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Internal Migration in Socialist China: An Institutional Approach

Ta Liu

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2002

Program Authorized to Offer Degree: Department of Geography

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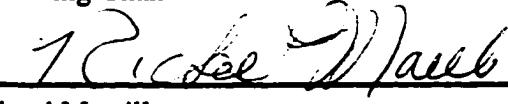


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Abstract

Internal Migration in Socialist China: An Institutional Approach

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This dissertation analyzes internal migration in socialist China from an institutional perspective. The overall objective is to understand the actual process of migration regulation, and the intersection between migration and social change in China in the last fifty years.

Despite the recent surge in studies on Chinese migration, less attention has been given to migration outside the sphere of contemporary rural labor migration, such as planned migration and migration before economic reforms. Plausible reasons include lack of a theoretical framework for socialist migration and unavailability of data and document information on migration and its regulation process. The dissertation intends to fill the literature gap by providing a conceptual framework of socialist migration and incorporating various sources of data accumulated in research and fieldwork throughout the years.

The dissertation contributes to the literature in five aspects. It provides a conceptual framework focusing on the bureaucratic process of migration decision making in a socialist system. It compares six major national migration data sets by developing a schematic framework for data comparison. It investigates institutional structures and regulation processes of migration regulation, and identifies major channels of socialist migration. It analyzes overall change of migration and related institutional change at national and municipal levels in the last fifty years and uncovers the nature of gradual

change. Finally, it contributes to the literature by illustrating the importance of migrant agency and micro-process in several settings. China has been believed to be exceptionally successful in migration control compared to most countries in the world. However, an in-depth look at the actual regulation and planning process reveals the limits of state power in controlling the geographic mobility of its citizens.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express sincere appreciation to the Department of Geography for its extended long-term support. The author would like to thank particularly Professor Kam Wing Chan for his help in many aspects of my work and study. I would like to thank Professor Richard Morrill for his careful reading of my dissertation. My other committee members, Professor Susan Whiting, William Lively, William Beyers also offered valuable help during the course of the dissertation. I am indebted to several institutions for their funding of my study and dissertation research: the Department of Geography, University of Washington; the Center of Studies in Demography and Ecology, University of Washington; Andrew Mellon Foundation Seed Grant; Hewlett Seed Grant; and Pacific Culture Foundation. But most of all, I want to thank my wife, Xiaohong Hou, for her understanding and encouragement while I have been a professional student.

DEDICATION

To my wife,
my parents,
and those whose migration in socialist China touched and taught me.

Chapter One. Introduction: Migration, Migrants, The Blind, Elephant and the Institutional Approach¹

As China marched into the last decade of the Twentieth Century, a new phenomenon emerged and captured the attention of the public, media and academia for the next decade. It was the rise of rural labor migration, mostly pouring into the prospering coastal cities. It had been the headlines of major internal and domestic newspapers. In The New York Times on February 24, 1999, there was an article entitled “100 Million Restless Chinese Go Far From Home for Jobs”, describing the experiences of rural migrants.² Rural migrants and their impacts were viewed as the dragon within that would eventually tear the Chinese political and social system apart, at least in the minds of some Western journalists, in an article in the Washington Post in 1994.³

“No longer confined to the countryside, a peasant population roughly equivalent to 40% of population in the United States is on the move in the one of the biggest demographic changes in Chinese history. ...There is a sense that society is changing beyond the control of China’s Leaders. The same sense of disintegration, some Chinese say, has preceded the collapse of imperial dynasties as far back as the Tang period.”

A similar theme of articles appeared in many US newspapers. In an article in The Christian Science Monitor in 1992, the opening paragraph reads like “Unrestrained by the communal controls and Maoist dogma of the past, China’s ‘human avalanche’ of idle farm laborers is a potential explosive force and a leading worry of top Communist Party

¹ This long and puzzling title tries to bring attention to several key concerns of the dissertation. It argues for a balanced approach for struture and agency in migration process. The blind and the elephant refer to the metaphor that researchers are like the blind feeling the elephant with different interpretations of data and evidence. The institutional approach is the unifying theme that holds all chapters together.

² Elisabeth Rosenthal. “100 Million Restless Chinese Go Far From Home for Jobs”. New York Times, February 24, 1999. Foreign Desk.

³ Lena Sun. ‘The Dragon Within’. Washington Post, October 9, 1994, PC1. The comparison here of migration workers with chaos and mobility rise at end of Chinese dynasties is far fetched. Increased mobility and chaos at end of dynasties were often related to wars and famines. Rural labor migration in contemporary China is by and large driven by economic opportunities. It is more like the rise of mobility at the beginning of a new dynasty, if you will. Things often look different from the perspective of Western observers.

leaders".⁴ In addition to the potential role of rural migrants in upsetting the Chinese Communist government and creating social chaos, Western journalists also linked rural migration with miserable living conditions both at home and destinations, unemployment and job competition.

Western media are not the only ones interested in the recent rise of rural-urban migration. Domestic media have also had wide coverage of the social event, although from very different angles. The custom of returning home for the Chinese New Years for sojourners had caused terrible traffic congestion. It actually paralyzed the rail system at certain times in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is not surprising to see that it went to the headlines of major national newspapers. Traffic congestion at both the inter-regional and intra-urban scale was one major concern of the domestic media and the government. Another concern was the increase of crimes in cities. It was often reported that rural migrants accounted for a large share of crime committed. Overall, the government's attitude and reportage were quite negative towards rural migrant workers for most of the 1980s and 1990s. Only recently has the positive contribution of rural migrant workers been acknowledged.

As such a social phenomenon, rural labor migration naturally did not escape the purview of academics both home and abroad. Numerous articles were written and several international conferences and workshops were held. Interest came not only from the traditional disciplines of migration, such as demography, geography and sociology, but also from other disciplines such as medical science (Lee, 1998). In the year 1999 alone, there were numerous articles and books published on Chinese migration (Chan et al, 1999; Chan and Zhang, 1999; Davin, 1999; Fan, 1999; Hansen, 1999; Hare, 1999; Larry, 1999; Ma, 1999; Ngai, 1999; Pieke, 1999; Rozelle, 1999; Solinger, 1999; Yang, 1999; Zhao, 1999).

⁴ James L. Tyson and Anne Scott Tyson. "Restless Migrants Stream To Cities". *The Christian Science Monitor*. Wednesday, August 5, 1992. P9.

Migration in China had been a barely researched field before this surge of academic interests and scholarship. One can easily count the number of the publications on Chinese migration prior to the mid 1980s both at home and abroad. It is worth celebrating to have so many scholars at work on the same topic from diverse fields. Their work has greatly expanded our knowledge of Chinese migration.

Though excited and encouraged by the recent explosion of scholarship on Chinese migration, we are still left with large territories of Chinese migration unexplored. From a macro time-geography perspective of the last fifty years, we have maybe 90 percent of the literature on about a quarter of migration in time and space.⁵ Certain limitations stand out in particular. First of all, most of the research is on rural labor migrations. Although rural labor migration may be an important part of Chinese migration, it still accounts for possibly less than half of total migration as late as mid 1990s.⁶ Other important types of migration, such as planned migration, are basically neglected. Second, most research is devoted to the migration and its change after economic reform. Few efforts have been made to account for migration in the long years under Mao. Cutting off the previous era often leads to inaccurate assessment of the nature and scale of current migration. Third, despite several attempts to construct theoretical frameworks for the Chinese migration, we are still in a less desirable position of not being able to theorize Chinese realities by using and extending established migration theories.⁷ This is particularly true for those migrations that are under direct control of Chinese government. Last but not least is the lack of attention to the consistency and comparability among migration data sets. Due to differences in coverage and data collection, these data sets can yield very different results for same type of migration in the same period. It is a risky business to build mansions of theories and arguments upon the loose sand of unverified data.

⁵ This is not intended as a measurement. Rather, it does give a rough idea of the concentration of research in the post-reform era.

⁶ Migration volume could vary greatly depending on its definition, as will be discussed later in the dissertation. Here the number is based on the standards of the 1990 census and the 1995 micro-census for migration.

⁷ This is not to suggest that it is desirable to fit Chinese migration data into Western theories. But the fact is that migration theories are dominated by Western schools and theorization on Chinese migration cannot be done without reference to these established theories.

It is not my intention to fully resolve these questions and issues in this dissertation. However, I do want to problematize these issues and present my own approach towards reasonable solutions. These limitations in the current migration literature, although scattered in four separate areas, i.e., migration types, history, theories and data, are actually closely interrelated. Data availability is the basic requirement for any meaningful research. Without data, it is difficult to describe, let alone to analyze other types of migration or migration in earlier times. But it is not enough just to have data since data cannot speak for itself. Here theoretical framework comes into play. Theoretical frameworks provide perspectives, insights and often motivations that can turn facts and data into meaningful abstractions of complex reality. Lack of study on planned migration and migration before the economic reforms is partly caused by data availability, and probably more by lack of a plausible theoretical framework. Past classical theories in migration severely restrict the imagination and thinking of students in the field of Chinese migration. Recent advances in migration theorization and increasing availability of various types of migration data provide an opportunity to extend the literature in all these important directions.

My dissertation contributes to the literature in the following aspects. First, I conduct a systematic evaluation and comparison of large national data sets, which are arguably the only data base for studying Chinese migration on a large temporal-spatial scale. Although there is large divergence among these data sets, only a little research has been done to compare them (Chan, 2000; Scharping, 1997). Through the years of doing dissertation work, I have been able to work on several micro data sets of Chinese migration.⁸ These micro data sets are immensely helpful since they allow me to reexamine the data in the way that published tabulated data do not. By constructing a schematic framework, I am able to systematically compare major national data sets on the important dimensions of

⁸ I would like to give my acknowledgment to Prof. Kam Wing Chan and Prof. Yunyan Yang for allowing me to access to the 1990 1% Micro Migrant Sample and the 1986 Urban Migrant Survey Micro Data. The latter was acquired through the Universities Service Center in the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

hukou, time and space, and estimate the direction and extent of potential bias of each data set.

Second, I have built a conceptual framework that confronts and tackles directly the decision making process of both the state and migrants in Chinese migration. Unlike most countries in the world, the Chinese state established complex social institutions to regulate directly the spatial movement of people. Dominant schools of migration theories, such as the neoclassical economic approach and the Marxian structural approach, are at a loss to explain the Chinese experience, which is an “outlier” in the migration theoretical terrain. Drawing insights from institutional theories and post-structural migration research, I develop a conceptual framework that focuses on institutional structures and changes in the Chinese socialist system. An institutional approach allows me to break the dichotomy of either the market or the state, which is important to explain the change and continuity of migration after the economic reforms. An institutional approach also enables me to deal with some subtle issues in migration theorization, such as structure and agency, and the dialectics of control. I will demonstrate that migration agency has important impacts on the structures that regulate it, even in a totalitarian socialist state like China.

Third, I examine systematically the socialist institutions that influence migration patterns and processes in China. Although most researchers in the field believe that the socialist state and its policies have tremendous impacts on Chinese migration, few has been able to give a systematic account of how the institutions actually influence the migration process. Recently progress has been made in assessing the impacts of one particular institution, i.e., the Household Registration System (or *hukou* in Chinese) on migration patterns. Despite the importance of *hukou* system in regulating migration flows, I will argue that it itself is an outcome of more complex socialist planning institutions. In this dissertation, I examine the interdependence among major elements of socialist institutions, i.e., state ownership, bureaucratic coordination, and socialist ideology and their impacts on migration. I also discuss the complex bureaucratic structures and

procedures that control various types of socialist migration. Labor planning is at the center of the bureaucratic regulation of migration. Other types of planning, such as investment and education, work through labor planning to exert influence. Changes in these institutions underlie the fundamental shift in overall migration patterns.

With backup from both data and theories, and understanding of institutional structures, I am able to analyze the overall change of internal migration in China in the last fifty years. I identify a major paradigm shift in Chinese migration after the economic reforms. Unlike the conventionally believed sharp dichotomy between plan and market, the shift in migration regime is a gradual process, which is closely associated with changes in economy as well as socialist institutions, with many fuzzy boundaries between state and non-state, and between plan and market. The paradigm shift is not only represented by the rise of rural labor migration outside the state's planning machine, but also by significant changes within the state directly regulated migration. The latter changes have often been overlooked in the current research. Another finding from an assessment of long term change in Chinese migration is that the scale of current rural labor migration might be overestimated. The conventional wisdom is that there has been a sustainable rise of rural labor migration since the mid 80s at an unprecedented scale. My analysis shows that the increase in rural labor migration in 1990s was in fact moderate. Overall mobility of rural population is still only a fraction of that of the urban population.⁹ Although rural labor migration is large in absolute numbers, it is not necessarily any larger than that in the 1950s in terms of migration rates.

1.1 Internal migration in socialist China: an overview

China has undergone tremendous changes in the past half a century. Like many developing countries, it transformed itself from a predominantly agrarian society into a major industrializing society. The industrialization and changes in economic structures

⁹ The overall mobility is measured and represented by the 1986 Survey, the 1990 Census and the 1995 Survey.

brought about significantly different migration patterns than those in its past several thousand years. The rise of many industrial cities was achieved largely by rural-urban migration, which is the dominant theme of migration in most developing countries. The similarities between China and other developing countries ended there as China chose a very different path to achieve the objectives of industrialization and modernization. And this path has tremendous impacts on the spatial mobility of its citizens. Socialist institutions not only had impacts on macro structures of migration and depressed the overall mobility rates by restricting rural to urban migration or by substituting migration with commuting. It also changed the internal workings of migration process and decision making substantially compared to other developing countries. Chinese migration in the last fifty years reflected the strong imprints of socialist institutions superimposed upon Chinese society and its traditional institutions.

One superiority of socialist economies, according to Marxist economists and socialist governments, is that they can avoid the severe economic cycles inherited in the capitalist system (Kornai, 1991). Profit-driven production and speculative behavior often result in anarchy and waste on the societal level along with business cycles. Socialist societies, however, can achieve balanced growth and maximization of social welfare through central planning. As a result, one should not find the wild alternation of boom and doom in economic performance. This argument had been very appealing in the early years of the People's Republic, when the leaders and ordinary people were looking forward to the bright future of Communism. From the advantage point of several generations later, we know what really happened was certainly not as predicted. Based on one set of figures, Figure 1.1 shows the general trends of economic growth and migration rates for socialist China in the last fifty years.

The Chinese economy also experienced large swings of ups and downs that were more drastic than economic cycles in market societies, as shown by the square-line in the

Figure 1.1.¹⁰ Economic growth rates varied greatly on yearly basis. In some years, the economy grew over 20 percent a year. In other years, it experienced negative growth. Particularly noticeable is the dive of the economy from a peak in 1958 to deep trough in 1961. A similar pattern also happened in the late 1960s, though on a smaller scale. According to patterns of economic growth rates, Chinese economic history can be divided into three phases.

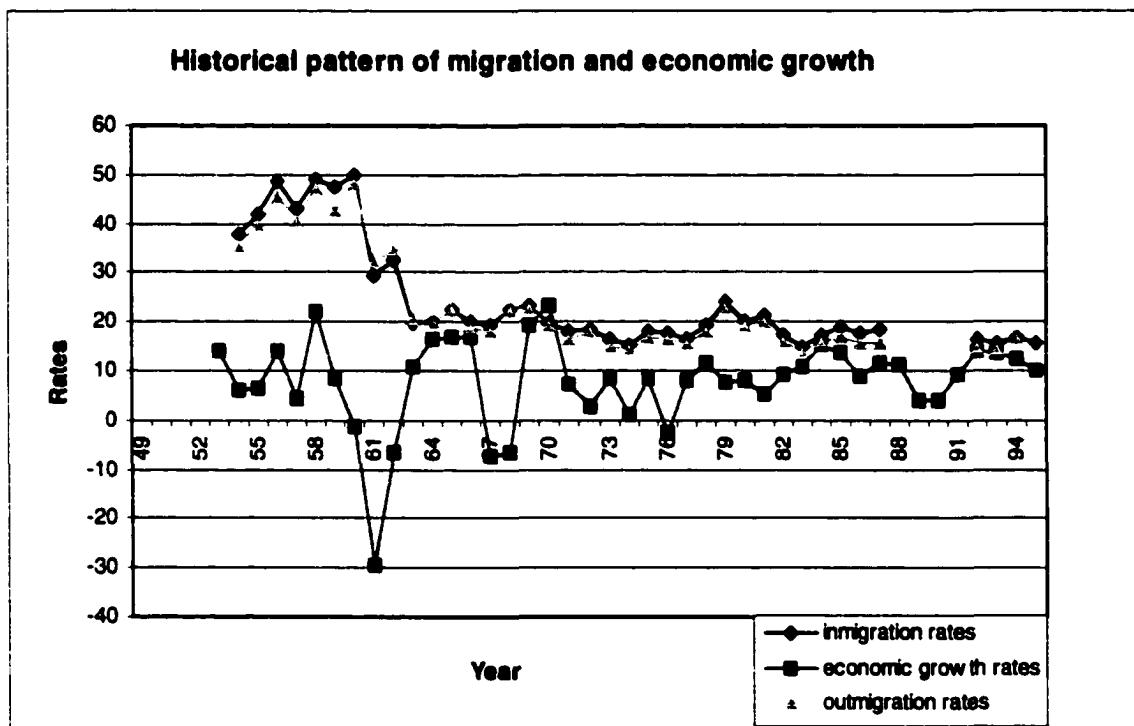


Figure 1.1 Migration and economic growth in China

source:

Economic growth rates from Liu (1996).

Migration rates from SSB (1988).

The first phase was the 1950s characterized by nation building and early industrial expansion. The economy grew consistently at around 10 percent a year and did not have negative growth rates. Fluctuation was relatively mild, except for the last couple of years

¹⁰ The data comes from Liu Shucheng. 1996. Zhongguo jingji zhoushi bedong de xinjieqian (The New Phase of Chinese Economic Cycles). Shanghai: Shanghai Yuandong Chubanshe, Page 7. The economic growth rates are calculated by Net Material Product for 1953-1977 and by GDP for years afterwards.

of the decade, which witnessed the fanatical expansion of the Great Leap Forward. The second phase stretched from 1960 to 1977, filled with many political movements, particularly the Great Cultural Revolution. The economy at this phase was in general in a depressed state with the exception of readjustment and rebounding in early 1960s and early 1970s. Economic reforms opened the third phase in which the Chinese economy experienced its longest expansion. There were several mild retrenchments in the early 80s, the late 80s and the late 90s. To some extent it resembles the growth pattern in the 1950s with a higher growth plateau and smaller fluctuations.

Such economic change and performance should have implications on every facet of a society, such as living standards, job availability, education, as well as migration. Let us have a look at how migration change corresponded with economic change.¹¹ Figure 1.1 shows both the annual immigration and outmigration rates on the national level for the last several decades.¹² Migration here only covers the official migration, or the *hukou* migration, which was recorded by the household registration system. “Unofficial” migration is not included in the data. The patterns of inmigration rates and outmigration rates on the national level are almost identical, which is not surprising given that China had extremely small international migration during this period.¹³ Annual migration rates were very high in the first decade of the People’s Republic, hovering above 40 per thousand with small yearly variations. Then it fell steeply in 1960 after the collapse of the Great Leap Forward. Within only three years migration rates were halved. An interesting thing is that it never came back to the original height even when the economy recovered. Ever since it has been hovering around 20 per thousand and slightly dropped off to the mid teens in the 1990s. Before the great fall migration was closely correlated with

According to Liu (1996), there are nine economic cycles overall from 1953 to 1995, about five years on average.

¹¹ This only compares the general trends between economies and migration. For a more detailed analysis of migration, urbanization and economic factors, see Chan (1994).

¹² Migration rates were from Zhuang (1995) (originally from SSB (1988)). The definition of migration in *hukou* migration statistics can be found in Chapter Six.

¹³ A little variation in the 1959 and mid 1980s might be related to some artificially produced migration by local government officials due to the three year famine and family planning considerations. That is, some deaths and births might be wrongfully reported as in or out migrations.

economic change. Every up and down of the economy immediately showed up in the migration rate. After the fall migration became somehow detached from economic change and stabilized on a new plateau.

It is here that institutions came into play. China diverged from the experiences of other developing countries due to its unique institutional structure. One important factor in this drastic change is related to a particular socialist institution, the household registration system, or *hukou* system. The household registration system was started in the cities in 1951 and extended nation wide in mid 1950s. But it was only strictly enforced in the early 1960s when the economy collapsed and a large share of the urban population and labor force became redundant. Migration rates also nose-dived around this time as we saw from Figure 1.1. The timing of both is more than coincidental. It is quite plausible to argue that full implementation of *hukou* system depressed overall mobility. In the fifties, despite certain government restrictions on labor hiring, the urban labor market and the rural labor reserve were well connected. There were numerous free labor markets even in Beijing where the government regulations and control were very strong. So we could detect the high correlation between economic growth and migration on the national scale. After the crash of the economy, however, the government was pressured to control “spontaneous” or “blind flows” migration from rural areas to cities. As a result, the relatively free exchange between urban labor market and rural labor reserves was cut off by *hukou* registration system. An “invisible wall” was set up between urban and rural China, which segmented China into two societies ever since (Chan, 1994). Forty years later Chinese migration, labor market and economies are still strongly influenced and even structured by this institution (Wang, 1997; Solinger, 1999). Its implications and repercussions are resounding down the corridor of history. It is apt for Chan to propose that “any meaningful study of Chinese migration must deal with *hukou* system at first place” (Chan et al, 1999).

It is beyond any reasonable doubt that *hukou* system has much influence on migration and labor markets in China. But the relationships between the *hukou* system and

migration might not be as straightforward as it appears. Careful consideration of some factors and evidence forces us to probe further. First of all, official (*hukou*) migration is only part of overall migration. It is not clear now how its share of total migration changed over time. But we do know that non-*hukou* migration became very significant since the mid 1980s, accounting for about half of total migration according to 1990 Census and 1995 National Population Survey. If that is true the overall migration rate could be double. Assuming that non-*hukou* migration was not significant before reform, sustainable economic growth did induce higher migration rates in the post reform period just as in the 1950s. One should be cautious here since migration data from various sources are not compatible. For example, migration rates from the *hukou* registration data are several times higher than those from censuses, with the latter including non-*hukou* migration as well. Before drawing any inferences we need to build a schematic framework to compare these major national migration data sets.

Other evidence precluding us from a simple and easy conclusion of the *hukou* system's impacts comes from international comparison. A related key question is whether migration rates and migration trend in China are truly exceptional in that they were caused by the unique household registration system. To relieve readers from suspense, I will give the answer first. It is a clear no. China is very similar to other large developing countries at the same development stage in terms of overall migration rates. China is also very similar to other socialist developing countries in terms of migration trends that went south over the years. So both the low rates of migration and its decline over time might not caused mainly by the unique *hukou* system.

It is fortunate that research and data for international comparisons of internal migration are readily available. For international comparison, three groups of countries are selected. The first group are countries with large geographical areas and population, such as India, Indonesia, the former USSR, USA and Brazil. The second group include those East Asian countries and regions that share similar culture and economic paths, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. The last group are some socialist countries, such as Poland. Since

migration definitions vary across countries and there also few systematic surveys of internal migration on an international scale, this comparison can only give some general ideas about geographical mobility. Because migration rates are closely related to the spatial scale of administrative regions and duration over which migration is enumerated, we should consider both of these factors in this comparison.

Table 1.1 International Comparison of Interregional Migration

Country (Region)	Number of Administrative Areas	Radius (km)	Annual Migration Rate	Five Year Migration Rate	Life Time Migration Rate
INDIA					
District	412	47.9	0.48-1.03 ¹		6.6 ³
State	31	174.7	0.23-0.78		3.3
CHINA					
County	2306	36.5	0.3-0.8	3.2-3.4 ⁵	
Province	29	324.7	0.1-0.2		
BRAZIL					
Municipality				17.6*	
State	28	311.1			14.2 ¹
USA					
County	3141	30.8	6.75	18.28 ²	
State	51	241.8	3.58	9.26	
Former USSR					
Econ-Region	20	597.2	5.7**		47.1 ¹
JAPAN					
Prefecture	46	50.7	3.71 ²		
TAIWAN					
County	21	23.1	3.92 ²		
S.KOREA					
Province	11	53.4		9.07 ²	
POLAND					
Voivodship	49	44.9	2.63 ⁴		

Notes:

- a. All migration rates are measured in percentage of total population.
- b. All data are for the year of 1970 and 1971, except lifetime migration rate in USSR in 1979 and data on China for the period of 1982-1990.
- * Intercensal 10 year data.
- ** Two year data

Sources:

1. Nam et al. (1990). pp.33, 192-5, 207-10, 257-8, 324-7, 347-8, 394
2. Long (1988). pp.274
3. Oberai (1983) pp.42
4. Brown et al. (1977). pp.324
5. SSB (1988). pp.135, 677; SSB(1993), pp.20, 72-3

Table 1.1 shows migration rates at several regional levels for nine countries including China. The second and third columns are the number of administrative regions and their average geographical size. The rationale for doing this is that large regions tend to have a

smaller share of total migration across their boundaries due to the friction of distance.

This provides a benchmark for looking at migration rates across countries. Migration is represented by three types, distinguished by temporal duration, i.e., annual migration rate, and five-year migration rate and a lifetime migration rate. All migration rates are measured as the percentage of total population who moved.

A quick look at annual migration rates and five-year rates across countries shows that China has quite low inter-regional migration. The annual migration rates vary from 0.3 to 0.8 percent from the 1987 Survey.¹⁴ These are much lower than the 6.75 percent in the United States and around 4 percent in Taiwan and Japan. They are also lower than the 2.63 percent in Poland, which was a socialist country. Looking at the five-year migration rates, we still see discrepancies but not as large as the annual rates. Chinese five year migration rates on the county level captured by the 1990 Census and the 1987 Survey is 3.2-3.4 percent, compared to 18.28 percent in the United States and 9 percent in South Korea. The province in South Korea is roughly similar in size to the county level in China. In general, Chinese migration rates are much lower than those in Western countries, East European countries, and East Asian countries or regions. Since these countries are more developed in terms of industrialization and urbanization, we may suspect that economic development has great impacts on geographical mobility.

The comparison with India is in line with this speculation. As a country with a similar population and geographical size and stage of economic development, India also has similar migration rates to China. Migration across its districts, which are a little bit larger than Chinese counties, has annual rates of less than 1 percent. This pattern should be familiar to geographers since it conforms to Zelinsky's "Mobility Transition Hypothesis" (1971). As a country modernizes, its economy is transformed, transportation and communication improved, and geographical mobility increases. Social systems appear to be less important than the economic development by this observation. However, the

¹⁴ The migration rates are 0.3% in 1982 and 0.8% in 1986 according to the 1987 Survey. The survey covers mostly migration at county levels. For detailed discussion of migration data in China, see Chapter 6.

lesser importance of social systems was certainly not supported by the comparison of Chinese migration with that in other socialist countries.

Table 1.2 Internal Migration in Socialist and Non-Socialist Countries¹⁵

Year	Socialist Countries					Non-Socialist Countries			
	Poland	Czecho-Slovakia	GDR	Bulgaria	China	Denmark	Nether-Lands	Finland	West Germany
1950				18.5					62.3
1951	50.3								
1952		48.9							
1953	53.1		49.7						
1954			41.7						
1955			43.0	18.0	41.7				65.6
1956			42.3		48.5				
1957		32.7	40.2		43.0				
1958	46.7		38.8		49.1		43.9		
1959			36.9		47.5		43.1		
1960	42.3	29.4	36.1	22.4	50.0	96.0	44.1	49.6	60.9
1961	38.8	28.9	37.5	19.1	29.4	93.8	43.4	48.1	60.9
1962	34.1	28.2	31.8	17.8	32.5	92.2	42.9	47.5	59.7
1963	32.1	28.3	37.4	19.9	19.5	92.8	42.2	47.4	59.7
1964	29.2	28.8	31.0	19.5	20.2	96.2	43.8	47.9	62.0
1965	29.0	26.9	29.3	22.5	22.6	94.4	44.6	47.3	61.0
1966	26.5	27.3	21.7	20.4	20.1	91.7	46.3	45.9	61.9
1967	26.4	26.7	18.2	18.2	19.1	90.4	46.6	46.2	60.3
1968	26.7	25.0	16.7	17.6	22.4	89.8	48.6	43.7	60.1
1969	27.6	24.5	15.6		23.2	96.5	50.2	44.8	60.3
1970	27.1	28.2	15.9		19.8	85.7	49.5	58.1	60.4
1971	26.7	27.3	16.8	18.2	18.2	80.4			60.9
1972	27.1	24.7	15.4	17.6	18.5				
1973	25.0	25.6			16.3				

Sources:

1. Migration rates are in thousandth.
2. Migration data for China is from Zhuang (1995) pp. 5
3. Data for all other countries are selected from Brown et al. (1977). pp.324

Having looked at the internal migration rates across countries, let us compare systematically mobility rates over time between socialist and non-socialist countries. There is a valuable table in Brown (1977), which listed migration rates for both East European socialist countries and West European capitalist countries over the years from 1950 to 1973. Table 1.2 recompiles the data with China added. Some systematic patterns emerge from comparing two groups of countries. The first is that socialist countries, in general, tend to have lower rates than their counterparts. The best example is the comparison between East Germany (the German Democratic Republic) and West

¹⁵ As we discussed earlier, it is very hard to compare migration rates across countries. These numbers are just to capture the overall trend rather than details.

Germany, which were one country before the end of World War II. In the 1950s right after the war, migration rates in East Germany were roughly two thirds of those in West Germany. But in the early seventies, they dropped to only about one fourth of those in West Germany. This leads to the second general pattern.

Most socialist countries experienced a significant drop in the geographical mobility in the observation period, with the exception of Bulgaria. East Germany migration rates declined gradually from 50 per thousand in the early 1950s to 15 per thousand in the early 1970s; Poland from 50 per thousand to 25 per thousand, and Hungary from 34 per thousand in 1960 to 24 per thousand in 1973. In contrast, non-socialist European countries had no systematic changes in their migration rates, basically maintaining the same level throughout the years. If we put China into the picture, we observe the same pattern as with other socialist countries. There is something inherent in the socialist system that decreased mobility over time. It could be the gradual deterioration of the economy, which reduced the incentive for migration. It could be the exhaustion of rural labor force by the extensive industrial drive that characterized the first stage development in socialist countries (Chan, 1994). It could be the aging of the population due to a persistent drop of fertility, which reduced the share of mobile young population in the total population. Or maybe because of the substitution of migration by commuting formal migration was avoided (Fuchs and Demco, 1975). It is still not clear what are the exact reasons for this systematic drop of mobility across socialist countries. It might be one or a combination of the factors above, or some other factors. One thing we can learn from this is that the mobility decline in China should not be fully attributed to the full implementation of the *hukou* system.¹⁶

There must be something else out there that caused the systematic change of migration rates, in addition to the *hukou* system. And the answer should be related to socialist institutions. Instead of a linear relationship between migration and economic

development, or between migration and the *hukou* system, we should look at a more complicated set of relationships, intertwined among migration, economic development and socialist institutions. I will argue that socialist institutions *as a whole* should be carefully studied in order to gain deeper understandings of migration patterns and changes since interactions between migration and economic development are mediated by and filtered through socialist institutions.

The importance of studying socialist institutions also comes for a slightly different reason. Recent theorization in migration, particularly in the vein of feminist research and post-structural school, has called for attention to the important roles of migrant experiences which cannot be deduced from structural factors. Migrants should not be treated only as development objects (Silvey and Lawson, 1998). They are also subjects who have feelings and experiences, which are always socially constructed with fluidity and ambiguity (Findaly and Li, 1997). Their experiences and decisions in turn may reshape structures that constrain their behaviors. In previous studies of Chinese migration, attention has been on the macro patterns not on migrant individuals, whose actions were basically determined by the government policies and bureaucratic decisions. So migration analysis became general descriptions of government policies at each period and migration change as their outcomes.¹⁷

Lost in this kind of analysis are the rich experiences of many migrants and potential migrants. Anyone who has lived in or is familiar with China may have heard stories of people trying to relocate through government channels. For most people it is a difficult, lengthy and painful process. One needs to spend considerable time and energy to open up social connections to achieve one's objective. There are so many intricacies and tidbits of knowledge that changing residential places becomes an art and discipline (Zhang and

¹⁶ Although the Soviet Union had a similar system for residential control, the *popiskaya* system, it was only temporarily implemented during the WWII and well before the great decline of migration. See also Hegelson (1978).

¹⁷ It is not to argue that previous research with an emphasis on data and government policies is fruitless. Rather recent trends provide another theoretical perspective from which migration processes, including those in China might be understood.

Chen, 1992). Migration, even those assigned by the government, has never been an automatic process. There are so many rules and procedures, policies and counter-measures in migration that this process itself deserves careful study. In my opinion, it is this complexity in migration decision making and its linkages with social institutions, rather than the deterministic power of economic forces and the state that makes migration study an inviting discipline.

Recent studies of Chinese migration have made substantial progress in understanding the hukou system and its impacts on migration. The *hukou* system is the central institution that regulates and controls migration. It had its imprints on general migration patterns as well as numerous individual lives. Building upon the understanding of the importance of institutions in migration, I argue that we must systematically explore the linkages between socialist institutions and migration. The following are the research questions that I want to pursue in this dissertation.

What are the actual institutional structures and procedures that the government employed and employs to control migration?

How do migration and its control fit in overall socialist institutions? What are roles of migration planning in the socialist development?

How could the government control migration and at times even to enforce downward migration? Why did people comply? Did they always comply?

How did institutional structures shape the patterns of Chinese internal migration?

1.2 The institutional approach and research methodology

In previous sections, I argued that socialist institutions were critical for understanding Chinese internal migration and its overall change. The reason lies at the direct control of

migration by the socialist state through the *hukou* system and other institutions. The interactions between migration and economic development are mediated through socialist institutions and economic planning. In this section, I will specify how I approach these research questions. In particular, I will relate my research to the current literature and migration theories. I also explain the research strategies and stages that I carried out in my dissertation research.

Despite the enormous literature on human migration, research directly tackling the relationships between migration and institutions has not become a mainstream endeavor. Although there is more interest in this area, there is no established theory that one can readily adopt. Migration study has been dominated by two research paradigms. One is a variation of theories and modeling based on neoclassical economic theory, such as the popular expected wage model of Todaro, the human capital model, the two sector model of Lewis, regional adjustment models, and gravity models. Most migration modeling and quantitative analysis of migration data are rooted in or closely connected to this theoretical paradigm (Brown and Lawson, 1990). This paradigm assumes that people make rational choices to maximize profits or gains, measurable or immeasurable, in migration decisions. It also assumes that the market is the default mechanism that matches the supply and demand of labor, which is the principal cause of interregional migration. Income in its various formats such as wage is often considered the most import factor in migration. Other factors such as unemployment, distance, networks, and amenities can also be included. This paradigm has limited utility for Chinese migration since the market only had very a limited role in allocating labor for most of the time, although it has an increasing importance for rural labor migration since the 1980s. Labor had been mostly allocated through bureaucratic coordination and planning. Labor allocation is often determined by factors very different from wage and income maximization.

Another paradigm is the historical and structural approach powered by Marxian theories of capital accumulation and the mode of production. It also has several variants of

theories, such as dependency theory, world system theory, and labor process theory (Portes and Walton, 1981). This paradigm argues that the fundamental causes of migration are structural forces, such as the drive for profit and capital penetration into peripheral regions. It has less to do with individual decisions of migrants or potential migrants. The expansion of capitalism has been bringing even remote nations and regions into the world system. Indigenous economies were replaced by the intruding world capitalism, resulting in drastic changes in economic structure. Farmers are displaced from land and have to migrate to cities or other regions to make a living. The state or local governments are often alliances of capitalists. This paradigm has penetrating insights into the migration process in colonial countries and international migration at the macro scale. On the theoretical level, it also offers alternative to the neoclassical view of market as equalizing forces and the scenario of everybody being better off. In contrast, the market as an instrument for capitalism often results in polarization and inequality among countries and regions. Historical and structural approach is also not very helpful to the Chinese experience since capital accumulation through the market is not an important factor that drove the changes of the Chinese economy.

Despite the differences between these two paradigms, they share some similarities that had pushed students of migration into other alternatives. Both theoretical schools have deterministic view of migration, although coming from different sources. Migrants are treated only as objects of development (Lawson and Silvey, 1999). They are faceless, voiceless and powerless. As a reaction to the old paradigms, recent studies of migration have given emphasis to the importance of migrants as subjects and the social constructed nature of their identity formation. Rather than the deterministic and unambiguous view of migrant experiences, the new school stresses the fluidity and ambiguity of migrant experiences, often interlocked with issues of race and gender. Among the new school appears research on migrant institutions applying Giddens' structuration perspective to the process of labor emigration.

Great progress has been made in understanding how social institutions work from other fields of social sciences, such as economics, political science, and sociology. New institutionalism has become a major force in economics and political sciences to shape an understanding of how social systems and economies work (North, 1990; Alston, 1996; Ensminger, 1992; Knight, 1992; Levi, 1990; Eggerstsson, 1990). There are also new findings in the field of socialist institutions and Chinese bureaucracies (Huang, 1996; Huang, 1994; Whiting, 2000; Nee, 1994; Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988). These works provide additional insights into the process of migration and institutional regulation.

The emergence of new thinking on migration provides good opportunities to building a new conceptual framework for Chinese migration that is compatible with Chinese experiences. In this dissertation, I propose an institutional approach to study Chinese migration. Building upon structuration theories, new migration theorization, socialist political economy, and studies on Chinese bureaucratic structure, I want to link the essential features of socialist institutions, such as a socialist ideology, state ownership and bureaucratic coordination to migration process. Under this general institutional framework, I want to examine the actual bureaucratic structures and the migration decision making process. By applying a structuration perspective, I am able to look at the nature of migration control and migrant agencies in a planned economy. This conceptual framework demonstrates its utility in addressing my earlier research questions.

Rather than employing one particular type of research methodology, I prefer a hybrid research methodology which can selectively combine their strengths. It is desirable to keep the strengths of both conventional conceptions of migration and new conception of migration. I want to balance structural factors and migration agency in the migration process rather than take one end of the migration process as given. In terms of research methods, I want to employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate Chinese migration patterns and experiences. Migrant experiences and subject formation are useful for analyzing the nature of the migration process, sources of change, and the nature of control. But they are quite limited in constructing an overall patterns of Chinese

migration in the long term perspective. Census data and surveys are very helpful in portraying macro patterns of migration, e.g., the volume and scale, overall migrant types. They have limited utility in investigating migrant experiences and their roles in structural change of Chinese migration. In short, each method has strengths and weaknesses. A balanced understanding of Chinese migration needs both methods and data. And they prove very useful together to explain Chinese migration.

Since I want to reveal both macro patterns of migration and their change and migration experiences at various levels, there is a demand for various types of data, including quantitative data from census and national surveys, archival data from government documents and circulars, interview data from government officials and various types of migrants and hukou registration data. In order to have an overall picture of Chinese migration, I need to collect quantitative data sets that can cover most of the history of socialist China. These data sets should be on the national scale and representative. There is also need to compare and evaluate them systematically. I evaluated six major national data sets, the 1990 Census, the 1987 National Population Survey, the 1995 National Population Survey, the 1986 Urban Migration Survey, the 1988 Fertility Survey, and *Hukou* Migration Statistics. Among these I have the 1990 1% migrant sample data set and the 1986 full micro data set. These micro data sets are particularly useful in giving insights to migration patterns and are good for exploring migration patterns.

In order to understand the government bureaucracies of migration control and regulation, I collected related government publications and documents that explain the division of labor between government departments. Among this category are the National Labor and Personal Almanac, the Modern China series on labor planning and economic planning, Municipal Labor and Personnel Gazettes for several cities, some government internal publications, such as *Jingji Yanjiu Cankao Ziliao* (Economic Research Reference Materials), and some handbooks for cadres responsible for migration management. Many cities have published gazettes that cover the changes of labor planning and migration over the last fifty years, sometime providing very detailed information on local events

and processes. It is ideal to have these local data and documents to understand migration patterns at multiple scales. Since publications after the economic reform tend to have more coverage of the recent period, it was necessary to find additional information on labor and migration management at earlier times. I collected a very rich set of information in the municipal archives of several cities, such as Xi'an, Wuxi, Wuhan, Nanjing, and Beijing. These archives include diverse sets of documents and information, including government circulars and working documents, government internal surveys of labor resources, government plans for labor, wage and migration, migration transfer documents, petition letters, and transfer records. These are rich resources waiting exploration and analysis.

In order to have working knowledge of migration planning and registration and perspectives of government officials, I interviewed directly government officials and cadres at various levels and various departments. During several fieldwork trips to China from 1997 to 1999, I talked with many government officials working at administrative levels from central ministries to small towns, with most at the municipal level. These government officials were spread across various departments, due to the complexity of migration planning, including labor departments, personnel departments, public security, economic planning, and civil administration. I also interviewed local cadres in state enterprises working in the field of labor and personnel administration for different sizes of state enterprises. These interviews gave me insights into how labor and migration were and are actually managed instead of how it should be managed as portrayed in official and academic publications.

Without migrants, the study of migration is far from complete. Without those who are to be managed there would be no managers. It is critically important to have the perspectives of migrants of various types and at various time and places. But it is impossible to cover all of them. So in my interviews, I tried to select different groups of migrants with various education levels, migration channels, historical periods and gender. I interviewed migrants in state units, such as large state enterprises and universities. I also

interviewed some non-*hukou* migrants, some from the countryside and some from urban areas.

Some information about migrants and their experiences can also be collected from biographies, memoirs, and popular literature. Particularly there is a large amount of writing on some special events, such as the “rustication” of urban educated youth. There are also some scattered documents on individual migrants and their migration experiences. Putting these together, it is possible to establish the connections between migrant experiences and structural change.

1.3 Research stages

My dissertation research was carried out in several stages. The first stage was the literature review and searching for a theoretical framework. The second stage was fieldwork and some quantitative data analysis. The third stage was evaluation and analysis of various kinds of data within the conceptual framework. Of course, these stages were interrelated and were not necessarily in linear sequence. Often they are interwoven during my several year research effort. I conducted my fieldwork in the summer for fall in three consecutive years from 1997 to 1999, overall about five months, supported by a CSDE Mellon Foundation seed grant, the CSDE Hewlett Foundation grant, and the Pacific Cultural Foundation. I spent one week in the Universities Service Center in Chinese University of Hong Kong to collect publications on migration and management, some being internal ones. I spent several weeks in the municipal archives in several large cities to collect government documents and circulars on migration and labor planning, particular for earlier historical periods. I also spent several weeks interviewing government officials at various levels, in ministries, research institutes, municipal governments, state enterprises, and even small towns. I interviewed cadres at different departments. It is hard to be certain that government officials were selected in such a way that their views were representative of the whole group. In China, the interview is an art that one can pursue but not force. Often one needs some connection of friends to make

introductions or provide opportunities. Often it is hard to plan ahead to set up an interview time.

I spent probably at least one year in full to work on the migration data, particularly 1990 Census data and 1986 Urban Migrant Survey micro data sets. I also worked on a recent survey of comparison of hukou and non-hukou migrants. I cleaned the data, dealt with missing values and explored their general patterns, as part of a larger research project funded by National Science Foundation.

Chinese migration is like the blind feeling the elephant. Many people tell different stories due to different theories and data. As I have argued, there are large territories unexplored, although some fields are adequately covered. Current research has mostly focused on rural labor migration and related social change since late 1980s. Other types of migration, such as planned migration have been rarely studied. I will fill the literature gap by employing an institutional approach to study Chinese internal migration and to bring migrant experiences into the picture and make them an integral part of the migration story.

1.4 Chapter outlines

The rest of the dissertation is organized as follows.

Chapter Two. Review of Literature and Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I will give an overview of literature related to my thesis and then provide a conceptual framework for my dissertation. There are several bodies of literature related to the dissertation in different ways. The first are studies done on migration in China by Chinese and Western scholars alike. The second is mainstream migration theory and new changes in it. The third is the new institutional school or institutionalism focusing on the mechanisms of social change and social institutions. The fourth is the study of socialist institutions, anchored by Kornai. The fifth is the study on Chinese bureaucracies and structures and mechanisms. After reviewing these bodies of literature, I will introduce a

conceptual framework that takes an account of Chinese institutional structures that regulate migration. I intend to take a holistic view of structure and institutions. In my theoretical framework, the macro patterns of migration are linked with individual decisions of migrants through a complex set of institutions. The institutional structure is multi-layered and multi-branch, building upon three basic elements, social ideology, state ownership and bureaucratic coordination.

Chapter Three. Institutions and Bureaucratic Structure of Chinese Migration

In this chapter, I will discuss migration within the general framework of socialist institutions, i.e., how migration is related to the socialist system represented by state monopoly, ideology and bureaucratic coordination. Then I will proceed to the actual administrative structures of labor and migration planning in China, focusing on the horizontal and vertical structures of administrative control. After that, I will discuss major migration channels and administrative procedures to regulate those migrations.

Chapter Four. Social stratification, wage and migration: a quantitative analysis

This chapter explores the major dimensions of social stratification in socialist China, which are closely related to migration and labor regulation. They include agricultural hukou vs. non-agricultural hukou, workers vs. cadres, state sector vs. collective sectors. One special characteristic of Chinese socialist system is spatial stratification that is clearly tied with administrative hierarchy. I also briefly discuss wage institution and its administration in socialist China. The last part of the chapter examines the wage determination before and after reform by using the 1986 Urban Migration Survey micro data. It produced some interesting results, such as wage structure closely reflected social stratification and its changes after reform and migration did have positive returns on wage income.

Chapter Five. Migration Agency and Limits of the State

In this chapter, I will focus on dialectics of the state control and negotiations between the state and individuals in both state initiated and migrant initiated migration. I will present

several migration cases to look at migration decision making and experiences from the migrant's perspective. The last part of the chapter aims at demonstrating the power and limitations of the Chinese state in controlling the spatial mobility of its citizens. The case of "rustication" of urban educated youth in 1967-1980 shows how forced migration was possible at one time and failed at another time. This case also shows these migration is a two-way street with structure and agency both having important impacts and interactions. Agency matters not only to the subjective meaning of migration, but also in shaping overall migration structures.

Chapter Six. Structuring Chinese Migration: a baseline for evaluating and comparing national migration data sets

Migration data are essential for migration research. Without data, one can hardly know the basic patterns of migration, much less the factors causing them. It is especially true for studying migration structures and patterns at macro scale. One reason for not having much research on Chinese migration before reform is the lack of data. Several censuses and micro censuses and numerous migration surveys greatly alleviate this problem and provide a large amount of data. With abundant data to work with, it is often neglected that these data and results from them are not comparable due to different standards and coverage. Research results and their interpretations can be off if no attention is paid to definitions and limitations of these data. In this chapter, I systematically compare six national data sets by evaluating their definitions and coverage, and discussing their limitations and potential problems. Through these data sets, I am able to explore the spatial and temporal structures of Chinese migration and present a schematic framework for comparing Chinese migration data sets.

