the same distribution of duration of residence, the estimated total number of temporary migrants in China in 1995 was about 88.5 million.

7 The 1987 and 1995 surveys defined migrants in slightly different ways. In 1987 two questions were asked about migrants: place of origin of individuals who have lived at the current location for no more than five years and duration of residence at the current location (SSB 1988: 819). The 1995 survey has (at least) two ways of defining migrants (CPSSO 1997: 644). One is the question on the location of residence five years ago. If an individual resided in a different location five years ago, this individual was defined as a migrant. Another way is to use the information on the time of arrival at the place of destination: anyone who arrived at a destination after 30 September 1990 was considered a migrant. Table 2 is based on the first definition for both the 1987 and 1995 surveys.

8 There was no information about the number of migrants in Tibet in the 1987 data; and Hainan did not become a separate prov-

ince until 1988. Thus we cannot compare changes for these provinces.

9 Hebei, Heilongjiang, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shanghai, and Tianjin are the provinces (municipalities) where the proportional share of interprovincial migrants declined between 1987 and 1995.

10 In Beijing, for example, migrants from Zhejiang (such as residents of the city of Wenzhou) own many clothing shops and have a strong presence in the cloth retailing industry. In Xinjiang village in Beijing, migrants from Xinjiang province congregate to do business. Southern China has experienced a similar phenomenon. Major streams of migrants from Sichuan province and from northeast provinces are influential in Guangdong's economy.

11 Urban-origin (city and town) individuals accounted for almost half of the intraprovincial migrant population in 1995, but note that China's urban population was only 29 percent in the same year. Using data from the 1990 China Population Census, I have also shown (Liang 1998) that, controlling for individual-level characteristics such as education and age, urban-origin people are more likely to make permanent moves than rural-origin people.

12 My results here may be affected by the rise of the number of cities in China during 1982–95. To the extent that towns are promoted to city status, they are likely to be smaller cities. A more detailed analysis would need to examine the size of cities to which migrants moved during 1982–87 and 1990–95. I did not have access to such information at the time of writing this article.

13 For example, in her anthropological research in Zhejiang village in Beijing, Zhang (2000) found that most of the migrant workers retained their land in their home province.

14 Charles Tilly (private communication, 1994) made similar observations during his trip to China in the early 1990s.

15 Growth in per capita income was 146 percent for China as a whole during the same period: 1978–88.

16 Hainan became a separate province from Guangdong in 1988; otherwise the percentage for Guangdong would be even higher.

17 The 12 coastal provinces and municipalities are Beijing, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Hebei, Jiangsu, Liaoning, Shandong, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Zhejiang.

18 Since my measure of migration to coastal regions refers only to interprovincial migrants, it is quite possible that intraprovincial migration to coastal cities may have increased much more during the same period.

19 The figure for 1997 is taken from the 1997 China Survey of Population Dynamics (SSB 1998). The definition of a temporary migrant in this survey is the same as that of the 1995 China One Percent Population Sample Survey and the 1996 China Survey of Population Dynamics (CPSSO 1997; SSB 1997).

20 Other writers have reported much larger estimates of workers laid off from state-owned enterprises in the late 1990s, on the order of 30–40 million (Wright 1998).

21 In several cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Xiamen, a proposal for a "blue chip household registration system," which grants certain migrants a special household registration status, has been tested. In Shanghai, for example, migrants who are able to invest large amounts of capital or who possess certain professional skills are eligible to apply for blue chip household registration status. After five years in this status, migrants can apply for permanent household registration (Wong and Huen 1998).

Some scholars have proposed gradually reducing the privileges attached to urban household registration (instead of granting full residential rights to all migrants). In October 1998, a new set of flexible guidelines regarding household registration system is reportedly being implemented (Lu 1998). The major proposed changes are: (1) parents can choose for their newborn babies the household registration status of either parent (as compared to that of the household head before); (2) permanent household registration status can be granted to a spouse after co-residing for a certain time with a spouse who has permanent household registration status; (3) elderly people over 60 years old can be granted permanent household registration status at places where their children reside.

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