Chapter Seven. Paradigm Shift of Internal Migration in Socialist China: A Long Term Perspective

There are regularities in the long-term change of Chinese migration and this chapter intends to capture that. After the discussion above about migration data, institutional structure and migrant experiences, this is an ideal place to extend those insights into

macro changes and patterns. Internal migration can be divided into three stages according to Chinese economy and migration patterns. I will discuss major factors and patterns for each phase. Each phase has specific migration patterns in terms of migration rates, extent of migration control, migration channels, and related institutional structures and their changes. Rather than the over-simplified notion of planned and market demarcated by the economic reform in 1978, I will show the gradual changes behind that and institutional structures that evolved over time.

Chapter Eight. Conclusion

I have covered some major aspects of internal migration in China. I will wrap it up in this chapter and put them in perspective. I will discuss the limitations of my findings and caveats. Also I want to point out the future directions one can pursue along the similar lines.

Chapter Two. Literature Review and A Conceptual Framework

The most challenging part of research on Chinese migration is to find or construct a theoretical framework. Unlike most developing countries, Chinese society and the Chinese economy are structured by a complex set of socialist institutions. The socialist state has direct intervention and influence on all spheres of social life (Dutton, 1992; Perry, 1990). It directly regulates the movement of people as well as capital and commodities. Because of this, conventional migration theories are hard to fit with Chinese experience, particularly that in the pre-reform period. The common alternative is to invoke the power of the state and relate migration and its changes to specific government policies. Although this approach can explain migration patterns in a concrete manner, it lacks the ability to explain them coherently. In other words, it cannot tell why the same policy worked at one time and failed at the other, nor to say why policies themselves changed.

What we need is a conceptual framework that is able to connect migration events at different times and to link them with changes in political economy systematically. The conceptual framework should be able to look at the deeper level processes, the institutional mechanisms underlying migration changes. It should be able to analyze migration in both the pre-reform and post-reform period. The common approach treats them separately as if they are two different societies, governed by either plan or market, ignoring the continuity between them.

A major misconception in the theoretical pursuit in Chinese migration is that migration “theories” are only those conventional theories, such as Todaro’s expected wage model, Lewis’ labor surplus model and so on. It would be very difficult to make Chinese migration realities fit these theories. Fortunately, these are not the only ways to theorize migration patterns and experiences. Recent development in migration theorization begins to look more closely at the importance of migration agency, institutions and multiple scales. This provides an alternative view of the migration process. It helps to examine the

social aspects of migration in addition to the economic ones, which are the primary concerns of conventional theories. Social institutions in different forms, such as social norms, ideology, and regulation all influence migration and its outcomes. In addition to progress in migration studies, there are several bodies of literature that show insights and will help us to understand socialist migration in China. One is general theories on social institutions, such as Giddens' structuration theory, new institutionalism from economics and political sciences, and Scott's organization and institutions from sociology (Giddens, 1984; North, 1990; Scott, 1995). Another body of literature studies socialist economies and institutions, notably Kornai's work (Kornai, 1992). The third is studies on Chinese bureaucracies and political economy, particularly that of Lieberthal and Oksenberg (Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988).

In the following sections, I will first discuss the research done on Chinese migration with a particular interest in their theoretical foundations. Then I will move to mainstream migration theories and recent progress in the field and how they may help formulate a conceptual framework on Chinese migration. After that, I will expand our understandings of the institutions through discussions of several related bodies of literature. At the end of the chapter, I will propose a conceptual framework which incorporates institutional mechanisms of migration regulation and migration decision making at multiple scales for Chinese migration.

2.1 Studies of Internal Migration in China: a survey

There is a strong contrast in the state of migration studies of China before and after the late 1980s. Before that, there were only scattered publications both within and outside China. After that, there has been an escalation of research from all the social sciences, not just geography and demography.¹⁸ Several changes contribute to this contrast. One is increasing availability of migration data at various scales, particularly the 1990 Census

¹⁸ According to a study by Yang (1999), there were 5 research papers related to migration between 1981 and 1983, 11 in 1984, 22 in 1985, 41 in 1988, and 65 in 1995 in Mainland China.

and several national surveys. There were also numerous small surveys conducted in cities and rural origins by scholars affiliated with both Chinese and Western institutions. Another is the spectacular performance of the Chinese economy and the rise of rural migrant labor. Scholars interested in social change in China could no longer ignore the implications of changing mobility in the post reform era.

There have been attempts to use conventional theories to explain Chinese migration. This is especially true for the new generation of scholars in the People's Republic China (PRC) and Western scholars. But overall, application of Western migration theories to the Chinese experience proved not very productive. Western migration theories have been limited to those in the theoretical camp of neoclassical economics. Since it is relatively easy to analyze rural labor migration using conventional theories, it is not surprising to find much research in that field. In comparison, less research has been done for the pre-reform period. As I argued in the introduction, this imbalance is not justified. Migration directly regulated by the state was and still is the most important part of Chinese migration.

There are a number of publications that are concerned with the overall migration in China from both within and outside the country. The earliest work on socialist migration within China belongs to Qiu (1981).¹⁹ By evaluating changes in percentages and growth rates of population across provinces between 1949 and 1979, he was able to tease out the migration flows for both organized and spontaneous migration. Ma was the first to use hukou migration statistics to reflect the general migration patterns and rural urban migration between 1954 and 1984 (Ma, 1987). Wei and Zhang clarified some basic concepts in Chinese migration, such as migration, hukou migration, and "floating" population (Wei, 1984; Zhang, 1988). The first national migration survey is the 1986 Urban Migration Survey, which produced several monographs edited by Ma and Wang (1988; 1994). The earlier issue was a collection of papers contributed by scholars

¹⁹ For a systematic survey of Chinese migration and urbanization studies, also see Yang (1999). Progress in Chinese Migration and Urbanization Research and Its Evaluation. Unpublished.

participating in the survey in major cities and thus organized by regions. Most papers discussed the survey process and temporal changes in migration in each city. The latter issue was a systemic examination of migration and urbanization organized by subjects rather than regions. It was mostly interested in rural-urban migration. Another early collection of research edited by Tian covered various types of migration, such as frontier migration, migration caused by reservoir construction and spontaneous (unregulated) migration (Tian, 1986).

In addition to edited monographs, several books appeared that provided a comprehensive coverage of Chinese migration. Among them are Shen and Tong (1992) and Yang (1994). Shen and Tong gave detailed account of various types of migration supported by anecdotal information and data from scattered sources. For example, when discussing migration associated with industrial expansion in the 1950s, they went over each major province and cited sources of immigrants, sometimes with concrete examples of urban districts and factories. They covered the whole recent history of China but their discussion of pre-reform migration is most valuable. They also made adjustments to national hukou migration statistics by interpolating for some provinces, which was adopted later by Zhuang (1995). Yang's book is more oriented toward a formal demographic analysis with awareness of impacts of socialist planning institutions on migration (Yang, 1994). With the advantage of having the 1990 Census and 1987 Survey data, he was able to analyze migration age profiles and reconstruct the regional patterns of migration for pre-reform period by using the demographic balancing method. Shi (1990) and Yang (1996) present an historical account of Chinese migration in the last few thousand years, and provide valuable information in their discussion of migration in the socialist period. Chapters of Zhang and Wang (1995) and Zhang (1995) on the hukou system and census data in the Proceedings of the 1990 Census Data Analysis provide comprehensive yet detailed information on hukou institutions and census data in comparison with other surveys.

The last ten years witnessed a large increase of academic work on migration. Due to increasing migration data and wide attention to rural labor migration, much work has been done, some in large projects. For example, the Ministry of Public Security conducted a survey of every household in 50 rural townships spread out in over 18 provinces. The Rural Development Research Institute, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Agricultural Bank of China jointly surveyed 12,673 households in 442 counties in 1993. Economic Commission of China People's Political Consultative Conference, the Center for Development Studies of State Council, and the China Rural Labor Development Research Association conducted a survey of 28 counties in 15 provinces in 1994.²⁰ The list can go on. Many publications resulted from these research projects.

Migration research within China tends to be empirically based and policy oriented. The earliest discussion of migration theories appeared in Ma and Wang as an introduction to general ideas of conceptualizing migration. There are more detailed discussions later on by younger generations of demographers, geographers, and economists (Yang, 1994). But the exposure has been mostly limited to neoclassical theories of migration. Western theories have not been well integrated into analysis of Chinese migration. The exception is probably Cai in his work of rural labor migration and the dual labor market (Cai, 1999).

Outside the mainland the earliest work based on new census data came from Goldstein and Banister (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1984; Banister, 1986). Both are prominent demographers on China and had published extensively on Chinese population and had wide influence on development of the field through their publications, consultancy in national surveys, academic exchange, and as advisors of graduate students.

There were studies on topics related to migration in the earlier period, although not directly from a migration perspective (Schwarz, 1963; Bernstein, 1977). Lynn White's work on career choices in the late 1950s had migration as a very important component of

²⁰ For detailed discussion, see Wu (1994).

overall structure (White, 1976). His micro-process analysis gave a balanced view of what happened between the macro state level and local events, which is generally lacking in China studies. Howe's work on labor market and allocation in the 1950s also gave detailed information on labor changes and migration. He analyzed the labor management process and the state's choices. Benstein's work on rustication is well known and thorough despite the limitation of data at that time. It gave a good analysis of institutional dynamics and their changes over time. Much of these were only rediscovered in the late 1990s when more information was available. These early studies before reform were not interested in migration per se but nonetheless provided insights into policy making process that influenced migration. White and Benstein also gave attention to individual choices and their interactions with state's policies and ideology, which was in sympathy with recent theoretical interest in migrant agency and micro-level process.

The majority of studies, however, appeared in the 1990s. There has been effort to construct a consistent picture of migration using different types of data sources. Chan and Yang use population data in three censuses to construct spatial patterns in two inter-census periods through the residual method (Chan and Yang, 1996). Liang and White attempt to construct both temporal and spatial series of migration patterns for 1949-88 by using 1988 fertility data (Liang and White, 1996). There are two English versions of studies using 86 survey data. One is a regrouped and extended collection from 1988 with contributions from western scholars (Ma and Wang, 1993). The other is edited by Day and Ma with the same title (Day and Ma, 1994). In addition to these major works, there are other studies also concerned with overall migration (Li, 1992; Cheng, 1991; Kim, 1990; Wei, 1996; Ma, 1995; Davin, 1999). It should be borne in mind that these are only a small part of research on Chinese migration. Like the migration literature within Mainland China, the majority of studies are on migration and floating population in the post reform period, based on newly acquired data from census and surveys (for example, Yang, 1993; Ma, Liaw and Zeng, 1997; Rozelle et al, 1999; Solinger, 1999; Liu, 1991; Fan, 1996). In addition, there are studies on particular cities, such as Shanghai (Gui, 1992; Lin, 1992; White, 1994). There are also many studies on inmigration of Han

Chinese into frontier provinces, primarily concerned with relations of Han Chinese with ethnic minorities (Li, 1989; Huang, 1995; Wang, 1998).

Recent rural urban migration is the specific field that has generated a lot of interest. One reason is the large scale of rural labor migration destined to the large coastal cities, which is associated with the rapid economic development in the last twenty years. Another reason is the political implications of the massive urbanward migration which is a dramatic turn from the past tight control of government over rural-urban migration. So the dominant interests, not surprisingly, are in the estimation of the scales, origins, processes, and effects of rural migration (Mallee, 1996; Chan, 1997; Wu and Li, 1996; Rozzele, 1997; Schapring, 1997, 1999, Taubman, 1997)²¹. In comparison, little effort has been made to understand government sponsored and regulated migration and migration before the economic reforms.

The proliferation of studies of rural migration might also be related to the relative ease in employing conventional migration theories to explain it. In contrast, socialist migration that is characterized by government regulation and planning does not fit well with the dominant western schools of human migration. Although there are a few works directly tackling socialist migration theory, most studies do without them with an emphasis on the description of policies and migration patterns. The following paragraphs discuss specifically several groups of literature that are closely related to my concern of overall migration pattern and theoretical issues, including Chinese migration, urbanization studies, and Soviet socialist migration.

Almost all of the studies related to Chinese migration realize and emphasize the importance of the role of the state. There is a consensus that the state plays a dominant role in population redistribution through socialist planning and institutions, particularly before the economic reforms. Most studies are descriptive citing the correspondence

²¹ See Mallee (1996), Wu and Li (1996), and Chan (1998) for detailed discussion of literature in this field.

between state policies and migration outcomes. But this critical connection between the state and migration is not further explored. In comparison, studies of urbanization made substantial progress in understanding the role of the state in population redistribution (Chan, 1994).

For the few studies that deal conceptually with socialist migration in China, opinions vary greatly as to the possibility of establishing a theoretical framework. Some think that it is almost impossible, while others suggest the likely applications of Western theories. In his article entitled "Human Migration under the Socialist System: the Case of China", Ma (1995) contemplates the form of a socialist migration theory. Addressing the paucity of theories and conceptualization in the field of socialist migration, Ma attributes it to the involuntary nature of migration in socialist economies and that established migration theories derive mostly from market economies. In his opinion, planned migration by administrative command is not a good subject for theorization. It's mostly decided by the state's intention, not those of individual migrants. Mostly concerned with migration patterns after the economic reforms, Chan et al favored a structural approach in which the hukou system is arguably the most important factor in shaping migration patterns in China. They found that labor market segmentation and migration in China bore considerable similarities with those in market economies (Chan et al, 1999). Western theories of neoclassical origin can be applied to the largely self-initiated migration in the post-reform period. But little is said about the pre-reform period when planned migration and hukou control were at their height.

In his comprehensive review of migration studies in China, Scharping set up a well-structured migration model for China. He intended the model to be "generalized enough to serve as a guideline for analyzing migration behavior in different periods and areas" (Scharping, 1997). Being aware of differences between Chinese and Western social and cultural contexts, he argued that generalized theory had to be integrated with systemic factors and peculiarities of the Chinese experience. The model is an extension of neoclassical migration decision making by incorporating contextual and systemic factors

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Chart 1: A Migration Model For China

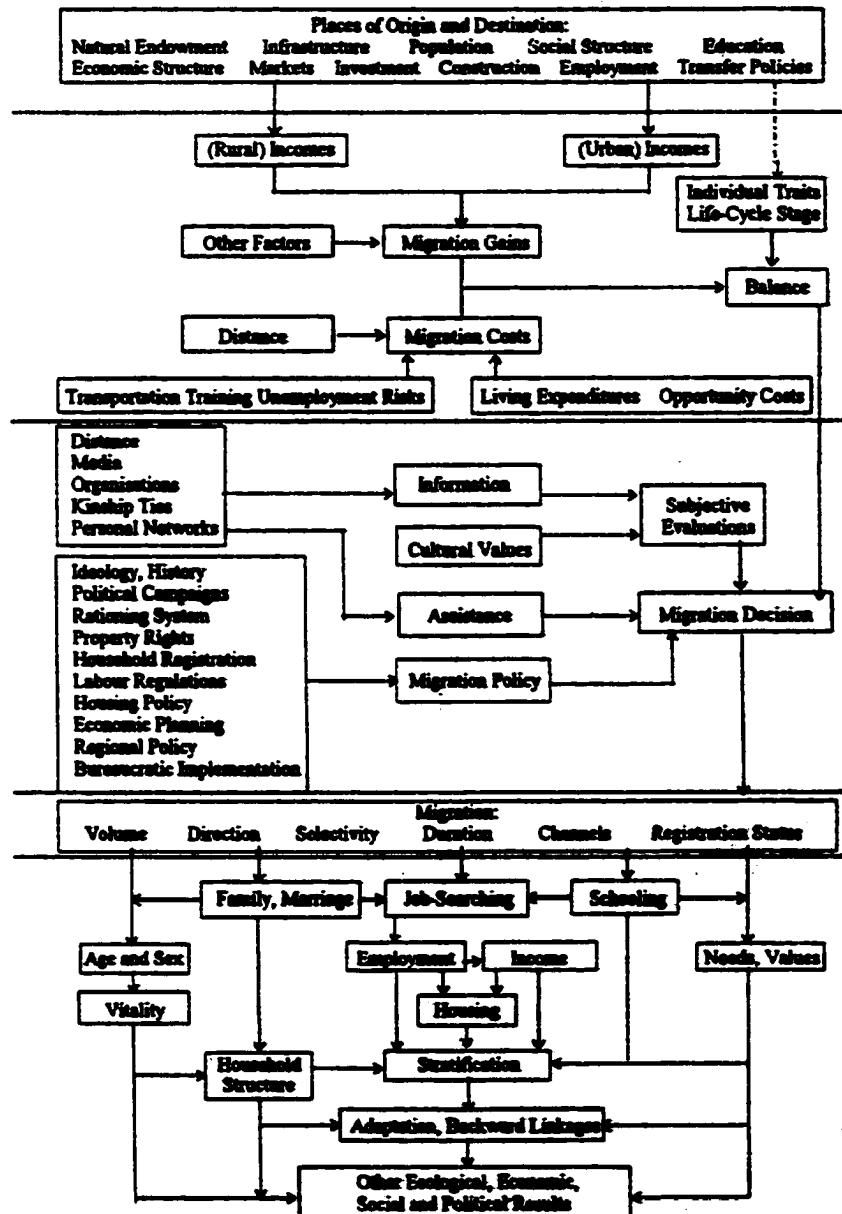


Figure 2.1 Scharding's theoretical framework for Chinese migration (Scharding 1997:24)

such as personal networks, government regulations, values and polices. Although conceptually it may broaden the scope for research on rural labor migration in the post reform period, it has limited value in explaining government planned migration. His effort deserves appreciation since it is probably as far as one can go to incorporate conventional migration theories into Chinese context (see Figure 2.1).

The brief overview above shows that a generalized conceptual framework for understanding Chinese migration is not yet available. Beyond migration studies, another group of literature that is related to Chinese migration is the field of urbanization studies. Migration is a major instrument that the Chinese government used to adjust urbanization to changing socioeconomic conditions. So it is not surprising that migration is a key element in these studies of urbanization.

There are two dominant views of urbanization in China. One is that the socialist state is highly tied to its ideological commitments, mostly anti-urbanism in nature, such as limiting the “three great differences” between urban and rural, intellectual and physical labor, and industries and agriculture.²² It is out of these commitments that the policies related to urbanization and migration had been formed. And the state was very successful in achieving its goals to restrict urban growth and to narrow the gap between rural and urban, skilled and unskilled. This view was supported by the perceived rural origins of the communist party, the sending down of urban educated youth and cadres to the countryside, and industrialization without urbanization, as in the cases of Great Leap Forward and development of new industrial complexes, such as Daqing, away from cities. This perspective prevailed until the mid 1980s when more data became available. Most detrimental to this school is the finding of large and increasing rural-urban disparity in the pre-reform period, counter to the claim that the state succeeded in minimizing rural-urban inequality.

²² See Kirkby (1985) and Chan (1994) for a detailed review of this school.

Another framework emerged and finally became the dominant perspective (Kirkby, 1985; Chan, 1994; Lin et al, 1996). This school argues that migration control and under-urbanization were natural results of the heavy industrial development strategy, or industrial accumulation. Due to the desperate need to develop a modern industrial system represented by heavy industries, the state needed capital to finance the extraordinary growth of modern industries. In a predominantly agricultural society with little industrial basis, agriculture has to be the source of surplus for industrial accumulation. By setting up price scissors, the government could exploit the peasants and channel the surplus into industrial projects.²³ Free flow of migration would seriously disrupt the scheme for it would, on one hand, increase the urbanization costs and on the other hand undermine the labor intensive agriculture. In order to facilitate the forced accumulation, various institutions were set up, such as the unified grain purchasing and provision system and hukou system. This school is now widely accepted by scholars in the China studies and even other socialist countries. The old school was basically discarded.

This school is related in general to the under-urbanization thesis in socialist countries (Murray and Szelenyi, 1984; Ofer, 1977; Ronnas and Sjoberg, 1993). Although itself a debated field (Enyedi, 1998), the under-urbanization thesis in general acknowledges the paramount role of industrial accumulation. But there is a visible difference between the European and Chinese versions, i.e., in the form of migration control. In European socialist countries, under-urbanization was caused by increasing capital intensity and migration substitution (Chan, 1994; Fuchs and Demko, 1975). In China, it was mostly through rural-urban segmentation policies embodied in hukou system. The insight from urbanization studies is the logical necessity of migration control given forced industrial accumulation.²⁴ It provides a plausible theoretical explanation to the widely observed practice of stringent migration control in both the pre and post reform periods. It has

²³ Price scissors refer to price discrepancies between agricultural and industrial products. Through artificially low price of agricultural products and high price of industrial products, the socialist state was able to force capital accumulation to support its heavy industrial development strategy, for details see Lin et al (1994).

²⁴ Recently a new variant of under-urbanization theme appeared, which emphasized the important role of "public ownership" on the logic of migration control (Zhang, 2000).

valuable implications for migration studies in China by revealing two migration circuits distinguished by hukou (Chan et al, 1999). Those holding non-local, mostly agricultural hukou face greatly different constraints and opportunities than those with local, mostly non-agricultural hukou in Chinese cities.

The “industrial accumulation school” for migration studies is mostly interested in explaining the end state of Chinese urbanization in the form of under-urbanization. Although the primary logic of migration control is uncovered, the actual process and mechanisms of migration and its control are not explored. As such, we are still in need of a conceptual framework that can guide investigation and analysis of actual migration processes and patterns for both the pre- and post- reform periods.

The last group of literature we may benefit from is the study on socialist migration in East European countries. Compared to the vast pool of migration research in Western market societies, migration studies on East European socialist migration are minuscule. The majority of them are on Soviet migration (Stuart and Gregory, 1976; Ball and Demko, 1978; Mitchneck, 1991; Mitchneck and Plane, 1995; Gibson, 1991, 1994). They all agreed that Western migration theories were applicable to the Soviet experience since the 50s despite the dominance of state economic planning. Those variables found important in market societies proved to be equally important in Soviet Union for they explained a large part of the variance in migration rates. Such variables are wages, housing condition, education and amenities. Underlying the statistical relationship was the fact that individuals could make their migration decision without direct intervention of the state. The state did have an incentive system that influenced individual's calculation of costs and benefits (Fuchs and Demko, 1979). This is a great departure from pre-WWII period when the state had a strict residence control system, Propiskaya, or an internal passport system, to limit rural-urban migration (Hegelson, 1978). Overall, most of these studies are more comparable to studies in the post-reform period in China and have limited value for helping understanding the planned migration in the pre-reform period.

The above discussion reveals several important issues in conceptualizing Chinese migration that deserve discussion, which I want to touch on before I go on to review mainstream migration theories. One dominant impression in Chinese migration and urbanization studies is the omnipotent state and the involuntary nature of planned migration.²⁵ The state is generally considered as a monolithic entity with the power and resources to achieve whatever objectives it decides. Often the intentions and outcomes of policies are conflated. Under this image of the state as the omnipotent and forceful power, migration in the socialist China is often regarded as involuntary and forced. The state could send millions of people away from cities and towns to the countryside when it believes beneficial to do so, such as the case of rusticated youth and sent-down cadres. People have no choice but to obey. Although it is convenient to explain migration patterns and events by simply recounting government policies at different times, this conceptualization leaves little to say about changes of state power over time and their implications on migration patterns. The problem with this conceptualization is not only the limited analytical utility it offers but simply that it is not validated by available data and information. If the argument is basically true, we would expect a low satisfaction among past migrants who moved “involuntarily” under the powerful state. The 1986 Urban Migration Survey shows the opposite. The survey included questions about subjective comparison and evaluation of conditions before and after migration. About 80% of migrants considered their income as improved. Migrants had higher satisfaction before reform than after reform (Lin, 1994:165-8). In terms of housing conditions, 70% of migrants thought that their situations had been improved, only about 11% that situations became worse. The results are similar for working conditions, education opportunities and living environment for most of 30 thousand surveyed migrants in several dozen cities.

This conceptualization of an invincible state over-emphasizes the control aspect of migration and neglects the enabling aspect. It implies automatically the success of

migration control. This emphasis generates a “static” image of mobility in the first three decades of the republic. And this “low” mobility is totally attributed to government policies and administrative controls. A careful examination of data and materials suggests a more complicated picture.

One important reason in preventing an alternative perspective in conceptualizing Chinese migration comes from the dominance of conventional migration theories in market societies. A cursory comparison of China and Western countries easily puts the government control and “involuntariness” on the spotlight, which runs against the basic assumption of conventional migration theories of migration decision making by individuals. Market coordination preoccupied with profit contrasts with plan coordination driven by administrative command. The gap between these two types of societies and between Western theories and Chinese realities is already significant even without considering many peculiarities of the Chinese system (Scharping, 1997).

Is Chinese migration really untheorizable as suggested by some scholars? Is there any alternative migration theory that can shed light on the Chinese migration experiences in the last fifty years?

To answer these questions, we need to expand our vision beyond the China field and look at change in mainstream migration theory.

2.2 Migration Literature Review

Human migration has been studied from all the avenues of social science with perhaps as many theories and schools as the number of researchers. In this brief review, I will concentrate on dominant migration theories and other literature that is related to migration experiences in China.

²⁵ Exceptions are Lau and Liu, 1998; Zhou, 1996.

Understanding of patterns and processes in human migration has come a long way. Since the earliest scientific work, Ravenstein's "laws of migration", we have moved through many stages. The earliest stage was the descriptive account of migration patterns in particular places. Then there was the attempt to generate overarching theories, such as Zelinsky's mobility transition hypothesis and Lee's push-pull theory. Following that was a move towards the quantitative analysis of movement and interactions substantiated by economic theories and spatial analysis. Falling within this category are Lewis's two sector models, Todaro's expected wage model, the gravity model and other modeling efforts. Born with the "quantitative revolution", this wave dominated migration literature for a long time, until it is challenged by the historical-structural approach. The historical and structural school, influenced strongly by the Marxian theories, is primarily interested in the macro structures of capitalist societies such as capital accumulation. Within its sphere are dependency theory, the over-urbanization thesis and world system theory. Lacking from all these migration theories is the ability to account for the interaction between migrants as individuals and social structure. In another words, there is no good theoretical construct to link the micro-level decisions and macro level outcomes. Recently a post-structural approach that intends to build such a link, has emerged. Theoretically informed by Giddens' structuration theory, this framework promises to take account of individual's experiences and connect them to patterns and changes at the macro level (Giddens, 1984; Findley and Li, 1996). Another strand of post-structural thought is informed by critical theory interested in the social construction of inequality of minority groups, particularly woman, in the migration process (England, 1997; Lawson, 1998).

The post-structural school shifts our attention from macro structures like markets and capital accumulation to the importance of institutions, ideology, identity and power relations in the migration process. Migrants are no longer treated as passive subjects and numbers, but with voices, perceptions and actions. The post-structural school offers a key into the once closed territory of Chinese migration experience aided by the advance of

research in other areas, such as the new institutionalism, the socialist system and Chinese bureaucratic structures.

2.2.1 Conventional theories of migration

Although no single conventional migration theory can readily explain the migration patterns and processes in socialist China, many do contribute to the understanding of pieces here and there. I would like to discuss several major strands.²⁶

The human capital model by Sjaastad (1962). This model provided a new perspective to view migration as one form of social investment, just as that in education or training.²⁷ The total net return of investment in migration depends on the income streams based on income differentials at two places discounted by the interest rates minus the costs of moving. Migrants will migrate to the place that generates the largest income. This perspective easily explains the age profile of migrants, although it does not invalidate the utility of life cycle in explaining typical age profile of migration. The benefits and costs are not necessarily restricted to financial accounting. They may include quality of life variables, amenities, government taxes, and psychic costs. This perspective is also related to the evaluation of rewards to human capital in migration. People with more human capital will have a larger migration space due to an increase in the ability to access and interpret information and the increase in space of demand. People with more human capital will also tend to have a large return on migration.

The human capital model provides a micro-analytical base for all the neoclassical migration theories. Its central idea is that the individual makes a migration decision by weighting benefits and costs. If we take a broader view of benefits and costs

²⁶ For a serious review of the Chinese context, see Schraping, 1997; and Hare, 1999. I did not cover some general theories, such as Lee's push-pull theory and Zelinsky's mobility transition theory, nor Ravenstein's "law of migration", because they are too general and grand to provide meaningful insights into the migration experience in China.

²⁷ For a comprehensive review of the human capital model, see Milne, 1991. For a review of the whole migration field, see Massey, 1993, 1994; Portes, 1995; Brown and Lawson, 1985; Lucas, 1997; Greenwood, 1997; Wood, 1982)

maximization, this model is similar to the assumption of rational choice school that people act rationally and strategically to increase perceived benefits. Although the narrow version may not apply to the Chinese migration experience, the broader one may be useful in understanding migration patterns which are the result of countless individual decisions. I would like to assume that migrants acted rationally even in the socialist environment when making migration decisions. In the case of forced migration, the costs of refusing to comply should also be considered.

A closely related but more developed version of the human capital model is Todaro's migration model based on income and the probability of migration. This is the most widely accepted migration model (Lucas, 1997). It is intended to solve the puzzle of large immigration into cities in many developing countries despite high unemployment rates. Todaro replaced the actual wage with the expected wage in the calculation of benefits and costs, which consists of wage and probability of employment. Despite the elegance of his model, studies have shown that its assumption of job search as a lottery process is not warranted (Banerjee, 1986). So the model does not add more insights than the human capital model to migration in the market sector, let alone the state planned sector.

Labor surplus theory – Lewis, Ranis and Fei (Lewis, 1965; Ranis and Fei, 1978). A product at the same time as Rostow's development stage and growth pole theory, this theory specified the mechanisms of urbanization in industrializing countries. Continuous expansion of industry draws surplus labor from the countryside through income differences between the agricultural and industrial sectors until agricultural surplus labor is exhausted. Although the model is concerned with the transformation of societies where market mechanism is dominant, it is also useful for analyzing the industrialization and urbanization in socialist countries. Relevant to our objective, in my opinion, is investment and reinvestment as the most important mechanisms of migration. There are a couple of differences in the socialist context, however, from the original model. One is that migration is no longer motivated solely by the desire to have a higher income, but is organized and planned by the state. The state also replaces the capitalist as the investor

and employer. Another is the even more forcible speed and scale at which the state is able to push the industrialization than capitalists in market societies (Kornai, 1992). As a result, socialist countries have a built-in pressure for large scale rural urban migration and a tendency for faster urban growth. Kuznetz's sectoral labor transfer caused by differential productivity and wages is in a similar vein but less elegant (Kuznetz, 1982). The model also speaks to the under-urbanization thesis caused by the heavy industrial development strategy (Ofer, 1977; Chan, 1994). The two agree that rural –urban migration is caused primarily by industrialization. They disagree, however, on the end results of high speed industrialization. A large share of reinvestment, according to Lewis, will increase the pace of migration and surplus labor exhaustion. The under-urbanization theorists in contrast argue that the top priority of maximizing industrial output squeezes out the urban infrastructure and service sector. Top planners in socialist countries deliberately economize on urbanization and limit urbanward migration either by substituting with commuting or restricting migration. This model provides an ideal type of industrialization-induced migration to evaluate the macro process of rural-urban migration in socialist countries.

Regional labor adjustment model (Lowry, 1966; Brown, 1982; Belger, et al, 1991; Gordon, 1983). This model is concerned with the mechanisms of adjusting labor supply and demand at the regional (macro) level. In market economies, labor supply and demand is constantly adjusted through migration, unemployment and the labor force participation rate. Immigration (or net migration) and labor force participation will increase, and unemployment decrease where there are more employment opportunities and higher wages. Of the three mechanisms, (net) migration is more elastic than other factors with quicker response (Bilger et al, 1991). In socialist economies, labor supply and demand also need to be matched, but, largely through government planning. The state needs to bring people to where the investment and factories are by administrative command, political mobilization and wage incentives. Of the three mechanisms for adjusting the regional balance of labor, unemployment is not an option due to its conflict with socialist ideology and the social norms of the "iron rice bowl". Elimination of open

unemployment implies substantial underemployment within state enterprises. Migration (particularly downward migration) and labor participation rate are actively pursued by the Chinese government. In the long run, free labor migration is restricted and a high labor force participation rate is encouraged (Chan, 1994). Overall, the employment system is rigid, and the balance between regional supply and demand of labor is determined artificially by state policies and the state budget. Although we cannot apply directly the regional adjustment model by plugging in wage rates and employment, it can still make us aware of the adjustment mechanisms in the socialist economies.

Behavioral models of migration choice (Wolpert, 1965; Speare et al, 1971). The theory of migration decision making is helpful in specifying the steps of a migration process. It constitutes the essential part of micro theories of migration. According to the model put forward by Speare, migration decision making consists of three stages. The first is to evaluate the place utility of current place or the degree of stress. The second is to compare place utility among different places and choose the place which can maximize the utility. The third is to move. Basically migration decision making is involved with motivation, choices of destination and the actual move. Although the differentiation of neat three stages is rather arbitrary, it helps us to think about the decision making process from an individual perspective. Such behavioral theories are criticized for treating migrants as not constrained by any social structures. The situation is probably more extreme in China where government has more rules and regulations on migration and movement. Potential migrants face much greater constraints if they initiate the move. The choices of destination and actual moves are explicitly and strongly regulated by government.

Having covered several theories of neoclassical economic origin, I need to address the historical and structural approach and evaluate its relevance to Chinese experience. The structural approach is preoccupied with inequality and passiveness of migration as a result of capitalist penetration on a global scale. Migration is no longer seen as an equalizing factor in regional development as in neoclassical economic theory. Rather it is

seen as a mere product of ruthless structural forces that displace and manipulate people in peripheral positions in both geographical space and social structure. It is a convenient tool to understand the migration process in developing countries which have been colonized. But it is not useful for socialist developing countries like China, because the essential feature of the system, greed or the desire for profit is non-existent in a planned economy. Although the idea of structure reminds one of socialist structures or system, the theory has nothing to do with the socialist structures and in general does not provide theoretical guidance to the migration experience in China.

Portes and Walton's work in 1981 may be an exception. It is a classic work of world system theory on migration. Very well articulated and perspicacious, it situates various types of migration, forced or voluntary, in a single framework of a world system. It criticizes dependency theory for being static ending up with "the image of an entrenched and essentially unalterable system of exploitation" (Portes and Walton, 1981:29). In contrast, they argue that labor process is an intermediate and integral part of the world-capitalist system that is shaped and being shaped by the dynamics of the accumulation process. It also deals quite well with the contradiction of structural forces and migrant agency. It allows for different situations and choices for all actors involved, the powerful capitalists at the center, local elites and migrants at peripheral regions. The demand for cheap labor by the capitalists and their representatives in the state, intersects with the demand of wage laborer for cash and survival, or even upward mobility, on the particular paths embedded in the historical contexts, shared ideological system and state's policies. Another merit of this work is its attention to the social reproduction of power relationships in the form of ideological control and contest. Neoclassical migration theories rarely give any attention to the social process of power and knowledge.

2.2.2 Post-structural migration theories

Migration studies are characterized by many dualities, such as voluntary vs. involuntary, micro vs. macro, determinants vs. impacts, economic vs. social and political, equilibrium vs. disequilibrium, qualitative vs. quantitative, origin vs. destination, male vs. female, and

so on. Due to so many dualities, it is not surprising to witness such a fragmentation with conflicting perspectives and conclusions in migration study, which is criticized by several researchers (Lawson, 1999; Chapman and Prothero, 1983; Skeldon, 1990). One of central dualities is that of micro and macro, which is also conflated with theoretical paradigms and methodologies. Neoclassical economic theories are generally considered as micro-based on the assumption that a social process is the aggregate of individual actions (Massey, 1993). A structural approach, on the other hand, assumes the predominant role of social structures that leave individuals with little choice. Both theories are severely criticized for their being superficial and predetermined (Wood, 1982; Goss and Lindquist, 1995).

There have been various efforts to find a middle ground that can connect the individual with the broad social and economic structures. For some, the household is a natural analytical unit that incorporates individual decisions and makes strategic actions (Stark, 1991; Wood, 1982). For others, it is kinship or social networks that connect individuals and households with the socioeconomic structures and sustain migration over time (Massey, 1987, 1993). Both households and social networks are intermediate units between individuals and societies and contribute to the understanding of a multifaceted migration process. But they are not adequate analytical units to bridge broad social structures and individuals since they only address social interaction, not system integration (Giddens, 1984). In other words, households and migration networks only include those members close to their everyday lives, while the world is often ruled by those farther way.

Despite the conflicting views of migration impacts and processes, these two schools are not so different as they look like at first appearance. They both assume that “migration of labor is a response to a wage differential or inequality between the source and destination countries caused by a difference in level of socioeconomic development” (Goss and Lindquist, 1995: 317). Migration studies, therefore, have often been reduced to testing

the obvious, income differentials. The richness of migration process and its interconnection with social change have been largely ignored.

A fundamental drawback in conventional migration theories is their inability to include human agency in their theorization. This point is obvious for the structural approach in which individual migrants are doomed as the victims of capital penetration. Human agency has little room here. It is not so different, I believe, for the neoclassical economics approach since people are often minimized as human economica who are only interested in maximizing their utility. Although claimed as a micro-based theory, many neoclassical studies use macro-level data to test the response of migration to a few determinants like wages and unemployment. In essence, migrants in such neoclassical analyses are not the ordinary people we see in everyday lives. In this sense, neoclassical theory is also “structural” and predetermined just as structural theory. There is no human face and human voice in such macro study. The analysis is about abstract numbers and abstract forces.

This assessment on neoclassical models and theories are on the general or typical cases. It doesn't include all the research and studies on human migration. Some studies, such as those by DeJong and Gardner (1981), Hugo (1982), and Chapman (1991), did pay great attention to micro-level process and migration decision making.

The self-fulfilling assumptions and theories leave heterogeneous social contexts unattended. In criticizing conventional migration theory, Pooley and Whyte (1991) make insightful remarks that I would like to quote here.

“Heavily quantitative studies using large data sets tend to produce an impersonal, dehumanized approach in which flows replace individual people and the motives for migration are assumed rather than proven, often being interpreted in a simplistic and generalized way to a point where they have little meaning. Such aggregative work can stretch the credibility of available sources to their limit without giving any significant additional insights to the migration process. In the process of aggregating the data, individuals with their hopes, fears and aspirations, become lost. Although such work provides valuable information, and can

clearly demonstrate the patterns of inter-regional and international migration (which is what it sets out to do), the macro-scale analysis of migration tells us little or nothing about the processes of population movement or the causes and effects of migration. (page 4-5)"

There has been wide discontent with the current status of population geography, in which migration has been a dominant concern since the early 1990s (Findlay and Graham, 1991; Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; White and Jackson, 1995). Population geography was criticized as isolated from the theoretical debate going on in the human geography. Various prescriptions are prepared to change its contentment and quiet. The breakthrough is actually in the migration field. This is what I call the post-structural turn in migration research. There are several directions in this change. One is to seek an analytical middle ground between macro structures and individuals by investigating migration institutions through the perspective of structuration (Goss and Lindquist, 1995; Findlay and Li, 1997). Another is to seek human voices and faces with identity and desire which are often oppressed by official ideology and power (Lawson, 1998, 1999; England and Stiell, 1997; Chant, 1992; Li and Findlay, 1996; Pooley and Whyte, 1991). This strand is also very interested in the interactions of migrant identity and places, particularly in the new global environment (Lawson and Silvey, 1998; see review by Mitchell, 1999).

One recent study that explicitly promotes institutional analysis of migration is that of Goss and Lindquist (1995). Goss and Lindquist propose a structuration framework at the outset to examine the migration process of Filipino labor emigration. They argue that migration institutions are better analytical units than households and migration networks, though they are largely unnoticed and even less analyzed. Labor migration is regulated by various state agencies and private placement agencies and actively participated in by laborers.²⁸ Philippine labor export started in the early 1970s. Over the years, practices related to labor emigration gradually stabilized and "sedimented" into migration institutions. There are various rules, requirements and procedures for potential laborers

²⁸The Filipino case is by no means peculiar and unique. Studies of labor emigration in the form of indentured labor and permanent settlers all show the involvement of different institutions, such as

and agencies. These rules and procedures constrain the practices of actors involved. For example, recruitment agencies need official licenses to pursue the business by showing enough capital, knowledge and good political connections. For each recruitment contract, they are required to obtain the permission from POEA (the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency). These recruitment agencies are also gatekeepers of labor export who enjoy substantial discrete power over migrant selection due to a large pool of applicants. Potential migrants must try hard to get seriously considered and eventually approved through using connections, finding informants or even bribing. These legitimate and illegitimate practices are constantly reshaping the migration institutions subject to changes in broader socioeconomic contexts. Just like the previous studies, the authors also use interviews to understand individual migrants' perceptions and actions rather than just assume their intentions and actions as in conventional theories.

England and Stiell's article analyzes international labor migration at the other end, through a different perspective (1997). They examine the process of and discourse in the construction of national identities by the example of paid foreign domestic workers in Toronto, of which Filipino domestic workers is the largest group. In addition to the discussion of the historical and structural background of paid foreign domestic workers in Canada, they show the detailed process of how the domestic workers are socially constructed by the state and placement agencies. The way of social construction has significant impacts on foreign workers' earnings and adaptation at the destination. The stereotyping in migrant identity construction is not just exerted from outside, rather most of the perceptions were shared and internalized by the domestic worker themselves. Thus, identity formation of migrants is a complex process and is not a one-way traffic. Their analysis also shows reveals migrant agency in forming associations of foreign domestic workers to protect their own rights and to try to make the government yield to their claims.

government, placement agencies and charity organizations (Pooley and Whyte, 1991; Portes and Walton, 1981; M.D. North-Coombes, 1984.)

In another study, Lawson and Silvey (1998) argue for the importance of migrant narratives in understanding the social construction of migrant identity and place. Migration is part of the development process that is promoted by the state and participated in by migrants, yet with ambivalence. Migrant's experiences and narratives sometimes run against the dominant narratives of neoliberalism. Migrant's identity and sense of place are shaped by their experiences in and their affiliation with multiple places (also Findley and Li, 1997). Findley and Li initiate an auto-biographical approach in understanding the construction of migration self-identity through the case of Hong Kong professional emigrants (Findlay and Li, 1997). They argue that the migration decision is not limited to external factors but may stretch back to earlier events and contexts in one's life course. The "seeds of migration" in the form of expectations, family experiences and peer groups often works at the level of practical consciousness. Migrants feel and know about their intentions and conditions of migration but cannot express them discursively. Interviews reveal the impacts of particular cultures and values in Hong Kong on these emigrants and how these values and norms strongly influence the integration of Hong Kong's emigrants in various destinations. The article does not push further along Giddens' line of constant reproduction of structure and values by investigating the impacts of various destination cultures in the Hong Kong's emigrants' values and goals.

The pursuit for a deeper understanding of migration process is not limited to geographers and sociologists. In their volume, *Migrants, Emigrants and Immigrants: a Social History of Migration*, Pooley and Whyte (1991) include a number of articles that explore innovative ways in studying historical migration. Two characteristics stand out from the collection. One is the attempt to use diverse sources of information to reconstruct personal migration histories and to understand the situatedness of the migration decision. The other is to examine the links between individual migration and broad social change. These sources of information include diaries, published and unpublished letters, reminiscences, shipping registers, census registration, and official documents. Detailed personal information is able to reveal the migrant voices and the ambivalence of the migration experience, as in Ecuador nowadays (Lawson, 1999). Some articles also

uncover the important roles of the British government in regulating migration overseas. Various means were adopted to promote emigration to British colonies to reduce the population pressure. Those include a propaganda, state subsidies, training, and sometimes outright forced migration of less desirable people. Migration control was widely practiced in the British Isles on the eve of industrialization, contrary to the image of free mobility in emergent market societies.

From the above discussion of a few studies using post-structural approaches, we can certainly feel their differences from conventional theories and have a glimpse of the new horizon for migration studies. There is a large amount of research on international migration, which has a pretty good grip on macro factors and scales of movement (Massey, 1989; Massey et al, 1994; Hatton and Williamson, 1994; Papademetriou and Martin, 1991). But the new approach touches many aspects of migration that are left out by the conventional approach. For example, the historical-structural approach treats international migrants as mere victims of global capital accumulation, which is really at odds with the desire and expectation of potential Filipino migrants. In a similar manner, neoclassical theory is at loss to explain why only a selected few are able to emigrate from the Philippines to Canada given the huge wage differentials. Actually if we put some of the studies discussed above together, we can have a more complete picture and in-depth understanding of international migration. For example, Goss and Lindquist (1995), and England and Stiell's (1997) articles fit very well together. Both emphasize the institutional structures that not only constrain but also enable migrants, recruitment agencies and the state in their pursue for self-interests. They are both well aware of the important roles of ideology and social norms in regulating migration behavior. Connecting the two allows us to literally co-migrate with a typical emigrant in the Philippines to Canada and experience the complicated process and uncertainties he or she faces at each stage. England and Stiell may go a little further to expound on the interactions between the state, residents and immigrants in terms of immigration programs, identity formation and politics. The change of immigration program from FDM (Foreign Domestic Movement) to LCP (Live-in Caregiver Program) drastically

altered immigration patterns. The article implies the subtle interactions (the process of social construction) of mutual influence between placement agencies and employers. But it is not clear how the state and society interacted with each other in terms of immigration policies and program. An institutional perspective may give a more dialectical analysis of the state's immigration policies than treat them as mostly exogenous as the authors do.

In the above discussion and comparison of major strands of migration theories, the emphasis is put on their differences and distinctions. But as Brown (1998) and Lawson and Silvey (1998) explicitly state, there are both continuities and changes for geographical theories in general and migration theories in particular. In that regard, the debate between Halfacree and Boyle (1995), and Skeldon (1995) is very illuminating. One side argues that biographical and ethnographical approach in migration is nothing new. Researchers had done that back in the 1960s and 1970s such as the work by Skeldon (1990) and Prothero and Chapman(1985). The other side argues that current approach is distinctly different from earlier ones since it is embedded in the context of current social theories. There are credits to both sides. Many ideas are not completely new but they are often restated in a new context. From that perspective, research by Goss and Lindquist on migration institutions and roles of government departments and private agencies resembles research on urban regulation and the importance of "gate keepers", for example by Saunders(1986).

Nonetheless, these new perspectives attentive to institutions and migrant agencies may provide an alternative theoretical angle to analyze Chinese migration. Just like the labor emigration in the Philippines, internal migration in China has been regulated by the government through rules and procedures. Migration associated with upward mobility often needs to be pursued by potential migrants through mobilizing resources and social networks (*guanxi*). Similar to migrants in Indonesia and immigrants in Canada, migrants in China both before and after reform have been involved with and subject to social construction of their identities. Stereotyping such as *xiangxiaren* (countryman) for rural migrant labor in the 1980s and *zhishi qingnian* (educated youths) for rusticated urban

youths in the 1970s has played important roles in shaping not only migrant subject experience but also the migration process. There are two immediate implications for Chinese migration studies. One is to pay close attention to institutional structures. Institutions are not only constraints but also enabling channels that get things accompanied in orderly fashion. Another is the importance of ideology and norms and how they interact with identities and migration choices.

If we look really closely at the actual migration process and associated decision making, we will find that differences between Western and Chinese societies may not be as large as it appears. The conventional theories neglect the roles of social norms, ideology, bureaucratic regulations, social construction of people and places, and power structures in migration patterns and processes. Even in Western societies, the migration decision is often influenced and determined by factors other than income, such as identity, social norms, and various institutional arrangements from education and training to housing and labor markets, and social norms. This alternative conception of migration as one form of social practice embedded in the complicated institutional arrangements unpacks the drastic differences between socialist and market societies in terms of migration mechanisms and decision making. Now the social system with a particular set of institutions becomes the object of analysis, in relation to their roles in migration, rather than just a simplified, fixed, predetermined macro structures, as the case with the neoclassical and historical-structural approach of migration theories.

2.3 Theories of social institutions and Chinese bureaucracy

In addition to migration literature, theories of social institutions and Chinese bureaucracy can also shed light on migration regulation in China and its decision making process. Among these theories are Giddens' structuration theory, Scott's institutional theory, the New Institutional Economics by North and others, Kornai's socialist system and bureaucratic structures by Lieberthal and Oksenberg. I will discuss how these theories provide additional perspectives to internal migration in China.

2.3.1 Theories of Social Institutions

Structuration theory is probably the only theory of social institutions that several migration studies explicitly acknowledge. Dissatisfied with the prevailing dualism and functionalism in social science, Giddens builds up a conceptual framework that “formulates a coherent account of human agency and of structure demands (page xxi).” The central features of Giddens’ theory are dialectic relationships between structure and agency, the limit of rationality and scales of social interaction.²⁹ The first and foremost feature is “duality of structure” perceived as a dialectical process by which the “structural properties of the social system are both the medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize” (Giddens, 1984:25). His primary concern here is the social practices that are fluid and routinized in everyday life rather than either structure or individuals. In his eyes, structure is not something fixed and patterned like a scaffold, the patterning relationship generally sought by both structural and neoclassical theories. Rather it is more like grammatical rules and syntactical resources that everyone draws on to facilitate daily communication and at the same time transforms the language structure itself, sometimes unintendedly. So structure is characterized by rules and resources that allow social practices to be reproduced over time. Unlike the structure in the structural theories which is forcible and overpowering over agency, structure here is both constraining and enabling. Agents can act strategically by employing their knowledge of structures to seek their own interests. It is through these individual actions or social practices that these structures are reproduced and transformed.

Giddens’ notions on the dialectic relationships between structure and agency is definitely a breath of fresh air to migration studies, particularly to Chinese migration studies. Migrants are no longer acting in an institutional vacuum either forced by structural forces like capital accumulation or the socialist state but within diverse, complicated and subtle

²⁹ For a concise introduction of Giddens’ structuration theory that is relevant to migration, see Goss and Linquist (1995).

constraints of institutions, formal rules, social norms, ideology, and resources. So the priorities in migration studies should be to understand the structural properties of regulating migration process in everyday life and its changes over time.

Another feature of Giddens' theories is the bounded rationality of agency.³⁰ The boundedness comes mostly from the limited role of discursive consciousness in human actions. According to him, there are three levels of consciousness, discursive consciousness, practical consciousness and unconsciousness that guide or motivate human actions. Discursive and practical consciousness are similar in that actors are aware of their rationale for actions, but different in that the discursive can be readily and clearly verbalized while the practical one needs to be pondered and reflected before making clear explanations. Due to the complexities and ever-changing nature of social life, practical consciousness is the most effective form of social knowledge. Every social member is an "expert" in social theory in his or her immediate social contexts. But this knowledgeability is bounded by the unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences. It is well presented in Marx' well-known phrase: "Men make history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing". This bounded rationality is the basis of a nonfunctionalist conception of social reproduction, which distinguishes itself from the rationality of seeking higher income or the logic of capital accumulation.

The third feature of Giddens' theory is the emphasis on the embeddedness and situatedness of social actions in time and space, or history and geography. Here time and space are not empty containers that human actions can be stuffed in. Rather they are densely filled with social relations often in the sedimented form of institutions. There are two levels at which social systems cohere and reproduce. One is the social integration that is characterized by the intensive face-to-face interaction with actors "co-present" in

³⁰ The notion of bounded rationality here is similar to the one in the new institutional economics although Giddens himself does not use the word in exactly the same way. See Williamson (1976). However there are some subtle differences. Giddens' notion acknowledges the roles of unconsciousness in human action, while that in the new institutional economics is tilted to the two conditions of rational decision making, i.e., information and processing capacity.

time and space. Another is the system integration between individuals and institutions across time and space without co-presence. Routinization of daily life is a very important part of social reproduction, in Giddens' words, no matter how grand a social system is, it expresses and is expressed through the daily routines of social life. "All social action is contextual and is defined by a specific presence-availability, or potentiality of actors and institutions to come together, and by a specific "bundle" of allocative and authoritative resources. A given locale may then be specified by the rules and resources involved in social action and integration within it."

The institutions are those structures sedimented and regularized over large stretches of time and space. It has quite stable rules consisting of ideology and enforcement mechanisms, and power relationships. This is not to say that institutions do not change.

How and where do knowledgeable agents meet the structures? Giddens conceptualizes the modalities of structuration as three dimensions: signification, domination and legitimization. The rules can be further divided into modes of signifying or meaning constitution, and normative sanctions. Often meaning, normative elements and power are interlaced. Signification represents itself in institutional form of symbolic orders and modes of discourse, which generally falls in the "cultural" domain of social systems. Although symbolic orders and associated modes of discourse are a major institutional locus of ideology, according to Giddens, ideology is not limited to them. "Ideology refers only to those asymmetries of domination which connect signification to the legitimization of sectional interests." Ideology, domination and legitimization are closely related. Actually in Kornai's (1992) analysis of socialist system, ideology is one major source of power. Domination depends upon the mobilization of two different types of resources, i.e., allocative resources and authoritative resources. The former refers to the forms of transformative capacity generating command over objects, goods, or material phenomena. The latter refers to the capacity over persons or actors.

Social knowledge and power are unequally distributed, however 'weak' their social positions, individuals always maintain some sense of autonomy and capacity for strategic action. According to the Giddens' "dialectic of control," relations of domination-subordination are reciprocal and "even the most seemingly 'powerless' individuals are able to mobilize resources whereby they carve out 'spaces of control'. Even the most marginalized populations are thus able to mobilize resources and rules in order to influence the actions the more powerful towards them (Goss and Lindquist, 1995; Scott, 1985; Barzel, 1989).

The dialectics of control is a very revealing part of structuration theory that applies to Chinese migration control. Rather than conceiving planned migration as totally controlled and determined by the state bureaucracy, we may see it as influenced by the decisions of the state bureaucracies and migrants. Even in forced migration, migrants had certain capacities to influence the decision making of migration for their own interests and advantage.

New Institutional Economics (NIE) is a recent theoretical development in economics that is interested in the deeper reasons for economic performance in a long time frame. Unlike neoclassical economics which is abstract from the real world of complex institutions, NIE seeks explanations of economic performance from social organizations and institutions. Developed mostly by economists like Coase and North, this theoretical school is gaining acceptance in economics, political science and anthropology (Coase, 1960; North, 1990). At the core of NIE is transaction cost theory. Neoclassical economics is mostly interested in transformation costs, i.e., costs in transforming raw materials into products. But there is another kind of cost, the cost of social exchange, including information collecting, searching, bargaining and insurance. Social institutions can reduce the uncertainties of social transactions by formulating certain rules and norms, enforced by social organizations, such as the state. They are not necessarily created and maintained for promoting economic growth. Rather they could be instruments for maintaining power and special interests of particular social groups (North, 1990; Knight, 1992). NIE has been

very powerful in explaining many social institutions and social change in modern as well as traditional societies. Examples are the rise of Western societies, the decline of paternalism in the American South, and the transformation of an African tribe toward modern society.³¹

NIE covers wide areas and topics. For my interest in internal migration, its principle-agent framework and the theory of the state could be very useful. The principal-agent framework basically deals with the institutional arrangement of agency. Due to divergent interests and monitoring costs, agents enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in carrying out assigned tasks by the principal. The principal would develop institutional structures to give incentives to agents. It could show insights in the bureaucratic process of economic planning and migration control. Another helpful part is state theory (North, 1981). Despite the variances of states across time and space, there are certain commonalities. A central function of the state is to collect enough taxes to push its agenda and maintain its management. A state faces challenges from within and outside. It would change its policies and institutional arrangements when facing challenges in order to survive. This framework gives a coherent view of institutional changes of the Chinese state in the past. A variety of work has been done to analyze economic and social change in China by employing NIE's ideas and perspectives, such as Huang's analysis of investment and inflation control in the post-reform period, and Whiting's research of differential treatment of TVEs in south Jiangsu and Wenzhou (Huang, 1994; Whiting, 2000). Huang demonstrated that the compliance of provincial governments in investment control depended upon severity of enforcement and convergence of interests. Smooth transactions and governance are not automatically guaranteed just because all officials belong to the same communist party and government. Whiting's work revealed the importance of incentive structures of local governments in developing rural industries and historical embeddedness of development.

³¹ For more examples see (Alston, 1996; Drobak, 1997 ; Harris, 1995).

Similar to structuration theory, NIE is also interested in institutional arrangements and social change. But it analyzes those from an economic perspective and in a more rigorous manner. It has great insights in the economic organizations and economic exchange and to certain extent, the state. But it is rather weak in conceptualizing the elusive nature of social interaction and social practice. For example, North's distinction of formal and informal rules lumps together different institutional process, like the normative and cognitive aspects, which is explained quite clearly by Scott in his theory of institutions and organizations.

Scott's (1995) theoretical interpretation of institutions provides yet another perspective. According to him, there are three pillars of institutions and institutional analysis. They are the regulative, normative, and cognitive pillars. His analysis of the cognitive and normative pillars is insightful. This insight also draws links between the new institutionalism and post structural theories by revealing the importance of social constructiveness of social process. The importance of identity politics and cognitive choices might explain some subtle part of the migration process, like the rusticated youths' passion in the first phase of migration.

Cultural systems provide a general context for individuals to construct and constantly negotiate social reality in everyday life. It provides symbolic frameworks, perceived to both objective and external, for orientation and guidance (Scott, 1995: 41). It also has implicit rules to create categories and typifications, which are processes by which "concrete and subjectively unique experiences...are ongoingly subsumed under general orders of meaning that are both objectively and subjectively real". One general example he gives is the football game in which players, actions and parts are all given meanings, not limited to rules and enforcement (as North suggested). In this sense, essentially institutions, actions and players are all socially constructed.

There are subtle but important differences between normative and cognitive theories. Let us look at the case of compliance. To normative theorists, it is normative expectations

that guide behavior. We do things because others expect us to do according to our social roles and positions. Our actions are subject to the power of constraining force of social norms. “For cognitive theorists, compliance occurs in many circumstances because other types of behavior are inconceivable; routines are followed because they are taken for granted as “the way we do these things”. So, the cognitive framework stresses the importance of social identities: our conceptions of who we are and what ways of action make sense for us in a given situation. Rather than focusing on the constraining force of norms, cognitive theorists point to the importance of scripts: guidelines for sensemaking and choosing meaningful actions” (Scott, 1995: 45).

By definition, constitutive rules for sense making are shaped and negotiated by individual actors rather than forced externally. Recent theories emphasize the “politics of identity” in which individuals or groups create goals, identities, and solidarities that provide meaning and generate ongoing social commitments. A cognitive conception of institutions stresses the central role played by the socially mediated construction of a common framework of meaning. Wider belief systems and cultural frames influence individual and collective actions in various ways. One important channel is imitation. Individuals and organizations deal with uncertainty by imitating the ways of others who are superior and successful. We want to be associated with high social status and security. According to Scott, practices of imitation are prevalent not just for individuals but also for organizations, such as firms.

2.3.2 Theories of socialist societies and Chinese bureaucracy

If structuration and institutional theories inform us in studying social institutions in general, the theories of socialism and Chinese bureaucracy help us understand the essential features of socialism and its actual characteristics in Chinese system. The most influential theory of socialism is that of Janos Kornai (1992). In his book, *Socialist System*, he laid down the key elements (pillars in his words) of socialism and their relationships. Socialist ideology, state ownership and bureaucratic coordination are the

three pillars on which socialism stands. The three pillars are mutually dependent and cannot work with any one missing. Kornai's approach is a good complement to the thesis of economic development strategies, by uncovering the root factors and logics in the working of a socialist system.

In this framework, we can analyze migration regulation from a more comprehensive perspective. Migration regulation was made possible by all three elements. It is conducted through bureaucratic coordination (planning), justified and enforced by socialist ideologies, and built upon the domination of state ownership. Lack of any element would render it non-workable. Without bureaucratic coordination, it is simply not possible to carry out labor and migration planning. Without socialist ideologies which require the submission of individuals to the socialist state, migration planning would be extremely difficult and costly. State ownership gives individuals no alternative to complying with the state's assignments. A careful survey of migration experiences in socialist China supports the importance of these three institutional elements, as I will do in following chapters.

Focusing on the root elements of socialist institutions also sheds light on the decline of migration planning. There are fundamental but gradual changes in all three elements, socialist ideologies, bureaucratic planning and the ownership structure during the process of socialist development, particularly after the reform.

In addition to the insights into the general institutional structure of socialist economy, Kornai also has a penetrating analysis of the behavior of socialist enterprises. His theory of economic shortage and soft budget constraints becomes building block for any research on socialist economies. Soft budget constraints and labor hoarding behavior of socialist enterprises are related to migration since they are partly the cause for institutionalized practices of migration control. There are many incentives for enterprise

managers to hire more people, which must be counter-balanced by the control of the state.³²

Another body of literature that enables us to understand the socialist institutions in China is research on the Chinese political system and bureaucracies. Under this categories are several publications. Among them are well known studies by Andrew Walder, Elizabeth Perry, Susan Shirk, Viven Shue, and Jean Oi. There are also early scholars like Harry Harding, Audrea Dornithorne, and Lynn White.³³ Some related work cut across the boundaries of several fields. Such is the work by Huang. He analyzes investment decision making and bureaucratic structures by applying insights from Kornai's socialist institutions and the new institutional economics. Lieberthal and Oksenberg's (1988) analysis of the Chinese bureaucratic process focuses on structures and decision making processes, particularly for the post reform period. Their view of a segmented and separated bureaucratic system and the various techniques to integrate the system is very insightful.

Huang (1995) reveals the tremendous role of the political system in economic decision making and activities, even in the late reform period. Implicit is the even stronger influence of a political system before reform, in a more intrusive way and with more weight attributed to ideology and political attributes for people at all levels. But it does not defy the fact that economic considerations are always important in the decision making of governments and individuals, although framed in different ideology and words.

A question is whether Lieberthal and Oksenberg's findings on the energy sector apply to the labor sector. Are there any differences in these two sectors and for each sector before

³² There is synergism between theories of socialism and NIE. Stiglitz's theory of economic management is revolved around the issue of information following Hayek's insightful work (Hayek, 1989; Stiglitz, 1996).

³³ Harding's work on the innovations of government and administrative system is helpful to understand the dynamic nature of Chinese bureaucratic system and its internal contradictions. complementary with Giddens' view of constant reproductions of social structures.

and after reform? The labor sector is similar to the investment sector in terms of its general characteristics, while the energy sector has substantive area of resources. Labor and investment cut all areas and all sectors, which are a core part of central planning. Compared to the energy sector, the labor sector is also more decentralized, which means that it is mostly in the hands of local government unless there are that issues and crisis that cannot be contained and protrude into the national arena, as happened in the early 1960s and early 1970s. In that sense, it is more regulated by bureaucratic structures and routines. Of course, major policies at any time would reshape the priority and even change procedures of these bureaucratic coordinations. Generally labor and personnel are lower on the government agenda. But nonetheless, they are the core part of planning routines of the Chinese economy.

The labor sector would have different mechanisms of bargaining and coordination. The strong emphasis on constraining workers and staff and budget is not characteristic of the energy sector. The role of *hukou*, dossier (*dang'an*) and work unit (*danwei*) control are not important in the energy sector. The labor sector is more decentralized also in the sense that we need to consider conditions in the lower level of government planning and administration. The work unit is the primary unit for social integration, while the system interaction extends mostly in the government decision arena. We can add that the day-to-day interaction of most ordinary individuals in the analysis of migration and labor planning, which is not a concern in the energy sector. When the labor sector is more decentralized, decision making is more diffused and fragmented, it implies that consensus building is more problematic, control and monitoring are more difficult and costly, and principal agent problems more prevalent.

So how does the bureaucratic structure influence labor and migration planning and management? Dominance of ideology concern is less apparent when we try to get to the actual process and mechanisms of migration and labor coordination. Chan's (1994) explanation is in the category of a "rationality" model in that migration control comes out

of the necessities of assisting the heavy industry development strategy. He is not concerned with the actual process of control and planning. Liebirthal and Oksenberg's (1988) work shows just the opposite that the actual process and structure have put large constraints on those necessities. Question marks need to be put on those logics and automatic process.

I can tackle the bureaucratic process through examining the bureaucratic structures, coordination and planning mechanisms, tools of controls and enforcement, identity and ideology. The state had tremendous power in shaping people's identity, expectations, place identity and migration contexts. But it does not mean that state power is unidirectional since all the policies need compliance to some extent.

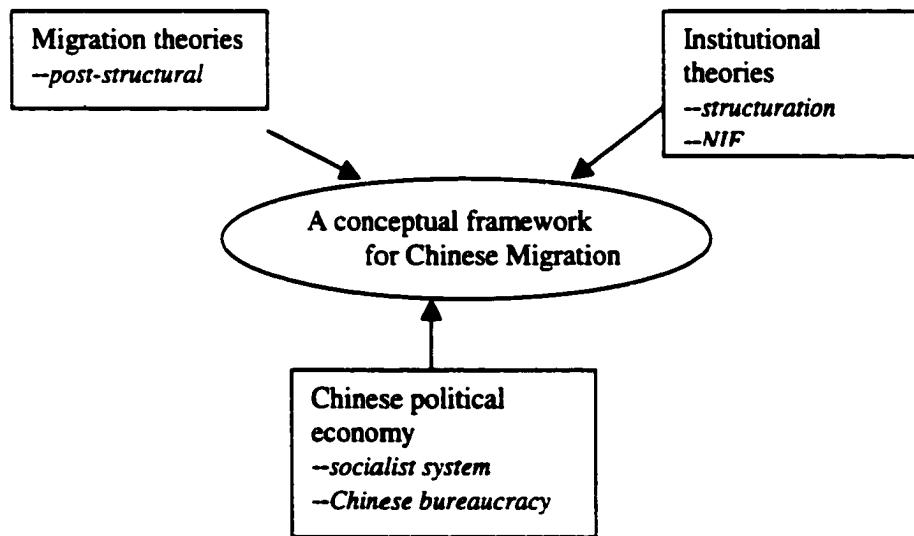


Figure 2.2 Literature Context for Conceptualizing Chinese Migration

In sum, the recent post-structural turn provides an alternative way to look and examine Chinese migration experiences. It also enables us to participate in the theoretical discourse of a migration, rather than remain in the parochial corner of applying established theories. Various literatures offer theoretical insights into migration regulation in socialist China from different perspectives (see Figure 2.2). A new

conceptual framework can benefit greatly from these schools in order to dig deeper into the actual process of migration decision making at multiple levels. By doing so, Chinese migration research can contribute to mainstream migration theories through the analysis of the roles of state and bureaucracies, ideology and identity formation, planning and control, place and identity, and so on.

2.4 A Conceptual framework for Chinese Migration

Inspired and guided by these recent changes in migration theories and social sciences, I would like to pose questions from a different perspective than the previous studies. Imbued by economic theories of migration, earlier studies are primarily concerned with the economic rationale of migration from an individual perspective. They find it very hard to analyze the role of the state and often refer to it as an explanation rather than as a process to be further explored and analyzed. The typical questions asked by earlier studies include: What are the extent and patterns of migration? What are characteristics of migrants? What are the factors contributing to the migration patterns? Relatively little attention is given to institutional structures, agency and the actual process of migration. Rather than being restricted to generalized patterns and the logic of income differentials and state control, I would like to examine the actual institution structures that regulate migration and seek to understand the implications on social change. The questions I will be asking are: How was migration planned in socialist China? What were the decision making processes and what were the implications? Why did people comply to the state? To answer these questions, we have to explore the institutional structures and people's choices confined within and interacted with those structures that had great impacts on migration patterns and social change in the socialist period.

The central elements in the analytic framework are institutional structures, planning and enforcement, ideologies and social control, identity and place, structure and agency, clientilism and guanxi.

The framework draws several perspectives from related literatures and studies. The first is the dialectical relationship between structure and agency, the notions of dualities of structure in Giddens' structuration theory, and the dialectics of control. Under this perspective, we perceive migrants not as passive victims of state policies and force but as knowledgeable individuals acting on self-interests. Not only migrants, but also the state are constrained by the resources, ideology and social norms. There is no absolute power previously assigned to the Chinese state as a totalitarian government. The state has various limits.

The second perspective is that the actual structuring properties regulating migration in a socialist state deserve our full attention. Under structural properties are government bureaucratic structures, rules and procedures of migration, controlling mechanisms, ideologies, and social norms. The state is not perceived as an entity but as fragmented structures that need to be integrated and controlled. In this perspective, I am going to analyze the bureaucratic structures that are closely related to labor planning and migration management. NIE's principal agent framework is very revealing in examining the bureaucratic process and labor hoarding behavior at state enterprises. I will introduce analysis at several levels, i.e., the top leaders, local governments including provincial and municipal governments, state enterprises and finally individuals.

Migration has been essential to the Chinese state in two respects. One is to decrease the number of people relying on the state budget and increase the labor productivity in state enterprises, mostly in the cities. Migration control had become the lifeline of Chinese state by preventing people from moving in the cities. A movement up the urban hierarchies has always been discouraged and restricted. It might be one of a few policies that have remained unchanged since late 1950s despite frequent and great changes in other policy areas. The other is to facilitate migration in the desired directions. Since the state has monopolized power over society, it has, in return, overall responsibilities for the people it rules. It needs to speed up economic development to compete with other countries in the world. It needs to make sure that borders were safe from potential

military actions. It needs to increase agricultural production to feed the urban people. It needs to maintain internal control of the society. In all these aspects, migration is an important element in fulfilling the economic, political and military functions of the state.

The state can influence population distribution and migration in several ways. It can provide economic incentives and disincentives to influence people's decisions on migration according to the preference of the state. It can actively construct places and citizenship by instilling and propagating certain ideas or images that would appeal to potential migrants by using media and government channels. It can set administrative restrictions on undesirable flows. The last is to force people to move in "downward" directions. The difficulty increases as we move down the list of policy options of migration. "Policies prohibiting, compelling, or channeling migration requires stronger measures than do policies simply encouraging or discouraging migration.³⁴" The state needs tremendous resources and political will to achieve those. Often the state employs combinations of various options rather just one. But rarely can a state achieve what the Chinese state did in migration control and channeling.

From the discussion of related literature and Chinese migration characteristics, let us think about the potential format and scope of a conceptual framework for Chinese migration. It should not be a neoclassical economic model in which migration decision is largely based on economic considerations, as many researchers attempted to do. The reason is simply since the decision to migrate is often not initiated by individuals but by the state. On the other hand, the framework should not be all about government policies and state interests, since any government policy needs implementation and compliance, which is not at all automatic but problematic, as we learn by a close scrutiny of Chinese policy making process. It is here that an institutional framework comes in. The attention should be on the negotiation between state interests and individual interests situated in the contexts of time and place. The decisions by cadres and individuals regarding migration are grounded in the institutional structures but at same time transform them on

a continuous basis. It is only through individual actions that social structures are maintained and reproduced (Giddens, 1984). In addition to the general acknowledgment of structuration properties of social system, the new analytical framework should also incorporate various elements of socialist Chinese society, such as bureaucratic regulations and procedures, ideology, planning, political mobilization, and guanxi (social networking).

The challenging task is to find a framework that can place these elements and make sense of them rather than just to draw a laundry list. I propose an institutional framework that can achieve that objective. By institutions I mean rules and procedures in social practices.³⁵ When certain practices are enacted repetitively, they tend to sediment into relatively stable rules and procedures across time and space to become institutions (Giddens, 1984). There are three major components of institutions, i.e., regulation, legitimization and cognition.³⁶ Regulation is related to rules and procedure involved with material allocation and exercising authority over people. Legitimation refers to norms and ideology that define or offer values and roles in social actions. Cognition is about mental constructs that try to make sense of self, others and societies. Although these three components point out the different spheres of social institutions, they are by no means independent of each other and cannot be analyzed separately.

³⁴ Planning for Internal Migration: A review of issues and policies in developing countries. Page 8.

³⁵ It is in agreement with major theorists, such as North (1990), Giddens (1984), and Scott (1995). The criticism of this definition is that it is so broad that it can mean anything. It can be such a convention as driving on the right side or a policy that all graduates should go to the countryside to be reeducated (in the late 1960s). It could be on any scale from families to supranational organizations. I strongly agree that these theorists explain very well some aspects of human societies but do not provide ready-to-use frameworks for future research. It should not be surprising given the complexities of human societies. Therefor the burden is on researchers to specify what types and aspects of institutions they are interested and what they can do with them.

³⁶ Here I mixed the perspectives and terms from these theorists. Giddens (1984) argues that the key to understanding the structuration is through three modalities of power, legitimization and signification. In Scott (1995), it is framed as the regulative, normative and cognitive pillars. North (1990) blends all three aspects into rules in the forms of functions to minimize transaction costs and frame cognition and choices. I intend to separate them for it allows me to analyze social practices in different spheres and to engage current migration theories with different emphasis.

This framework allows me to analyze all the major elements of Chinese migration, such as policy making and bureaucratic regulations, powerful roles of ideology and its conflict with traditional norms, and construction of people and place identity, in a systematic way. It enables me to strike a wedge into the most difficult concept, 'voluntariness' in socialist migration. It also makes possible the engagement with current theoretical discourse in migration field where identities and regulative structures are gaining increasing attentions.

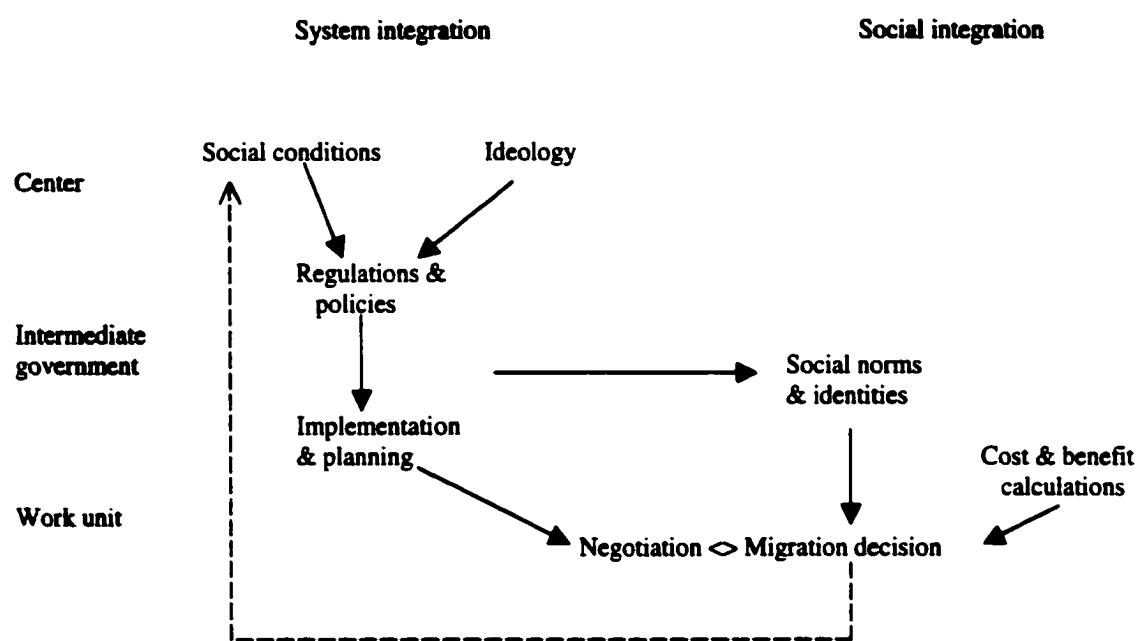


Figure 2.3 A Conceptual Framework of Chinese Migration from an Institutional Perspective

I organize major elements of Chinese migration and condense them into a schematic figure through the institutional perspective (see Figure 2.3). The figure shows basic relationships between those elements and how they influence migration decisions. They are placed within the context of power hierarchy and spatial scales. The temporal dimension is hidden in the feedback of migration decisions of all the individuals to the

overall social conditions. It can take various forms, such as initiation, enthusiastic response, compliance, resistance, early exit, or even open contention.

2.4.1 Policy making and implementation

The upper left part of the figure describes the process of policy formation at the center. By the center I mean the central government, mostly the few top leaders (Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988). A major national policy is formed by considering social conditions and ideological limits through the perceptions of top leaders.³⁷ Often the initiatives come from below and then are recognized, recommended or even enforced. Although information comes from both directions, power is mostly unidirectional, i.e., downward. Policy formation takes the form, more often than not, of crisis management. The center needs to identify and select the top agendas from a large number of critical issues and is pressured to respond in timely manner.

At this level also lie the regulations and procedures, which can be considered as stabilized policies originated and sedimented from the past. This is the area of bureaucracy with fixed rules and stabilized organizations, characterized by procedures and routines of administrative management. They are the most visible forms of institutions, such as government departments, the hukou system, the work unit system, labor planning, collectivization and so on, many of which originated from past crises rather than rational design. Due to the potential conflict between socialist ideology and bureaucratic autonomy as well as political struggle at the top, central policies imbued in strong ideological overtone are anything but harmonious with the tendency of routinization in bureaucratic practices (Lieberthal and Roksenburg, 1988).

Once policy is formed, it needs to be implemented by lower levels of government. Now we move down to the middle left of the chart. Due to inherent problems in socialist planning, implementation is mostly carried out through mobilization and political

³⁷ By social conditions I mean the social circumstances often occurring in the form of crisis in all societal aspects, which could be political, economic, military and so on.

campaigns.³⁸ Ideological and political control is employed to generate and enforce conformity from local government. This is much more so in China than in the more developed socialist countries, due to its diversity, size and the monitoring capability of the state. The center has a monopoly of not only resources, but also an ideology and political information, which counterbalance the tendency of local government to pursue its own interests.³⁹ Parallel to the emphasis on conformity from local government, the center also encourages local initiatives and competition to solve the priority issues on the center's agenda. Those officials with foresight and guts have the prospect of being promoted up the political hierarchy. Once the priority is clearly identified and there is no confusion on the top, local officials will feel great pressure to implement it. Often this takes the form of the leading cadre in the local units personally being responsible for that policy. Since the priorities often shift and change, policies and their implementation are bound to be inconsistent over time.⁴⁰

2.4.2 Negotiation and migration decision

At the bottom of the chart is the level of work units, which are the cells of Chinese socialist society.⁴¹ They are characterized by personal interactions on daily basis, termed

³⁸ An essential problem in socialist system is information. Since central planning system needs to match the supply and demand of resources, labor and capital in several spatial scales through administrative means, it needs to have all the information about producers and consumers such as quantity, quality and preferences. Even if it has all the information, it is impossible to solve the huge simultaneous equations with the best computing knowledge and devices (Stiglitz, 1996; Hayek, 1956). Related to the information issue is the principal and agent problem due to divergence of interests between local and central government and the asymmetrical distribution of information (Huang, 1996; North, 1990). Local governments as agents of central government often have different interests and agendas from the central government and among themselves due to diversities in local conditions, incentive and responsibility structures. They tend to promote their interests at the expense of the center, which is exacerbated by asymmetrical information in that the agents have more knowledge of local conditions than the center.

³⁹ The central document system is highly hierarchical. The accessibility to documents and directives from the center is often associated with administrative ranks. The center specifies the administrative rank that a particular document can reach. And documents go down the hierarchical level in considerable time lag. So when a news or policy reach the masses, it has been discussed and circulated in cadres for a long time. In this way, the center essentially limits key decision making to a small circle of cadres.

⁴⁰ In addition to ideological and political control, other measures are used to achieve integration of the bureaucratic system. One is to form administrative systems in a vertical line, such as Ministry of Labor at the center, down to labor bureaus at local governments, and labor sections at work units. Others include document systems, working meetings, and the media (Liebthal and Oksenberg, 1988).

⁴¹ By the work unit I refer to not only the state units but also neighborhoods, natural villages, schools, and basic military units. Despite differences in the nature of their functions and levels of hierarchy, they are

as social integration by Giddens (1984) as against system integration with capabilities of time-space distanciation. This is the arena of micro-politics, the condensation point of ideals and social norms, and the negotiation zone of policy and personal interests (Blecher, 1979). This is where ideologies and policies reach the lives of ordinary people. The success of government policies is determined by the countless decisions of these individuals.

There are various strategies to seek their compliance such as catering to personal interests through material incentives and social mobility, appealing to patriotism, setting up models through media and 'advanced' cases (*xianjin dianxing*), exerting political pressure based on continuing class struggle theory, economic disincentives, and so on. These strategies can be employed singly or together in the mobilization at various scales. There are also various strategies from the individual perspective. One may enthusiastically respond to the call of the party by taking the chance of being promoted. One can use *guanxi* and resources to circumvent undesirable migration or to pursue a desirable one. *Guanxi* can cut across the cellular nature of work units and achieve some spatial-temporal distanciation (May, 1990).

There are basically two types of migration in socialist China, that initiated by the state and that by individuals. Migration initiated by the state dominated before reform, which was often associated with mobilization in various forms. Self-initiated migration is generally discouraged and only permitted when it falls in the categories of sickness and other difficulties. Both types of migration need negotiation although opposite directions. The burden is on the state when it tries to mobilize the mass to migrate for economic and political reasons. For self initiated migration, individuals need to convince bureaucrats in charge that their needs to move are legitimate.

similar in face-to-face interactions in daily activities. The majority of them also stay at same place off the working hours such as a work unit compound. For example, the State Planning Commission as a site of work can be regarded as a work unit since the staff and officials work together during the daytime and may live mostly in several concentrated places, such as dorms and unit-built apartments.

Migration decision making at the individual level is determined by the calculation of costs and benefits in China, just as anywhere else. But the calculation is not necessarily limited to economic considerations. Political advancement and higher social mobility were very important considerations in pre-reform China. One was willing to take a downward migration if that can lead to an upward social mobility or if one can avoid perceived severe punishment in the future. It needs to be pointed out that this calculation is filtered through personal identity and influenced by social norms and significant others. If one identifies herself as a loyalist to the communist cause, personal sacrifice is acceptable when it is perceived to generate greater good for that objective. It is often associated with heroism and romanticism, of ‘revolutionary’ fever in socialist China, particularly appealing to certain age cohorts. It may even yield a sense of security by forming an imagined alliance with the post powerful, Mao, in the case of *shangshan xiaxiang*, as Scott points out the tendency for people to imitate the superior and powerful. More often than not, people migrate with multiple motivations on the level of practical consciousness situated in everyday practice (Findley and Li, 1997; Giddens, 1984).

2.4.3 Ideology and identity

Implicit in the chart is the importance of official ideology and its impacts on identity of people and places. Socialist ideology is considered as both the source of power and means of enforcement (Kornai, 1992).⁴² It gives legitimization to the party authority and its policies. It also constrains party’s choices by excluding those considered as ‘capitalism’ such as decollectivization and private business. It indoctrinates the mass, shapes people’s identities and redefines places. It also frames and channels the discourses through which people and places articulate their interests and desires. Socialist ideology is not as fixed as it sounds, rather it is constantly reproduced and contested. The

⁴² Ideology is defined here only as official socialist ideology which offers a systematic world view derived from classical communism and developed with Chinese experiences. For a list of commonly shared socialist ideology see Kornai (1992).

communist party enjoys monopoly of ideology reproduction through closely controlled media and various institutional formats, even more than its control of resources.⁴³

There is a close association between official ideology and identity of people and places. A major objective of ideological work is to change people's world-views (*gaibian shijieguan*), as it was claimed in the official propaganda, through various institutional formats. A pervasive interference of official ideology with personal identity is through social labeling and stereotyping. There is clearly constructed social status for social groups, such as working class, peasants, liberation army, intellectuals, landlords, bad elements and anti-revolutionary. This stereotyping defines one's official identity, chance of social mobility and sometimes life itself. Bad social status is more likely to be associated with downward migration. Ruthless dictatorship is justified for those with bad social status since they are considered to always conspire to overthrow the party and government. One of the powerful institutional tools in regulating the lives of Chinese people is the dossier (*dang'an*), a personnel file which keeps track of political attitude and performance in addition to personal information and family background for each individual. Dangan gives additional power to cadres in work units for they can determine opportunities not only for now but the future as well (Blecher, 1979). Anything negative they put in your dossier will follow you no matter whether you go.⁴⁴

The state is very active in constructing people's identity and place identities. But identity construction is not limited to the state as a one way process from top to bottom, it is participated by everyone in everyday practice. As a result, migrants and potential

⁴³ There are special personnel who are responsible for works of political thought (*sixiang zhengzhi gongzuo*) in work units, who are connected to various organizations in the upper hierarchy, such as propaganda departments, party schools and of course party committees. There are regularized study meetings to study central documents and spirits once a week in many work units as late as the early 1990s. There are special parades and campaigns in large political events. There are study groups mostly targeting people whose thought is not progressive.

⁴⁴ In socialist China, migration had been accompanied with movement of many files, among which were hukou status, grain and oil standard, membership of party and youth league, wage certificate, healthcare certificate and personal dossier.

migrants often change their ideas of who they are or what they want to do after gaining experiences, which ultimately influences migration patterns at the macro level.

In sum, the conceptual framework consists of three separate domains of migration process, i.e., bureaucratic structures, negotiation, and ideology and identity. These domains are situated in the Chinese institutional context with a clear implication of power and spatial structure. Policies and planning instructions run down from the top leaders and major ministries to intermediate governments, like local governments at various levels and bureaus within central ministries. Migration and labor planning are formulated and reformulated at these levels. Then planning instructions reach the work unit level, where people have face-to-face interactions. It is at this level that needs of the state and people are constantly negotiated. The decisions of individuals change social conditions on the aggregate level, which the state needs to reconsider when making new policies or adjusting policies.

The conceptual framework does not exclude particular theoretical schools, such as neoclassical migration theories. Rather it puts them into perspective in the Chinese context. For example, people still make assessment of benefits and costs of migration, but income is no longer the dominant factor in individual decision making as well as for the macro analysis of migration. Calculations of benefits and costs on the individual part have impacts on migration decision-making, but there are other important factors too. “Rational” choice is filtered through identity construction and ideology. Also the degree that individuals can negotiate with the state to achieve their own objectives depends on their ability, status, social networking and policy environment. So the calculation of benefits and costs is posited within the broader framework of institutional structure and processes.

The conceptual framework is an abstract version of the actual process of migration regulation and decision making. There are multiple actors located at various levels of power structure, from top leaders to ordinary citizens. They are connected by the

institutional structure and social roles associated with particular positions. They share similar ideologies and social norms.

These elements are mutually inter-dependent and intertwined and interlocked. Ideology influences people's identity, which in turn influences calculation of benefits and costs of individuals. Individual's choices in the aggregate change social conditions upon which policies are formed and planning is made. New regulations may be formed or past practices may be reinforced.

The discussion here is very schematic and abstract. I will explore those ideas in the following chapters. Without a basic knowledge of the Chinese institutional system and past experience, it is hard to make sense of the conceptual framework. The objective of the conceptual framework is to put migration data and experiences into perspective. I will discuss various parts of the framework to different extents. I will discuss the bureaucratic structures and procedures of labor and migration planning. I will discuss the subtle interaction of ideology and migrant identity, and the rich social world of migration negotiation.

The conceptual framework takes into account common themes of social institutions. But it has Chinese experiences and process fully in mind. It will contribute to the theoretical literature by demonstrating how structure and agency, and macro and micro process, reconcile in a specific culture and society.

Chapter Three. Exposing the Black Box of Chinese Migration: Institutions and Bureaucratic Structure

This chapter focuses on the institutional structure and process of migration in socialist China. Past migration research tended to connect government policies directly with migration outcomes. The intermediate process embedded in socialist institutions has not been explicitly discussed. Institutional structures and processes are therefore treated as black boxes with government policies as input and migration changes as output. This cannot be justified since bureaucratic structures and processes do have important implications on policies and their outcomes (Liebenthal and Oksenberg, 1988). Following the conceptual framework in the previous chapter, I will introduce the institutional structures and procedures that regulate and control migration. First I will show how migration is related to major institutions in a socialist society. Then I will examine particularly the bureaucratic system of labor and personnel that is responsible for labor allocation and migration planning. In the last section, I will discuss specific migration channels.

3.1 Migration structured by socialist institutions

Migration in a socialist society is fundamentally different from that in a market society. In a market society, labor, resources and products are allocated primarily through the market. Goods are produced by numerous firms motivated by making a profit rather than for achieving social goals. Most of these firms are private firms. Individual interests and private property rights are the ultimate principle and vigilantly guarded by all parts of society. Production, consumption and allocation are mostly in the private domain without direct intervention of the state. Migration decisions are made by individuals largely for income improvement in the long run (Sjastaad, 1962). In a socialist society, the state takes charge of economic activities and directly intervenes in production, consumption and allocation. Migration and its decision making no longer stay in the private domain. Often it is the state that initiates and mobilizes migration. Migration of laborers and their

families are subject to the state's plans. Plans of labor and migration are formulated and implemented by bureaucratic departments at several levels corresponding to social, political and economic conditions. In other words, migration in a socialist society is directly regulated by the state and filtered by a complex set of socialist institutions. In this section, I will first look at the essential features of socialist institutions and their interrelationships with migration. Then I will discuss socialist planning and its inherent problems, particularly the information processing and principal-agent problem. In the last part, I will briefly discuss the institutional environment of socialist migration in China, such as the *hukou* system, the *danwei* (work unit) system, the *dang'an* (personal dossier) system, and so on.

3.1.1 Essential features of socialism and migration

Socialist system is an organic system with various features interlocked with each other. Migration becomes integrated into the system out of necessity and evolution. It is intrinsically linked with major features of socialism and bears their imprints which are hard to find in market societies.⁴⁵

Socialist societies in practice are distinguished in many aspects from capitalist societies. But there are some major features that basically determine the structure of the whole system. According to Kornai, the founding block of the socialist system is the dominance of socialist ideology and its representation, the undivided power of the communist party (Kornai, 1992:361). Once communist parties take power, they have the tendency to push for nationalization as circumstances allow. In the Chinese case, the party was very cautious in the beginning but accelerated the nationalization program when economic conditions permitted in 1956. The second major feature, dominance of state ownership, is thus induced. The combination of socialist ideology and state ownership naturally calls for a particular form of coordination mechanism, bureaucratic coordination. Despite

differences in actual practices, socialist bureaucratic coordination shares some common characteristics, such as elimination of autonomous actors on the market, centralization of decision making and information, and hierarchical dependency. Other features of socialism can be derived from the three major components. For example, soft-budget constraints, plan bargaining, forced growth, chronic shortage of resources and commodities, labor hoarding and underemployment are all byproducts of the three key components of state socialism.

Migration regulation is intrinsically related to the key components of the socialist system. But the relationships between migration regulation and major components are not unidirectional. On the one hand, migration regulation is not feasible without major key components of the socialist system in place. Execution of migration control and planning relies on the dominance of state ownership and socialist ideology. On the other hand, socialist system cannot be sustained without bureaucratic regulation of labor and migration. Its social and economic objectives can fall apart if the state does not have the power to allocate labor and migrants.

As the Chinese experience shows, state ownership is a precondition for effective regulation of labor and migration. Without direct control of most economic activity, it is impossible for the state to conduct labor and migration planning since non-state sectors are not subject to the direct state regulation of labor. Competition from non-state firms offering higher wages can disrupt the labor plans of the state. It is more difficult for the state to punish private business owners due to less compliance and high monitoring costs. This was the case in the 1950s when the private sector still accounted for substantial part of the economy. Labor planning was less effective since private firms and even state units hired laborers from the spot labor market outside state's plan. It is also the case for the period since the late 1980s. The rapid expansion of non-state sectors gradually weakened the state control of labor allocation since people began to have alternatives to the state

⁴⁵ The focus here is on the classical or the state socialism such as those in the USSR and China. Other type of socialism such as decentralized democratic socialism might not need a direct intervention of the state in

sector. This really underlay the gradual decline of labor planning and its final abandonment in the 1990s.

Socialist ideology influences migration in numerous ways. Socialist ideology not only gives legitimacy to the ruling party of the communists, it also justifies the functioning of the system. It is very important to the operation of migration regulation and labor allocation. There are a number of ideological issues closely related to migration. The most basic one is the superiority of the socialist system manifested in its morale justice and alleged capacity of high economic growth. Coming with that is the promise of full employment and provision of social welfare for all citizens. Some Eastern European countries succeeded in delivering the promise to varying degrees, while China could only extend its state provision to urban residents, who accounted for only less than 20% of its population. The state could not tolerate massive unemployment and various vices such as prostitutions in cities. This consideration underlay all forms of downward migration from sending down “unwanted” and unemployed people in the 1950s to the massive rustication campaign in the 1960s and 1970s.

The second ideological notion is that the socialist state is the only “true” representation of people’s interests, which Kornai terms as self-legitimation and the paternalistic nature of power (Kornai, 1992:55). Since the party and the state always represents the interests of the country and all citizens by definition, state regulation and policies should not be challenged and questioned. People need simply to trust the party and obey all its decisions, then their interests can be taken care of and their problems can be solved. The party and its top leaders are literally the “father” of the people whom they guard and protect. This ideological notion provides justification for bureaucratic organization of power and, specifically the central allocation of labor in the case of migration.

Not only is obedience required for carrying out government decisions, but unconditional compliance is permeated into other spheres of individual lives. It becomes the social

physical mobility and migration.

norms sanctioned and propagated by the socialist state. Loyalty and reliability, rather than ability, are the major criteria for political advancement. In contrast, independence, originality, active thinking and individualism are considered as undesirable and even dangerous personality traits. Individuals are expected to put national and collective interests in first place. Sometimes sacrifice of self-interest to the higher interests would be amply rewarded by the party. Self-interests seeking can easily backfire and ironically lose the intended social and political mobility. This does not mean that self-interests seeking ceases to exist in socialist societies. Rather it is often disguised and distorted into officially acceptable formats. Ideology determines the formats and channels of public discourse. The power of ideology lies in that it is shared, at least partially by both the ruling party and its constituents (Portes and Walton, 1981). When ideology and official norms are no longer shared by all, social change is under way. Migration regulation and bureaucratic allocation of labor owe greatly to this invasive power of correct social behavior. It defines the “rules” of upward social mobility.

Another ideological notion that has impacts on migration is social stratification and stereotyping. One contribution of Mao to socialist ideology is his theory of continuing class struggle in socialist societies. The whole society is divided into various social groups, such as workers, farmers, military soldiers, cadres, students, landlords, rich peasants, anti-revolutionaries, bad elements, class enemies, rightists and so on. Each social group has a subscribed social status, such as the slogan “the working class leads all”. People in “bad” social categories and their families are more likely to have downward migration. They have very little bargaining power with government officials. Social stereotyping overshadows ordinary people’s choices and actions since there are so many ways to become a member of bad social groups. It’s a powerful tool to enforce desirable migration, particularly in a harsh (heated) political environment.

The above analysis shows that migration is deeply rooted in socialist institutions. Without the dominance of state ownership and socialist ideology, the direct regulation of labor and migration by the state is hard to achieve, maybe unthinkable. It is probably why other

developing countries could not emulate Chinese success in preventing over-urbanization, as recommended by some development theorists. Most developing countries failed miserably in preventing rural migrants moving into large urban centers. The Chinese success should not be attributed to specific migration policies. Rather as we have seen earlier, it is enabled and supported by the whole structure of socialist institutions. In similar line of argument, research on Chinese migration should not be limited to specific policies, although those policies might have triggered particular events.

Migration is not just a passive effect of socialist institutions but also an active element in enabling and sustaining the socialist system. Planned allocation of labor and population control are essential to the management and maintenance of the socialist system. Since investment and resources are centralized and planned, the state needs to make sure that the distribution of labor would be compatible with those other resources. Their separation would cause waste and inefficiency. So planning of other major resources calls for the planning of labor, which is a harder task than the other resources. In addition to the need for centralized allocation of labor, in the case of China where population pressure is huge, migration control is vital for sustainability of the system. Limited fiscal resources could be easily drained by the large inflow of rural migrants if the state needed to maintain even minimum provision for urban residents and to avoid high unemployment in the cities.

Migration and allocation of labor also serve other specific functions in socialist China. The socialist state is able to move thousands of workers across long distances to build new industrial complexes. Many new industrial cities, like *Daqing*, were built mostly by planned labor migrants and their families. Industrial labor migration accounted for a significant part of labor migration in China. Sometimes whole factories were transported to far away places for economic and military considerations. Planned allocation of labor allows the state to build up many new industrial projects in a very short time, which is difficult in capitalist societies. Migration of young and educated to rural areas was considered by the state as an important means to reducing regional inequalities and assisting development in backward regions. This happened in both China and the USSR.

at different scales. Migration is also a tool for national defense. By sending military and civil migrants to frontier provinces, the state could have a better control of border regions, especially in time of military conflict. Migration can function as a safety valve for internal security. When unemployment piles up in city centers, the state may resort to migration to relieve the pressure on fiscal resources and the risk of potential social instability. The socialist state also chases out those “undesired” and perceived anti-government “enemies” by forced migration.

Bureaucratic structures and administrative control lie at the core of migration regulation and labor allocation. It is through administrative measures that migration is regulated and labor is allocated. There are specific bureaucratic departments responsible for labor allocation and migration control. Labor allocation is closely related to migration regulation in socialist societies since some spontaneous migration might not coincide well with planner’s intentions. Labor and migration planning is intrinsically connected with other types of planning, such as investment, education, technology, military enlistment and demobilization. The actual process of labor and migration planning is the focus of this chapter and will be explored in the following sections.

3.1.2 The myth of Chinese planning

Socialist planning and Chinese planning are treated sometimes as a problem-free process in some studies. It is necessary to differentiate the ideal forms of socialist planning from its actual forms. This section will identify the actual process of planning and factors influencing that process.

One perceived advantage of a socialist system according to early theorists is that a socialist system can avoid the anarchies and wastes inherent in market processes. In theory, socialist planning is able to achieve the rational allocation of labor across sectors and regions by considering all the factors comprehensively. It is like a well-oiled machine (or a super computer) that can take account of changes in each separate part and then make wise adjustments. Marx and Engels did not discuss specific ways of socialist

planning and potential problems associated with them. The logic and possibility of achieving the socialist planning were taken for granted. In reality, planning in such a centralized way proves to be a tremendous task. The central issue is information and its processing. There are several aspects of the information problem. One is the capability to process huge amounts of information in a timely manner. With the best computers in the world and best techniques of optimization linear programming, it could take days and years to find an optimal solution even when all the needed information were available. By that time, it would be too late to make any decision based upon that information.

The second problem is the lack of information. Collection of needed information about economic activities on a national scale is a costly process. Statistical agencies, accountants, staff, and supervising agencies need to be hired, trained and financed. In Soviet Union, the statistical employees accounted for about one sixth of total government employees (Huang, 1994). Even with the greatest effort, some information will not be collected. For example, consumer's preferences are only revealed at the time of buying products and services. Even consumers themselves may not know clearly beforehand (That is one reason why people spend so much time in shopping mall). A fortunate thing for socialist societies is that the hyper growth in the early stages was based on machinery products rather than consumer products.

A third related problem is measurement. Performance evaluation relies on measurement of products. In capitalist societies, profits and shareholder's value give a fair assessment of how a company or a product performs.⁴⁶ In socialist societies, enterprises produce not for markets and profits but for various levels of governments. Product quantity is relatively easy to measure, say in tons and pieces, while product quality could probably only be assessed by consumers. It is not surprising that socialist societies tend to use output values of a few key products to evaluate performance. It is very costly and nearly

⁴⁶ In capitalist societies, decision about production and consumption is greatly decentralized into the hands of entrepreneurs and ordinary individuals. Information collection and processing can be resolved in a local arena. Besides, there is a corresponding incentive structure for people to collect and process that information.

impossible to evaluate performance based on subtle indicators of product quality, however it is defined, on a large scale.

Then there is the problem of “principal and agent”. Principals delegates rights to agents to work for them. But agents have their own interests and agendas. So agents tend to seek their interests when they can get away with it. Principals need to build in some incentive structure and monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to counter-balance the tendencies of agents to go astray. Local governments are the agents of central governments. They have their own interests even in a socialist society. They want to have a better than average performance so there will be better chance of political mobility. They are also under internal pressure to hire more workers, attract more projects, and get more funding from higher level of governments. The same is true for enterprises at various levels, especially if they face only soft-budget constraints. These local agents may withhold information or misrepresent information for their own benefits.

Problems with information collection and processing have direct influences on the forms and process of socialist planning. Since it is technically impossible to collect, measure, and plan all the items in a practical way, socialist plans tend to deal with fewer items and rank them on a list by priority. Priority is an important concept since it is the core of socialist planning. It has strengths in specific areas and drawbacks in other areas. It provides major directions for social and economic development in a particular period so it can hold the society together. It allows the concentration of resources and administrative effort in some key areas. It has produced amazing results in building industrial projects and developing key industrial products, such as iron and steel. But it also generates very damaging side effects, particularly the neglect of non-priority activities. It tends to create unbalanced growth and eventually economic collapse since non-priority activities would eventually become severe bottlenecks without enough funding and development. It also causes bandwagon effect that tends to ignore local conditions, which will lead to economic and political collapse at much a larger scale.

Another reason for the importance of priority in socialist planning is the chronic shortage of resources and investment. Since enterprise managers and local officials are not fiscally independent and face only soft-budget constraints, there is a tendency for them to hoard resources and capital as much as they can. Hoarding resources give them flexibility in achieving economic plans and also display their higher administrative and social status. The rational behavior of local agents to hoard resources causes investment hunger and shortage of resources and commodities at national scale. Priority is central to socialist planning in that it allows central government to distribute investment and resources in desirable manner and balance the needs of local agents.

Priority is implemented through quota control in national economic plans. A quota is the maximum or minimum limit for products and resources. A production quota is the target for the value and output of production expected to be met by enterprises or local governments. In some sense, it is the minimum amount of output or value that should be delivered. On the other hand, quotas on investment funds, raw and intermediate materials, and labor and wage funds, are the limits that are not expected to be exceeded. National economic plans include every aspect of economic activities, include production, investment, labor and wages, technological development, education, and so on. The central government and its planning agencies give large quotas to activities that are considered important, i.e., higher production quotas associated with higher quotas on investment, materials and labor. Generally large projects of the central ministries of heavy industries are important, while local projects in not-so-important sectors will be allocated less resources.

The central technique in socialist planning is balancing output with input across products and regions. A plan that cannot be balanced, with skewed output or input is not a good plan. An important part of balancing is through bargaining between different government departments at the same administrative level or the same government departments (and related enterprises) at different administrative levels. Due to the principal and agent problem, upper level governments want to set production targets high and resources low,

and lower level government would do the opposite. Planning normally takes several rounds of bargaining through planning work meetings and plan revisions. Often plans can be renegotiated from both sides if unexpected conditions occur, for example, if the political atmosphere suddenly changes or there is severe shortage of workers and staff. The finalized plans at the center are disaggregated into specific plans for provinces and ministries, which are further partitioned into smaller plans until they reach the bottom level of state enterprises and government units. The process is called plan disaggregation (jihua fenjie). In overall, planning is not a smooth and unproblematic process. Rather it is filled with bargaining, unexpected conditions and outcomes, adjusting and readjusting.

Actual planning styles vary greatly across socialist countries depending upon the development stage, culture and institutional origins of the communist parties. There are great differences in planning between the Soviet Union and China. In comparison, Soviet planning is more sophisticated and bureaucratically driven, while Chinese planning is more politically driven and rudimentary technically. The investment the Soviet Union made in information processing is many multitudes of that in the communist China. One indicator is the size of statistical personnel. The share of statistical personnel of total population was 8% in the Soviet Union and 0.0016% in China. Roughly 40% of total staff in central ministries was employed by the Central Statistical Agency in the Soviet Union, while China had less than 300 employees in the State Statistical Bureau in 1981 when the importance of statistical work gained appreciation. The difference in the absolute number of statistical employees was around 150 times between the two countries, when the economy of the Soviet Union was only five times that of Chinese economy measured in GNP (Huang, 1994:127-128). As early as 1959, the Soviet Union already used input-output tables to assist planning. In 1986, 90% of the data in the State Statistical Bureau in China was still analyzed by hand.

Due to its poor statistical infrastructure, Chinese planning and policy making are much less sophisticated. The number of products under central allocation fluctuated depending on economic and political cycles in China. It was over 500 in the peak of the First Five-

Year plan and was cut into half in the following years of the Great Leap Forward. It was just over 200 in the early 1970s when decentralization prevailed and later increased to close to 800 in the early 1980s (Huang, 1994: 112). The centrally allocated products were no more than a thousand in China even in high centralization periods. In contrast, the Soviet Union was able to allocate 20–40 thousand products at the central level.

The weak infrastructure and planning capability have some implications for the economy and the style of Chinese planning. The Chinese economy experienced much larger economic variations partially because there was no adequate and reliable information about economic conditions. In addition, there was no independent statistical agency that provided economic statistics without direct interference from local governments.⁴⁷ In the extreme case like the Great Leap Forward, the center had no idea about even the most basic statistics, such as grain output. The Chinese economy is also less balanced since the priority is given to much smaller number of products, sometimes only a few, such as the output of iron and steel.

Another implication is the relatively decentralized structure of economic decision making. Chinese planning is more territorially based with local governments enjoying more autonomy and decision making, while the Soviet system is characterized by strong presence of central ministries. In China, more products are balanced within the territories of local governments rather than the country as a whole. At times, there was massive decentralization that shifted management rights from central ministries into the hands of provincial and municipal governments, such as the case in the Great Leap Forward and in the early 1970s. Local governments owned and managed a larger share of total state enterprises.

There is a large difference in planning style. Chinese planning is less data intensive and based more on experience and political factors. There was a real attempt to build a

⁴⁷ It is well known that Chinese local governments are able to and often do manipulate socioeconomic statistics such as the Gross Value of Industrial Output and the number of births.

centralized planning system like that of the Soviet Union in the mid 1950s. But it failed on several grounds. Local planning agencies complained about the high workload in making tables and plans. They also complained about lack of incentives and freedom in local decision making. Some central leaders like Mao felt frustrated with the technicalities and conservativeness inherited from Soviet planning. Rigorous planning with surveys, reports and tables was discredited and abandoned in the Great Leap Forward.⁴⁸ And it never came back into full practice. Chinese planning departments and officials have never enjoyed the authority like its counterparts in the Soviet Union. In various political movements, they were criticized as bureaucrats and conservatives, often “dragging the leg” of rapid revolutionary expansion. Economic planning and statistical work even ceased to exist for several years during the Great Cultural Revolution.

The top agenda for government planning officials is not to get reliable data and make practical and optimal plans. More important is to take the right stand in an ever changing political environment. Due to the weak information processing capability and bureaucratic control, the Chinese state needs to have an alternative way to retain the control of the center. It is through political control and ideological enforcement. Political compliance and ideological conformity are more desired qualities from government officials than management ability. Cadres who strayed from the party (Mao) line were severely punished, while those who failed economic objectives could easily survive.⁴⁹ Even in the post-reform period, political control still has the upper hand that holds local governments officials at bay, despite the deepening decentralization and increasing fiscal autonomy in the local governments (Huang, 1995). One difference though, is the significant decline of importance in ideological enforcement.

⁴⁸ During my archival research in several large cities in China, I found out that archival materials related to labor planning and migration were the richest in the mid 1950s with many meeting documents, reports, surveys and tables. Then they almost completely disappeared for the next 20 years in some cities. It shows that planning intensity was not really significant for most of the pre-reform period.

⁴⁹ In the Great Leap Forward, those government officials who followed Mao's call and launched various satellites in grain and steel production (imaginary yields) were rewarded by promotion and were not punished even when the fraud was discovered. In contrast, those officials who were realistic and cautious were greatly punished due to their suspicion of the Communist Party.

Rather than assuming socialist planning as an automatic and unproblematic process enabled by the totalitarian socialist state, this section has discussed intrinsic problems involved with the centralized socialist planning. As several well known scholars demonstrate, information collection and processing are at the heart of problems. Central planning is unable to conduct full-scale coordination and balancing across all products, sectors and regions. Bargaining and setting priority become the essential features of socialist planning process. In the case of China, these characteristics are further stretched. Economic planning in a rigorous sense like that in Soviet Union never existed in China, although it was similar during the First Five Year Plan. It is why this section is entitled the “myth” of Chinese planning, because the powerful image of the socialist state being able to plan and coordinate every aspect of economic activities is truly illusional. Due to the strong political pressure and lack of reliable information, there are great uncertainties in the process of policy making and implementation. Policies are often reactive rather than proactive. Planning is made in a rudimentary form with a lot of latitude in the hands of local governments. Economic planning and management are closely associated with political movements and ideological campaigns. Since migration regulation is a part of socialist planning, these characteristics have implicit impacts on migration processes and outcomes, which will be discussed later. But before that, it will be very helpful to go over several institutions specific in China to understand fully the institutional structures in which migration operates.

3.1.3 Institutional environment of migration in socialist China

As we already know, migration regulation, planning and control were deeply rooted in the socialist system and enabled by socialist planning. In China, they are also closely related to several specific institutions, without which migration control and regulation would be impractical. Out of more than a dozen of specific institutions, there are five that interest us directly. They are the household registration system (*hukou*), the work unit system (*danwei*), the grain rationing system (*liangshi gongji*), the neighborhood system (*juweihui*) and the personal dossier system (*dang'an*).

These institutions are formalized social practices with clearly specified rules and administrators. Some originated from practices well before the communist regime but were integrated and transformed into socialist institutions. Others started when the Communist Party was still underground but later were formalized. The household registration system actually existed for thousands of years but was recreated by the communist party into a unique socialist institution (Dutton, 1993). The work unit system did not enjoy such a long history but nonetheless existed prior to communist rule (Lu and Perry, 1997). The personnel dossier system was created for cadre management when the Communist Party was at the revolutionary base of *Yan'an* in central China and was extended to ordinary citizens in the socialist period. Discussion of these institutions provides an understanding of the institutional environment in which labor and migration planning as well as migration decisions of ordinary citizens are made.

3.1.3.1 The Hukou system

Hukou (household registration system) has been a central instrument for administration, population registration and social control (Chen, 1991; Dutton, 1993). The state relies on it for collecting demographic information, distributing material benefits and formulating socioeconomic plans and policies.

In China, everyone has an officially registered *hukou* residence, which is normally one's usual residence. There is a tag of status to each *hukou* residence. There are two *hukou* statuses, one is an agricultural *hukou* status and the other is the non-agricultural *hukou* status. Although originally derived from occupation, *hukou* status is not determined by one's occupation at all. It is a status granted by the government for state employees and their family members, and former urban residents. Most of them are in cities, though some people living in rural areas also have a non-agricultural *hukou* status, such as rural cadres and workers and staff in state farms. Non-agricultural *hukou* holders are entitled to government benefits, such as food rationing, subsidized housing and education,

employment and so on. The state does not have similar provision for agricultural *hukou* holders.

A change of usual residence cross the boundary of townships, towns and urban street committees, needs to be sanctioned by the government with corresponding change in *hukou* registration. In the case of rural-urban migration, double conversions are involved (Chan and Zhang, 1999). One is to change *hukou* residence from origin place to destination place. The other is to convert an agricultural *hukou* to a non-agricultural *hukou*.⁵⁰ Since the non-agricultural *hukou* holders are on the government's budget, Chinese government has long used many administrative tools to restrict their increase. Those tools include quota control, overall policies, and specific rules for many categories of people at different circumstances. For an agricultural *hukou* holder, there are only a few specific channels that he or she can change *hukou* status, such as college enrollment, military enlistment, state recruitment and family connections in cities.

Hukou registration is administered by the Public Security system.⁵¹ The public security system stretches from the Ministry of Public Security at the central government level to the sub-stations of Public Security Bureau (*paichusuo*) at the lowest level in cities. In rural areas, there are no established branch offices of public security. Public security affairs are administered by town or township governments. In cities, every urban household has a *hukou* book with information of all family members including personal characteristics, *hukou* residence and status, and past migration. The *hukou* book is required for food rationing, education, employment and many other things.⁵² When a person or family moves out of the substation of the PSB, a new *hukou* book will be issued and the old one destroyed. The move will be recorded by the origin and destination, nature (or reason) of the move, and time. In rural areas, it is the village rather the household that has a *hukou* book. Enforcement of *hukou* registration is much stricter in

⁵⁰ In some cases, if people move from rural places to the rural communities within cities, *hukou* status conversion is not required.

⁵¹ It was shared by the Civil Affair Bureau before the mid 1950s and under the control of MPS.

urban areas than the countryside since the public security administration is more established in cities and the government is more concerned with controlling urban population. In the past, the state actually mobilized migration of urban residents to the countryside in order to reduce the drain on government fiscal resources.

Although the public security system is the final institution to sanction a change of *hukou* residence, it does not enjoy the full power of decision making in migration regulation. When a person applies for migration involved with *hukou* change, she or he normally needs approval from other government departments, such as labor bureaus, personnel bureaus or planning commissions. Only a small amount of migration mostly in the category of family reunion are decided by the public security bureau. These types of migration account for less than 10 percent of total migration (Chan and Zhang, 1999).

3.1.3.2 The Work unit system

Unlike enterprises in a market economy, enterprise units in socialist China are under direct administrative control of the state in all their decisions including production and employment. In addition to production functions, they also support a full range of welfare provisions, such as housing, daycare facility, dining halls, medical clinics, schools from primary schools to universities, theaters, and department stores (Lu and Perry, 1997; Yang and Zhou, 1999.).⁵² State units vary greatly in terms of their resources and prestige depending on their sizes and administrative ranks (Walder, 1992). This variation has important implications on migration patterns and processes.

Enterprises in urban China are differentiated by their nature of ownership. At the outer layer is the difference between state owned (*quanmin*) and collective (*jiti*) ownership. Urban collective enterprises are owned and managed by the sub-level urban government,

⁵² In pre-reform period, most commodities were rationed. One needed to display a *hukou* book to buy tofu, sugar, wrist watch and other things.

⁵³ The actual provision depends on the size and administrative ranks of state enterprises. The larger the size, the higher the administrative ranks, the more complete the provision will be.

such as district, street governments and neighborhood committees. They were originally built to incorporate the unemployed whom state enterprises were unable to absorb. Collective employees tend to be the old, less educated and women. They are generally not entitled to the many benefits that a state employee enjoys, such as housing and medical care. In migration regulation, an employee in urban collectives is not allowed to transfer to state enterprises or to become a state employee (Zhao, 1989). The distinction is as strongly enforced as that between agricultural and non-agricultural hukou. There are also great distinctions within state enterprises. Although state enterprises are nominally owned by the people (*quanmin suoyou*), they are actually “owned” and managed by various level of governments from central ministries to counties.⁵⁴ Normally, enterprises owned by the higher level governments, such as ministries, are larger in size and have higher administrative ranks.

The differentiation within state enterprises has impacts on planned migration in two ways. First, planned migration tends to concentrate in those state enterprises which are owned by the higher level of governments. Since these key enterprises have priorities in socialist development, they are favored in allocation of investment and labor. These enterprises have greater bargaining power since economic performance of a sector or a region often depends on a few large enterprises. And economic performance is one important criterion for the promotion of government officials. So it is much easier for them to have labor quotas when they need to recruit new workers, particularly skilled workers and professionals. Their requests for migration would be more likely to be granted. Second, migration procedures for these enterprises are much simpler since there are fewer layers of government above them. A central enterprise (*zhongyang qiyie*) only needs permission from its authority ministry and the ministries of labor or personnel to grant a migration. A city enterprise would potentially need permission from a number of

⁵⁴ The de facto ownership is established by initialization and investment to build the enterprise. If the investment comes from a provincial government, it normally remains a provincial-owned enterprise (*shengshu qiyie*) (Huang, 1995). The ownership of state enterprises has changed frequently in the history of the Republic. During the decentralization in the early 1960s and early 1970s, numerous central enterprises were handed down to the local governments . During recentralization afterwards, many of them were taken back by the central ministries.

municipal bureaus, provincial departments and central ministries. As a result, a disproportionately large share of planned migration is concentrated in large state enterprises, while small state enterprises and urban collectives are relatively unimportant in planned migration.

An important characteristic of socialist migration is its overall low mobility compared to market economies.⁵⁵ The permanent employment system (*gudinggong zhidu*) and labor hoarding behavior of state enterprises are factors contributing to the low mobility. Employees in state enterprises are expected to stay in one work unit for life once they are assigned. The permanent employment system was formed in the early 1950s when the state explicitly discouraged the turnover of workers and tried to reduce unemployment. It is regarded as a superiority of the socialist system to provide a stable job for every one of working age.

Since the movement of state employees should be directly managed and controlled by the state, a large turnover rate might increase the administrative workload tremendously.⁵⁶ Also labor plans could be easily disrupted when workers move frequently. So the permanent employment system makes labor administration feasible.

If the permanent employment system expects people to stay, labor hoarding of state enterprises practically discourages any attempt to make a move. Socialist enterprises tend to hoard investment, labor or any scarce resources since there are no hard budget constraints (Kornai, 1992). The government pays for the wages and expenses of workers whom state enterprises hire. Also large size of workers and staff means large fiscal resources from the state that enterprises can employ for their own purposes, such as building apartments and dorms for their own workers. Another incentive for labor hoarding comes from the inflexibility of labor planning. Typically labor planning is made annually. If state enterprises need to hire more people due to unexpected conditions, the

⁵⁵ Exceptions are definitely common for the first phase of socialist development. Large investments and the urge for industrialization in the early days of many socialist countries generated great mobility (Chan, 1994).

request typically takes a long time and is not always granted. That will potentially leave enterprises in awkward position with assigned production quotas unfinished, which may harm the prospect of promotion of officials in enterprises and related government departments. So it is practical to have some extra workers just in case production picks up speed.⁵⁷ On the one hand, state enterprises want to have more workers as long as it is permitted by the state. On the other hand, they tend to discourage the leaving of their employees, particularly skilled workers and professionals. This is true not only for self-requested move but also for state requested transfers.⁵⁸ Knowing the attitude of state enterprises toward job transfers, many willing to move do not even try since the chance of being permitted to move is small (Blecher, 1979). That is why many people expressed the desire to move but only a few actually moved (Zhang and Chen, 1992). Sometimes cadres of enterprises did not give permission even when the move met state policies for fear that others might follow suit.

The cadres in work units have tremendous power over their employees because of employees' dependency on work units for work related opportunities and all welfare benefits. Walder proposed that state employees trade their compliance to the state for all sorts of benefits (1986). Over time there developed a clientilism between ordinary employees and cadres. Cadres need compliance and support from employees on various matters and employees need the favor of cadres in many decisions important to their lives, such as job promotion or housing allocation. A good relationship with cadres in one's unit is essential to make migration possible. Without the work unit's support, one cannot even propose a move to the higher government departments such as labor bureaus since the application should be submitted by the work unit as the representative of the individual. In the case of state initiated migration, labor (migration) quotas only assign

⁵⁶ This actually was the case for the early 1950s when labor bureaus were under great stress to provide administrative support in a timely manner despite a shortage in staff and personnel.

⁵⁷ Another solution is to hire temporary workers outside the plan. Existence of temporary workers was pervasive even before the reform to such a degree that quotas for temporary workers were incorporated in the labor plans. It is a way for small state enterprises to be able to keep production running since it is difficult for them to acquire hiring quotas (Blecher, 1979).

⁵⁸ In many occasions, enterprises only gave the "undesirable" people, such as pregnant women, or people with a bad class background when there were requests to help other enterprises.

the overall number and required skills of potential migrants, the plan does not dictate actual people. It is the cadres' responsibility to fulfill the plans and quotas by mobilizing and choosing specific people. Another source of power for personnel cadres is their control of personal dossiers. This gives key cadres in work units considerable latitude. Many people use their social networking (*guanxi*) to help get better positions or avoid less desirable jobs (Bian, 1994a; Liu, 2000). Of course, all these will not appear in the migration statistics. Every move, particularly those initiated by individuals, has a story behind it. There could be cultivating of relationships with local cadres, social networking, long waiting, pleading, bribing, and sometimes threatening.

3.1.3.3 Neighborhood

The control of the Chinese state extends into the bottom layer of society through two major institutions. One is the work unit system. The other is the neighborhood system.⁵⁹ The neighborhood system is mostly for those who are not directly attached to state work units, such as the unemployed, employees in collective enterprises belonging to neighborhood committees, some retirees and visitors from other places. Similar to work units, neighborhood committees have multiple functions, such as job and welfare provision, security check, and local sanitary maintenance. Compared to economic functions, their social control and social support mechanisms are more important (see Table 3.1).

The neighborhood system is administrated by the neighborhood committee. Neighborhood committees are semi-government organizations. A neighborhood committee generally has a population around a couple thousand. The director of the committee is normally a permanent job paid by government. Other committee members are volunteers, mostly retirees. They have some subsidies from local revenues, around

⁵⁹ Neighborhood committees exist only in cities and towns. For rural areas, the counterpart are village committees. There are similarities and dissimilarities between neighborhood committees and village committees. They are both the basic units of Chinese society and share similar socioeconomic functions. The difference is that neighborhood committees are only secondary basic units in urban China, less important than work units, while village committees are the only type of unit in rural China. In addition, neighborhood committees' roles are more social than economic.

one or two hundred RMB in the late 1990s. There is a small amount of government funds allocated for administration of neighborhood activities. In addition, neighborhood committees have several sources of local revenues, such as profits from neighborhood committee enterprises (*jiedao ban qiyé*), local fees collected from small business, and renting revenues from neighborhood properties. Neighborhoods vary greatly in their capacity in generating revenues.

Table 3.1 Neighborhood Committees: major functions and links

<i>Service or Duty</i>	<i>Governmental Connection</i>
Care for Children and Elderly	Family Planning, Public Health Welfare, Supply Station
Life-Related Services	Supply Station
Implementing Rules and Directives	Police, People's Court Street Office of Government
Residential Hygiene and Local Order	Public Health, Police, People's Court
Local Coordination	Street Office of Government Work Unit Leadership

Sources: Shaw, 1996

Neighborhood committees are under the direct administration of the government street office (*zhengfu jiedao banshi chu*), which is the lowest level of government. The government street office is responsible for personnel management and fund allocation to the neighborhood committees. The neighborhood system does not stop at the neighborhood committee level. The neighborhood committee consists of subcommittees for mediation, united defense and security, patriotic health movement, and family planning. Under the neighborhood committee, there are resident groups (*jumin xiaozu*), each of which has a number of building directors (*mendong zhang*), informants (*xingxi yuan*), and patrol teams within each resident group.⁶⁰

The neighborhood system was an important force in migration control in the pre-reform period. Neighborhood committee members and active members help the police in routine

⁶⁰ Field interviews of neighborhood cadres at Wuhan, 1999.

updating of household registration, registration of visitors staying with households within the neighborhood, criminal search and investigation, and so on. They were also responsible for patrolling residential areas, and reporting significant incidents to the security office. They were also active in mobilizing downward migration of urban residents through sponsoring study groups and one to one persuasion. After reform, the neighborhood system relaxed substantially and turned to revenue generating, just like any other entities. But they are still important in maintaining neighborhood security and other social functions.

3.1.3.4 The grain rationing system

The grain rationing system was enacted in the mid 1950s and abandoned in 1994. Until the mid 1980s, food provision had been scarce and private free markets selling meat, vegetables and grains were not permitted. The only sources for grains and groceries were state operated grain and grocery stores, and restaurants. Urban residents were eligible for grain rationing coupons ranging from 25 to 34 *jin* (roughly 1.1 pound) depending on sex, age and occupation. One needed to use rationing coupons together with cash to buy grains and food. There had been black markets for grain rationing coupons, where one could change coupons for cash.

There were two major types of grain rationing coupons. One was for local use only, generally limited to within a city or county. Another was for national use, not restricted to particular places. Since one was normally given local rationing coupons, one could only buy grain or food locally. It was only under special circumstances that one could apply for national coupons, such as traveling to other places on government business, assigned to other places by government upon graduation and demobilization, or special occupations like workers on railways and geological surveys.

The grain rationing system added another barrier to self-sponsored migration. Since rural residents were not eligible for grain rationing, they did not have grain coupons. By

carrying their own food, they could not travel far and stay away for long. Even for urban residents it was hard to migrate unofficially since they would probably rely on their relatives for their already meager amount of grains.

3.1.3.5 The dang'an system

Dang'an (personnel dossier) institution refers to the personnel file management system. It has great implications on migration of state employees, military soldiers and students. It has the magic power to generate compliance from state employees since it is the base for official decisions regarding their employment, promotion, housing allocation, political mobility, and migration. According to one definition, *dang'an* is the record of personal experiences and practices, the reflection of cadre's thinking and virtue, professional skills, working ability and work performance, the important basis of examining, understanding, promoting and employing cadres historically and comprehensively (*jundui ganbu guanli shouce*, 1984:480).

Dang'an originated from cadre management in the communist control area before the establishing of the PRC. In 1940, the General Political Department issued "The Third Directive Regarding Cadre Work" to collect and administer systematically information about the history and current performance of cadres at all levels within the military. In 1956, the Department of Organization summoned the first work meeting of cadre *dang'an* and formulated a first working regulation of cadre *dang'an*--"The Temporary Regulation of Cadre *Dang'an* Administration". The regulation demands that cadre *dang'an* should be arranged to separately for each person. "The Working Regulation of Cadre *Dang'an* Administration" was reformulated in 1980 (Zhang and Chen, 1992).

Each person has a personnel dossier, which includes materials and files in the following categories:

- Experiences (*luli ziliao*): all kinds of forms (*luli biao, jianli biao, dengji biao*), such as registration forms of students, workers, cadres and party members;
- Autobiography;
- Examination materials (*jianding ziliao*): examinations and inquisitions of students or party members, or evaluations of their study and working;
- Performance materials (*kaoji ziliao*): professional evaluations, study grades, publications, technical innovations;
- Political examination (*zhengshen ziliao*): reports of investigations and decisions about political and historical problems, major evidence, self-examination, final opinion, time of beginning revolutionary work and joining the party, etc;
- Joining party or youth league materials: application for party and youth league, reaffirmation of party members;
- Award (*jiangli ziliao*): advanced worker registration form, excellent party member registration form, good student registration form, science and technology award materials;

In socialist China, the relationship with one's work units is very important, maybe the most important of all relationships. One needs to confirm his or her work unit in many activities, such as buying a train ticket, applying for a marriage certificate, studying or training, taking a TOEFL exam. The list is endless. Normally confirmation is the form of a letter, called an introduction letter (*jieshao xin*). Only the work unit that owns your *dang'an* has the power to write that letter. So the work unit could grant its approval by writing that letter or decline it by refusing to write it. That is a huge power since the unit and the person who controls your dossier can literally determine your fate. In migration, the most difficult step is to get the cadres to write a permission letter. Also in many cases, people complied with government-initiated migration despite the fact that they were not really willing to make that migration. The most important reason is that they were afraid of leaving bad marks in their personnel dossiers, so that they would be handicapped for the rest of their lives.

The rule of keeping dossiers for subordinate organizations applies to all work units. Dossiers for party members and mid-rank officials are kept in the Department of Organization (hereafter DOO) of the party, dossiers for low-rank officials and nominal cadres are kept in the department of personnel, and dossiers for ordinary employees are kept in the department of labor. In small work units, all dossiers may be under supervision and management of one person, while in large work units, they are separately managed.

Job transfer, or migration of state employees critically depends on the transfer of the personnel dossier. As a rule, a state unit cannot receive a person without his or her dossier since the dossier is the official source for information and evaluation of the person concerned.

3.2 Bureaucratic structure and institutional processes

Previous sections explored the general institutional environment in which migration decision making is situated in socialist China. This section will focus on the actual process of migration regulation and planning. Specifically it will look at bureaucratic structures and the decision making process, and various rules and procedures.

3.2.1 Bureaucratic structure

Socialist planning is essentially carried out through distribution and redistribution of labor, capital and materials (*ren, cai, wu*). Distribution and redistribution of the labor force are often involved with migration across administrative boundaries. In an effort to regulate the labor force, the state has to control the flows of labor across regions. It is especially important since the Chinese socialist economy is based on the segregation of urban and rural societies. The implementation of migration regulation not only depends on several institutional constructs as discussed in the previous section, but is also actively

carried out by many bureaucratic departments.⁶¹ At the heart of migration planning is labor planning and management, consisting of planning commissions and labor and personnel departments. Other government departments, such as industrial bureaus, education commissions, civil affairs and public security are also closely involved. These government departments are connected through vertical and horizontal linkages with clear defined administrative authority. These bureaucratic departments also operate according to various rules and procedures in regulating migration. The complexity of migration types and their administration leads to fragmented decision making and a segmented labor market.⁶²

The central focus is on labor migration since it accounts for a large share of total migration. It also creates secondary migration, i.e., family migration.⁶³ Labor and its redistribution in socialist economies are underlain by bureaucratic coordination, which makes it fundamentally different from its counterpart in market societies. Bureaucratic coordination is characterized by centralized control from the top. Although sharing this basic characteristic, the Chinese economy is less centralized than East European countries. China was much less developed economically. As we discussed earlier in this chapter, it also lacked institutional, technological and human resources to collect information and monitor economic performance. In the first-five year plan period, the Chinese government basically copied the bureaucratic structure and planning methods from the former Soviet Union. The state planning commission and central ministries had much larger power than local governments. This model was drastically changed in the following Great Leap Forward due to the need of accelerated growth. Coming with decentralization and larger autonomy for local governments came the overheating of

⁶¹ Institutions that have impacts on migration in socialist China are not limited to government departments. As we know earlier, neighborhood committees assist migration regulation in their own ways and they are not real government institutions. Social networks, particularly kinship networks in rural migration, are very important in self-initiated migration both before and after reform.

⁶² Labor market here refers only to the supply and demand of labor and not the coordination mechanism.

⁶³ Migration can be directly or indirectly related to labor. In migration literature, migration is often divided into primary migration (breadwinners) and secondary migration (family members). Although migration can be non-job related, as in the case of amenity migration, it is mostly related to jobs one way or the other. It is

economies and sometimes social chaos. The state was forced to recentralize by reducing the authority of local government in decision making. This policy cycle of decentralization and recentralization had become a central feature of the Chinese economy until the early 1990s. It also had great impacts on migration patterns and lives of millions of ordinary people.

In the bureaucratic structure of migration regulation and planning, a key concept is the difference between the center and local government. The center (*zhongyang*) refers to the central government, including all the departments and ministries, such as the State Council, the State Planning Commission, the Ministry of Labor and so on. In addition to general-purpose ministries like the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education etc, there are about 20 industrial ministries, such as the Ministry of Textile Industry, the Ministry of First Machinery Industry. The local (*difang*) refers to all levels of local government from province, prefecture city, county (city), to town and township. The center implies authority, importance and priority. Local needs should be submissive to the needs of the center. But the center also relies on the local governments to supply infrastructure and labor since only local governments have physical administrative regions.

Closely related to the concepts of center and local are the notion of administrative lines and areas. In Chinese bureaucratic language, it is called *tiaotiao kuaikuai* (lines and pieces). *Tiaotiao* (lines) refers to the lines of authority extending from the center to local governments in a specialized administrative area. The extension of administration is enabled by building the same department at all levels of local government. For example, the Ministry of Textiles is replicated as the department of textile at the provincial level, and bureaus of textile at the municipal level. The commands and directives from the Ministry of Textiles move down the line, first to the provincial departments, then to the municipal bureaus. *Kuaikuai* (pieces) refers to the administrative regions of local

particularly true for developing countries. China, although a socialist developing country, is no exception. As we will see later, labor migration and related secondary migration accounted for most migration.

government. The authority of local governments covers all the work units and enterprises within their administrative regions except those owned by higher level of governments. For example, a city government has direct control over municipal enterprises through its municipal industrial bureaus. But for enterprises owned by the provincial or the central government, which reside in its administrative regions, a city government normally cannot exert administrative authority over them. The administrative affiliation or ownership of work units is not static but often changes over time. During decentralization, many central enterprises were handed down to the provincial or municipal government. During recentralization, some of these enterprises were again reclaimed by central ministries.

Tiaotiao and *kuaikuai* build the basic administrative structure of Chinese planning. Any work unit or enterprise may locate itself in the grid of vertical lines and horizontal pieces. For example, the municipal bureau of the textile industry in a city is under dual leadership of both the provincial textile department (vertical) and the municipal government (horizontal). The former represents the professional relationship (*shiyeguanxi*) while the latter the administrative relationship (*xingzhen guanxi*) (Liebthal and Oksenberg, 1988). Professional relationship does not carry the authority to nominate or remove administrative positions.

An important concept in understanding the bureaucratic process is the direct authority department (*zhuguan bumen*). Each work unit has a direct authority department, which is responsible for its operation and administrative positions. Determination of the authority department for a work unit depends on the nature, history and administrative rank of the work unit. If a university is owned by the Ministry of Education (MOE) then its authority department is the MOE. A textile enterprise owned by a city normally has the bureau of textile industries (or bureau of light industries in some cases) as its authority department. Authority departments keep the dossiers of major cadres of work units under their charge. And migration of cadres and workers of a work unit needs the approval of its authority department.

Labor and personnel planning consists of not only the vertical lines, which are the labor and personnel departments at various levels of government. It also consists of labor departments in other government systems. For example, the Ministry of Textiles Industry has a Labor and Personnel Bureau. Most industrial enterprises have labor and personnel sections (*laorenchu*). For some small enterprises, labor management is under the planning and statistics section (*jitongke*). These labor and personnel sections in various industrial bureaus and state work units have a professional relationship with labor administrative departments. They are part of the labor and personnel system (*laodong renshi xitong*). Labor distribution and migration are basically administrated by communications among these departments and offices.

Labor and personnel planning is part of overall economic planning and government policies. So it is subject to the decisions of supra-ministry organizations, such as the State Planning Commission, the State Economic Commission, the Education Commission and the Staffing Quota Office in State Council. The Ministry of Finance also has functions similar to these supra-ministry organizations. These supra-ministry organizations coordinate the demands and conflicts between ministries and local governments. Other ministries, which are not part of labor and personnel system, are also closely involved in migration and labor administration. These ministries are the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and various industrial ministries. Let us first look at these supra-ministry organizations and ministries at the central level to see how they are related to migration regulation and what are their divisions of labor in that task.

State Planning Commission (SPC) and State Economic Commission (SEC)

The major responsibility of the SPC is to guide and organize the production and distribution of major commodities as well as the construction of significant capital projects. It is the central organ of economic planning, more specifically for making five year and annual plans. The SPC is supposed to take a long term, comprehensive and

strategic view of the development, while the SEC is specialized in the coordination of daily activities and the operation of production.

The most important agenda for the SPC is planning of capital investment, its size and overall geographic and sectoral distribution. It is also concerned with the balance of funds between capital investment and personal consumption. Personnel consumption is mostly controlled by wage plans, which is part of annual labor plans.

The major roles of the SPC in labor planning fall in several areas. It determines the overall size of the labor force and new addition to the labor force for each year and five years. It decides on the total wage fund by working with the Ministry of Finance. In addition, the decisions about capital construction and industrial projects have direct implications on geographic distribution of economic growth, thus the direction and magnitude of labor migration.

Ministry of Labor

The Ministry of Labor is the core ministry in labor planning and management. According to the regulation of the State Council, the Ministry of Labor is the institution to have unified management of the national labor force. It leads the work of labor departments in local government. It monitors and directs labor administration of all departments in the State Council. It was given the responsibility of formulating overall plans for the labor force and for wages.⁶⁴ The major tasks and responsibilities of the Ministry of Labor can be divided into several specialized areas at several levels.

First it is responsible for formulating important laws and regulations in labor management. It has significant roles in revising and removing unreasonable regulations, laws and directives in labor administration.

⁶⁴ In January of 1957, the Central Committee and the State Council decided to let the Ministry of Labor make national plans for labor force and wages. Prior to that, the task was shared by the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Personnel.

Second it is responsible for investigating long term change in the labor force in both urban and rural areas. Based on the change of demand and supply of the labor force, it needs to formulate long term planning of the labor force and related policies.

Third it has the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of labor policies, regulations, directives and plans by all government departments and all types of state work units.

Fourth it is responsible for formulating and carrying out annual labor and wage plans based on the overall economic plans. It should adjust the distribution of the labor force across regions and sectors to keep the supply and demand of labor in balance.

Its other responsibilities, which are not directly related to labor and migration regulation, include training of technicians and skilled workers, labor safety, labor insurance, and labor disputes.

The Ministry of Labor directly influences migration through annual labor plans, which set up quotas for hiring new employees for each region and each work unit. Without new employment quotas, work units cannot accept staff and workers migrating from other areas. It also directly controls the inter-regional transfer of workers and their family members through a set of rules and procedures.

In terms of administrative division of labor, the Ministry of Labor is specialized in enterprises and workers, while the Ministry of Personnel in administrative and non-production units, and cadres. In 1994, the total staff and workers of state units in urban areas were 112.14 million, among which 10.33 million were in administrative units and 20.48 million were in science, education, cultural and health units (ZGCZTJNJ, 1994:7,16).⁶⁵ In 1984, there were only 7.43 million employees in administrative units

⁶⁵ The reason to use state units is that the Ministry of Labor is not directly involved in the labor and wage plans of non-state units, although some large collectives are also under plans.

and 17.79 million in non-production units (Zhao, 1989:1845). There were substantial increase of employees in administrative and non-production units, while the total of workers and staff flattened out over the same period. Even with the increase, administrative and non-production units account for less than 30% of the total state workforce. It is not so surprising that the Ministry of Labor is given the overall responsibility for labor and wages based on the relative size of the workforce under their administration.

Ministry of Personnel

The Ministry of Personnel was originally established for coordinating the administration of workers and staff in administrative (government) units, and later was extended into non-production units, and cadres in production units. It is concerned with everything related to cadres, from promotion, training, welfare and wages, to retirement. It is responsible for formulating labor and wage plans for administrative and non-production units, which are combined into the national total labor and wage plans by the Ministry of Labor.

A major part of the ministry's work is the reallocation and transfer of various types of cadres. It is a key player in college graduate assignment, together with the State Planning Commission and the Higher Education Commission. It is responsible for the allocation of military cadres to non-military units after they are discharged, working with political departments in the military. Inter-regional transfer of cadres must also be assessed and approved by the personnel departments. Since these categories of migration account for a big chunk of planned migration, the Ministry of Personnel is very important in regulating migration, particularly in the post-reform period.

Since the Ministry of Personnel is similar in nature to the Ministry of Labor in terms of administrative tasks, they were combined into the Ministry of Labor and Personnel during 1982-88. Some local governments at various levels combine them in one

administrative department. For example, provinces like Zhejiang, Nei Menggu, Hainan have only one Bureau (or Department) of Labor and Personnel, rather than two separate administrative departments.

It is worth mentioning that personnel departments are responsible for most of the cadres, but not all. Those high level cadres with administrative ranks above a certain level (bureau level or 13th administrative rank and above) are under the management of the Department of Organization (DOO) within the Chinese Communist Party. Therefore, the transfer of high level cadres needs the approval of the DOO rather than personnel departments.

National Establishment Control Committee

The National Establishment Control Committee (*guojia bianzhi weiyuanhui*) is one of the three key bureaucratic institutions of labor and wage control, along with the ministries of labor and personnel. At times, it was a branch department within the former two (Xu and Zhang, 1992:51). Its principal task is to keep the number of staff and cadres in state administrative units and non-production units in check, according to some general standards. As an administrative unit grows for whatever reasons, its increase in staff needs approval from the establishment control committee at its administrative level. It is the same for new establishments. Through controlling new establishments and the total number of staff in existing establishments, the committee is an additional check on employment and wage growth of administrative and non-production units besides the labor and wage plans.

The Ministry of Public Security

Despite the general perception that migration is controlled by the public security system, it does not have decision making power for most planned migration. Its most important task in terms of migration regulation is *hukou* administration. It's responsible for maintaining and enforcing *hukou* registration. With official approval from the labor and personnel departments, public security departments can issue *hukou* registration for immigrants. It is an important but not decisive step for many planned migrants. With all

other documents ready, this step is automatic. For rural migrants into cities, who do not have official permission from local governments, public security departments can be a fearful enforcer.

Some non-job related migration is subject to the direct discretion of the public security departments. These moves are family migration out of humanitarian consideration. Under-age children, elderly who cannot support themselves physically and financially, can be allowed to migrate to the place where their parents or children work. Spouses can reunite if one is under conditions of bad health. Public security departments can permit a number of such migration subject to specific quotas.

It is also responsible for the migration generated by the reformed labor. Reformed labor (criminals and political prisoners) is generally sent away, sometimes to frontier provinces. Their urban *hukou* is revoked by the public security departments. Once they are released, public security departments may restore their *hukou* in their original areas and allow them to move back.

Public security has a strong presence in the lowest level of government. A major part of the urban street government office is the branch office of public security. Migration associated with state units is mostly enforced by the labor and personnel departments, while migration outside state work units, i.e., urban neighborhoods, is enforced by the public security departments.

Other major ministries

The Ministry of Civil Affairs is directly involved in allocating demobilized military soldiers, together with labor departments. Civil affair departments are solely responsible for allocating demobilized soldiers in rural areas, while it works with labor departments in assigning demobilized soldiers from urban areas to state enterprises and factories.

In the late 1970s, the Ministry of Civil Affairs was also given the authority to deal with immigration of low ranking cadres into Beijing summoned by various departments of the State Council. It relieved itself from this responsibility after the Ministry of Personnel resumed operation (Zhao, 1989:901-2).

The Ministry of Higher Education, later promoted to the Higher Education Commission, is directly involved in college graduate assignment. In certain periods, it was given the sole responsibility of college graduate assignment. In other periods, it was the Ministry of Personnel that was mostly responsible. There were multiple shifts back and forth between the two in the past. Even today when the majority of college graduates are assigned by personnel departments, education departments are responsible for some graduates, such as those from teachers' colleges.

Temporary working offices under the State Council

It is a proven strategy for the State Council to set up special offices to coordinate activities among ministries and provinces in emergency circumstances. They can be considered as temporary supra-ministry organizations, normally with strong power due to the emergence of crisis. Quite a few are closely related to migration. Out of these, some lasted for several years, others for more than a decade. The most prominent example is The Office of Allocating Educated Youths, set up around 1965 and which died out in 1980. Its major functions were to mobilize urban youths to migrate to rural areas, to make plans regarding the total number of rusticated youths and regions they were sent to, to coordinate local governments sending and receiving educated youths, and to provide financial and material assistance to these youths. Its predecessor was the Office of Urban Population Reduction, whose task was to cut down on the urban population in order to reduce the fiscal burdens of the state after the economic disaster of the Great Leap Forward.

Another example is related to demobilization. In the early years of the republic, there were a large number of demobilized soldiers that needed to be allocated appropriately. A

special office was set up for this purpose, the Central Committee of Demobilization, which was changed to Central Committee of Demobilization and Construction. After the large wave of demobilization, routine allocation was then handed to the Ministry of Personnel. Fast forwarding to the mid 1980s when large scale disarmament was under way, the State Council again set up a special office, the Working Group of Military Demobilized Cadres.

So far, I have introduced those central ministries and supra-ministries, which are major administrative organizations in regulating migration in socialist China. These ministries are basically replicated at the provincial, prefecture and city level. Their functions and responsibilities are the same as the corresponding ministries. So, for example, a large city like Wuhan, has a Municipal Planning Commission, a Municipal Economic Commission, a Municipal Labor Bureau, a Municipal Personnel Bureau, and so on. Figure 3.1 shows the basic administration hierarchy and lines of authority in labor and migration regulation using the planning commission and the labor department as an example. Within each level of government, there is a grade of authority, from communist party committee and government, to planning commission to labor department, and other departments. This is the horizontal side of administration. Within each line, authority is also clearly defined, from the State Planning Commission, to provincial planning commission, and to county planning commission, in the case of planning. This is the vertical side of administration. Contact is only between adjacent levels of government. For example, the Ministry of Labor normally would not have direct contact with county labor bureaus. Its authority is exerted through provincial and prefecture labor departments. The vertical line of authority is professional in nature, except for party committees and government departments. The Ministry of Labor can issue directives, commands, and labor plans to provincial labor departments. It cannot, however, change the administrative positions of lower level departments. The right to nominate and remove personnel in provincial labor departments is in the hand of provincial governments.

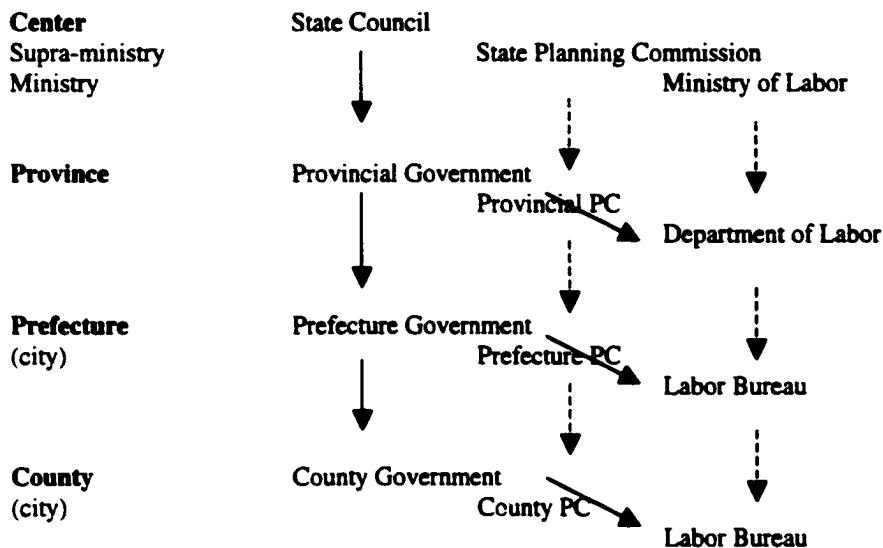


Figure 3.1 Major bureaucratic departments and lines of authority

Notes:

Solid lines for administrative relationship;

Dashed lines for professional relationship.

Administrative directives, commands and plans from the State Planning Commission and the Ministry of Labor need to be implemented by work units. Work units are the final destination of these planning directives. The way that work units are connected to the labor departments depends on the nature of work units, their types and ownerships.

Figure 3.2 shows how a municipal textile factory is linked to the municipal labor bureau. The First Municipal Textile Factory is owned by the city and directly administrated by the Municipal Bureau of Textile Industry. So the textile bureau is its authority department. Within the factory, there is a section of labor and personnel, which is responsible for wages and transfers of factory workers and staff. The director of the factory has the overall power in all labor affairs within the factory. The labor and personnel section submits labor statistics, plans and working report to the department of

labor and personnel in the textile bureau. The textile labor department in turn submits information on labor for all factories and work units under its administration to the Municipal Labor Bureau. Transfer of workers from outside the city needs approval of both the textile labor department and the Municipal Labor Bureau. New policies and labor plans pass down in the opposite direction, i.e., from labor bureau to textile labor department to the labor and personnel section.

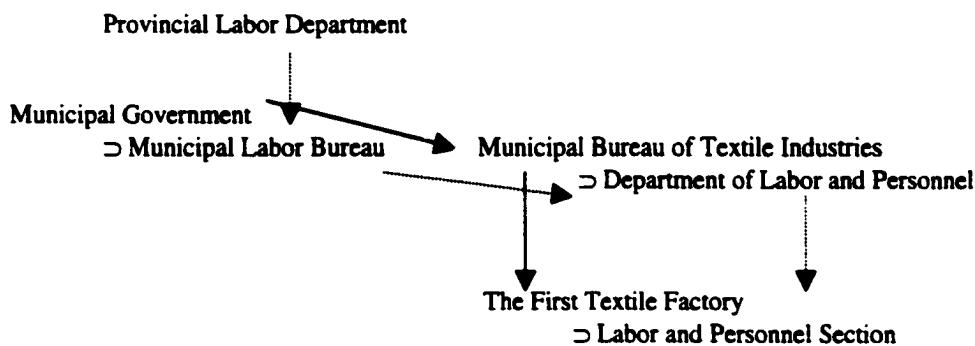


Figure 3.2 A Detailed View of Authority in Labor Administration

Notes:

- Solid lines are administrative relationship;
- Dashed lines are professional relationship;
- ▷ means subordinate unit

For work units at other administrative levels, the procedure is more or less the same. An enterprise owned by an urban district would have one more administrative level, the urban district government, which has its own labor section. An enterprise owned by a provincial government would report directly to the labor department of its authority department. So the lower an enterprise's rank, the more administrative departments regulate it. In Chinese bureaucratic language, there would be more “mother-in-laws” (*popo*) to interfere.

The final level of bureaucratic structure is that county and city which are the lowest administrative units that have “independent” administrative authority. A township government or an urban district cannot issue administrative letters to other government

departments. For example, when a worker in a state enterprise owned by a district government is to be transferred to another place, it's required to have the approval from the municipal labor bureau, rather than the district labor department.

In sum, this section has discussed the basic bureaucratic structure of labor and migration regulation. The core bureaucratic departments include planning commissions, labor and personnel departments, and establishment control offices. They are connected through vertical and horizontal linkages to build a structure with clearly defined authority. This structure is able to reach and regulate work units of all types and at all administrative levels. The next section will look at the institutional processes and techniques to put the structure to work.

3.2.2 Planning process and quota control

Although migration is generally perceived as planned by the socialist state, it is not implemented in a straightforward way. Migration is not normally listed as an independent item in the state's social and economic plans. The socialist state does not formulate migration plans on regular basis as it does for finance, material supplies and the labor force. There were several occasions in the past when the state did make explicit plans for migration.⁶⁶ But those are exceptions rather than the norm.

3.2.2.1 Planning Process

Planning and regulation of migration are generally embedded in economic and social plans. Socialist planning, or national economic and social development planning as it is formally called, contains several time frames and various specialized plans. The time frames include long term plans (such as a 10 year plan), mid term plans (mostly five year plan), and annual plans. At different occasions, long term plans were made for agricultural development, industries and population and so on. They were mostly draft

⁶⁶ One example is the regional transfer and balancing of construction workers and skilled industrial workers in mid 1950s. Another is the sending down of educated youths and urban residents in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

plans for reference and were never carried out directly. Five year plans have specific targets and policy measures, and are supposed to be materialized through annual plans. But for the whole pre-reform period only the first five year plan was actually carried out. So Chinese planning has functioned mostly through annual plans. Annual plans consist of more than a dozen specialized plans. The actual number fluctuates over time depending on the economic and political environment. Core plans include those on industrial development, agriculture, fixed asset investment, labor and wages, resources and materials, trade, education and technological development.

The most closely related planning for migration is labor and wage planning. The central task of labor and wage planning is to carry out strategic directions and macro decisions of the central party committee and state council on the national economy and social development, to make overall arrangements and comprehensive balancing of the urban and rural labor force, and to raise labor productivity by rationally utilizing the labor force (Zhao, 1989:105).

Theoretically, the formulation of labor and wage plans should be based on comprehensive evaluation of all major factors and their possible changes that might influence supply and demand of labor for the next plan period. During the First Five Year Plan when economic planning was basically copied from the Soviet Union, there were great frustration and pressure on labor officials at basic administration levels. There were simply too many forms to fill out, too many items to investigate and too few people to do it.⁶⁷ Later on, this was strongly criticized as bureaucracy. Due to practical considerations and political pressure, an alternative planning method was pursued.

In actual practice, plans are made mostly through the “base” method (*jishu fangfa*). The base refers to the base year on which plan for the next period is built. In the case of an

⁶⁷ Many government reports and documents during the mid 1950s mentioned this, which I discovered during my archival research. An additional observation is that most of government archival materials related to labor planning were in the 1950s. For the next twenty years fewer archival documents can be

annual plan, the base year is the current year and the plan period is the next year. The "base" method focuses on major possible changes over the next year and adjusts related plan quotas percentage-wise. The major indexes of labor planning include the total number of workers and staff, total wages, and sometimes labor productivity. The objective of the labor and wage plan is to project a desired increase (decrease) of these indexes. The numbers for workers and staff for the next plan period will be used as controlling quotas that set limits for the increase in state employees and their wages. Local governments and work units should not exceed these limits without sound reasons and approval from authority departments.

The plan for the total number of workers and staff is formulated by adjusting current total number according to several possible changes. On one side is the possible increase of state workers, including new recruitment, demobilized cadres and soldiers, assigned college graduates, urban youths waiting for jobs, and so on. Demobilized soldiers and college graduates are quite easy to predict since they are determined by earlier numbers of enlistment and enrollment (NLGB, 1982:186). New recruitment depends on the economic growth rate, determined mostly by the scale of state fixed investment, and the amount of grain production. On the other side is the possible decrease of state employees, caused by retirement and resignation, and occasionally reduction by state policies. The wage plan is a little more complicated than the worker number plan. In addition to wage changes caused by the increase or decrease in state employees, total wages can also be changed by state policies related to wages, such as wage raises for existing workers (Xu and Zhang, 1992:7).⁶⁸

The planning procedure ideally would be "two ups and two downs" (*liangxia liangshang*). 'Ups' refers to sending information and reports to upper level governments. 'Downs' refers to sending planning quotas and directives to lower levels governments.

found. Assuming there is no bias in selecting and preserving documents in labor administration, it seemed that planning in later years was not based on hard investigation and evaluation.

⁶⁸ This is a much simplified description of the wage planning process since it is not my major concern. For detailed description see NLGB (1982:398-411).

First, work units and their authority departments should submit suggested figures of workers and staff and wages for the next plan period according to basic guidelines and policies. Then planning commissions and labor departments balance these requests on two levels. One is to balance figures sent down from above and the submitted figures from below. The other is to balance requirements from all departments and units within administrative regions. After such coordination, planning commissions and labor departments can formulate and issue draft plans. After subordinate units receive draft plans, they can voice their opinions and revisions and resubmit the plans. This is the second "up". Finally planning commissions and labor departments issue final plans after making relevant changes (Jiang, 1997).⁶⁹

In actual practice, the first step is often omitted. Planning commissions and labor departments directly issue draft plans with controlling quotas. Planning commissions and labor departments at lower levels disaggregate these quotas for subordinate departments. These departments and work units formulate and submit their plans, which are finalized after necessary changes by the planning commission and labor departments. For most of the history of the republic, labor and wage plans were mandatory. In ordinary circumstances, government departments and work units cannot exceed labor and wage quotas. Without an assigned quota, work units cannot obtain wage funds, *hukou* residence and grain rationing for people hired outside plans. In special situations, work units can apply and do get permission to hire additional people after the plan has already started. It is a normal practice that planning commissions at every level keeps certain percentage of the new employee quota for emergency use.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Formulation of plans consists of two parts made along "lines and pieces" separately. The vertical planning system implies that plans are formulated and submitted by the labor departments along vertical lines, for example, from a municipal textile bureau to a provincial textile bureau to the Ministry of Textile Industries. Horizontal planning system refers to compilation and balancing of plans for all work units within an administrative region, for example, a city. Then the plan will be submitted to the upper level of government, a province in this case (Jiang, 1997:43).

⁷⁰ In fieldwork interviews, officials at planning commissions commented that State Planning Commissions kept 10 or more percent of the total quota for flexible use.

Labor and wage plans are not flexible for frequent changes in labor demand. One adjustment is to allow work units to hire temporary workers for temporary and seasonable jobs, such as unskilled construction jobs, sugar and cotton field jobs. It's been a by-product of labor planning since the beginning of socialist China. Sometimes, temporary workers are given special quotas. Sometimes they are only included in the total wage fund without restriction of total numbers (Zhao, 1989:199-204). Many enterprises hire temporary workers to fill undesirable jobs, to cut labor costs, or simply to meet labor demands that cannot be timely served by labor departments. The majority of these temporary workers are of rural origin. These rural temporary workers do not have benefits and official *hukou* residence.⁷¹ Evidence shows that the hiring of rural temporary workers by state enterprises is a time honored practice, going far back to the 1950s and 1960s. It was estimated that there were 9.3 million "temporary" rural laborers in state units in 1980, accounting for about 12% of permanent workers at that time (Zhao, 1989: 201). The recent rise of rural labor migration was not a totally new phenomenon if put in this perspective. The practice of resorting to temporary workers generated substantial rural labor migration, which was not recorded in the official *hukou* statistics before reforms.

Labor and wage planning sets out the macro frame within which most planned migration occurs.⁷² Labor planning determines the scale of new employment and its spatial distribution in accordance to state policies and investment. Part of this employment is fulfilled by transferring labor across regions. When Wuhan Iron and Steel was under construction in late 1950s, most of its technicians, administrators and skilled workers came from outside. Some of them were transferred in whole units of workshops or even in factories. A state unit cannot make a hiring, especially of people from outside without the assigned labor quota. There are many cases in which state workers were not granted the chance to migrate to other places to reunite with their family members. Officials and

⁷¹ At several occasions, temporary workers were allowed to convert to permanent workers, such as 1956, 1963, and 1971. In 1971, about eight million temporary workers became permanent workers, substantially breaking quota limits for that year.

local cadres simply said that there was no quota to accommodate the migration. Officials at labor departments informed me that four labor quotas in the mid 1970s were worth an office building. These quotas were desperately sought by the sent down educated youths and their parents.

State units are not treated equally when assigned labor and wage quotas. Large enterprises, central enterprises and heavy industrial enterprises often had large labor and wage quotas. Enterprises of local government, small-sized and light industries were likely to be neglected. The reason is, as we discussed earlier, that heavy manufacturing enjoyed a high priority in economic development. In addition, administrative ranks imply the capability to extract resources, of which labor and wage quotas are among the most important. In a proposal to reform labor systems in the early 1980s, Wuxi labor officials complained about the irrationalities in labor and wage planning. An example was that two large central enterprises with surplus workers were assigned more workers while many local enterprises with fast growth did not get labor quotas at all. Local governments were helpless since these labor quotas were specifically assigned (*daimao xiada*) and were not allowed to be transferred.⁷³

Labor and wage planning is the principal control mechanism in regulating labor distribution. But it is not the only one. There are several others either implicitly or explicitly related to migration, particularly urbanward migration. One is cadre planning and quota control. Others include quota control of hukou conversion and the mechanical increase of population.⁷⁴ These control mechanisms mostly developed in the 1980s when the urban population and workers and staff in administrative and non-production units had increased rapidly and seemed out of control.

⁷² Labor and related migration (family or study and training migration) accounts for a dominant share of planned migration. Other types, such as reformed labor, are really small in comparison.

⁷³ From archival materials of labor bureaus in Wuxi City.

⁷⁴ Mechanical increase refers to the population growth caused by factors other than natural increase in Chinese official language.

There was no systematic control of cadre increase before 1981. Cadre management was implemented through controlling major sources of cadre increase, such as college graduate assignment, demobilized military cadres and promotion of cadres in state units. But in the early 1980s, things almost got out of hand due to economic reforms and institutional reorganization. The total number of cadres nationwide increased 46% between 1980 and 1986, with the largest increase in administrative units (Xu and Zhang, 1992:33). During the same period, administrative expenditures almost doubled, mostly due to increases in wages and benefits. In 1987, the State Council mandated that cadre increase should be subject to overall annual plans.⁷⁵ The process of cadre planning is similar to that of labor and wage plans. State units and departments need to apply for cadre quotas when they hire people with cadre status. The Ministry of Personnel and the Department of Organization are responsible for formulating and implementing cadre annual plans. This change restricted migration of cadres to a certain extent. In the past, state assigned transfers of college graduates and demobilized cadres came automatically with labor and wage quotas. Now work units need to acquire cadre quotas before they can receive cadres transferred or assigned from outside. Since cadre assignment and transfer account for a major share of planned migration in the post-reform period, this policy may reduce the scale of migration within state units.

The 1980s also witnessed rapid increase in urban population, particularly in large cities. This fast increase was caused by changes in government policies and economic development. Policy rehabilitation allowed many who were sent down to rural areas and other places to come back to their original cities, such as rusticated youths and state employees to the Third Front regions. State land acquisition also added formerly rural residents to the urban population by granting them non-agricultural hukou status. The state was under pressure to centralize control of the urban population increase. Starting in 1990, many large cities, such as Nanjing, Wuhan, and Wuxi adopted explicit planning control of hukou conversion and mechanical increase of urban population. This is a

⁷⁵ In April of 1987, State Council issued "Directive Regarding Terminating The Increase in Administrative Units, Establishment and Cadre Numbers" (Central Government Document No.12, 1987).

diversion from the past when control of immigration was implemented in various departments, such as labor and personnel bureaus, public security bureaus and so on. Now the planning commission set up overall quotas for immigrants and hukou status conversion, which were disaggregated among subordinate departments and work units. Applicants for immigration need to obtain migration and hukou conversion permits before they can apply for hukou residence and grain rationing. Even the formal channels of migration, like college graduate assignment were also subject to the overall quota of urban population increase (Jiang, 1997:241-3). Migration into these cities now was under dual control of state policies and a planning quota. Those who conformed to state policies but did not have a planning quota should wait for the availability of a quota while those who have a quota but did not conform to policies were not allowed to migrate into cities.⁷⁶

These new policies generated complaints and tension in some cities. For example, the hukou conversion quota allocated by Jiangsu Province to Wuxi City was 7200 in 1990 while the actual conversion number was 42876 in the previous year.⁷⁷ This pace of tightening up created a tough situation for local governments. Many who had been approved for hukou conversion but did not gain grain rationing were unable to proceed since the provincial government stopped granting grain rationing quotas. Therefore they were out of grain supply and went to related government departments to protest. The Wuxi government pled for an additional quota of 4000 to pacify those who were caught in between the policy change.

3.2.2.2 Quota control for establishment size

Socialist state units have a tendency to hoard labor due to soft-budget constraints as we discussed before. There are two ways to restrict their size. One is through labor, wage and cadre plans. This puts a limit on increases for existing work units based on their current number of staff and employees on an annual basis. Another is to estimate how many staff

⁷⁶ For the process and procedure, see Chan and Zhang (1999).

⁷⁷ These figures are quoted from a specific report submitted by Wuxi Municipal Planning Commission regarding remaining problems of hukou conversion in 1990.

and workers are needed based on the nature of their work. The latter method is important since they give a knowledge of whether the current size of employment is overblown. It also provides a standard for allocating employee quotas for new work units. This is the work in the field of staffing and establishment control (*bianzhi kongzhi*). The actual methods and standards for establishment and staffing control vary across work unit types.

- Staffing control for administrative units.

The standard for determining the size of administrative units is relatively simple and straightforward. According to the regulation of administrative reform in 1982, there are four factors, i.e., population, social and economic development, number of subordinate administrative units, and administrative area in determining the size of government units. Generally speaking, an administrative unit will have more administrative staff, if it has larger population and administrative area, is more developed economically, and has more subordinate administrative units.

The size of administrative staff in provincial and county governments is determined by combination of all four factors above. Administrative size of city governments is determined by the size of urban population and percentage of rural population. Town and township government size is determined mostly by the rural population density (Zhao, 1989:1049).

For example, the total number of administrative staff for centrally administered cities is calculated by the standard of four per thousand of total population (Xu and Zhang, 1992:49). So a city with 10 million population is allowed to have 40,000 administrative staff. The nature of administrative work also matters. For example, archival administration differs from planning administration in terms of workload. The larger the workload, the more administrative staff will be needed and granted.

- Staffing control for non-production state units

The factors for determining the number of non-production units (*shiye danwei*) are more complicated (Xu and Zhang, 1992:51).⁷⁸ Unlike administrative units, non-production units are very diversified in their tasks. For example, staff quotas for research institutes are very different from that for hospitals. The size of non-production units is also related to overall economic and social development.

There were only two or three establishment standards for non-production units issued by the central government before reform. The number of establishment standards by the central government increased to 26 in 1987 (Zhao, 1989). In addition, local governments at various levels also issued a large mount of local standards and implementation details. These standards cover many areas, such as education, science and technology, culture, health and physical education. For example, the number of teachers and staff in a polytechnic school (*zhongdeng zhuanye xuexiao*) are determined by the size of students and nature of the school. For a finance school with 640 students, the teacher and staff to student ratio is 1 to 4.5. For a school with twice the size of students in the same field, the ratio is slightly lower, 1 to 5.5, possibly due to scales of economies (Zhao, 1989:1057). Schools in sciences and engineering are given a larger ratio compared to finance and social sciences. So, the state can allow up to 142 positions of faculty and staff for a finance school with 640 students with related expenditure covered by the state. If the school has fewer than 142 faculty and staff, it is possible to apply for some new positions subject to the approval of the authority department. If the school has already more than 142 positions, it is not only hard for it to add any new position, it also will be under pressure to cut positions when the state cut down on its fiscal budget.

- Staffing control for enterprise units

After the Great Leap Forward, the state felt the need to trim redundant workers in state enterprises. Major effort was undertaken to set up standards for the number of staff and

⁷⁸ Shiye danwei is different from state administration, party organization and mass organization. It is also different from enterprises, which accumulate capital for the state. Shiye danwei's major objectives are to create or improve production conditions for the whole society, to promote social welfare, and to satisfy people's needs for culture, education, science and health.

workers on each job post. This is called *dinggang dingyuan* “determine the workers for job posts” (Zhao, 1989:222-38). The objectives were to reduce positions in management and services, to tie the number of workers to production quantity, and to get rid of surplus workers and staff. Several industrial ministries, such as the Ministry of First Machinery Industry and the Ministry of Metallurgical Industry, formulated standards on establishments and job post. But major progress has been made only since the reform. In 1981, 19 industrial ministries created standards for about 60 sub-industries. Some companies, such as the Capital Iron and Steel Corp. (*shougang*), rigorously implemented its staffing standard. According to the requirement of the State Council, the way the standard is formulated is to follow the best records (with the least workers and staff for each job and industry). This caused discrimination against old enterprises with old machinery, since old machines are much less efficient than new ones. Labor productivity depends on a multitude of factors. It is very hard to measure the real potential performance and set up some standards even across similar enterprises.

Although it is believed that staffing control is the basis of labor planning, in actual practice, it was opposite sometimes. For example, one basic principal of staffing control determined in the national establishment and staffing control working meeting in 1960 was to decide staffing quota within the range of labor planning (NLGB, 1982). So staffing control was not widely and successfully implemented.

In sum, out of two measures to control the tendency of overhiring in state units, labor and wage planning is more successful and realistic than establishment control. Despite tremendous effort and policy attention, establishment control through unified standards did not help the situation of continuing redundancy in state units. A major effort in setting up these standards actually concentrated in the post reform period. One implication of this failure is that upper level governments could only rely on the past records to restrict the size of workers and staff. State enterprises and units should have local knowledge of how many workers are needed for each job. But it is not in their interests to cut down on their establishment and workforce due to reasons discussed previously. In the end, the

Chinese state is much less than successful in containing the growth of its labor force in state units.

3.3 Planned Migration: Rules and Procedures

So far, we have discussed the general and specific institutions within which Chinese socialist migration operates. We have also discussed the bureaucratic structure and planning process in labor regulation. Now it is time to look at planned migration and its regulations, particularly the rules and procedures.

In the languages of bureaucratic officials, rules and procedures are called literally as “lines and frames” (*tiaotiao kuangkuang*). Officials use these rules and procedures to measure and frame all possible cases in real world into much simplified categories. This not only provides some kind of standardization but also makes their administrative jobs practical. Similarities exist in migration regulation across regions and migration channels in terms of some general principles and procedures. There are also obvious differences in administrative departments, migration requirements and procedures for different types of migration. In the next few sections, we will first discuss some general principles in planned migration. Then we will move on to major types of migration and their administration.

3.3.1 General principles

There are some principles that appeared over and over again in government documents and regulations related to migration. These principles explicitly declare the preferences of the socialist state in migration directions and destinations. Administrative departments and officials are required to stick to these principles when making decisions on labor migration and transfer. These general rules may also help government officials to simplify complex situations. The objectives of these principles are to limit unwanted and unnecessary migration and restrict migration into large cities. Some general principles that are similar to labor planning are not discussed here, such as adhering to current policies of the state, giving priority to key development projects, and so on.

Encouragement of downward migration.

According to a regulation of the State Council, the direction of rational migration and transfer is from large and middle size cities to small cities and towns; from coastal and inland areas to frontiers and hardship regions; from state enterprises to collective enterprises; from economically developed regions to underdeveloped regions; from skilled worker abundant areas to less abundant areas.⁷⁹ It is not limited to the migration of skilled workers, similar requirements appeared in other types of planned migrations. For example, migration for spousal reunion should move in the direction from large cities to middle and small cities, from inland to frontiers, from First and Second Front regions to the Third Front regions.⁸⁰ Migration in the reverse directions should be controlled strictly (Zhao, 1989:252).

In general, migration moving down the urban, administrative and spatial hierarchies is encouraged. Migration across the same level of settlements is normally possible but not strongly encouraged. Migration moving up the hierarchy is discouraged, particularly for places like Beijing and Shanghai at the top of hierarchy. There are specific regulations for migration into these two cities.

The state's preferences in encouraging downward migration are consistent with its policies on urban growth. The state practices urban development policies according to the size of urban settlements. A consistent policy has been "rigorously restricting growth of large cities, moderately controlled growth of middle cities and encouraging the growth of small cities and towns". The reasons and difficulties in carrying out these policies come from the fact that there are natural tendencies for resources to concentrate in large cities due to the nature of socialist system, and for people to concentrate in large cities due to various benefits and amenities.

⁷⁹ Quoted from "Temporary Regulations of Rational Migration of Skilled Workers in State Owned Units" issued by the State Council issued in 1987.

⁸⁰ For detail about Third Front, see Naughton (1988).

Back to where one came from.

In many types of migrations, “back to where you come from” is an explicit principle. This rule would in general limit the choices of migration. It dramatically reduces the otherwise multitude of circumstances and scenarios and makes administration of migration much easier. A large proportion of planned migration has been return migration, such as education, and military enlistment. After finishing college studies and military service, people are expected to go back to their origins, if there are no clear assignment plans. For some migrations originally perceived as one way movement, when circumstances change, people can go back to where they come. Examples are rustication of urban educated youths, cadre and workers supporting frontier and inland provinces.

In implementation of this rule, there are variations of interpretation of “origins”. It could be the general region or specific area. It could be origins of parents or spouses, or sometimes those of children of elderly and retired people. In the early 1950s, demobilized soldiers could go back to their origins in the general sense. Many settled in towns and cities in their origin areas despite that they came from rural areas. Later on, the rules tightened. Demobilized soldiers could only go back to their rural origins.

In the campaign to reduce the urban population in the early 1960s and the rustication movement, many urban residents and urban youths were sent to the “origins” where they had never been before. In the conventions of socialist China, “origin” (*jiguan*) was long considered as the origins of parents. It is similar to class origins. Children inherited the class of their parents, although they were born under communist rule. If their parents were landlords, or rich peasants, they would bear those class origins.

Family or humanitarian consideration

For prospective migrants in planned migration, one basic requirement is to obey the state’s assignment. The state’s interests should be put before personal considerations. In college enrollment exams, students are asked to check the box whether to comply with the state’s assignment. Rarely would people check no.

But the socialist state is not totally negligent of family considerations and traditional social norms. It is supposed to take care of people's interests, although interpretation of people's interests lay at the hands of the state. It cannot run totally against common sense in migration decisions. Planned migrations in the past disrupted many Chinese families. As a remedy, the state gave some leeway for families with special difficulties, such as long term separation of spouses, elderly with health problems without children around, under-age children separated from parents, and so on. This provides a legitimate and probably the most important channel for individuals to argue and petition for their desired migration. The effectiveness of this principle depends on the political environment. At times of urban population downsizing, such as the 1960s, the state was less lenient towards personal needs and petitions. At other times, such as the post-reform period, it is much easier for the state to accept family considerations.

Some channels of migration are explicitly family oriented, such as migration managed by the public security system. Others are less obvious, such as worker and cadre transfer. In fact, a large part of planned migration after reform is family related.

3.3.2 Migration channels and procedures

I have already shown that various government departments are involved in migration regulation and administration. The administrative division of labor is formed according to the nature of various types of migration. Then this administrative division channels most migration into several specified streams. These migration channels have specific bureaucratic procedures and have different implications for migration in China.

Six major channels of migration can be identified. They are worker transfer, cadre transfer, enlistment and demobilization of military cadres and soldiers, college graduate assignment, recruitment, and family migration under the public security system. This classification is for ease of analysis and does not clearly delineate migration channels

since some channels are intertwined. One type of migration, rustication of urban youths, was a special migration channel for a dozen years. It will be discussed in the next chapter.

Cadre transfer

Cadre transfer is a form of migration that is administered by personnel departments. Others include college graduate assignment and allocation of demobilized cadres. It is worth mentioning that not all cadre transfer is under the administration of personnel departments. The transfers of cadres at municipal and bureau rank and above are administered by the Department of Organization under the Communist Party Committee. Only cadres with middle and lower level ranks go through personnel departments. They account, however, for most of the cases in terms of numbers.

Cadre transfer includes those both within a city and between cities. Only the latter one is associated with migration, which is our interest. Which government department has authority in transfer regulation (*shenpi quanxian*) depends on the administrative ranks of the work units involved and the type of their authority departments. The general guidelines are given by a cadre management working pamphlet (Xu and Zhang, 1992:174).

1. Cadre transfers between ministries and their directly governed units are only subject to the approval of related departments. For example, a cadre is to be transferred from the Ministry of Chemical Engineering to the Ministry of Textile in Beijing. The transfer will succeed if both ministries approve the move. But if the move is across regions, say from Wuhan to Shenyang, it needs not only approval of both ministries but also the personnel bureaus of both cities, particularly in Shenyang, the destination city.
2. Cadre transfers between ministries and local governments need negotiation and approval of personnel departments of county level governments or above for the units involved. For a transfer from Beijing to another city, approval from the work units

and personnel bureau of the other city is needed. But a transfer from other cities to work units in Beijing, needs special approval from the Ministry of Personnel to get into Beijing, which is strictly controlled.

3. Cadre transfers between various levels of local government are determined by personnel departments for governments at the county level and above. As to which level government is responsible, it depends on actual circumstances. Generally speaking, transfer into a city will be examined by its municipal personnel department, disregarding the actual administrative rank of the city, which could be county-level, prefecture-level, and provincial-level. But for transfer into work units of provincial governments in the city where the provincial government is located, an approval from a provincial personnel department is required. The same is true for transfer into prefecture government work units.

The above guidelines specify the personnel departments that have the authority in cadre transfers. It is only the first part of the bureaucratic process of cadre transfer, knowing the appropriate personnel departments that are responsible. Actual transfer procedures are even more specific and nitty-gritty, which is roughly stated next.

The first step is to issue a *shangdiao han* (letter of negotiating transfer) from the sending unit to the prospective receiving unit (from the perspective of migrants). Normally the personnel bureau of the administrative region (either a city or a county) of the sending unit, or the authority department of the sending unit if it is at county-regiment level or above sends the letter representing the sending unit. The second step is that the receiving unit will receive and examine the dossier of the prospective migrants. Then the application will be submitted to its authority department for approval. Then it is handed to the personnel bureau for final approval.

The personnel bureau needs a number of documents to go over depending on the nature of the move. The basic documents include a transfer application, a transfer registration

form, and the negotiating letter of the sending unit. Additional documents include the college diploma and professional certificate if it is a move of special talent or a skilled category. Or they include a marriage certificate and hukou certificate of destination, or a single child birth certificate for a move related to spousal reunion. Or they include documents of health and family conditions issued by hospitals, public security branch offices, and neighborhood committees for a move under the category of family difficulty. Or information about the rank of military officers, length of military service, and age for the move under the category of family co-migration of military families. There are also other small categories of transfer, such as policy transfer, rehabilitation, and special consideration (*zhaogu*).

A personnel bureau has monthly meetings to look at these applications submitted by authority departments. After approval, the personnel bureau can issue a transfer command (*diaoling*), a cadre transfer notice and an immigration planning quota card. With these documents, prospective migrants can start the actual procedure to move into the city. They need to report to the receiving unit, to change their hukou residence and grain rationing at the public security bureau.

For migration related to special talents and skills required by industrial enterprises, the personnel bureau does not wait for the monthly meetings. Since the mid 1980s, it deals with applications immediately as they come .

In addition to the general labor and wage quota, the receiving unit should have a cadre quota for the prospective migrant. The cadre quota is administered by the staff office and personnel bureau. The right of approval is in the hand of the personnel bureau. The personnel bureau administers the hukou conversion and immigration from outside the city. Transfer within the city is much easier and does not need approval from the bureau. It can be negotiated by the authority departments related to the transfer.

Worker transfer

Transfer of state workers is administered by labor departments. Worker transfer can be divided into group transfer and individual transfer. Group transfer (*chengjianzhi diaodong*) refers to the transfer of workers and staff in a whole unit, such as workshop or factory. Individual transfer refers to transfers on an individual basis, which could be initiated either by the state or the prospective migrant. Group transfers were prevalent during the first five year plan, the Third Front Movement, and the early years of reform. Most individual transfers are family related, especially in the after reform period. Group transfers are work related, e.g., for supporting development in inland areas. Worker transfers need the approval of labor departments at county rank or above. In comparison, group transfers normally require the permission of higher level labor departments. For example, in the time of economic contraction in the early 1960s, group transfers with 50 people or more needed direct approval of the Ministry of Labor. The actual number and authority fluctuated over time.

Individual transfers can be further divided into two major categories, single or one-way transfer (*dandiao*), and two-way or exchange transfer (*duidiao*). Exchange transfer refers to the exchange of prospective migrants in two places. Sometimes exchange transfers have very specific requirements, such as that the two prospective transferees should of the same sex, and have the same type of work. The exchange transfer is favored by labor departments because it does not disrupt labor plans. At times, it is required that a worker transfer must be in the format of exchange transfer. In the early 1980s, there were also multiple exchanges organized by several local governments to help spousal reunion. For example, Shanghai and other cities in south Jiangsu hosted special work meetings to exchange workers with spousal separation (Zhao, 1989:253).

Individual worker transfers are of low priority compared to cadre transfers. According to the directive of the Ministry of Labor, ordinary workers, in principle, are not allowed to have inter-provincial transfers. The general guidelines are to avoid long distance transfers. The demand for ordinary workers should be fulfilled locally. High skill workers

are exceptions. Some types of workers with low social status are totally excluded from worker transfer. Transfers of apprentices, temporary workers, workers in street or town collectives, and rural enterprises, are not allowed at all by the labor departments.

Worker transfers cover several types of people and situations according to an archival document.⁸¹ For example, there were 1841 workers transferred from outside Wuxi in 1987. About one third were returning educated youths. One fourth is for spousal separation and one fourth for skilled workers. Others include taking care of parents, family members co-migrated with professional cadres and military cadres. For worker transfers due to spousal reunion, an additional requirement such as separation over 10 years is attached in order to control and pace immigration numbers. The actual duration of separation varies across cities.⁸²

Worker transfer is subject to the quota control of labor and wages. Either the receiving units should have additional quotas to accommodate prospective transferees. Or the sending units should send quotas together with transferees. Generally the first situation applies to a group transfer and the second to the individual transfer. For example, the 1974 National Annual Labor and Wage Plan stated explicitly that labor departments of transferring out should transfer staffing and wage quotas to labor departments of transferring in areas. There is a special case I happened to come across. In 1974, the State Council and the Central Military Committee decided to hand its No. 6 Research Institute over to the Ministry of the Third Machinery. The Number Six Research Institute had 35,000 workers and staff, distributed in Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, Hubei and 6 other provinces. The total wage amount was 22.7 million RMB at that time. The labor and wage quota were all transferred to the Ministry of the Third Machinery.

In addition to the restraints of labor and wage quotas, there are added specific controls for transfer of workers and staff due to the massive return of state employees to large cities in

⁸¹ The document is from the Wuxi Labor Bureau regarding workers transferred from outside in 1987.

⁸² From interview with planning officials in Nanjing.

the 1980s. In 1981, the Nanjing Municipal Government issued a regulation that total transferees from outside should not exceed 0.5 per thousand of total workers and staff annually (Jiang, 1997:164). My interviews in Wuhan, Nanjing, and Wuxi show a common standard of 1.5 per thousand of total workers and staff for most of post-reform period. By that standard, a city with one million state employee can only allow 1500 workers and staff (include cadres) to inmigrate annually.

The procedures of worker transfers are quite complicated. The Wuxi Municipal Labor Bureau made a document on the procedures, stages, and materials for worker transfers into the City of Wuxi. Other cities and provincial governments have similar ones, which may not be exactly the same.

The first step is to contact labor departments or authority departments in Wuxi. Outside workers who want to come to Wuxi to work must ask their labor departments with the administrative rank of county and above to send official letters. Also needed is a form “staff and worker transfer negotiation form” (zhigong shangdiao biao), with information about their direct relatives in Wuxi, such as names, work units, address and transfer reasons. These letters and forms would be sent to related urban district governments or municipal bureaus. These letters and forms will be registered and filed.

The second step is to survey and examine situations related to the transfer. Upon receiving the requests, the district and bureau governments need to collect information on the family and housing related to the transferees. The sending units need to fill out a form, “transfer-in worker examination form” (diaojin gongren shenpi biao) with opinions from both receiving units and sending units on the transfers. After being stamped with an official seal, the application is submitted for the approval of authority districts or bureaus.

Then there follows discussion and examination from the authority departments. If the transfers conform to transfer principles and policies, and if transferees fit with in categories of worker transfers, then the authority departments of districts and bureaus

may sign their opinions of approval and stamp with an official seal. The application then is submitted to the Municipal Labor Bureau for approval. The transfer Section in the labor bureau will go over the documents first before handing them to the director of the Municipal Labor Bureau for final decision.

Finally is the actual process of making a transfer. After the approval by the labor bureau, authority districts and bureaus ask for dossiers and pass them on to receiving units. If there is no significant problem, the authority bureaus can send a transfer notice to the labor bureau of the sending units. The transferee must bring an introduction letter of administration relationship, a wage certificate, an urban hukou migration permit and a rationing card of grain and cooking oil to report to the Municipal Labor Bureau.⁸³ Then the labor bureau can give the transferee a hukou report card and a migration permission card. Transferees then need to go to the authority bureaus or (urban) district to have an introduction letter of administration relationship to report to the receiving units. Then the transferee needs to go to the public security bureau and the grain bureau to start the hukou and grain rationing procedure. Normally transferees are required to finish these steps within a month.

College graduate assignment

College graduate assignment is an important part of planned migration. Different from cadre and worker transfers, which are processed mostly case by case, college graduate assignment is an institutionalized annual practice. Every summer new graduates are assigned uniformly by the state. Their destinations and destinies are determined by the state policies at that time.⁸⁴

Since colleges and universities are extremely concentrated in large cities, college studies usually cause two migrations, one for going to school and the other graduating from

⁸³ The “introduction letter” of administrative relationship (xinzhen guanxi qieshaixin) is normally issued by a work unit to demonstrate its ownership of employees in communicating with the outside world.

⁸⁴ Before 1979, high school graduates in urban areas were also under direct state assignment of jobs. But most of them were allocated in the same cities and towns, so generally no migration was involved.

school. In many cases, this is a roundtrip migration with four or five years in between. A significant share of college students comes from rural areas. Actually this is probably the only way rural youths can squeeze into the privileged urban society. The lives of these rural youths are totally transformed between these two migrations. The first migration is a joint decision of students and colleges. Students fill out preferences for about half a dozen universities. The actual universities that students end up at depend on their enrollment exam scores and college selection process. Often students were picked by colleges not even on their preference lists. Normally they must comply with the results.⁸⁵ Once they are enrolled, their hukou status changes to a temporary (collective) urban hukou.

The departments in the central government that are responsible for college graduate assignment have changed several times. Before 1981, it was either the Ministry of Personnel or the Higher Education Commission (Ministry) that made assignment plans. After that, it was done by a joint committee headed by the State Planning Commission, consisting of the Higher Education Commission and the Ministry of Personnel.

There is an explicit division of labor between central government departments, local governments and colleges in graduate assignment. The central authority departments are responsible for 1) collecting statistics on graduates, formulating assignment and dispatchment plans, 2) monitoring and mobilizing implementation, 3) and drafting regulations for assignment. Local government departments are responsible for 1) collecting and reporting relevant statistics, 2) formulating assignment and dispatchment plans for universities under their administration, 3) examining assignment lists of graduates and introducing them to state work units. Universities and colleges are responsible for 1) providing information about majors and skills of graduates to state hiring units, 2) arranging students in dispatchment plans, and 3) mobilizing and examining students.

⁸⁵ In extreme cases, students who did not comply with the results were denied the right to participate in the college enrollment exam the next year.

The procedures of college graduate assignment generally go through the following stages (see Figure 3.3). The first is to collect information on both the supply and demand of college graduates (Zhao, 1989:855). Universities and colleges provide information on the supply side, such as majors and number of graduates. Local governments and ministries provide information on the demand for college graduates, pooled from state units. Then based on this information, the State Planning Commission or the Ministry of Personnel or the Higher Education Commission formulates the assignment plans and specifies the key points according to state policies and socioeconomic conditions. The draft plan is sent to ministries and local governments for suggestions and opinions. According to these suggestions the draft plan is revised and finalized. The finalized plan is submitted to the State Council and issued in its name. Universities dispatch students according to the final plans. Graduates report to the personnel departments and authority departments in the assigned destinations, and will be assigned to specific work units under them.

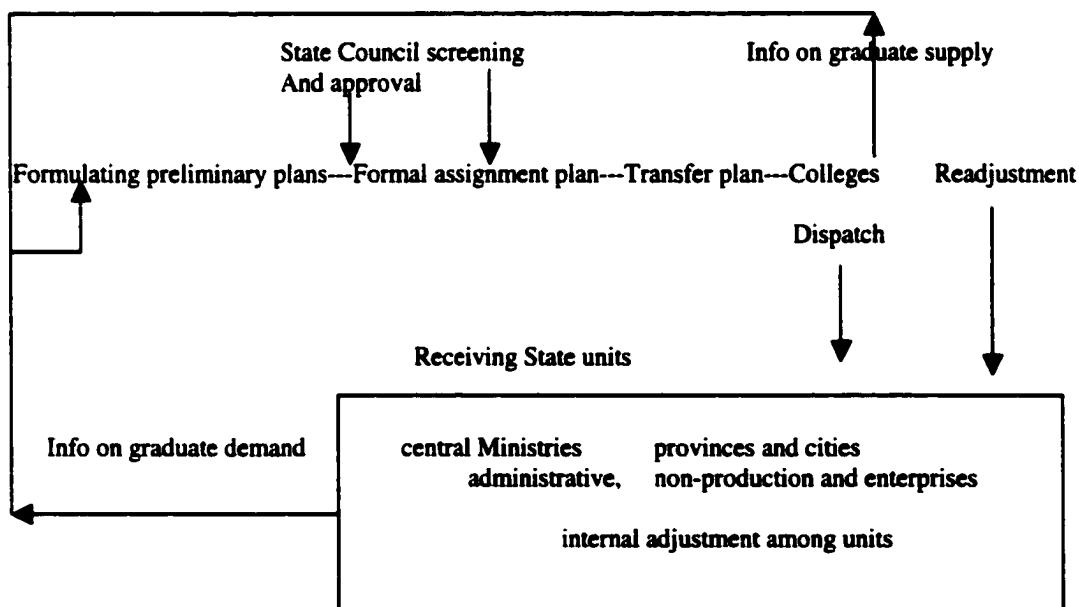


Figure 3.3 Working procedure of college graduate assignment

Source: Zhao (1989:855)

At the level of local government, there are subtle differences within the responsibilities of local departments. The planning commission is responsible for the overall quota of assignment. The personnel bureau and the education bureau are responsible for actual assignment and dispatch. In large cities, the personnel bureau is responsible for assigning graduates from colleges other than teacher's colleges while the education bureau is responsible for graduates from teacher's colleges. In small cities, it is all under the administration of education bureaus.

College graduate assignment is a state-centered process, influenced mostly by concerns of central and local governments. There is only a small room for personal preferences and choices. Students are allowed to have several preferences when colleges make assignment plans. They can report practical problems, such as sickness, family difficulties, spousal relationship, difficulties in adjusting to custom and climate and so on. Occasionally their needs and preferences are considered. In comparison, compliance with state needs and assignment is emphasized. This centralized process naturally results in the misallocation of many graduates. In many cases, assigned jobs of graduates have nothing to do with what they learned in school. In others, graduates complained about the practical problems caused by the assignment.

Social status and administrative ranking also factor in college assignment. Among college graduates, there exists an hierarchy from postgraduates (*yanjiu sheng*), four year college graduates (*benke sheng*), three year college graduates (*dazhuan sheng*) down to technical secondary school and polytechnic school graduates. According to my interviews and media reports, most cities, including large cities like Wuhan have no restriction to immigration of four year college graduates. Beijing, Shanghai and the new booming city Shenzhen are only open to postgraduates provided that they are employed by state work units.

The procedure and rules changed substantially after reform, particularly after the 1980s. For example, college assignment used to be carried out in a top down manner and

determined by decisions of the center. Since the late 1980s, there have been experiments to increase the choices of both students and state units in the process of assignment, while the state planning agencies stepped back. The major practice is called two way exchange (*shuangxiang xuanze*). One format is to convene a supply-demand face-to-face meeting (*gongxu jianman hui*) on a regular basis, sometimes for a whole city. Another major change in college graduate assignment is the relative balance of supply and demand. College graduates had been a key resource in short supply until the late 1980s. Central governments often kept a percentage of graduates for central allocation even from universities owned by local governments. After the change, there was difficulty in assigning college graduates uniformly, particularly from local colleges and polytechnic schools. This change contributed partially to the education reforms that were undergoing for a decade.

Demobilization of military cadres and soldiers

Allocation of demobilized cadres and soldiers is another important channel of planned migration. It is also an institutionalized practice conducted on a regular basis, similar to the assignment of college graduates. But due to the wide perception that military soldiers and cadres lack skills required in economic development, local governments have been reluctant to accept them. Allocation of military cadres and soldiers has been a tough sell and often regarded by the state as a political task. Local governments are required to accept them even if they do not need and want to do so. Labor and wage quotas are also automatically given to the receiving unit to accompany their allocations.

There are large differences between allocation of military cadres and soldiers. It is for the convenience of discussion that they are grouped together here. Military cadres are those who have military or professional ranks of platoon leader (*pai zhang*) and above.

Demobilization of military cadres is considered as a cadre changing occupation (*zhuanye*), while that of soldiers as termination of service (*fuyuan*). State policies regarding their allocations are very different. Military cadres are guaranteed state jobs, while only soldiers of urban origins qualify for state jobs. Military cadres with certain

ranks enjoy taking their families with them, and who are also entitled to state jobs. The allocation procedures are different for military cadres and soldiers. Allocation of the former is administered by the personnel departments, while that of the latter by departments of civil affairs and labor departments.

Like college studies, military service also implies two migrations, one of enlistment and the other of demobilization, with two or three years in between. A large percentage of these two migrations are round trip migrations, with military cadres and soldiers going back to their places of origins or enlistment. Due to the nature of military service and the state's concern for regional military power, a significant part of these migrations are interprovincial migrations. Military units are often mixed with soldiers from various provinces. About 80% of soldiers are of rural origin.

Military service is generally considered a channel of upward mobility, particularly before the economic reforms. Urban soldiers are provided state jobs upon demobilization even if they were jobless when enlisted. Rural soldiers have a priority of being recruited by state or collective units.

Military enlistment is administrated by military committees and local governments. The basic units are schools and neighborhood committees. Based on the plans of enlistment, local governments will disaggregate enlistment quotas to schools and neighborhood committees, typically with some choices of a few military units. Military service is voluntary, unlike many countries where every male is required to serve for a period of time in his life. Youths under a certain age can apply and are given a medical examination. Those who pass might be selected to join the army. Their hukou will be transferred to the military units of their service, and can be switched back automatically upon demobilization.

The allocation of demobilized military cadres is probably the most complicated among all planned migrations.⁸⁶ Military cadres tend to have much longer service and therefore older than soldiers. Many of them have had spouses and children and established various linkages at the places of their service. At the time of demobilization, there are many options of destinations. Therefore the management and rules framing their choices are prolific and vary across cities.

The basic principle is similar across the provinces, regardless of their socioeconomic status, except that Tibet has no extra conditions for receiving military cadres. The basic principle is to go back to one's origin or places of enlistment. Several other things amended this basic principle. The most important one is the spouse. If the spouse's origin or current hukou is in the city of service, one has the claim to be assigned in the city. If the spouse has stayed or worked for a long period of time, one is also allowed to move into that city. But the length of period required varies across cities. Hebei requires 10 years of local hukou residence; Taiyuan three years' work; Jiangsu five years of marriage; Zhejiang, five years' local residence; Fujian five years' work for cadres above regimental commander (*tuan ji*), and eight years' for above battalion commander (*ying ji*); Shanghai stayers must meet the condition of being able to bring families during the terms of service (which means middle level cadres and above); Jiangxi five years' work; Liaoning eight years' work or stay; and Yunnan three years (*jundui ganbu shouce*, 1988).

The second principle is special skills measured by a college degree or mid-class technical title (*zhongji jishu zhicheng*). If the spouse is from outside but has a college degree, demobilized cadres could be assigned locally. For the top large cities, there are further restrictions on the principle. For example, in Beijing, one's spouse needs to work in the city and seems indispensable to the unit. The third principle is the honor or the nature of military service. If one has earned the military award of second-class or above, was

⁸⁶ The demobilization of cadres with military rank of divisional commander and above is under the responsibility of the Organization Department of Central Committee of Communist Party, Military Cadre Allocation Work Group of the State Council and the General Political Department.

injured in service, or worked in airplanes or submarines for more than fifteen years, or worked in remote and difficult regions, one can be given permission to choose among the parents' place of residence, the current place or the place of origin.

Places vary in these principles as we have already seen in the duration of the spouse's job at prospective destinations. Some cities are extremely tight, while others very relaxed. For example, in Shanghai, if demobilized cadres having a Shanghai origin but married a spouse in other provinces, one is not allowed to go back to Shanghai. But if one had 20 years service, or a rank of vice regimental commander (*fu tuan ji*), and the spouse had Shanghai origin before marriage, one can be assigned to Shangahi. Sometimes even if all other conditions are met, housing must be provided by oneself. At the other extreme, there are no conditions for going to Tibet. In Nei Menggu, one can go as long as one's spouse works and stays there. There are no further restrictions as to length of marriage, work and residence.

An important difference among military cadres is whether they can bring their families with them during service. It is a symbol of social status and has implications on migration of both cadres and their family members. The conditions for family members to accompany military cadres are: cadres with military rank of vice battalion commander and above, 35 years and older, military tenure of 15 years or more, being a college graduate working more than 5 years in a key technology department; and serving in remote and frontier regions.⁸⁷

We have seen that military cadres satisfying conditions of family accompaniment during service are better treated and have more options in demobilization. If the spouse is a

⁸⁷ According to the Ministry of Labor and Personnel May 13, 1983 <<The Notice Regarding the Delineation of Remote Areas>>, the remote areas include Tibet, Xinjiang, Qinhai, Mei Mongol, Ningxia, Gansu, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Sichuan, Heilongjiang and Jilin, 12 provinces and 681 counties. These counties are further divided into three types: first is remote and poor mountainous countries; second is the frontier countries at national boundaries and cold and high elevated above 2000 m; third is the specially high and cold counties with elevation above 3000 m.

permanent staff or worker in a state unit, she or he can transfer with the demobilized cadre at the same time. The receiving unit and sending unit increase or decrease the quota of laborers and wage funds accordingly. Their family members can also migrate when they are in military service. They are included in the labor and cadre transfer categories depending on their status.

The allocation of soldiers is less complicated. In principle, no rural discharged soldiers are allowed to change their *hukou* status. Those who have special skills or have second-class awards, have priority in recruitment and job allocation. An exception is the top and first class handicapped soldiers. They and their spouses and children should be allowed to change their *hukou* to local county seats or the cities and towns of their spouses. Urban discharged soldiers, are entitled to unifiedly assigned jobs by the state, even if they were unemployed before enlistment. Those who have awards could be allowed to have more choices in choosing jobs.

Demobilized soldiers and cadres have more uncertainty in their assignment than the college graduates. They might be assigned to frontiers for land reclamation or to large industrial projects. In 1952, about 10,000 military cadres and soldiers were collectively demobilized to work in the Daqing Oil Field (Zhao, 1989:992). Typically the state has some objectives and destinations, which have large implications on jobs and benefits. For example, for 1975-79, agricultural and basic units was the major destinations for demobilized soldiers. In 1981, demobilized soldiers were assigned to strengthen the political and legal front, which meant government administrative units. 1982 witnessed a switch back to agricultural and basic units. The major destinations were industrial and commercial administration, and institutions of taxation, banking and pricing.

Migration administrated by the public security system

Migration under the discretion of the Public Security belongs explicitly to this category.

There are five types broadly grouped under “four relying and one adoption” (*sitou yibao*).

“Four relying” refers to a wife migrating to rely on her husband, parents migrating to rely on adult children, non-adult children migrating to rely on parents, the relatives migrating to rely on family. One adoption refers to adopted children migrating to their adopting parents. The general condition for these types of migration is that prospective migrants cannot support themselves due to age and health conditions and that it is difficult for people in the destination to move in the opposite direction.

Prospective migrants in this category normally do not have a job in state units. There is a specific quota control for this type of migrant. According to my field interviews and other documents, the number of migrants in this category should not exceed 2 per thousand of total urban population. For a city with two million non-agricultural people, the limit is 4000 people per year.

State recruitment

From migration data and interviews with enterprise managers, one of the largest sources of migration into urban areas is state recruitment. But it is not a regular channel on a yearly basis. Rather it is highly dependent upon economic and political conditions. One of the largest recruitment peaks was the late 1950s. During the Great Leap Forward years, due to the high expectation of the state and a perceived labor shortage, many state units recruited workers wherever they could. Some units recruited anyone who could work in a railway station, giving *hukou* residence and labor relations on the spot. The next was in the early 1970s when the economy recovered from the Cultural Revolution. Millions of rural youths were able to migrate and work in urban state units. For these two recruitment peaks, labor and wage quotas were the principle restrictions. The last recruitment peak was the first few years of reform. Most of the recruited workers were educated youths. Rural residents were not significant since the state had added other administrative measures to control urban population growth.

The basic principle in recruiting is to hire locally. The first stop is to transfer surplus workers and staff from other state units within the same system. This method is not very

popular since work units tend to keep the best and skilled workers for themselves. Often “problematic” workers, those who are old, sick, pregnant, or with bad political records, are selected. Units needing workers sometimes simply decline these workers. The second method is to hire local urban residents. Many units tend to hire their family members and relatives. These methods need to go through labor departments, which are often slow and inflexible to the labor demand. An alternative way is to hire rural laborers as temporary workers. They tend to work hard and do not need benefits. Over the long run, some of these temporary workers who have skills are able to be converted to permanent workers and change their *hukou* status. In the employment peaks, when the demand far succeeded supply, state units had to resort to hiring rural people.

In the early 1970s, state enterprises were allowed to hire in other regions. Part of the reason was rusticated youths. The basic principle was for state enterprises to go to the areas where children of their employees were rusticated. They would be given a certain recruitment quota, part of which could be used to recruit their urban youths.

3.4 Summary and conclusion

Internal migration has been centrally regulated in socialist China. Few countries and regions in the world were able to succeed in controlling physical mobility for extended periods of time. At the basic level, the success of migration regulation and labor control in China is grounded in the socialist system. Socialist ideology, state ownership and bureaucratic coordination provide justification, need and means for migration regulation. At a practical level, migration regulation and labor control are made possible by centralized yet fragmented institutional structures. There are a number of unique institutions that are closely related to migration, such as the *hukou* system, the grain rationing system, the *dang'an* system, the work unit system and the unified employment system. Although migration was occasionally planned directly, it is mostly embedded in and regulated by labor planning. Labor planning and migration regulation is administered by a number of government offices, such as state planning commissions, labor and personnel departments, and so on at multiple levels of administrative hierarchy. Because

of the administrative division of labor, socialist migration is divided into multiple channels, such as college graduate assignment, worker transfer and cadre transfer, demobilization of military personnel etc. There are some general principles for all types of migrations, such as going back to the origins and encouragement of downward migration. But typically each migration channel has special requirements and procedures. Often these requirements and procedures vary across provinces and cities.

The complicatedness of these rules and their variations render government officials and cadres latitude and power over ordinary individuals since there is no way for ordinary folks to know and understand all these rules. But individuals are not totally powerless since they can resort to various means to achieve their goals, such as migration to desired places, which is the topic of Chapter Five. A direct impact of multi-level and multi-channels administration and control is the stratification of Chinese society. Migration is a result of such system but at the same time it also reinforces the system, which will be discussed in next chapter.

Chapter Four. Social stratification, wage and migration: a quantitative analysis

The previous chapter discusses the complicated institutional structure in labor and migration regulation. Most of the complexity comes from the fragmentation of labor administration, i.e., migration being administered by various government departments through various channels within a clearly defined authority hierarchy. This fragmentation of administration both exhibits and reinforces the stratification of the overall society. Chinese socialist society is extremely stratified, along the official ranking based system (*guan benwei*). Everything or everyone is positioned directly or indirectly in the administrative hierarchy. There are multiple layers of social positions and power, such as administrative rankings, wage layers and so on.

There are numerous studies on social mobility and stratification for the post-reform period in both the English and Chinese literature. Bian examined the extent and mechanisms of urban stratification in socialist urban China by using a 1988 Tianjian Enterprise Survey (1994a). He discovered that not only personal characteristics, such as education, father's occupation, and party membership were important to one's social status. The characteristics of work units to which one belonged also had great impacts on social stratification. These characteristics included the size of the work unit, administrative ranks, and industrial sectors. These results should not be surprising from the discussion of priority and administrative segmentation in the previous chapter. Davis also studied the changes of social status in urban society in several contexts. Peng studied wage determination in the state and collective units and found out that there were systematic difference of wages between the state and collective units (1992). The most important factor in wage determination was ownership, tenure, and cadre status. One controversial finding was that the return to education was not significant in both state and rural collective enterprises.

In the Chinese literature, there also emerged a number of publications on social stratification and mobility after the late 1980s (Li et. al, 1995; Guo, 1993). Social stratification became an influential topic partially because of Mao's writing on stratification of Chinese societies in the 1920s, which provided insights to political strategies of the Chinese Communist Party. Several large surveys were conducted on social mobility and family structure in many cities. These studies analyzed social mobility, occupation stratification and generational changes.

These studies in both the English and Chinese literature are mostly on the post-reform period due to lack of data for the pre-reform period. There is also no explicit analysis of migration and its relationship with social stratification. The 1986 Migrant Survey actually provides data that can be used to expand our understanding in both directions, i.e., to cover social stratification in the pre-reform period and to evaluate the impacts of migration. Especially interesting is that the data allows us to examine the changes of social stratification after reform and contemplate the factors and mechanisms underlying these changes.

This chapter will discuss the major dimensions of social and spatial stratification, which have not been covered directly in previous chapters. Then I will introduce the wage institution and its regional structure. At the end of the section, I will examine quantitatively the determination of wage structure, social stratification, and the effect of migration on wages.

4.1 Social and spatial stratification

There are many dimensions of social stratification as were revealed in earlier studies. Since our interest is primarily on migration, I will discuss only those that are the most relevant to labor and migration regulation.

4.1.1 Non-agricultural Hukou and Agricultural Hukou

The difference in *hukou* status is arguably the biggest social divide. It divides all people into those supported by the state's coffers and subsidy and people basically living on their own. The former are state employees and their families mostly living in urban areas and the latter are mostly farmers in the countryside. To a certain extent, it corresponds to the urban and rural divide, since more than 80% of non-agricultural people living in urban areas (Chan, 1994). Migration that needs to cross this social divide faces the largest challenge. A double conversion consisting of changes in both official residence and *hukou* status is required for a rural resident to move to urban areas. In a situation where a migrant moves into the rural part of a city, such as its suburban area, a requirement of *hukou* status change can be waived. Since *hukou* status conversion is strictly controlled, moving into the suburbs becomes an alternative way to get into cities without changing *hukou* status. For example, some large enterprises helped family members of its employees migrate to nearby rural areas for family reunion. Some educated youths were only allowed to return to suburban areas of their cities.⁸⁸

College education for rural youths is invariably associated with migration, since colleges and universities are mostly in large cities. It is a primary way that rural youths can move across the social divide of *hukou* status. In comparison, military service only offers a slim chance. Rather than automatically changing *hukou* status as in the case of a college education, military service requires additional achievements for *hukou* conversion to be possible. Soldiers of rural origin can change their *hukou* status if they have been promoted to military cadres, received military awards of second class or above, and acquired special skills. Only a small percentage of rural soldiers can make it.

Probably the largest channel of *hukou* conversion is state recruitment. As I discussed previously, during several peaks of state recruitment, large numbers of rural people were hired as state employees and granted the non-agricultural *hukou* status. Some of them who were initially hired as temporary workers were given permanent worker and non-

⁸⁸ From fieldwork interview and archival research in Wuhan and Wuxi.

agricultural *hukou* status. A related channel is for the family members of state employees. Family members of technical and military cadres are normally allowed to change their *hukou* status. In certain circumstances, even family members of ordinary workers can change *hukou* status. For example, when workers become retired or deceased, their children can take their job positions with *hukou* status change. Most recently a new policy allows children to follow either of their parents' *hukou* status. In the past, the state recognized only the mothers' *hukou* status. The reason was that for typical families with spouses having different *hukou* status, it was the husband who worked in state sectors and the wife in the countryside.

One recent category of *hukou* conversion is state land acquisition. When rural land tracts, mostly surrounding cities, are reclaimed by the state for development purposes, the state compensates rural residents on the land by giving them non-agricultural jobs and non-agricultural *hukou* status. But most of this type *hukou* conversion is not involved with migration.

Table 4.1 shows the rough estimate of *hukou* conversion in Wuhan for the year 1997. This is only for illustrating the major categories of *hukou* conversion. It does not necessarily representative of other cities, particularly since Wuhan is the third largest city with the largest number of universities and college and students.

Table 4.1 Major Categories of Hukou Conversion in Wuhan in 1997

Categories	Estimate of Numbers
College Enrollment	48,000
Family Members of State Employees	about 10,000
Land Acquisition	about 10,000
Exchange Recruitment*	3,000
Total	about 70,000

Source: interview of Wuhan planning officials in 1998

* Workers of rural origin are allowed to have their children replace them when they retired after working in large state enterprises for 30 years.

4.1.2 Cadre and Worker

If *hukou* status is major institutional divide that separates urban and rural societies, cadre status further carve out a privileged group from ordinary citizens within urban and rural

societies.⁸⁹ There are two kinds of cadres, one holding administrative positions and the other professionals. Compared to workers, cadres enjoy access to more resources and opportunities. Cadres have higher income. The wages of top leaders are 20-30 times of that of ordinary government staff (Zhao, 1989). A section level cadre (a county head or regimental commander) has wages of about two or three times that of ordinary staff. Cadres also enjoy priorities in housing allocation, promotion and other things. Cadres have political privileges such as being able to receive internal government documents. An ordinary worker or staff lacks all these advantages.

It is not much easier to change from worker to cadre status than from agricultural to non-agricultural *hukou* status. Cadre promotion is strictly controlled. There are special quotas for cadre promotion or absorption. Cadre promotion refers to converting worker and staff to cadre positions (*zuan gan*). Cadre absorption refers to absorbing cadres at the same time as they become new state employees. Due to strict quota control, sometimes people are assigned cadre's duties and responsibilities but without the status. A wide practice is “*yi gong dai gan*” (work as a cadre with a worker status). They were estimated at about 4 to 5 million in 1982, among which 70-80% worked in industrial enterprises (Zhao, 1989:848). The technical titles of worker cannot be transferred into professional titles, which require cadre status. For example workers can earn skilled technician (*jishi*) and highly skilled technician (*gaoji jishi*) titles, but these cannot be converted into engineer (*gongchengshi*) titles. Even for those entitled for cadre status, the process might be quite nuanced. For example, college graduates from four-year programs automatically acquire cadre status, while graduates from two-year programs in small colleges and polytechnic schools run by lower-level governments may wait for several years to get cadre status.⁹⁰

According to statistics in 1989, there were 31 million cadres nationwide, about 5 million in administrative units, 13 million in non-production units, and the remaining 13 million

⁸⁹ Most state cadres stay in urban areas of county seats or above. Those in townships are a very small percentage of total cadres. So I argue that it segregates privileged cadres from ordinary citizens in urban areas. But of course, it works in the same way in rural areas as well, even for those semi-state cadres or local cadres.

in enterprises (Xu and Zhang, 1992:868-9). Total workers and staff at the same year were roughly 96 million. In other words, there was one cadre for two workers for all state units. The ratio varies across the types of work units. For administrative units, 80% of workers and staff were cadres, not surprising. For non-production units, it was 65%. And it was only 19% for enterprises.

Another important division of cadre is administrative vs. professional and technical. It is estimated that out of the total 31 million cadres, about 20 million were professional and technical cadres. The rest of 11 million were administrative cadres who had administrative positions in all types of work units (Xu and Zhang, 1992:869-71).

Due to the large disparity between cadres and workers, regulation of migration for workers and cadres is very different. In general, workers are not permitted to migrate across regions. If they do migrate, they often face stricter requirements and go through different institutional process.

Within the general category of cadres, there are many layers of status and administrative ranks associated with power and privilege. This has implications on migration regulation and process. Actual procedures of migration for cadres depend on their administrative ranks and the administrative ranks of authority departments. For example, military cadres with administrative ranks of divisional commander and above have their migration processed by the political departments in the army and the department of organization in the local government. Military cadres with ranks of battalion commander and above are generally able to have their families at their places of services.

4.1.3 Ownership of Work Units

Another social divide is the difference between collective and state enterprises. As we discussed in the earlier sections, collective enterprises are normally run by low-level

⁹⁰ From fieldwork interview and archival documents.

government units and enjoy less privileges. The average wage in collective sector has been set at 70-80% of that in state enterprises.

During work transfer, a worker is allowed to transfer from state enterprises to collective enterprises but not vice versa.

There are further stratifications within state units differentiated by actual ownership. In general, enterprises owned and run by central ministries enjoy more privileges, higher wage and more benefits (Walder, 1992). They are more likely to get quotas of migration, labor, cadre, investment fund and other scarce resources. In contrast, small state enterprises owned and run by local governments are at a disadvantage.

4.1.4 Spatial Stratification

Chinese socialist society is stratified along not only many social dimensions but also by spatial and regional dimensions. In other words, places are ranked explicitly in an administrative ladder. This spatial stratification directly influences the spatial patterns of socialist migrations of various types.

Around the world, regions and cities derive their importance from economic, political, cultural and religious activities. These functions often diverge for specific regions and cities. And their importance is generally not directly related to administrative rankings.

In China, places are explicitly ranked by their administrative standings. There is also confluence of economic, political and cultural status for places. The political center is normally the economic center on every level of administration until the late 1980s. Similar to the situation of developing countries in terms of urban bias, officials are more concerned with local welfare where they live. They have more information and more pressure to give preferences to their local development.

At the top of the spatial hierarchy are three centrally administered cities. Beijing is the capital of the country. Shanghai and Tianjin are economic centers and have very important geopolitical positions. They were also granted central status.

At the next level are central cities of large administrative regions. Large administrative regions consist of several provinces adjacent to each other. The whole country can be divided into Northeast (*Dongbei*), North China (*Huabei*), Northwest (*Xibei*), East China (*Huadong*), Central China (*Huazhong*), Southwest (*Xi'nan*), and South China (*Hua'nan*). The major cities are Shenyang, Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Wuhan, Chengdu and Guangdong. Among them, Beijing and Shanghai are repetitions from the first level. In the first seven years of the People's Republic, these large administrative regions were functionally administrative regions which had power over provinces. Then they were removed in order to increase administrative efficiency and reduce bureaucracy. But they are still the centers of military forces, called 'the large military regions' (*da junqu*). They tend to be also centers of higher education and other infrastructure. They are the world cities of the Chinese system.

The next level of spatial hierarchy is the level of provincial capitals, normally the political, economic and cultural centers for corresponding provinces. In the Chinese socialist system, provinces have more power than their counterparts (Republics) in the former Soviet Union.

Further down is the prefecture level city centers, normally consisting of a number of counties and county-level cities. Then are counties and county-level cities, urban districts. At the lowest level are towns, townships and urban street level government office.

Geographically it is replication of a similar structure at the lower levels. For example, the provincial capital is the center of the province, just like Beijing as the center of the country. The same thing applies to cities and counties. The key here to migration is the attrition of administrative power and resources down the administrative hierarchy. The

lower the administrative region is, there would be fewer resources and planning quota. The real "Chinese" characteristic is that all basic social units are tied to this administrative hierarchy. State firms, department stores, universities and research institutes, and army units all have explicit administrative ranks, thus differential entitlement to decision making power and resources.

Let us take Wuxi City as a cell of the Chinese planned economy and look at the centralization of labor planning. Wuxi is a prefecture level city, consisting of the city proper (central city) and three counties, which all had population around half million each in 1985. Out of 452,000 state workers and staff for Wuxi as a whole, 315,000 were in the city proper, while the three counties had around 45,000 each (see Table 4.2). In the same year, the state units in the city proper added 26,156 new employees, where three counties added around 1,500 each. There were 7,387 workers and staff transferred from other cities for the city proper and only 1,508 for the three counties combined. The example shows that Wuxi City Proper with less than one fourth of population had 71% of state workers and staff, 89% of newly added employees in 1985 and 85% of total planned migrants.⁹¹

Table 4.2 Centralization of labor planning and migration: a case of Wuxi in 1985

	Population	Staff and workers ^a	New employees ^b	Planned Migrants ^c
City Proper	842,734	314,857	26,156	7,387
Jiangying ^d	1,026,512	46,374	992	500
Wuxi	1,026,805	42,861	2,499	749
Yixing	1,013,448	47,940	1,512	259

Notes:

^a Staff and workers are total staff and workers in state units (*quanmin qiyie*) in 1985.

^b New employees are staff and workers newly hired or transferred in 1985

^c Planned migrants are staff and workers transferred from outside the city

^d Jiangying was a county in 1985 and later was promoted to city status. The same is true for two other counties, Wuxi and Yixing under Wuxi City's administration.

Sources:

Population and staff and workers from Wuxi City Chronicle 1988, pp.344, 354; New employees and Planned migrants from archival materials of Municipal Labor Bureau, "Sources of Increase and Decrease of Permanent and Contract Workers in State Owned Units in 1985"

⁹¹ The data comes from archival materials I was able to get in my fieldwork in Wuxi.

Wuxi is an epitome of the whole structure. It would be similar if one takes another administrative unit on another subject. Centralization of resources might be more extreme for some other subjects. For example, R&D (Research and Development) personnel is highly concentrated in a few large cities. Those in Beijing and Shanghai alone account for about 40% of national total of science and technical personnel.⁹²

The direct implication for migration is that higher administrative ranking for work units and people implies the ease of migration due to the availability of planning quota and decision-making power. So planned migration is more represented in higher administrative units, such as large state enterprises, large cities, etc. This built-in mechanism works against the state's policies of controlling the population growth of large cities and encouraging that of small cities and towns. Or this can be interpreted from another causal direction, i.e., the reason for the state adopting this urban development policy is because of the tendency of planning concentration. So, the Chinese socialist system is full of self-contradictions. The inherent institutional tendency for planning concentration runs against the policies that intend to limit the impacts of this concentration.

4.2 Wage institution and migration

We have discussed institutional structures and processes that explicitly regulate socialist migration. There is another important piece that might weigh on the considerations of the state and individuals in migration decision making. That is the wage institution. This section will discuss the basic structure of wages, regional differences and potential implications on socialist migration.

Wage or income differentials are the most important factors of migration in market societies (Lucas, 1997). This has been proved by theoretical formulations, statistical models and field interviews. They are also shown as important in migration modeling of socialist countries in Eastern Europe. In China, state employees are also paid by wage

⁹² Liu, T. 1991. *The R&D and High Tech Industries in China*. Unpublished manuscript.

salaries, would the wage have any impact on migration at all? To answer that question, first we need to look at the wage institution.

At the beginning of the People's Republic, wages were paid by grain (unit of millet). National leaders could have as high as 3400 *jin* (about 1.1 pound) millet while ordinary staff could have as low as 120 *jin* millet. The wage discrepancy between the highest and the lowest wage was 37 times in 1965 and was reduced to 17 times in the early 1980s.

Unlike wages in capitalist societies, which are determined by the supply and demand of the market, wages in socialist China are administratively determined. Since a wage is the primary source of income for ordinary citizens, it is vitally important for their livelihood. Wage administration is articulated and very detailed. It is called the wage institution (*gongzi zhidu*). Wage institution is broadly divided into two types of state units, administrative and enterprises. Wage at administrative and non-production units are determined by administrative ranks from one to 22. Related are technical ranks, in research, teaching, performing, engineering, with corresponding wages. Workers in enterprises are divided into eight grades, determined mostly by technical skills and seniority.

Wage formulation and administration are further complicated by regional differences. Regional differences in wages were determined by administrative measure and originally formulated in 1956. Each sub-provincial unit (roughly prefecture) could belong to one of the 11 wage classes. Wage classes increased by 3% in ascending order. So the wage in the 11th wage region is about 30% higher than that in 1st wage region. The regional wage level was decided by considering living costs (higher in Northwest and lower in Southwest), the original wage level (higher in Shanghai and Guangzhou than the hinterland), and the state's intention to encourage workers and staff to work in remote areas with hardships. Since sub-provincial regions could vary greatly in terms of the above factors, it is not surprising to see large variation within each province. For example, in Guangdong Province, Beihai Prefecture belonged to the 4th class wage

region, while Guangzhou Prefecture belonged to the 10th class. Sichuan Province had every wage class for its sub-provincial units (Zhao, 1989:478). For places like Tibet and Northwest China, there were additional subsidies. For example, Lahsa, the capital of Tibet, enjoyed a 52% wage subsidy of its basis on the wage of 11th class.

There have been several large adjustments of regional wage classes since 1956.⁹³ The results of these adjustments raised the wage class for the lower regional wage classes. So by 1979, there were only 8 wage class regions from the 4th to the 11th (Zhao, 1989:488). In 1986, the lowest wage class was the 6th. There were also changes in the living subsidies for the frontier provinces. In 1956, the subsidy for Tibet was 87-128% of the wage, 10-84% for Xinjiang, and 6-97% for Qinghai. They were adjusted downwards substantially in 1958 and 1960. After the economic reform, they were readjusted upwards.

The regional wage system was intended for administrative and non-production units. Enterprise wage systems were more complicated. Some conformed to the regional wage system, while others to a lesser extent, such as enterprises belonging to central ministries. Central enterprises had large variation in terms of geographical distribution, size, and priority. It was difficult to determine the regional difference according to the system.

In addition to administrative ranks, seniority, and regional difference, the wage is also influenced by ownership and industrial sectors. Wage in state sectors is higher than that in collective sectors. Collective sectors' wage is normally only of 70-80% of wage in state sectors. Wage in certain heavy industrial sectors is higher than that in other sectors. The state has tilted towards heavy manufacturing sectors by giving them higher wages. Actual income differences may be further increased by the fact that heavy industrial enterprises have more resources. They are able to provide additional benefits, like housing, food, education and so on to their employees (Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988).

In the end, wage administration is the most complicated work in labor and wage planning. About 350 pages were devoted to wage formulation, wage standards, regulations on subsidies and bonuses for various groups of people in various situations in the Labor and Personnel Almanac 1949-1987, published by the Ministry of Labor and Personnel (Zhao, 1989). In the same book, less than 30 pages were devoted to labor planning and labor allocation. It is full of tables with many wage levels corresponding to the ranks of administration and skills. According to a rough estimate, there were four to five hundred wage standards nationwide in the early 1980s (NLGB, 1982:347). Some enterprises had a few dozen wage standards just within themselves. It is amazing how the central planning system could handle such chaos with so many standards floating around. It should be very difficult to manage such a system not to say to make the system reflective of labor productivity.

There does not appear to have a straightforward answer to the impacts of the wage institution on migration. The bias of the state towards heavy industries influenced migration in terms of their sectoral and regional distributions. But it is not so clear how much wage differences played a role in that process.

One thing is certain. Regional differences in wages introduce complexity in migration administration. There were numerous policies on wage adjustment due to worker transfer through the years (Zhao, 1989: 509-17). A basic principle is to follow the higher wage of the two places, i.e., the origin and destination. But at times, one could only keep the higher wage for a year when one moved to a lower wage region. The actual policies are so specific that they are hard to read and follow.

Anecdotal evidence shows that some workers did migrate because of higher wage in the destination areas. Some informants of my interview said that they or their parents

⁹³ There were four major adjustments of regional wages nationwide. They were conducted in 1963, 1979, 1985 and 1986. There were individual adjustments as well, such as Shenzhen and Zhuhai, being promoted

migrated partly because of higher wage at the destinations. Some educated youths acknowledged that they went to state farms in frontier provinces because of state salary. Evidence from statistical models also shows positive impacts of migration on wage, which will be discussed next.

4.3 Evidence from the 1986 Urban Migration Survey

Wages are the primary source of income for citizens in socialist China. Wage discrepancies have been in the range of 20 to 40 times, not much better than capitalist societies (Zhao, 1989). Wage income, therefore, is the most important index of social stratification, conflated to a great extent with administrative power. Using wage income as a window, we can examine the social stratification and its changes in different periods. This section will analyze wage determination by looking at wide range of factors, such as age, sex, education, occupation, sector of ownership, region, size of cities, and migration.

The data come from the 1986 Urban Migration Survey. The basic introduction of the survey is discussed in the Chapter Six. It is a unique and excellent data set for analyzing social stratification and migration. It has a large sample size of 100,000 cases, of which 38,000 are migrants across city boundaries. It has income data for everyone surveyed for two separate years, i.e., 1978 and 1986. These two years are representative for the pre-reform and the post-reform period. So we can examine changes in social stratification and wage impacts of migration after economic reforms.

The dependent variable is wage.⁹⁴ The income is not a continuous variable. It is understandable given the retrospective nature of the survey. The income variable consists of seven categories from less than 50 RMB to more than 300 RMB, as <50, 51-70, 71-100, 101-150, 151-200, 201-300, >301. It can be seen that the range is not equally divided, smaller in the beginning and larger in the end. Though it cannot give us exact

from the 7th to the 10th regional wage class.

⁹⁴ Wage is only one aspect of total income, which also includes non-wage benefit, such as assigned housing and medical care. So this model only evaluates the social stratification revealed by wage income.

representation of income, the income variable can at least reflect the range and magnitude of changes.

The independent variables include demographical variables like age and sex. Age can reflect the impacts of age on income, particularly the effect of seniority. Studies show that age is positively correlated with wage income in urban China (Peng, 1992). It's not surprising since the chance and extent of wage raise in state units are often calculated by tenure of working in state units. So I expect that age has positive coefficients with income. Sex is a basic variable, which can reflect gender inequality in paid income. Universally females are paid less than males, which could be true or not in socialist China. Regarding the change in gender equality, the general perception is that men and women shared more equal status before reform than afterwards. So I expect that income return to male gender increases over the period of analysis.

Education is one of the universally important factors in income determination. For this data, education is represented by indicator variables of diploma or degree completed. They include college, college incomplete, senior high school, junior high school, primary school and semi-illiterate. I expect positive returns of education to income, but probably not so much as in market societies. Also the mechanism for the positive return is different from those in market societies. In socialist China, higher education, especially college degrees are directly related to administrative ranks and benefits associated with them as we known before.

Occupation is the most interesting variable in this analysis since it reflects not only occupation but also social status. The occupation is broken up into 10 indicator variables including farmer, worker, cadre, staff, professional and technician, commercial service, military personnel, other employed, retired, retired but still working part time. Other categories such as student, waiting for job, housework and unemployment are excluded from the analysis since they did not receive regular income. Worker and farmer are not just occupations in socialist China, they are also indexes for social status as we already

know about the urban-rural segmentation. The same is true to other categories, such as cadre, professional and technician and so on. I expect that occupations with higher social status have higher returns to income.

There are two regional variables. One is the size of urban centers where the survey was conducted. The other is the division of three great regions. Size of urban centers includes indicator variables of extra-large city, large city, middle-level city, small city and town. I expect that size of urban centers is positively related to income as I have analyzed above about the administrative hierarchy. The three great regions are East, Middle and West. West region tends to have higher wages as we discussed before. The east region also has many extra-large cities, which tend to have higher wages.

Sector of ownership is another factor that might influence the wage. In this model, it is simply divided state sector and non-state sector. I expect positive returns to state sectors compared to non-state sectors.

The last factor I am particularly interested is migration. I want to have a look at the impacts of migration on income. From discussion above, the direction of migration impacts is not quite clear. It could be positive due to personal effort and migration selectivity. Or it could be negative since most of migration is through the government channels, regarded as involuntary to a certain degree by some researchers.

I use a linear regression model to test the statistical relationship between income and wage determination factors. I run two models separately for 1978 and 1986. Results are listed in following tables.

Table 4-3. Wage Determination in 1978: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.671 ^a	.450	.449	.80

a. Predictors: (Constant), INMIGRANT, SENIORH, OTHEREMP, MIDDLE, MILITARY, COMMERCE, CINCOMPL, CENTRAL, GENDER, STAFF, SMALL, PROTECH, LARGE, CADRE, FARMER, AGE, PRIMARY, EASTERN, COLLEGE, STATE, EXTRA, JUNIORH

b. Dependent Variable: INCOME (1978)

Table 4-4. Wage Determination in 1978: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	34296.005	22	1558.909	2460.176	.000 ^a
	Residual	41974.752	66242	.634		
	Total	76270.757	66264			

a. Predictors: (Constant), INMIGRANT, SENIORH, OTHEREMP, MIDDLE, MILITARY, COMMERCE, CINCOMPL, CENTRAL, GENDER, STAFF, SMALL, PROTECH, LARGE, CADRE, FARMER, AGE, PRIMARY, EASTERN, COLLEGE, STATE, EXTRA, JUNIORH

b. Dependent Variable: INCOME (1978)

Table 4-5. Wage Determination in 1978: Coefficients^a

Model		Standardized Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.601	.021		-28.848	.000
	AGE	4.690E-02	.000	.639	176.666	.000
	GENDER	.174	.006	.080	26.855	.000
	FARMER	8.289E-02	.012	.024	7.065	.000
	CADRE	.335	.011	.102	30.655	.000
	STAFF	.103	.015	.021	6.895	.000
	PROTECH	.104	.014	.024	7.189	.000
	COMMERCE	2.153E-03	.014	.000	.154	.877
	MILITARY	.664	.064	.030	10.358	.000
	OTHEREMP	-7.227E-02	.019	-.012	-3.883	.000
	COLLEGE	.546	.020	.125	27.938	.000
	CINCOMPL	.493	.036	.043	13.737	.000
	SENIORH	.467	.015	.191	31.655	.000
	JUNIORH	.619	.013	.278	45.909	.000
	PRIMARY	.560	.013	.214	43.731	.000
	EXTRA	.136	.009	.063	14.407	.000
	LARGE	.171	.013	.047	13.459	.000
	MIDDLE	6.673E-02	.011	.023	6.006	.000
	SMALL	6.679E-02	.013	.019	5.318	.000
	EASTERN	.115	.007	.053	15.769	.000
	CENTRAL	-3.984E-02	.004	-.036	-10.579	.000
	STATE	.199	.008	.091	26.041	.000
	INMIGRANT	8.631E-02	.007	.040	13.094	.000

a. Dependent Variable: INCOME (1978)

Table 4-6. Wage Determination in 1986: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.568 ^a	.322	.322	.98

a. Predictors: (Constant), INMIGRANT, SENIORH, OTHEREMP, MIDDLE, MILITARY, COMMERCE, CINCOMPL, CENTRAL, GENDER, STAFF, SMALL, PROTECH, LARGE, CADRE, FARMER, AGE, PRIMARY, EASTERN, COLLEGE, STATE, EXTRA, JUNIORH

b. Dependent Variable: INCOME (1986)

Table 4-7. Wage Determination in 1986: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30060.387	22	1366.381	1432.131	.000 ^a
	Residual	63200.778	66242	.954		
	Total	93261.165	66264			

a. Predictors: (Constant), INMIGRANT, SENIORH, OTHEREMP, MIDDLE, MILITARY, COMMERCE, CINCOMPL, CENTRAL, GENDER, STAFF, SMALL, PROTECH, LARGE, CADRE, FARMER, AGE, PRIMARY, EASTERN, COLLEGE, STATE, EXTRA, JUNIORH

b. Dependent Variable: INCOME (1986)

Table 4-8. Wage Determination in 1986: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardiz ed Coefficient s	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	1.531	.026		59.920
	AGE	2.007E-02	.000	.247	61.621
	GENDER	.395	.008	.165	49.748
	FARMER	-.336	.014	-.087	-23.367
	CADRE	.541	.013	.149	40.310
	STAFF	.314	.018	.057	17.123
	PROTECH	.418	.018	.087	23.585
	COMMERCE	.162	.017	.031	9.437
	MILITARY	.546	.079	.022	6.936
	OTHEREMP	-8.543E-02	.023	-.012	-3.741
	COLLEGE	.848	.024	.176	35.348
	CINCOMPL	.669	.044	.053	15.196
	SENIORH	.667	.018	.247	36.865
	JUNIORH	.716	.017	.290	43.286
	PRIMARY	.625	.016	.216	39.763
	EXTRA	.131	.012	.055	11.340
	LARGE	.417	.016	.105	26.751
	MIDDLE	-4.321E-02	.014	-.014	-3.169
	SMALL	.183	.015	.046	11.852
	EASTERN	.429	.009	.181	48.122
	CENTRAL	-.111	.005	-.091	-24.124
	STATE	.284	.009	.118	30.306
	INMIGRANT	.212	.008	.089	26.246

a. Dependent Variable: INCOME (1986)

The overall fit for models in both 1978 and 1986 is quite good. The R square is 0.45 for model in 1978 and 0.322 in 1986. Considering the large number of cases (66264), the results are very impressive. The F statistics are in the multitude of thousands.

Let us first look at the wage determination model for 1978 (see Table 4.5). Almost every variable is highly significant. The coefficient for age is 4.69 per cent per year. In other words, one year of age difference can explain close to 5% of wage, which is very impressive. The t statistics for age is 177, extremely high. For gender, the coefficient is 17.4%. So wages for males are about 20% higher than that of females. This indicates gender inequality in socialist China, though the extent might not as high as in capitalist societies.

For occupation, the worker variable is used as the base variable. The coefficient for other occupation is referenced against that of the worker variable. Military personnel enjoy a large wage advantage, almost 66% higher than that of workers. It is compatible with the higher social status of military people in pre-reform China. It was the hottest occupation for youngsters in the 1960s and 1970s. One interesting observation is the smaller coefficient for protech, which stands for professional and technician, who tend to have higher education level. Their wage level is not significantly higher than that of workers. It is also reasonable because professionals were treated badly in 60s and 70s. Many were sent to labor farms and relieved of administrative and managerial positions. Out of all occupations, only other employed has lower wage than workers. Even farmers have a slightly advantage over workers. That is contradictory to what we know about the rural and urban segmentation of Chinese societies. Careful examination of data shows that more than half of workers and farmers had a wage lower than 50 RMB. Their differences are disguised. According to my personal knowledge, 50 RMB in the late 1970s was a decent income. An ordinary worker with wage grade of three had wage of about 35 RMB. Farmers who relied on farming should have a much lower income than that. But since they were both categorized under less than 50 RMB, it was impossible to reveal the urban-rural inequality.

For education, the reference variable is illiterate. So coefficients for other education levels are evaluated by comparing to no education. It is very interesting that all education levels had almost the same level of coefficients, about 50%. It is junior high, rather than college that has the highest return to education, which is contradictory to experiences in other countries. Although some basic education greatly improves income, continuing education added little return to income.

Regarding the size of urban cities, there appears to be some kind of hierarchy. Small town is the reference variable for urban size. From Table 4.5, it appears that people in extra-large cities and large cities enjoy around a 15% higher wage than those in small towns. The scale of difference reduces to 7% for people in middle and small size cities. The higher coefficient for large cities might be related to its selectivity in the survey of exclusively industrial cities. There are some regional differences in wage income as we expected. The western region is selected as the reference variable. Wages in the eastern region are about 11% higher than that in the Western region, while the central region is about 4% lower. Overall, the contribution of the spatial factor to income measured by both urban size and regions is not very important. Their ranges are in 5% to less than 20%, roughly about the difference caused by two to three years of age difference.

Ownership sector is important. The state sector has about a 20% wage advantage over non-state sectors, which were mostly collectives. This difference fits very well with some observation that collective enterprises on average only 80% of the state wage. This difference is quite significant, comparing to the spatial difference. The t statistics is 26, higher than those for city size and regions.

The last variable is the one we are mostly interested in. Due to various factors or mechanisms, it is hard to anticipate the direction of migration impacts on migration. But the regression model shows positive results. Migration can bring on average 9% higher wage than not moving. Its impact is about half of the impact caused by state ownership. It

is also consistent with the migration response to comparison of conditions before and after reform. About two thirds of migrants considered conditions of income, living, working and education improved after migration.

If the 1978 model reflects condition before reform, then the 1986 model can be used to examine conditions and changes after reform. Table 4.8 shows the results.

Compared to the 1978 model, there are some significant changes. The most obvious change is the increase of coefficient for gender. The income advantage to males increased from 17% before reform to 40% after reform. At the same time, the age impact decreases somewhat from around 6% in pre-reform period to only 2% after reform.

Regarding social status and occupation, cadre and military personnel still enjoy about 50% higher wage than workers. One significant change is the improvement of income for professional and technicians. Their wage advantage relative to workers increases from about 11% to 42%, which is very impressive. This is consistent with overall social change after reform. Another difference is the relative poorer return for farmers, which is what we expected. Despite relative improvement of farmers' income to urban residents in early 1980s, the 1986 survey data became able to capture the wage difference as more people moved out of the lowest wage category (less than 50 RMB).

Another change is the relative improvement of return to education. College education can bring 85% higher wage than that of illiterate, comparing to 55% before reform. but still the difference between primary education and college education is far less than in other countries.

Regarding spatial factors on wage determination, results are quite mixed for urban size. Extra-large cities do not see a significant change, while large cities and small cities see a big improvement. The reasons for that are not clear. There also appears some income divergence between large regions. The eastern region has 43% higher wage on average

than the Western region, double the difference in 1978, while at same time, central region is 11% lower than the original 4%.

The state sector is still every important in 1986 in terms of wage income. The coefficient increases from 20% in 1978 to 28% in 1986. This was the golden time for many state enterprises before their eventual decline since late 1980s.

One last interesting observation is the large increase of migration impacts to income. Being a migrant can bring additional 22% of wage in 1986 instead of 9% in 1978, other things being equal. This might be related to the increasing importance of economic motivations in all types of migrations.

4.4 Summary

This chapter explores the major dimensions of social stratification in socialist China, which are closely related to migration and labor regulation. They include agricultural hukou vs. non-agricultural hukou, workers vs. cadres, and state sector vs. collective sectors. One special characteristic of the Chinese socialist system is spatial stratification that is clearly tied with administrative hierarchy. Major administrative centers also tend to be centers of economic, military and cultural activities. The chapter also briefly discusses wage institution and administration in socialist China. Wage differences across occupations and geographical regions are artificially determined by the central government. The multiple wage levels and over hundreds of wage standards defy close control of the central government.

The last part of the chapter examines the wage determination before and after reform by using the 1986 Urban Migration Survey micro data. The regression modeling of wage determination confirms the previous analysis of social stratification based on administrative hierarchies. Wage as an important index of social status is stratified by social status and occupation. Cadres and military officers enjoyed higher wages in both the pre-reform and after-reform periods. The data only partly confirms the social

segmentation between workers and farmers due to limitations of the 1986 Survey.

Migration has positive returns on income for both periods, despite the planning nature of socialist migration. The state sector enjoys a 20% to 30% premium over other sectors (mostly collectives). People without education (illiterate) have income only about half of those with some basic education. But there is no increasing return to further education even after primary school. There was a small improvement after reform for college education. But overall, the impacts of education are very small in light of experiences of other countries.

Economic reforms brought some major changes to wage stratification. The impacts of age and seniority decreased to only one third of its pre-reform. The gender stratification increases greatly, putting females in a more disadvantage position. The social status of professional and technicians improved greatly, catching up with prestigious groups such as cadres and military people after reform. The impacts of migration on income also more than doubled after reform, which might be related to increasing choices by migrants and increasing importance of economic considerations in all social affairs.

Chapter Five. Migrant Agency and the Limits of the State

The previous chapter focuses on institutional structures and processes of migration and labor regulation, particularly the bureaucratic regulation of various channels of migration and their social implications. These bureaucratic structures consist of rigid rules and procedures. Many of these rules are explicit, as we have seen in the last chapter. These explicit rules are formidable, probably more so than those abstract ones, such as capital accumulation.⁹⁵ This type of analysis inevitably gives an image of an all-too-powerful state and passive individuals in migration process. And this is actually the common stand of many studies on Chinese migration, especially for the period under Mao (Wei, 1997; Liang, 1996; Ma, 1995; Cheng, 1992). But this is only one side of the coin.

There are two important factors that change the balance of power from the state to individuals. One is the need of the state to persuade or force its citizens to migrate for its economic, political and military purposes, which is the core of labor and migration planning. Bureaucratic structures are not enough by themselves. Other measures, such as economic incentives, social and political mobility, ideological indoctrination, education, mobilization, and so on, are needed to generate compliance. Historical evidence shows that state allocation is not an automatic process, particularly in the case of downward migration. Often it does not take the form of outright protest or unrest for its citizens to demonstrate their non-compliance. Passive, separate and silenced resistance from many individuals would thwart the state's plans.

Another factor is the important roles of social networking (*guanxi*) in the Chinese social life. Social networking through personal connections is an informal social structure that

shapes social outcomes, which is not limited to the post-reform period (Walder, 1986; Oi, 1990). This “informal process behind the scenes” is widely observed in job allocation and migration (Bian, 1994). To a large extent, social networking is closely related to the principal-agent problem discussed earlier. At the heart of social networking are the government officials who have powers and are willing to trade those powers for local interests or personnel gains. This divergence in interests of government officials from the state directly weakens the power of labor and migration plans. Social networking has impacts on both state initiated and self-initiated migrations.

In this chapter, I will first describe two types of migration in socialist China, i.e., self-initiated and state-initiated migration. The direction and factors of negotiation between the state and individuals vary for these two types of migration. Ideology and identity matter greatly in state-initiated migration since the state needs to mobilize prospective migrants and generate compliance. On the other hand, upward mobility and family considerations figure prominently in self-initiated migration, which often run against the preferences of the state. In the second part, I will introduce eight migration cases to provide another perspective of the socialist migration process, i.e., from the perspective of migrants. These qualitative accounts add depth and life to the statistical numbers and abstract discussion of migration structures. They also show the prevalence of social networking and migrant agency in the actual migration process. The final part of this chapter is devoted to one of the most important migration events in modern Chinese history, the rustication of urban educated youths in 1967-1980. This case demonstrates that migration agency can turn migration structure on its head even in this extreme case of forced migration, which was vehemently propagated and enforced by the Chinese state.

⁹⁵ The most prominent example of structure is of course capitalism. But the rules of capitalism are highly abstract and soft, for example, the drive for capital accumulation. In comparison, the structures in socialist migration are more concrete and therefore more intimidating.

5.1 Negotiation in migration decision making

One important characteristic of socialist migration is the negotiation between the state and prospective migrants. In capitalist societies, migration is a personal decision that is not directly involved with the state. But in socialist China, to migrate is considered as a decision having impacts on the public domain. That is the sole basis for state intervention. As Luo Runqin, the Minister of MPS, put it in 1958, the state must control migration for the interests of all people. The constitution guarantees the free movement of people, but it does not guarantee the freedom that will damage the interests of all people, which are represented by the socialist state.⁹⁶

Since the state has a direct claim on the rights of mobility, whoever moves needs to negotiate with the state to get official permission, particularly if one wants to stay permanently. Only when the state approves the move, can one get access to basic daily necessities like food, housing and job. Theoretically this restriction is not only limited to rural-urban migration. Other types of migration, such as urban-rural and rural-rural migration also need approval. For example, in 1967 when the rustication was in the early stage, many urban youths were not allowed to settle in the Neimenggu by the local governments (Liu, 1998:166). In the case of rural-rural migration, Heilongjiang had been a primary place for self-initiated migration. But in the early 1970s, the provincial government started to control the inflow of migrants from other provinces and even sent some of them back due to the fear of large population increase.

Negotiation is not necessarily in one direction from the individual to the state. It could be in the opposite direction, i.e., from the state to the individuals. One major objective of state direct regulation of migration is to have orderly movement of labor and people that is consistent with socialist economic plans. In socialist China, the state initiated various types of migrations from the unified assignment of college graduates to large transfer of

⁹⁶ A speech given by Luo Runqin in zhongguo renkou nianjian (1992). This speech signified the rigid control of the state over mobility.

workers. For state initiated migration, it is the state's task to mobilize prospective migrants to follow the plans.

Although negotiation can be both ways, it is not a symmetrical distribution of power. The state and individuals have drastically different tool boxes to achieve the desired migration. The state has many tools in its box, such as legal authority, ideology, the power of distributing people and resources, media control, granting awards and punishments, and the list can go on. In contrast, individuals have fewer options, such as pleading from hardship, family difficulty, or using social networks to circumvent the state controls. During clash of interests between the state and individuals, the socialist state generally has the upper hand. But its power is not without limit.

Negotiation is the core component of the conceptual framework of this dissertation, as discussed in the Chapter Two. By incorporating negotiation into the theoretical framework, the framework therefore recognizes the importance of agency, particularly migrant agency in migration process. It points to the subtleties of migration decision making, which not only include state policies and cost-benefit calculations, but also ideology and migrant identities.

The remaining part of this section will make these points more clearly by examining differences between state-initiated and self-initiated migration. It will discuss state preferences and personal preferences, mobilization, ideology and migrant identity, and discourse.

Socialist migration can be divided into two broad categories: state-organized and self-initiated migration. State-organized migration includes all types of migration initiated and organized by the state. It not only includes institutionalized and semi-institutionalized migration, such as assignment of college graduates and demobilized soldiers, and rustication of urban youths. It also includes transfers of large groups of workers, sometimes in whole factories and workshops in the First-Five-Year Plan period (1953-7)

and during the years of the Third Front Movement (1964–1975). It was not restricted to urban residents. The state organized large groups of rural residents for reclamation in frontiers (Shen and Tong, 1992). Despite the diversified purposes and formats, state organized migration shares many similar characteristics. It is generally desired by the state, organized in large groups and proceeded through similar processes of mobilization, assignment and relocation.⁹⁷

On the other hand, self-initiated migration is normally of separate individuals and families, rarely in groups extended across families.⁹⁸ It is especially true for migration that needs to go through formal government procedures. The examples are job transfers for family reasons and family migration in MPS channels. Self-initiated migration is guided by personal preferences of individuals, which are often contrary to state preferences. Self-initiated migration is discouraged by the state due to several other reasons, which will be discussed shortly.

5.1.1 State preferences and individual preferences

In the previous chapter, it is observed that the socialist state has been consistently encouraging downward migration, i.e., the migration from urban to rural, from large cities to small cities and towns, from coastal areas to inland areas, from state enterprises to collective enterprises.⁹⁹ At same time, it fervently discourages migration in the opposite directions. Just like any other policies in socialist China, what government is strongly against is actually what is really going on. In other words, there is a persistent drive for individuals or state units to move in the opposite direction and up the hierarchy.

I have discussed in Chapter Three and Chapter Four that planning mechanisms themselves tends to create concentration of key resources and migration activity at the

⁹⁷ In some cases, the state initiates migration of specific individuals, such as transfer of high-level cadres. But this type of migration only accounts for a tiny part of total migration.

⁹⁸ Recent rural labor migration to the coastal cities often occurs as group migration consisting of kins and friends.

⁹⁹ It is still true today, although state preferences for downward migration are not strictly enforced as in the past.

top of planning system, since planning is based on priority and state units with higher administrative standing enjoy higher priority.

The reasons for individuals to move up the hierarchy are quite similar. There is a strong drive for them to move from rural to urban, from small towns to middle or large cities, and from inland to coastal areas. This is caused by a number of factors, among which the wage is not an important consideration.

In a market economy, wages may be a reasonable indicator of place utility, though amenities are argued to have independent impacts on migration. There are some wage differences among Chinese regions, but apparently they are not large enough to induce migration in government intended directions.¹⁰⁰ Wages at Xizang and Xinjiang Provinces were about 70% higher than those in coastal areas, but migration to these areas was generally accompanied by political pressure and mobilization in the past. It must be that the attraction of the higher wage was counterbalanced by other factors. Although rural residents do not have wage jobs, while many urban people do, rural-urban migration is much more than realizing an income difference. It means crossing the boundary of a caste-society segmented along the rural and urban line (Chan, 1996).

Place utility was mostly determined by factors other than income in communist China. The wage differences in most areas were negligible, except those areas at the frontier or with extreme hardships. Regional difference in wages can be more than compensated by the differences caused by administrative ranks and skills. Place utility in Communist China consists of urban infrastructure, work unit welfare, income, housing, education, cultural activities, employment opportunities and other urban externalities. The overall preference has a clear association with spatial hierarchies. Place utility increases up the urban and regional hierarchies. This preference is well demonstrated in a popular saying "I would rather have a bed in central Shanghai than a house in suburban Shanghai"

¹⁰⁰ There was an attempt to use wages as an economic lever in 1956, but the dramatic increase in wages overran government budgets (Howe, 1971).

(*Ningyao puxi yizhangchuang, buyao pudong yidongfang*)".¹⁰¹ The key consideration is the positive externalities of urban infrastructure and amenities, especially for a shortage economy with an underdeveloped service sector. Education and health services are much better in large cities. Socialist entertainment, such as museums, public libraries, youth palace, and public parks are of better quality in large cities. Some high-end rationed goods are only available in a few large cities. Another consideration is the proximity to decision-making powers. Top-level government decision-making is generally concentrated in cities. Although different from the institutional structure of lobbying in Western countries, the proximity constitutes what is called "co-presence" in Giddens' framework. It facilitates bargaining to the advantage of those staying close, in addition to the effect of urban bias represented by local interests. For individuals, staying in large cities where the party-state is located opens up many opportunities that are not available in peripheral places, like the rural areas.

Not all aspects of individual preferences and state preferences are in conflict. There is at least one major aspect both of them share. It is the regional preference of migration. As we discussed before, a major principle in government allocation of migration is to go back to origin places. By tying people to their origins, the state could reduce overall turnover and administrative costs. On the other hand, many people wish to go back to their origins due to cultural preferences such as food, language and customs. The direct implication of this concurrence is the predominance of "return" migration in overall migration.¹⁰² Also there are fewer choices of destinations in migration decision-making compared to other countries.

Fewer choices do not imply that migration decision-making and relocation process are easier. For self-initiated migration, individual preferences could only be realized through the mediation of government bureaucracies, which are not tailored to individual needs at all. In addition to the ideological decree that the needs of the state should be always put

¹⁰¹ It was a popular saying before. Things have changed much since the early 1900s and Pudong has become an attractive place for many Shanghai residents.

before those of individuals, there are a number of practical considerations to discourage self-initiated migration. We have already discussed several of them, such as the tendency for work units to hoard labor and skilled personnel, the need of socialist planners to allocate labor to match other resources, and the clash between state preferences and individual preferences in the Chapter Three.

There is another factor that may give preference to state-initiated migration. It is administration overhead or planning costs. A single transfer would entail changes in almost every area of socialist planning and the related administrative work of numerous government officials. A job transfer needs the permission of both sending and receiving units and their authority departments, and related departments of local governments. A job transfer is involved with changes in planning quotas of labor or cadre, grain rationing, immigration, and wages in both origin and destination places. It also disrupts the original structure of housing, education, health care, professional or administrative titles. For example, when one moves out, his or her apartment in the sending unit will be available for reallocation. And the receiving unit needs to find an apartment for him and her. For anyone having had experiences in a Chinese work unit, it is not difficult to understand all repercussions that reallocation of a single apartment may generate. All these changes brought about by a job transfer need to be discussed, negotiated, and planned by all involved. Plans need to be changed accordingly through adjusting various quotas for places and work units involved.¹⁰³

In contrast, state-initiated migration is typically large in size. The procedures for dealing with these migrations are rather standardized. So the administrative overhead is much smaller than that of individual migration. But state-initiated migration has its own challenges, i.e., how to make people move effectively. One of the central measures is mobilization.

¹⁰² This concurrence is only to a certain extent for people still prefer cities in the same regions.

¹⁰³ For a vivid description of the potential implications that a single transfer can have on a planning system, see Zhang and Chen (1992:171-3). Migration in market societies also causes a lot of changes. But its

5.1.2 *Mobilization and voluntariness*

An often-stated characteristic of Chinese socialist migration is its involuntary nature, in contrast to free migration in most countries (Ma, 1995). The impression may come from the existence of the hukou system and the historical fact that millions of people were sent to less desirable places. It may be related to the once dominant perspective of China as a totalitarian state in China-related research. Recent research presents a more complicated view of the Chinese socialist state.¹⁰⁴ A closer inspection shows the fragmented bureaucratic structure of the state and conflicts between various levels of the administrative system (Liebthal and Oksenberg, 1986; Huang, 1995). Migration studies have yet to recognize the subtleties within the general notion of the involuntary nature of socialist migration. Increasing availability of both quantitative and qualitative data point to a picture that is not so clear-cut even for forced migrations in the past.

Voluntariness has been an elusive but important concept, particularly in studies of forced migration. It always looms in the background, constantly bugging researchers. In the first strand, migration studies assume the voluntary nature of migration, i.e., the capacity of potential migrants to make choices according to their interests. On the other hand, an historical-structural approach is associated with overpowering social structures.

There is a full spectrum of migration types between physically forced migration, such as the African slave trade, and the totally free migration that does not have any social constraints and probably never really existed. Admittedly, many state-initiated migrations have involuntary elements to various degrees, probably more than migration in most countries.¹⁰⁵ But they rarely match the image that "forced" migration conveys, i.g., desperate and hopeless individuals vs the powerful and omnipresent state. It is particularly true if we examine the migration decision-making process in original

repercussions are shared in a more decentralized manner. For example, house or apartment disposal caused by migration can be processed in the market and has nothing to do with one's work place.

¹⁰⁴ For a review of theoretical perspectives on China studies, see Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988).

contexts, rather than analyze them with contemporary eyes. This is because people think differently as social norms, expectations and ideology evolve over time. Let us look first at major features of state-initiated migration in this section and then at ideology in the next section.

The most important feature of state-initiated migration is mobilization. Mobilization is an essential tool for Chinese planning, in general, due to constraints of information and administrative capacity, as discussed before. Mobilization had been used extensively and intensively to carry out major national objectives, such as the Great Leap Forward and the Third Front, throughout the years under Mao.¹⁰⁶ The deficiency in socialist planning requires this campaign style for planning implementation for it effectively sets up priorities and clears up resistance.

Just as with other types of planning, planning of labor and migration relies on mobilization to generate compliance and support. The extent and intensity of mobilization depends on the nature and scale of state-initiated migration. For institutionalized migration such as college graduate assignment and demobilization, mobilization is standardized and has less intensity. Typically, the last few weeks of college or military service are devoted to educating students and soldiers to cooperate with state assignments. The major objective in these sessions is to make prospective assignees think “correctly” through thought and political work. Officials explain the needs of the nation, people and party, the desirability to serve the party and people by following the assignments, and the potential punishment for those who do not accept assignments.

Mobilization is not limited to prospective assignees. It can include government branches, work units and family members, depending on the type of migration. For example, demobilization of military soldiers is involved with mobilizing local governments and

¹⁰⁵ The historical and structural approach emphasizes the overarching role of capital accumulation in migration of market societies, even though migration is mostly self-initiated.

work units since state units generally do not like to receive demobilized soldiers, who generally have not technical skills. It becomes a political task to accept discharged soldiers and officers. There are special national meetings attended by related government officials at various levels. In such meetings, top leaders give speeches regarding the spirit of policies, together with various successful examples.

In his speech concerning allocating discharged officers, Zhao Dongwan (Minister of Labor and Personnel) gave a brief summary of demobilization allocations of the previous year in a national work meeting in 1987. One paragraph is quoted here since it shows succinctly the mobilization involved in demobilization of military cadres (Zhao, 1989:1523).

"After the national work meeting for demobilization of military officers, every provincial party committee and government summoned a special work meeting of the party committee and the provincial governor. They studied and transmitted the speech of central leaders, formulated measures to allocate officers, and held large meetings of allocation. At the meetings of 24 provincial governments, 682 advanced units of officer allocation and 4128 advanced individuals were praised and honored. Every place also propagated the significance of streamlining the military forces and progressive achievements of demobilized cadres in the four modernizations through newspapers, radios and television. This effort enhanced the positive attitude of all units toward receiving demobilized cadres. Provinces that have heavier tasks of receiving demobilized cadres made good preparations and had faster and better allocation than previous years. These provinces are Shandong, Sichuan, Liaoning, Henan, Hebei, and Guangdong. "

This short paragraph shows a number of things. First is a sequence of meetings trickling down from the center to provinces and lower level governments. These meetings are often headed by top leaders in every level of government. Then there is the widespread use of awards and honors to those individuals and work units who have done a good job in related tasks. The objective is to set up models that can be followed by the mass (the public). The third is the important roles played by the media, which are totally controlled by the government.

¹⁰⁶ It is estimated that there were dozens if not hundreds of campaigns, large and small, under Mao's rule.

The mobilization for less desirable migration or downward migration shares the same basic formats but is more complicated than the examples above. These downward migrations normally have a higher priority in the administrative tasks and demand the full attention of top leaders in every level of government. Large amount of resources and prolonged media coverage are devoted for the purpose. The pressure from the higher level of government and media push local governments and work units to carry out plan assignments. Numerous meetings are held. At times street parades are organized. Schools, work units and street committees often arrange small groups to study the “spirit” of central governments and to help “backward” people to catch up. Semi-governmental organizations, such as youth leagues, women’s associations and labor unions are activated for targeted groups. Often progressive or advanced models in downward migration are set up and promoted politically. Their experiences, heroic achievements and correct thoughts are broadcast through newspapers, radios and large meetings. Bad examples are also identified and punished for the modeling effect.¹⁰⁷

All these actions are to generate compliance if not positive responses from local governments, work units and eventually ordinary people. The state negotiates with its people through convincing, pressuring, rewarding and punishing in order to allocate people to meet its economic and political objectives. This is far from an automatic and easy task. The difficulty depends on the extent of divergence between state and individual preferences. Despite the image of a totalitarian state, the Chinese state rarely uses outright coercion to achieve large-scale migration.

People comply with the state’s plans and assignments due to a number of considerations. They may do so because of community pressure from work units, neighborhood committees, and their own families. Or they are afraid of potential punishment or loss of future opportunities due to bad records in their personnel dossiers. But the most important

factor is that they believe it is right to follow the state's call. They share the basic tenets of state ideology. In other words, ideology and belief system shape people's perceptions and decisions, which is the topic for the next section.

5.1.3 Ideology and migrant identity

The earlier discussion focuses on the structural aspects of socialist migration. Those structures are presented as if they were static and stand alone social constructs. That is only for analytical purposes. In reality, these bureaucratic structures change and evolve over time. They are reproduced on a continuous basis through social actions of all the people involved. These regulative structures are accompanied and enabled by other dimensions of the institutional process, i.e., normative and cognitive aspects. Regulation and planning of socialist migration are not possible without the contribution of official ideology through reshaping people's identity and perceptions.

Migration identity has recently attracted a lot of research attention (Lawson and Silvey, 1999). Introducing migrant identity restores the realistic assessment of migration, which was often perceived as deterministic and mechanic in earlier migration research. It allows the investigation of migrant agents and their impacts, which bring subtleties to the migration process. Those are no longer clear and bi-polar concepts, such as origin and destination, home and work, and so on.

Migration decisions such as whether and where to migrate are influenced by people's identity, which is in turn shaped by their life experiences and social context (Findaly and Lin, 1997). So the social and cultural contexts have very important imprints on migration by shaping migrant identity and value system. Particularly in the long run, it is possible to observe dramatic changes in ideology and people's thinking. In other words, ways of thinking have time stamps. It is easy to forget that people think so differently in the past or at other places so that overly general laws of migration do not apply.

¹⁰⁷ This general description of the mobilization process is derived and abstracted from various accounts of the mobilization process at different periods from archival materials and published works. I'm not aware of

Of all modern societies, socialist societies are probably the ones with the strongest intervention by the state to guide and shape the ways of people's thinking.¹⁰⁸ Education, the media and work units are the major modes that transform people's thinking. Ideological training and political mobilization have a high priority in the state's agenda, particularly under Mao's rule. Ideological inoculation reinforces communism as the ultimate goal and personal sacrifice as desirable behavior. The state's interests and objectives are coated by lofty ideals, such as to liberate humankind from the brutality of capitalism.

The critical point is that the ideology is shared by the state and its people. As Portes and Wilson show, the ideology is shared and co-constructed by the ruling class and ruled. It has constraints on both (Scott, 1975). The power of the ideology is that people believe it and think accordingly. It influences people's identity and reference of action. People may voluntarily migrate to poor and underdeveloped places if they think their actions can change lives of other people and contribute to the greater good of society. If their goals and objectives are not known, their migration may be taken as irrational and compulsory judged from another perspective, for example, income maximization.

Ideology has a normative aspect as to what should be done and what should not be done. It also has a cognitive aspect that filters what can be seen and what cannot (Scott, 1995). During the dominant period of socialist ideology, people tended to think in certain directions. Some alternatives were simply inconceivable. For example, it was impossible for people to think that the socialist state could be wrong in mobilizing downward migration, or simply that Mao was just a human being and could make mistakes. People tried to escape downward migration for its hardships but they might still think that it was the right thing to do. Mindsets were different from now.

specific studies or research in geography or political sciences that focus on the subject.

¹⁰⁸ Medieval societies dominated by Catholic church are other ones.

There is a little twist here. Socialist ideology does not create people who are less selfish than those under capitalist ideology. It is hard to argue that people are more altruistic at one time than another. People may appear or talk unselfishly and still strive for their own interests. Sacrifice of one's interests in classical socialist societies won not only the approval of the state officials but also admiration of peers and communities. It may eventually lead to larger personal benefits and advancement. In other words, rules of the game are different. And the state did pick and glorify some individuals who made sacrifices to meet the state's need.¹⁰⁹

Ideology also frames the context and structure of social discourse. Arguments of compliance or non-compliance in state-initiated migration should be presented in particular channels of official ideology. Similarly, in order to achieve self-initiated migration, one needs to speak particularly languages to argue with and persuade officials. For example in classical socialist societies, it was not wise to argue that one needed to migrate because one wanted to get higher income or personal advancement. The proposed move would not be approved at all. Even worse, by doing so, one's motives and identity might be blackmarked and one's future might be jeopardized. Normally people would argue in terms of personal and family difficulties and hardships even when they aspired for personal advancement and benefits.

One interesting thing about socialist ideology is the explicit social stereotyping. People in socialist societies are divided into groups of different occupations and social origins, with stereotyped images. For example, workers in industrial enterprises are considered progressive and advanced in thinking, while peasants in farms are thought selfish and resistant to change. This social categorization was pushed to extreme by Mao's continuous class struggle theory. He basically argued that there would be still class struggles after the establishment of socialist government. There were hidden class enemies from various backgrounds and social groups. The point here is that people are

¹⁰⁹ It is my personal belief that human nature does not vary systematically across time and places, at least not in the short time frame, although one can argue that those societies or communities with more altruistic

treated very differently under these stereotyped groups in the migration process. There are different rules governing their migration and they tend to have different migration experiences.

In socialist societies, identity comes not just as the passive reception of official ideology. It is also shaped by personal experiences, families and social communities. The power of socialist ideology eventually relies on how the state delivers its promises. Breaking promises reduces the persuasiveness of socialist ideology and the legitimacy of the state, although it could take long time for such a change. From the experiences of rustication migration, which will be discussed later in this chapter, we can see the drastic change of identity of urban youths after they migrated to rural areas.

The impacts of ideology on migration are not limited to socialist societies. Migration restriction and regulation in other places are often associated with particular ideologies.¹¹⁰ As we discussed earlier, the Canadian government's social perceptions of race and nationalities directly influence the adaptations and outcomes of domestic workers from overseas (England and Stiel, 1997). Portes and Walton (1981) also demonstrated how ideology interacted with labor and the migration process across various countries.¹¹¹

Research in other areas can be illuminating for the Chinese case, one of which is North-Coombes' (1984) work on indentured labor in Mauritius. Mauritius was a plantation economy ruled by a small number of Europeans over a large number of indentured laborers from overseas. One interesting similarity with China is the control of mobility. Indentured labor and free labor needed to carry a pass from employers or issued from the police station. At the completion of indentured labor one could apply for a ticket of free pass but on a number of conditions, such as a fixed abode and acceptable occupation. Residence change required reapplication for a new pass. For an island of 1800 sq miles, Mauritius had nine districts. The state also tried hard to prevent the entry of free

norms would survive in the long run (North, 1990; Nelson and Winter, 1982).

¹¹⁰ Examples include the American South, Mauritius, South Africa, and other societies.

indentured labor into trade and other occupations for fear of eventually undermining the cheap labor supply of a sugar industry. The government charged prohibitively high license fees for all the trades.

Repressive measures alone could not secure the stability of the brutal system which existed in Mauritius, especially when the oppressors were so greatly outnumbered by the oppressed. The continuation of planter hegemony thus depended also on the existence of a forceful ideology of domination. To be effective, such an ideology had to instill in the rulers a psychological readiness to claim and exercise authority unquestioningly. It also needed to convince the oppressed that no even a revolution could upset the permanence of the existing order. Moreover, it had to show that the ruled were so inferior to the rulers, that they could not conceivably aspire to the latter's status and privileges. Hence, this legitimizing ideology had to act, first and foremost, as a cement for internal social cohesion and stability. It also had to serve as a defense against external attacks on the existing system.

There were changes of perceptions and ideology about the Indian laborers (North-Coombes, 1984:103). Above all, Indians were seen by planters and officials, as ignorant, semi-barbarous beings, naturally suited to and fit for little else but arduous field labor. This characterization was inconsistent with earlier pre-emancipation portrayals of Indians as ideal domestic servants, renowned for their cleanliness and as skilled workmen whose inferior physique ruled them out as field hands. Appropriate stereotypes were always conveniently manufactured to justify the racially hierarchical employment options prevailing at any one time.

These claims were confirmed, actually reproduced by the colonial state in the neglect of provision of social services, such as the health system and education. Horrible living conditions in the plantation not so different from former slaves made a clean appearance impossible. No education provision for Indian children justified the claim that they were

¹¹¹ See the discussion of state regulated migration in other types of societies in the Chapter Two.

inferior and unable to move upward socially. The state also strengthened the police system to control possible revolt and strong resistance.

There is a parallel between Mauritius and the Chinese government in terms of important impacts of ideology, often shared by both rulers and oppressed, on migration regulation. In Mauritius, it was the notion of inferior status of Indians that justified the intervention of the colonial governments. In China, it is the utopian Communist future and superiority of the state that demand compliance, and sometimes the sacrifice of individuals. Without these ideologies, migration control would be much difficult, if not impossible.

This is not to say that individuals are totally at the mercy of the state under its overpowering bureaucratic structure and ideology. There are many decisions and actions to be made by individuals that can influence the outcomes of migration, and sometimes the overall structure that governs migration. This is the topic of the next section.

5.2 Migrant agency: individual cases

In both types of migration, i.e., state initiated and self-initiated migration, individuals could change migration outcomes to their advantage by influencing the decisions of responsible government officials. This could be done in directly arguing for ones' credentials, winning sympathy by appealing to one's difficulties related to health conditions and family, using social connections, or resorting to bribery.

In this section, the focus is on the migration process from the perspectives of migrants, rather than that of the state. I will present eight migration cases that involve several migration channels. A commonality among them is the importance of social networking.

Social connections or social networking is extensively used in migration and other areas of Chinese social life. It is called *guanxi*, which literally means relationships. It has several layers of meaning (Bian, 1994a). It could refer to relationships, a person who has power or capacity, or the strength of social relationships, depending on the context of

conversation. Some scholars even consider social connections as an alternative perspective to the state-center view (Bian, 1994b). It reveals the whole social web of informal institutions that actually run the society by trust, exchange of favors and gifts. It may undermine the rigid control of the state and provide resources across and with administrative systems.¹¹²

Guanxi (social networking) is the most important resource for self-initiated migration. It was practiced before reform but was not openly accepted. It becomes prevalent after the reform and is considered as a normal part of life, although frequently criticized in public discourse. Everyone practices and everyone complains. My interview shows that every case of migration is related to *guanxi* in some way.

All these migration cases also show the migration process from the migrants' perspective. Many migrants were not aware of the whole process of transfers and movement before the move. But they learned along the way by talking with friends or learning through hard experience.

Case 1

The first case is a job transfer for family reunion from a woman I interviewed in my fieldwork in 1999. She and her husband had been separated for four years before she applied to transfer to the factory where her husband worked from a factory she worked at another small city. I quote here about the process of the migration.

"In 1979, we applied for a family reunion. Both work units agreed. On my side, I did well in the factory. The cadres understood my situation. As a mother with a child, I was not expected to stay in the factory for long. On my husband's side, he had a very good relationship with mid-level cadres in his factory. The head of the Labor and Wage Section helped him a lot. The procedure of a transfer follows a few steps. First, both work units need to agree to send and receive the transferee. Then the receiving unit needs to submit an

¹¹² *Guanxi* is a very important aspect of social life in post-reform China. It was and is prevalent in planned migration. Many people use *guanxi* to move to desired places for work or family reasons. See Yang (1994) for general discussion of *guanxi* in social life in urban China. See Bian (1994b) for situations in job mobility. See Liu (1998) for examples in sending down of urban educated youths in 1970s.

application to the authority bureau (*zhuguan ju*), which is the Municipal Metallurgical Bureau in this case. Its section of labor and wage is the government department responsible for the matter. The third step is to send the application further to the Municipal Labor Bureau after the approval by Metallurgical Bureau. We spent a lot of time and energy on the transfer. The head of the Labor and Wage Section of our factory had a very good relationship with the head of labor and wage section in Metallurgical Bureau, who was an able woman. She pushed the Municipal Labor Bureau. Eventually it was approved. It took about one and half years. I came to join my husband after working in the Third Front factory for ten years.”¹¹³

The informant was very lucky because both sending and receiving units had no problems with the transfer. It also shows that good relationships with cadres at various levels are essential in getting the process moving. The case probably met the policy requirements since they were married and had been separated for quite a few years. The key thing is to get a labor quota for the worker transfer. It also shows the importance of social norms and social expectations. The sending unit did not block the informant’s move since it might be against the social norms (*renzhi changqing*).

Case 2

The second case shows the process of college enrollment and assignment. This is a case of a technician who was assigned to a textile factory where I conducted interviews.

“I studied and graduated from a textile college in city A and was assigned to the Textile Bureau in city B. But there were many small incidents in my enrollment and assignment. I came originally from Hunan. I did not put the textile college in my preferences. I wanted to go to military college. But the recruiter from the college came by my dossier and picked me. The reason is that they needed a cadre of youth league. I was very active in school in youth league activities as a student cadre. I did not object to it since I also put in my preferences that I would comply to the assignment of the state.

I graduated in 1987 after three-years at college. I studied heating and cooling engineering in school. I and another female student were among the best in our class. I was student representative in study and number one in academic rank. We were guaranteed good jobs in a new company in Beijing. But a few weeks before graduation the news came that the company was removed due to the government’s policy to limit expansion of companies sponsored by government institutions. We were left with an awkward situation

¹¹³ I conducted interviews of planned migrants in Wuhan and several other cities in 1998 and 1999.

since many other students had already filled good positions. I had three choices at that time, the Textile Bureau at city B, a textile factory in Hua County of Guangdong Province, or to stay at the college. I would like to go back to Hunan but positions there were filled already. I decided to come to City B because the customs and food are similar to Hunan. Also my education level is a bit lower in the academic environment.

I did not know that I would be assigned to this factory. I had no relatives and friends in City B at that time. I only heard from a bus driver that another factory was better. I wanted to work in the Provincial Textile Engineering Bureau. But I needed to move my dossier from the Municipal Bureau to the Provincial Bureau, which I was unable to achieve due to lack of friends and connections (guanxi) (A staff of labor and personnel section interceded, 'he was recruited above assigned quota (chaojihua) since the factory badly needed a technician in the Power Section. The factory applied specifically to the textile bureau')."

There are several interesting things in the enrollment and assignment of this person. The first is the uncertainties in the state-initiated migration, enrollment and assignment in this case. It is quite common for college students to end up in schools or majors not of their own choice. This informant went to a textile college not because he chose it but because his personal dossier was taken by the textile college. There is a saying, "You can get the person if you get his or her personal dossier". And often schools, work units and government departments would take a personnel dossier without the implicit consent of the person involved. Uncertainty is highly likely and expected in assignment since state direct assignment normally consists of several stages. The person is first assigned to the authority department, the Municipal Textile Bureau in this case. There are sometimes hundreds of factories and companies under one authority department. The assigned person is generally not aware of the work unit. The informant was assigned to the textile factory because the factory asked specifically for people with this special skill. But as can be seen later, assignees can know and change potential work units by mobilizing their social networks.

The second observation is that graduates can have their own choices to a certain extent. Particularly if they are students with good academic and political record, their preferences are likely to be considered. One important factor in inter-provincial migration

is regional culture. There are substantial differences in weather, cuisines and diets, dialects and customs across regions due to China's expanse and long history. For example, "north" and "south" are considered very different since the north is dry and cold compared to wet and warm in the south. Diets in the south consist mostly of rice and its by-products while in the north mostly of wheat and flour. Also northerners speak mandarin while the southerners speak various dialects that are not totally understandable to the northern ears or even among other southerners. So in state assignment, one common request from assignees is to go to the areas with similar regional cultures (Chan et al, 1999).

Case 3

The case was an example of recruitment migration in the mid 1970s. The informant was a woman about 40 years old. She worked as a staff in the labor and personnel section in a large state company WGT.¹¹⁴

"I was sent to the countryside in Hong'an County as an educated youth in 1974. At that time, a popular model of rustication was a connection between state factories and rural communes.¹¹⁵ In 1978, WGT had recruitment quotas of 700. The state company WGT's designated regions were Miyangang and Qianjiang prefectures. Huanggang Prefecture was not one of them but nonetheless allocated 30 quotas. The only reason, from what I knew, was to recruit a child of one important cadre in WGT. Ten recruitment quotas were assigned to Hong'an County, which was under the jurisdiction of Huanggang Prefecture.

There was intense negotiation between WGT and the county government. The original plan was to hire seven men and three women. After the negotiation, it was changed to six men and four women. Out of the ten youths, seven were from Wuhan and three were local youths, children of local cadres.

I was able to be hired partly because I was an activist and representative of educated youth. I worked in the County Office of Educated Youth. I wouldn't have known about this recruitment if I were an ordinary educated youth."

¹¹⁴ Because of the concern of privacy, WGT can be just taken as a name for a company.

¹¹⁵ I will discuss it more explicitly later in this chapter.

She originally came from a tractor factory, where her parents worked, not WGT. She was the group leader of the educated youth in one of the largest groups. She was recruited directly to the Labor and Personnel Section of WGT and worked there for a dozen of years. This is probably another reason that she knew the recruitment and bargaining process quite well . According to her, the ten recruited youths all had social connections (*guanxi*). An insight from this case is that local governments and work units do bargain in migration plans and assignment.

Case 4

This case is a cadre transfer across administrative system and provinces. The transferee was a staff in a bank in the City of Zhengzhou. Her husband worked in a university owned by a ministry. They lived separated for several years after marriage.¹¹⁶

The procedure was quite complicated and involved several government departments. The first step, as usual, was to submit application to the work units on both sides. After the two units both agreed to the applications, they contacted each other by sending materials. Then the university submitted materials to the provincial personnel department for approval. Though the university is under the authority of a ministry, i.e., centrally owned, its personnel management belongs to the provincial bureau. This is as we discussed in the last chapter of differences between administrative and professional relationships between government departments. Once the provincial department approved, the unit of the transferee submitted related materials to its authority department, which was the provincial people's bank. These materials were forwarded to the provincial personnel department. With its approval of the provincial department, the city government granted automatically the residence right. The transferee could transfer hukou and grain relationships in the substation of the municipal security bureau in the university area.

¹¹⁶ Spousal separation within marriage is prevalent in socialist China. According to a survey by the Ministry of Labor in 1980, there were 5 million people living separately with their spouses in state units, which accounted for about 10% of total workers and staff (Zhao, 1989:252). For spousal separation, see also Ma (1997). Spousal separation here refers merely to the fact that husband and wife live at different places. It does not imply at all that there is any problem in their marriage.

The university had a queue of people applying for spousal reunion based on several standards, such as the length of separation, time of application and tenure. Some people waited for three or four years. The transferee did only for a few months. One plausible reason is that the husband of the transferee is a graduate student of the university president and could be considered favorably even if he or the president did not intervene directly.

Case 5

The fifth case concerns the assignment of military officers.

"I went to the military college in Henan Province and was assigned to work in the army to serve for four years. When I was discharged my dossier was transferred to the provincial office of military cadre allocation. The rule of assignment is to go back to the places of enlistment, the residence of parents or of spouse. It does not specify the particular work unit but only the administrative system where one's spouse is. In my example, I know I would be assigned to Gaogongwei (Higher Education Working Committee). In the beginning I wanted to go to the College of Music because I like music. I hesitated to come to the university since my wife, my parents-in-law, my brother-in-law all work there. I did not want other people say that I did well because of my relationship with my wife's family. It would be worse if I did not do so well since others would come to the conclusion that I am not competent.

My brother-in-law works in the cadre department that is responsible for transfer and personnel dossiers. He went to the provincial office of military cadre allocation and found my dossier and asked it to be transferred to the university, otherwise he would not receive any one. Since the university is at the same administrative rank with Gaogongwei and even higher than the provincial office of military cadre allocation, it is not obliged to receive any demobilized soldiers and cadres. So he got my file. I did not insist on my preference since I knew that I would be assigned to a much worse school. Every school only wants people related to its own faculty and staff. They would not want me unless their own people want to come to the university because the university is better than their own schools. I am satisfied here."

This case shows the powerful roles of family networks. One would have better opportunities and migration experiences if one has family members in important positions. Often the person himself does not need to lobby the decision makers. Another

observation is the negotiation between state units. As we know, assignment of military cadres and soldiers is not widely welcome by the local government and work units. His brother-in-law bargained with the allocation office by offering to accept other assignments on the condition that he would be sent to the university. And it is a general practice that work units tend to receive only those who are related to existing people in the units, as the informant commented. On the last note, he is now an administrator of an important branch in the university.

Case 6

This is another case of assignment of demobilized soldiers. He was able to change his hukou status at the time of assignment.

"I have been a taxi driver since 1994, before that I was a driver in a large hotel. In 1980, I was enlisted to the army and was assigned to Guizhou Province. When I was enlisted I had no idea where I would go. It turned out to be in Guizhou. But it was not so bad since I had my service in the provincial capital, Guiyang. I was in the army for four years. In 1984, I was discharged and started to work in Wuhan. The reason that I was able to change my hukou status was that I was married to my wife who had an urban hukou. I was enlisted from the suburb. Without marriage I should have gone back to the suburb with an agricultural hukou. We were introduced and met and married. I did not spend much money on the transfer, just a banquet for officials in the public security branch station. I was driving car for a regiment commander when I was in the army. He was demobilized and assigned to be the head of the hotel. He helped me a lot. After the discharge I still drove car for him. My wife worked in a large state factory but recently was laid off on a 150 RMB living stipend. But even when she worked she could only earn about 300-400 RMB. Hukou does not matter so much now in a lot of things. But housing may be an exception. I was assigned an apartment which I paid 7000 RMB but could be worth 100-200 thousand. It was golden years for taxi drivers when I first started in 94. I could earn more than 10,000 a month. I repaid the loan for car in the amount of 140,000. But things are not as good as then. I can only earn about 4,000-5000 a month. But it is still much better than working in factories. I only need my wife to take care of my child."

Most demobilized soldiers are from rural origins. After being discharged, they are normally not allowed to change hukou status and hukou residence. In special situations, such as promoted to officers or married to a woman with an urban hukou, they are able to change residence and hukou status. Many soldiers actively seek marriage before

discharge. Another reason for his assignment in the city is his connection with the head of the state unit. If the unit asks for and actively pursues his assignment, it is a tremendous help. Having skills and experiences of driving, he was able to adapt to the new wave of changes in the 1990s.

Case 7

This case is about a transfer of a cadre through mixed channels of the department of organization and the personnel department due to a change of his administrative rank after the transfer.

"I transferred from City S to the factory in 1992. I was the director of the textile bureau of City S and the director of a textile factory there before that. My transfer went through in a few steps. First I submitted application to the Municipal Party Committee of City S (which is a county level city). Upon their approval the application with comments of the municipal party committee was further submitted to the prefecture party standing committee, which has jurisdiction over city S. When it passed, it was the department of organization that took care of transfer matters. Then I reported to the personnel bureau instead of the Department of Organization (*zhuzhibu*) in this city also because of the rank (since S city has only county level rank, the highest cadres it can be responsible for are sub-county level cadres).

A few things motivated my transfer. First is my daughter's education. She was approaching 16 years old in 1990, a critical year after which one cannot move with parents. The education was much worse in city S than here. Another thing is that I fired a worker due to his misconduct. We went to the court and the ruling was that we should not fire him. But the factory management team stuck to the firing decision. Then I got myself in trouble. He tried to set fire to my house. I did not fear him but worried about my children. I did not want anything bad to happen to them. So I asked my wife to move with the children first. She transferred to a district government-owned factory. The head of the labor and personnel department is a friend of mine and used to be the director of the factory. She moved through the channel of excellent and technical personnel.

I went to see the party secretary of the Municipal Party Committee of city S to petition for my wife's transfer. I had sympathy from the committee and the secretary due to the incident. They agreed but demanded that I myself should stay. After a few years, I was able to make my own transfer. I asked the party secretary to assign on the application I wrote for my transfer on the spot. He was a little drunk that

day after a banquet. I used the excuse of taking care of old parents. It was not considered as an appropriate and major reason for transfer on paper though everybody acknowledges and accepts it."

The informant is a head of a large state company. He is very knowledgeable of the labor and migration process. This case shows a number of interesting things. First is that the migration channels for cadres can shift during the process. Normally high-level cadres transfer through the Department of Organization (DOO). But in some cases, the top leaders in lower-rank administrative units also go through DOO. When they move to a high rank unit, the responsible department changes to the personnel department in accordance to their ranks. Secondly, there are several layers of migration reasons depending on who is on the other side of discourse. To the state, his move belongs to the category of cadre transfer in terms of official registration and his wife's the category of skilled personnel. He presents his move to his colleague and party secretaries as taking care of old parents, which is socially acceptable but not officially a sufficient reason for a formal transfer. His actual reasons, however, are mostly related to concerns of his children, their safety due to the incident and their education opportunities.

Case 8

It is a case of college assignment before the reform.

"I graduated from the Chinese Textile University in Shanghai in 1969. There was an overall assignment plan that determined the regions and work unit types for assigned graduates. The plan would tell the university how many students should be sent to which region or unit. But as to which student could fall into the position it is in the hands of Graduate Allocation Office (GAO, *biyesheng feipei bangongshi*) in universities. Being able to access and influence the decisions of GAO is definitely important since assignment upon graduation could determine one's whole life's opportunities. However the means and forms of influencing are very different. I had never heard of sending gifts at that time. It could be extremely dangerous to do that. Political performance was very important. It was totally different types of game from now. Playing political activist and self-sacrifice was the key to open opportunities. Leaders and ordinary people shared the same rules and considerations, which formed the basis to judge and act correspondingly.

At that time the central government had a policy guideline (*zhengce jingshen*) that the state should encourage the exchange of people across regions to enhance the integration of the country.¹¹⁷ It may only be expressed at certain government levels. So graduates in Tianjin Textile College were assigned to Shanghai, while Shanghai students were assigned to the inland. This consideration is different from that of rotation of high-level government officials. The principles of assignment can be generalized as the four “towards” (*sige mianxiang*). They are facing towards the countryside, the basic units, frontiers and industrial and mining enterprises.

In that year, China Textile University had about 1600 graduates. All were assigned to other places. None was left in Shanghai. Most students came from other provinces. Local students were not many because quotas given to Shanghai local residents were not very large. At that time propaganda teams of military and workers (*gongxuandui* and *junxuandui*) were in charge of the daily administration of the university.¹¹⁸ A worker leader talked to me about my preferences of assignment. Knowing there was little possibility of staying in Shanghai, I said that I would prefer Hunan and Hubei due to a similar climate and diet. I did not know their decisions or talk to them again until I saw my name on the big red poster. Beside my name is the name ‘Hubei Light Industry Bureau’. I got my administration letter and transferred my grain and oil certificates. In just a few days I was on the way to Wuhan. Only when I reported to the Light Industry Bureau did I know that I was further assigned to a textile factory in another city. I left the next day.”

Most of these cases here are for the period after reform. Through these cases, we have observed the effort and motivation of prospective migrants and their families to influence migration outcomes to their advantages. We also notice the extensive use of *guanxi* in the migration process through different means. This case gives us a glimpse of individual effort in the migration process before and after reform.

It is no doubt that overall strength is tilted to the state in the balance of migration initialization. But as the above informants pointed out, there were still subtle ways to influence the migration outcome. Straightforward employment of *guanxi* might have negative impacts on people involved. The rules of game were different. Progressive political attitude, “good” family background, a close relationship with teachers, staff and GAO would normally lead to a good assignment. In another words, even in the period of

¹¹⁷ I have never seen this point in formal government documents I came across in my research.

¹¹⁸ This is during the high point of the Great Cultural Revolution.

the classical socialist period, individuals did and could influence the state's decisions on migration and job assignments.

This case shows that regional preferences were considered in job assignment by the state. This is so because the state wants to reduce future turnover that can be caused by relocation due to regional cultural factors. This case also shows the multilevel hierarchy of labor and migration allocation. The informant was assigned to an industrial bureau, which reassigned him to another place. He had no idea where he was going to end up. Before the reform, individuals were more receptive to the requirements and assignment of the state.

5.3 Limits of the state: Rustication of Urban Educated Youth under Mao in 1967-79

So far, I have identified major elements of socialist migration, i.e., bureaucratic structure, the planning process, negotiation between the state and individuals, mobilization and ideology. We have witnessed the power of the socialist state through its centralized bureaucratic structure and dominant socialist ideology. But we also discussed the seeds of destruction in this seemingly unbreakable monolith. We observed the divergence of individual and state preferences, principal agent problems in the state administration, state assignment relying on compliance based on shared ideology and so on. I will show how these elements play out in an actual event, i.e., the rustication of urban educated youth. This case also demonstrates the limits of the state and the importance of migrant agency. Migrant choices and agency mattered even in a totalitarian state like China under Mao.

Rustication of urban educated youth during the Cultural Revolution exiled millions of urban youth from cities into frontiers and the countryside. This migration event has great significance for its own sake and deserves careful research and investigation. It wreaked havoc with many urban families and touched even more in cities, towns and the

countryside. Its impacts were not just limited to its sheer size. It fundamentally changed people's perceptions of the socialist state and prompted a crude awakening and rethinking of the socialist system by the younger generation.

Recent years have witnessed a resurgence of interests in the urban educated youth and the Rustication Movement in the popular literature in Mainland China, tabbed as *zhiqing re* (the heat of educated youth). A large number of autobiographies, recollections, histories, chronicles, as well as novels have been published, providing many insights into the movement. In addition, data from migration surveys and archival materials help reveal the macro patterns of the movement. In contrast to the "heat" of Chinese literature on the Rustication Movement, the Western literature is quite "cold". There are only a few publications on the Rustication Movement from a migration perspective (Zhou, 1999, Luis and Liu, 1998). The most comprehensive work on rustication in the English literature is still Bernstein's book published twenty years ago.

Although the Rustication Movement is commonly perceived as a forced migration under Mao, recent evidence shows many subtleties that defy this simple categorization (Ma, 1995). Despite the overarching power of the socialist state, countless decisions of urban educated youths and their families had decisive impacts on the patterns and process of the downward migration of urban educated youth. In the following sections, I will introduce the process of rustication and demonstrate the interactions between migrant agency and structures.

5.3.1 Temporal and spatial patterns

Rustication of urban educated youth involved 16.5 million high school graduates from late 1960s to 1980. Its scale was about one third the size of Great European Immigration to the New World which lasted three to four hundred years, while the former occurred over ten years. We can easily imagine its intensity and impacts. It was estimated that it would take three and half months to transport 310,000 youths to Heilongjiang Province at

the rate of three special trains per day in the peak of rustication in early 1969. In the end, military warships were called in to assist (Gu and Hu, 1996). More dramatic was the “great return of educated youths to cities” (*zhiqing dafan cheng*), vividly described in popular literature, in which 10 million urban youths escaped their rural destinies in less than two years (Liu, 1998).

The rustication of urban educated youth originated in the mid 1950s. Graduates from junior and senior high schools were encouraged to go to the countryside to help develop rural areas. There were several small peaks of sending down corresponding to economic downturns in 1955, 1957 and the early 60s. They were relatively small in scale compared to the later “great” rustication. These early experiments provided valuable experiences for organization and administration of rustication.

Rustication was originally called *Xiaxiang Shangshan* (Down to the Villages and Up to the Mountains). It was changed to *Shangshan Xiaxiang* due to a speech given by Vice Premier, Tan Zhenlin in 1965, who argued the necessity of occupying major mountains to prevent possible military attacks from the air (Gu and Ma, 1997). It has been used in this way since then. The change in the name shows the military concern of top leaders at that time. It also shows the naivete of the central government. Some major decisions were not clearly thought out and planned.

The real trigger for large-scale rustication came from the Great Cultural Revolution. In mid 1966, Mao initiated a mass campaign against government cadres and intellectuals, at roughly the same time when youths in Europe and the United States took to the street, when students in the University of Washington protested in the Red Square. The active force were Red Guards, mostly high school students all over the country. Economic activities were paralyzed since officials in most government institutions were either sent to the countryside to study and labor or were thrown out of their positions. Workers and soldiers who knew little about economic management took over factories and schools.

The result was the near collapse of the whole economy. As one can expect, there was no new hiring from the state units. So the high school graduates, the Red Guards, became unemployed after their graduation. There were no jobs available in cities for them. Also at the latter stage of the Cultural Revolution, they became really militias. In some large cities, military battles involved tens of thousands of people, many of whom were high school students. The government was concerned for social stability and needed an instant outlet for these troubling youths.

In late 1967, some red-guard groups in Beijing sensed the change to new political direction and volunteered to go to some frontier provinces to settle down in the countryside. One group went to Nei Mongol and the other went to Yunnan (Liu, 1998; Deng, 1996). Their spontaneous actions were immediately captured by the government. Major national newspapers publicized their heroic deeds on the front page with editorial opinions that gave strong affirmation. This new migration set a new trend and standard for millions of urban youths, providing a new outlet for the dying Red Guard movement.

Their examples were widely imitated by other red guards in a number of cities. But the absolute number was still small. The massive migration gained huge momentum only after Mao issued a directive. In December 22 of 1968, Mao gave his support to rustication by saying "It is very necessary for educated youths to go to countryside, to get reeducated by the poor-and-lower-middle-peasants. There is a need to persuade cadres and others in cities to send their children graduated from junior-high, senior-high schools, and colleges to the countryside. They should mobilize, and comrades in all the countryside should welcome them." Students' actions were not always welcome originally. But Mao's words changed the attitudes of many local governments (Liu, 1998:163,6).

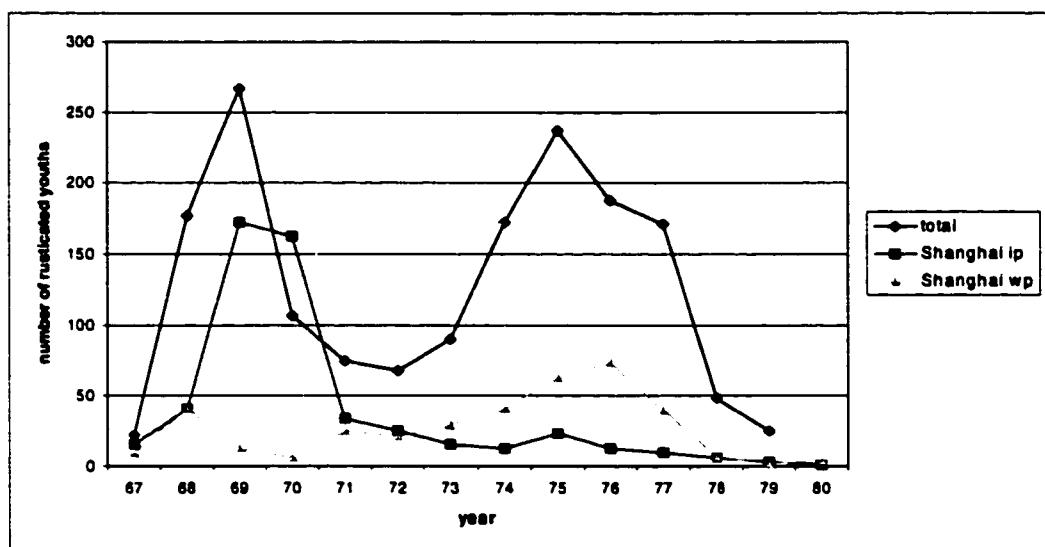


Figure 5.1 Temporal Pattern of Rustication of Urban Educated Youths (1967-80)

Units:

For total migration, in 10 thousands;

For Shanghai ip (inter-provincial) and wp (within province) migration, in person.

Sources:

Total migration from Gu and Hu, 1996:301, with 1967 and 68 figures readjusted by 1986 micro sample;

For Shanghai, from 1986 micro sample with a sampling ratio around 1 per thousand, see Ma and Wang, 1988:3.

There is a vast descriptive literature on the general process of rustication of urban educated youth.¹¹⁹ Here I just want to point out some of its major characteristics and events. There are two obvious peaks over time (see Figure 5.1). One peak was in 1969 with 2.7 million leaving for countryside, most of whom were so called “*lao san jie*” (literally, “old three graduates”).¹²⁰ Their revolutionary enthusiasm proved later only to be exchanged for tremendous hardship and suffering. That was, ironically, probably much more than they would have received if they had lived in the “old societies” before Communist rule, which is the opposite model of the new society. Almost all of inter-provincial rusticated migration occurred in the first peak years. The second peak was in 1975 with a slightly volume of about 2.4 million. In the second peak and years thereafter,

¹¹⁹ Most of them are in Chinese, such as Liu, 1998, Deng, 1996, Gu and Ma, 1996, Gu and Hu, 1996. Notable exception is Bernstein (1977).

not only was the inter-provincial migration negligible, but more than 50% of rusticated youths went to suburban areas comparing to less than 30% having intra-provincial moves during the first peak. The trend of Shanghai, which was the city of the diehard support for rustication, demonstrates the changing internal structure of rustication over time.¹²¹

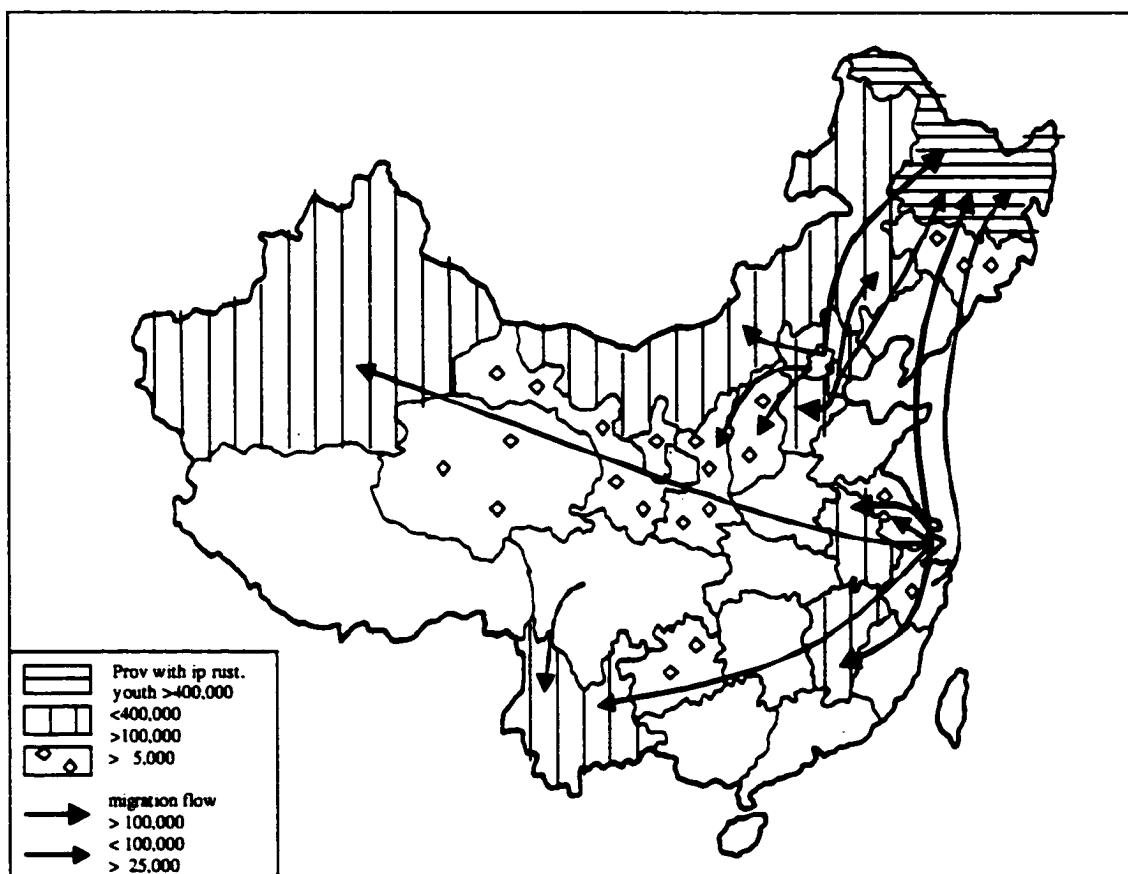


Figure 5.2 Provincial Distribution of Inter-provincial Rusticated Youth and Migration Flows 1962-79

The inter-provincial rusticated migration is not evenly distributed (see Figure 5.2). The three largest sending areas were three centrally administered cities, i.e., Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjing. The sizes were 0.72, 0.25 and 0.27 million respectively, accounting for

¹²⁰ This term refers specifically to those graduated from junior and senior high school in 1966, 1967 and 1968. They suffered much more than those who graduated later. For their dramatic stories see Deng (1996).

¹²¹ The data for spatial composition of rustication within the province and the trend of rustication of urban youths from Shanghai come from the 1986 Migration Survey micro data of 74 cities and towns (CASS through Universities Service Center in Chinese University of Hong Kong).

about 90% of total inter-provincial rustication. The largest receiving provinces were those at the north frontier and Yunnan, although Shaanxi, Jiangxi, Guizhou and a couple of other provinces also hosted a small number of urban youths. The reason for the migration into these inland provinces was mostly due to their political symbol as the revolutionary bases for the red army in the early years. The map displays the largest stream of migration flows. It shows that Shanghai was the least accommodating, sending its youth across great distances.¹²² The overall inter-provincial rustication was only about one tenth of total rustication. If counting both inter and intra-provincial rustication, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Sichuan, Shanghai, Jilin and Guangdong mobilized over or close to one million of their youths to rural areas (see Table 5.1).

5.3.2 Motivation and identity

On the whole, *Shangshan Xiaxiang* belongs to the downward migration initiated by the state. But the decision of the state might be inspired by a number of self-initiated rustication moves in the late 1967.¹²³ At that time, facing the stagnation of the Red Guard movement, several Red Guard leaders, seeking the next frontier of political adventure, discovered rustication and voluntarily settled in Inner Mongolia and Yunnan to help develop frontier regions and transform themselves through hard labor.¹²⁴ Their actions were eagerly supported by the government and widely publicized by the media. It is not surprising since the government was troubled by both the demands of earlier rusticated youth to return and the mounting pressure of unemployment accumulated during the Great Cultural Revolution.

¹²² It was a continuation of past practice before the Cultural Revolution. Shanghai had the largest urban population and highest population density and thus the greatest pressure to control its scale of urban population. It experimented with sending out youths even back in the mid 50s by establishing institutional linkages with Xinjiang (White, 1979). Later on, it was those youths who protested in ten of thousands in Xinjiang in 1979 and 1980, which was the only place where military force was mobilized to crack down on the protests and the only place where the urban youth failed to return collectively (Liu, 1998).

¹²³ The origin of rustication of urban youths may be traced back to the 1940s when progressive urban youth moved to Yan'an to join the Communist party. In the mid 1950s, the state encouraged urban youth, mostly unemployed, to help develop rural areas.

¹²⁴ The earliest groups started in Beijing. For details see Liu (1998: 110-121) and Deng (1996: 52-60).

Table 5.1 Spatial Distribution of Rusticated Youth, 1962-1979. In thousands.

Provinces	Sending		Receiving		Net		% of total inter-prov migration
	sum	sum	1962-66	1967-79	sum	%	
National total	17765	17765	1293	16472	-1367	-8	1367
Beijing	636	384	12	373	-252	-40	-18
Tianjin	465	194	8	185	-272	-58	-20
Hebei	384	511	40	47	126	33	9
Shanxi	264	313	20	293	49	18	4
Nei Mongol	194	299	8	291	106	54	8
Liaoning	2013	2018	86	1932	5	0	0
Jilin	991	1053	35	1018	61	6	4
Heilonjiang	1519	1922	70	1852	403	27	29
Shanghai	1252	532	40	492	-720	-57	-53
Jiangsu	828	861	111	750	33	4	2
Zhejiang	646	596	115	481	-50	-8	-4
Anhui	577	726	42	684	149	26	11
Fujian	372	372	57	315	0	0	0
Jiangxi	505	623	78	544	118	23	9
Shandong	513	493	28	465	-20	-4	-1
Hebei	673	673	27	646	0	0	0
Hubei	887	879	40	839	-8	-1	-1
Hunan	636	636	75	561	0	0	0
Guangdong	973	973	100	873	0	0	0
Guangxi	435	435	36	399	0	0	0
Sichuan	1472	1427	60	1367	-45	-3	-3
Guizhou	214	224	13	212	11	5	1
Xizang	3	3		3	0	0	0
Yunan	233	339	7	332	107	46	8
Shaanxi	463	490	16	475	27	6	2
Gansu	245	264	29	235	19	8	1
Qinghai	44	51	9	42	7	17	1
Ningxia	49	58	11	46	8	17	1
Xingjiang	278	417	120	297	139	50	10

Source: Gu and Hu, 1996: 302-3, net figures and % distribution of inter-provincial migration calculated by the author.

Notes:

Figures in the column of Sending are all rusticated youths mobilized within the provincial unit;

Figures in Receiving are all youths allocated in the province, including those from other provinces;

Net figures are the rustication across provinces, with positive as receiving and negative as sending, % represents the percentage of inter-provincial migration of total sending youths;

% of total inter-provincial migration is the share of each province in the 1.37 million rusticated youths across provinces.

There is a continuity between the Red Guard movement and *Shangshan Xiaxiang* for early urban graduates (*laosanjie*). Both were strongly influenced by the class struggle theory which defied the economism and traditional education. Both gave these youngsters a sense of making history and of being pioneers of revolutionary action, in short, being in the spotlight in an extremely positive way. Their seemingly spontaneous choices were filtered by their identities, which in turn were shaped by the media and the education system (Chan, 1985). The media was flooded with heroic achievements of early revolutionaries and current youth models, which naturally ignited those young hearts who had yet to experience practical problems in real life. They were molded through education in schools which devoted a significant share of time to political study. They were called “revolutionary successor” and “Mao’s children”.¹²⁵

They never considered themselves as migrants as the word normally implies. In Chinese literature, migration (*qianyi*) or migrants (*yimin*) have never been used to describe the Rustication Movement. In the Chinese language, human migration has the connotation of self-sponsored movement for the purpose of making out a living, such as that of Shangdong people to Northeast China (Larry, 1996; Li, 1987). Even the rural youths who went to the frontier in the 1950s did not like the term migration. For their official title *zhibian qingnian* (youths supporting the frontier) is associated with the image of courage and honor for answering the state’s call to transform the frontier regions (Hansen, 1999). In this paper, educated youths (*zhiqing* or *zhishi qingnian*) refer specifically to the urban youths who went to the countryside in the rustication movement. Those who had agricultural *hukou* and returned to their rural origins after graduation are called rural returned youth (*huixiang zhishi qingnian*). They were in much larger numbers (Bernstein, 1977: 22-23).

¹²⁵ It is well illustrated in Mao’s words. “Youths are just like the sun in the morning, the world belongs to you. Although it’s ours now, it is eventually yours.” Anyone in school in Mainland before the mid 1980s would be familiar with this phase and the feelings it generated.

These names do not just confer social images. They also matter greatly to migration outcomes and social opportunities for those involved since the social state formulates related policies according to these social categories. For example, the state supplied food, housing materials, and living subsidies for *zhiqing* (urban educated youths), but nothing for *huixiang qingnian* (rural returned youths). *Zhiqing* were also entitled to state employment in urban areas while *huixiang qingnian* were excluded. This is one aspect of the urban-rural segmentation in social China. The “unfair” treatment for rural educated youth revoked some complaints and protests but which died out without any change in the system. In the last stage of rustication when urban youths fought to come back, the state tried to change the social category of *zhishi qingnian* (educated youths) to *zhibian qingnian* (youth supporting the frontier) (Deng, 1996). *Zhibian qingnian* were treated as state workers who had commitment to frontier areas. Educated youths were largely for reeducation in the rural areas, so they were not supposed to stay permanently, although early rustication polices asked for permanent relocation. In other words, *zhishi qingnian* were entitled to come back to cities, while *zhibian qingnian* were not. There were some serious protests by angry *zhibian qingnian*, which were cracked down by military forces in the late 1970s.¹²⁶

In the beginning of the Rustication Movement, enthusiasm and missionary thinking were not limited to the few initiators. Many of those early rusticated youths shared this. Here is a quote from the top page of a rusticated youth’s diary. It was her vow at Tiananmen Square before leaving for Shaanxi in early 1969, at the end of the first wave of rustication.

“I will be forever loyal to Chairman Mao and never bend even when the mountain is over me. I will stay in the countryside for all my life. I will be taking roots, budding, blossoming, and bearing fruit. I will never turn back even with strong adverse winds and waves. I will not change my will even when heaven falls down and earth collapses.” (ZQRJBWH, 1996:13)

¹²⁶ See footnote 19.

An author who himself was an educated youth commented on the feelings of urban youths. He used the words such as purity, innocence, sincerity, piety and confidence (Liu, 1998: 113).

Of course, not everyone had such a strong commitment and revolutionary zeal. The majority might feel the call but were also influenced by other considerations. Some went because they tried to clear up their not so revolutionary background and reinvent themselves as revolutionary youths.¹²⁷ Some went because they could get salaries in state farms, some because of the pressure from work units and neighborhood committees.

Here is a quote from an educated youth in Shanghai who went due to strong pressures.

"I was only 15 then. Who wanted to go to the countryside? There was no other way. If you didn't go, aunties in the neighborhood committees would come to mobilize you everyday, to study Mao's selected works. A worker from the Workers Propaganda Team would bring his quilt to my home to conduct study group. My father was a cadre, a section head. His work unit had a special study group for him. He was told that he could be released only when his children decided to go to the countryside. Think about it, such a mess, how could we live a normal life? Feeling that it was impossible to escape, my mom begged me in crying: my daughter, please go, it is only two years of hard work, your dad has heart problems, he may not come back alive if he has to stay any longer in that study group. So I went. Ten years, rather than two years as the worker said. It was two years more than the Anti-Japanese war. How many ten years can one have?" (Deng, 1996: 63).

By the end of 1969, about 4.7 million urban youths, most of *laosanjie*, went to rural areas. It was extremely smooth compared to that in later years because of a combination

¹²⁷ There were various social categorizations of lower social classes in socialist China. The official definition of class enemy in a central circular of December 26, 1968 included nine types of people: traitors, spies, unrepented capitalist roaders, unreformed landlords, rich peasants, anti-revolutionaries, bad elements, rightists and current anti-revolutionaries. Their children in rustication were called "*kejiao zinu*" (educatable children) (Liu, 1998: 328). Another common term was "*heiwulei*" (Five Black Types), including traitors, spies, unrepented capitalist roaders, current anti-revolutionaries (Liu, 1998: 207). Intellectuals were called "*choulaojiu*" (The Stinky Ninth), for they ranked the last on the list of class enemies by replacing anti-revolutionary in the first list. This categorization originated in the Peoples' Daily on October 4th of 1968, aiming to show the importance of reeducation since intellectuals were among the low of the lows. This reflects the strong and persistent hostility of the Communist Party towards intellectuals.

of several factors, such as willingness of students, lack of real experiences of rural life, strong pressure from the top, and equality in the process. Another less obvious factor was that people simply “go with the flow” rather than run against the tide, judging from the level of practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984).

The diaries of educated youths later published offer insights about their thought process and decision making at that time. It reveals the impacts of ideology in shaping the identity of urban youths and framing their discourse. The state was pretty effective at channeling and guiding thinking by singling out typical thoughts and linking them with the line of class struggle. Of course, those early diaries were screened by the authors themselves. In those days, anyone who wrote a diary must identify themselves with the official ideology. Otherwise, they needed to be very courageous to put their real thoughts into writing, which could cost them dearly later on. But it is not to say that these diaries are useless. They do reflect the characteristics of that time, the context, the logic and typical problems. There were indeed some courageous people out there.

One interesting thing is that urban youths constantly struggled with their identities. On the one hand, official ideology molded them in certain directions. On the other hand, their life experiences and desires for a better (more comfortable) life pulled them in the opposite direction. For example, typically in the beginning of their settlement in rural areas, urban youths often looked down upon rural residents because of their low political consciousness and low level of education. At the same time, they also criticized themselves for this attitude as petty bourgeoisie and impractical, since the party required them to learn from peasants. Official ideology was often internalized and influenced their decisions at critical points, such as leaving the cities and coming back from the countryside. They could not help examining their motivations for a comfortable life as selfish and spiritually low. They would persuade themselves and others by emphasizing their poor health or other excuses. The official ideology overshadowed their decisions and shaped the channels and formats of public and self-discourse. The imprints of

ideology and the effort of urban youths to reconcile with it can be found everywhere in their dairies (ZQRJSXBWH, 1996).

This notion of ambiguous migrant identity, shaped by migrants' experiences in multiple places, challenges the classical view of migrants having clearly cut identities. It provides support for the argument of fluidity of migrant identity from a different social context (Silvey and Lawson, 1999). Identity of migrants is important as both determinants and consequences of migration.

Once they decided to go, the next question was where to go. From the center's perspective, the ideal places would be frontier provinces such as Xinjiang and Heilongjiang for both military and economic purposes. The state wanted to increase commercial grain production and also to be prepared for possible wars with several neighboring countries, particularly the former Soviet Union. The center's perspective coincided with the interests of some local governments. Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjing had been struggling with their high population density and experimenting with ways of reducing the urban population. Due to the already high population density of their suburban areas, it would be ideal to send these high school graduates to other places.¹²⁸ Some of the inland and frontier provinces also needed labor, at least at that time.¹²⁹

From the individual perspective, there are many choices regarding the destination. For those who have the political zeal, the motto was "to go to the places where hardship is the greatest" and "to go to the places where the motherland needs us most", where it happened to be a perfect match with the state's preferences. Some youths picked old

¹²⁸Tianjing annexed five counties in the August of 1972. Before that, it had a small suburb, which contributed to its highest percentage of inter-provincial migration among all cities, see Appendix table.

¹²⁹ Yunnan sent a special telegraph to the State Council requesting for more labor quota (Gu and Ma, 1996:80). It was not until late 1970s that Heilongjiang Province started to control and limit self-initiated migrants into its areas. But not every place welcomed the coming of educated youths. Some county level governments in Nei Mongol issued urgent circulars to decline spontaneous immigration of urban youths. Their attitude, of course changed greatly after Mao gave his full support to rustication by bringing it up to the level of ideological importance in the form of reeducation (Liu, 1998: 166).

revolutionary bases, such as Yan'an and Ruijing for their symbolic meanings, which are very much like Mecca to the Muslims and Jerusalem to the Jews.

I quote from a diary from a youth who was assigned to Shanxi about her image of Yan'an.

"I heard from my dad that the next group of graduates will be assigned to Yan'an. I am so enraged for I cannot see the home of the 'red ancestor' and contribute my effort. How nice are the people and place of Yan'an! I fell in love with her since I was little. But I missed the chance to go there. Yellow soil, red faces, white scarf, blue sky, fighting to have land reforms, to reduce the rent and interests (asked by rich landlords), and to have marriage freedom, I love her. I have no way to go now. Do a good job since it doesn't matter where you revolutionize! Yan'an, I will definitely go to see you one day." (ZQRJBWH, 1996:15) ¹³⁰

But going to the frontier provinces was not just inspired by faith and enthusiasm. There were practical considerations as well. Some chose to go because they could stay in state farms which had state ownership, a regular salary and the prospect of being enlisted as a soldier.¹³¹ In addition to state ownership, other considerations include distance from home, the living standard of the area, climate and food customs (Bernstein, 1977: 112-116).

Bringing these factors together, we find the spatial pattern shown in the beginning. A common feature of these places on the frontier or inland is that they are very poor. Most also have an extreme climate. The most difficult part for the youths to deal with was not the physical challenges such as extreme climate and hard labor. Rather it was the dullness and backwardness of life there, and the realization that they could not change it at all, contrary to their earlier expectations of changing the world.

¹³⁰ This youth was very enthusiastic about rustication and also a serious thinker. She was later put in prison under the charge of "contemporary anti-revolutionary" three years after being in the countryside.

¹³¹ State ownership was preferred to other types of ownership, let alone rural villages. The salary in state farms was around 25 to 30 Yuan, similar to the lowest wage in industries. Soldier at that time enjoyed very high social prestige. They are entitled to or have a better chance to get urban jobs depending on whether their origins were urban or rural.

Adding insult to injury is the reeducation theory (Liu, 1998). Many urban youths found out that they were no longer regarded as revolutionary fighters but the objects of reeducation since they belonged to the camp of intellectuals.¹³² Reeducation put them in an ideologically inferior position to the peasants and farm workers, who appeared often quite selfish and short-sighted. This was particularly hard for those "reeducatable" children of "class enemies". It turned out that everything they tried, blood letters, hard work, thought reports, meant nothing just because of the bad remarks in their dossiers.¹³³ They were still treated as outsiders and potential opponents to the party. They had no opportunities of upward mobility, political or economic.

Gradually, expectation and enthusiasm were crushed by the harsh reality. These sharp changes of identities generally happened not long after they settled down, usually two or three months, even for the most enthusiastic ones. The high ideal should be buttressed by social status and justice. In the beginning of rustication, the mass media (propaganda) intentionally run the parallel of political leaders of this generation with the past generation, who are those in power now, like Mao himself. The sacrifice was supported partially by the distant hope of becoming someone in power, unique and righteous. That was confirmed in the beginning by the attention of those high in power (top leaders and provincial leaders), society and their families. But as time lingered on, the attention disappeared, and so did hope. The glory and sense of making history were replaced by the daily mundane of hard labor. Left were no excitement, no attention, dirty local politics, and the most primitive need to survive economically, and politically to many with a bad social background. Basic needs of rusticated youths were not met in many places. The state devoted resources to mobilize urban youths but did not set up an efficient

¹³² Actually the term "educated youth" is a false one since what they learned at school was mostly slogans and Mao's work. They did not get much education by conventional standards. Little did they learn about knowledge in sciences and humanities.

¹³³ In those days, a popular way to show one's resolution was to cut one's fingers and to write an application letter with the blood. People, particularly activists and "reeducatable" youth, were asked to write out their thought process to reveal their origins of selfness and their determination to change them, which were called "thought" reports.

administrative system to support them once they were out there, particularly in the first phase. A survey conducted in 1973 estimated that about one third could not support themselves and 36% did not have a stable place to live in (Liu, 1998: 287-299).

That change in identity was greatly reinforced because of experiences of or information about maltreatments, tortures and abuses of educated youths. Due to the constraints of information and monitoring capacity, the center could not get control of local governments on things that were not on the priority list. Local governments at the most basic level, particularly those in remote places and countryside, had a near monopoly of daily management of local societies. The reeducation theory and the lack of social experience put urban youths, especially female youths, in very vulnerable positions. Rapes, tortures and abnormal deaths were not rare incidents (Deng, 1996; Liu, 1998).

Probably the biggest factor that depressed morale at a large scale was the increasing inequality caused by the differential access to power and social connections and the inconsistency of cadres in their speech and actions. Backdoor and connections were rife like weeds in circumventing the trial of hardship of countryside.¹³⁴ Those who had power and *guanxi* exited early through recruitment of state factories, school enrollment, and military enlistment. By the early 70s, most cadres' children left the countryside if they went there in the first place (Liu, 1998:339-354, Deng, 1996:157-8). Later on corruption and *guanxi* became so rampant that most rusticated youths were involved to varying degree in order to get back to their cities.

I quote a rusticated youth who was able to transfer back to Wuhan to get a sense how *guanxi* worked.

"My father is a famous doctor, graduated from Tongji Medical University. Many of his patients were senior cadres. One of his patients was the party secretary of a city near Wuhan. Another patient was in the Provincial Machinery Department, which is the authority department in charge of this factory. Even with

¹³⁴ "Going through backdoor" is term referring to achieving certain objectives such as finding a good job or buying a rationed good through personal connections, sometimes against state regulations.

such strong connection, it took me a year to make the transfer. Mostly it is because the local cadres were afraid that others would follow suit. I went to see and talk with the director of the Municipal Chemical Industry Bureau every other week. He was a stubborn man. But finally he yielded.”¹³⁵

Due to the differences in life styles and various connections of educated youths with cities through official and personal channels, they were never considered to belong to the rural society. They were generally considered as *gongjiaren* (people of the government) and only stayed temporarily. This double identity put urban youths in an awkward position for they could not have support from the rural communities and at the same time they were encouraged to take root permanently. Also the state treated them differently. Although their *hukou* status changed from urban to rural, they still had dossiers, a special administrative system, an allocation fee, grain rationing, a special quota in recruitment and college enrollment, and even a special subsidy for visiting families.¹³⁶ Rural returned educated youths were not entitled to any of these.

All these factors contributed to greater difficulties in mobilization in following years. In some cities, it took hundreds of thousand of people to convene to mobilize and see off a few dozen urban youths. None of the children of top cadres in the Hebei Provincial Standing Committee went to the countryside. When cadres were enthusiastic in explaining the importance of rustication, there was no response from the audience. Some commented “It is not necessary to set up such a large stage. We would follow right on your heels if your children move first” (Liu, 1998: 353).

The actions of cadres for their self-interest greatly undermined the rustication campaign by exposing the shallowness and hypocrisy of high ideals, which in turn extinguished any enthusiasm from ordinary people and made mobilization extremely difficult. It also weakened rustication on the other level since cadres were no longer able and eager to enforce the compliance. Despite the persistence of rustication ideology in the

¹³⁵ From the my interview in the Wuhan interview in the Fall of 1999. For many other cases, also see Bian (1994a, b) and Liu (1998).

¹³⁶ Rural people mostly do not have personal dossiers unless they have high school education or above.

stratosphere, countless decisions of cadres and ordinary people reshaped the social conditions of policy making and caused a social crisis that forced the state to seek alternative approaches.¹³⁷

5.3.3 *Bureaucratic structures and policy making*

Having looked at the micro scale of the process and subject experiences of rusticated youths, let us examine the other side of the coin, the social structures, or system integration in Gidden's term. I will demonstrate that these two aspects are closely related, interacted, and only separable analytically.

The rustication of urban youths was channeled through the complex bureaucratic structures both in the sending down and coming back stages. Each year, a quota for rustication was assigned to each province, disaggregated further to urban districts and to schools and work units. In the case of inter-provincial migration, under the coordination of the center, an agreement was formed between sending and receiving provinces regarding the total number of rusticated youths. Special funds and materials were allocated to the receiving areas.¹³⁸ The assignment was not carefully planned as it sounded to be. There was no investigation and research at all about living conditions in the receiving areas and the possibility of them really supporting the incoming rusticated youths. In the first stage, the principle was basically to go to the poorest areas, which turned out to have severe implications for the rustication movement and for the state.

¹³⁷ The damage to state policies caused by this kind of everyday resistance was probably much greater than that by open contests, particularly in the political sensitive environment before reform. It bears remarkable similarities with the peasant societies of James Scott (1985). So it is probably not wise to look only for open contention for resistance in the context of modern citizenship in Western societies (Luis and Liu, 1998).

¹³⁸ Most of the special fund was allocated to receiving areas in the categories of living subsidy in the first year, purchasing farming tools, building houses and so on. A small percentage was given to the sending area for the transportation and clothing subsidy (if going to cold regions), called a mobilization fee. In the case of Wuhan, the total allocation fee per capita was 230 Yuan, consisting of 15 Yuan mobilization fee and 215 Yuan to the receiving production teams. Food and cooking oil were provided by the state for a year until the next harvest. The state also assigned quota for construction materials for the receiving areas which was much cheaper than the market prices. In addition, rusticated youths could buy certain cotton produced outside the cotton rationing by showing the "glory certificate of rustication" (Liu, 1998:190-1). In some cases, the government continued to supply food to rusticated youths who could not support themselves long after they settled down.

Upon return, rusticated urban youths needed to go through even more complicated procedures. There were only several designated gates through which rusticated youths could come back officially, i.e., industrial recruitment, military enlistment, college enrollment, and return due to sickness and difficulties, as we have seen before. These categories were associated with quotas subject to overall economic and employment plans. The major gate keepers were labor bureaus, public security bureaus, and other functional departments. Once approved, rusticated youths could change their hukou status back to non-agricultural status and even back to their original residence. Without official approval, their stay in origin cities was precarious due to intimate knowledge within work units and communities. It was a tremendous task for ordinary people to negotiate with these gate keepers at both origins and destinations in order to come back. But it could be very easy for high level cadres. Individuals had dramatically differential abilities for negotiation across time and space.¹³⁹

The following paragraph takes a closer look at bureaucratic structure and institutional mechanisms in the Rustication Movement. The first point worth emphasizing is that bureaucratic regulation of rustication was built upon existing administrative structures. A special office was set up for central coordination of the Rustication Movement, which was directly inherited from a former leadership group for urban population reduction in the early 1960s. It also heavily relied on the central administrative system to carry out plans. The second is that multiple institutional mechanisms, such as working meetings, a document system, and mobilizing through the media were employed in the policy implementation. The last point is that the involvement of local government is critical to successful implementation. Participation of local governments varied due to their local interests and linkages with the center.

¹³⁹ There was a saying that "first rate fathers have that done by others, second rate fathers go through backdoors, third rate fathers try their luck in finding the door, and fourth rate fathers cannot find the door". And saying that "high level cadres have authority, low level cadres have guanxi, plain folks have strenuous work" (Liu, 1998:351).

The state set up a specific government system, called the Allocation Office of Rusticated Urban Youths, to be responsible for both allocating and returning rusticated youths. Its precedent was the *guowuyuan nonglingban anzhi lingdao xiaozu* (The Allocation Leading Group of Agriculture and Forestry under the State Council), established in 1962. Its major responsibility was to allocate reduced urban population to state farms, including unemployed urban youths. After the success of reducing population in 1964, its emphasis changed to the assignment of urban graduates. It formulated basic plans for the first wave of rustication in late 60s. In 1969 during the reorganization of government institutions, it was subsumed under the leadership of the Ministry of Labor. In the next year, the Ministry of Labor became the Labor Bureau under the State Planning Revolutionary Committee and the Allocation Office became the Allocation Section under the Labor Bureau. There were only three persons working in the section which was supposed to be responsible for central planning of 10 million rusticated urban youths out in the countryside. Only in 1973 after a major policy shift did the Allocation Office become important again with an elevated administrative status as that of Labor Bureau (Gu and Hu, 1996; Gu and Ma, 1996).

Planning, coordination and administration of rustication involved all the major mechanisms that enable the bureaucratic structure to work. National conferences, according to the official documentation, were held on regular basis. In January of 1969, the central government arranged the plan for provincial transfer after negotiation and coordination with related provinces (Shimo, 1997:106). In mid February of 1971 the national conference of planning ended. The conference planned to recruit 1.44-1.55 million permanent workers. According to the new policy formulated in this conference, educated youths who had worked in the countryside for more than two years were eligible for application with a recommendation from poor and lower middle peasants.¹⁴⁰ At the same time, about 24 provinces submitted plans to send down 2.74 million urban youths. Two years later, as the situation of rustication deteriorated, the state summoned

¹⁴⁰ In previous years, government policy stated explicitly that all urban youths should go to rural areas, except under some extreme situations, such as single child with ill parents.

another working conference, held from the 20th of June to the 7th of August in Beijing in 1973. The new policies in this conference raised the allocation standard and allowed the families with one child or one remaining child to avoid rustication. These conferences collected information from local governments, adjusted state policies according to socioeconomic changes, and mobilized local governments to implement new policies.

Another administrative mechanism was the central document system. The central document system refers to the utilization of circulars, directives and internal reports from the central government to communicate and coordinate policy and plan implementation in local governments. Central documents were used extensively to initiate responses and actions from local cadres and related individuals in the rustication. For example, in the beginning of rustication, an urgent circular in January of 1968 asked local government to stop rusticated youths from coming back to cities in the name of "economism" (*jinji zhuyi*).¹⁴¹ In April of the same year, there was a central document on the report of the assignment of graduates from Heilongjiang Province, which proposed the principle of assignment of "four facing to" and included high school students in the assignment plan.¹⁴² In June of the same year, there was a circular about assignment of college graduates emphasizing "four facing to". There were also several internal publications on a regular basis on rustication. One was the "*Brief Report of Rustication (Shangshan XiaXiang Jianbao)*" published by the Labor Bureau of State Planning Commission. Another was the "*Situation Report (qingkuang fanying)*" published by the Education Youth Office of State Council. Both were concerned with current situations, local conditions and problems in rustication as well as related central government policies.

In addition to the central document system and working conferences, the state also used the media, i.e., newspapers and radios to reach effectively millions of people in a very short time. The articles in major national newspapers, such as the People's Daily, had great impacts on national sentiment on particular topics. They were considered to reflect

¹⁴¹ *Jinji zhuyi* was a derogatory term referring to the tendency to look for higher pay and material rewards.

center's suggestions or preferences. They were also major tools for ideological combat, having greater importance due to greater access to public, unlike central documents. Government officials and ordinary citizens alike were extremely attentive to subtle changes in major national newspapers. For example, the disappearance of Lin Biao's picture in national newspapers in early 1971 sent a subtle message of his demise. Many people knew or were aware of that well before the official report. Often top leaders' speeches went to the newspaper directly without going through formal government document channels. An example was Mao's speech on reeducation of educated youths on December 22 of 1968. "Rural areas are great places, one can have great achievement there. Educated youth should go to the countryside to receive reeducation by peasants. Leaders at every place should welcome them" (Liu, 1998). Hundreds of thousands of urban youths responded immediately, forming the first peak of the rustication. And it was the single most important event of the whole rustication movement.

Central policies need not only cooperation and compliance but also innovations from local governments. Since the Chinese administrative system is a multi-layer and stratified structure, local interest is very important for the success of a central policy initiative. When local interests coincided with central initiative, implementation is much smoother than otherwise. But local governments often have different interests and agendas due to various local conditions, and they tend to have different response to certain policies.

One example is Shanghai. Shanghai was an ardent supporter for rustication. Its effort of doing that was even well before the Rustication Movement. In the later half of the 1950s, Shanghai tried to send its students and urban residents to various parts of China (White, 1977). In a working report of State Council's Allocation Office in March of 1963, the Bureaus of Education and Labor of Shanghai Municipality estimated that over half of high school graduates would be unemployed. The municipal government once tried to

¹⁴² These were facing to the frontier, facing to the basic units, facing to the factories and mines, and facing to hardship areas.

allocate 3000 students to suburban communes, but most of them came back later. So the city government concluded that finding employment for educated youth could not be resolved within the administration area of Shanghai. It asked the central government and the East China Administrative Bureau to consider transfer across provinces. The ideal transfer was to state farms and constructions in other areas (Gu and Ma, 1996:35).

Some provinces needed labor, such as frontier provinces like Xinjiang and Yunnan. In June of 1968, the Yunnan Provincial Military Commission demanded an increase of 11 thousand in the quota in their labor plans to develop natural rubber. Vice Premier Li Fuchun, and Li Xiannian responded by granting its requirement by accommodating changes in the provincial annual plan of rustication allocation (Gu and Ma, 1996).

Local governments introduced institutional innovations which were recommended by the center and emulated by the other places. For example, the Zhuzhou model named for the city of Zhuzhou practice of forming linkages between factories and communes in rustication (*changshe guagou*) was widely adopted to resuscitate the dying movement in 1974 (Liu, 1998).

Although the Allocation Office of Rusticated Urban Youths was the special administrative organ for the Rustication movement, in practice, it had little administrative power in achieving those objectives.¹⁴³ In the end, it could only provide information and general plans for the rustication. The actual policy and implementation really depended on the main administrative system represented by communist party committees at various administrative levels, which were under multiple tasks at any given time. As a result, implementation of rustication fluctuated greatly in terms of priority, resources and national attention despite the continuous emphasis on rustication as a long term policy. In the end of 1967 when both the economic and political situation deteriorated, issues of

¹⁴³ The system was understaffed from the center down to the local government, which represented its relative insignificance on the state agenda. In the meantime, due to multiple spheres of responsibility, such as planning, agriculture and forestry, labor, fiscal management, and education, it was constantly under stress and very inefficient in getting cooperation from all other ministries.

unemployment and concern of stability became the top priority. In the early 70s when economic recovery grabbed attention, the urgency of rustication lessened considerably. Then again in the mid 70s the state felt the pressure to put it back in the top priority list as the massive hiring in previous years seriously worsened fiscal conditions, and the problems in rusticated youths could no longer be neglected.

Both peaks of rustication happened when rustication was on the priority list of national policies. But the impacts of the same policy attention on rustication migration varied greatly. The same policy priority generated very different patterns due to changes in perceptions of those who had been sent or were going to be sent. Common to the two were the tremendous resources and time that were given to meetings, parades and various other forms of mobilization. Once a priority was set and no confusion in the center, it became a political issue (*luxian wenti*, literally standing in which lines) for local government officials to show support and implement in full force.¹⁴⁴

There were also implicit competitions between local governments in achieving objectives in terms of scale, speed and innovations. In 1969 after Mao endorsed rustication, the Liaoning Provincial Revolutionary Committee summoned a huge telecasted meeting of educated youths involving an attendance of 11 million. The leading cadres of the Henan Provincial Revolutionary Committee personally sent off educated youths by riding trucks with them. Under these kinds of circumstances, local conditions no longer mattered. Even Tibet which had little urban population also jumped on the band-wagon and had 200 graduates in the Lhasa High School to move to the rural part of Tibet. It was the kind of time when the Shanghai youth saw the worker from Workers Propaganda Team in school

¹⁴⁴ This tactic is one form of ideological control to generate compliance among officials just like among ordinary folks. It was assumed that there was class struggle between two lines, revolutionary and reactionary lines. This can easily create a band-wagon effect that led to rustication and the Great Leap Forward because officials were afraid of being punished by not being active and supportive. After economic reform, this ideological control has been greatly weakened but political control is still essential for the center to maintain control of societal conditions (Huang, 1996).

moving into her home to do a study group. Cadres at all level were compelled to finish and exceed assigned quotas.¹⁴⁵

Things happened between the two peaks set them apart. We have already seen the changes in identities of rusticated youths and perceptions of general public. Added to the list above are the changes in government policies due to priority shifts. Once unemployment was attenuated by sending urban youths away, government attention turned to the recovery of economic production, administration and social order in the early 70s. Decentralization of economic management was taken again as the tool to spur economic growth. This decentralization caused huge over-hiring, just like the one in the Great Leap Forward. Actual hiring during 1971 and 1972 was close to 10 million workers and staff, three times higher than the plan quota of 3 million. The interesting thing is that despite the strong warning from the center, plan quotas had been exceeded for several years. A large percentage of these new workers were recent graduates. On national level, only around 20% of current graduates were assigned to the countryside, compared to over 90% a couple of years earlier. The center's warning might accelerate the process since people were afraid of having to go to the countryside again if they missed the current recruitment opportunities.¹⁴⁶

If the return of rusticated youths in the late 1970s was called the 'great escape with victory', the massive hiring in the early 1970s was the first wave of the escape, mostly of children of cadres. This early escape was not limited to urban folks, as rural cadres at the bottom layer of the administrative hierarchy were able to participate, probably for the first time in their lives.¹⁴⁷ So on the social stage of China in the early 70s, there appeared

¹⁴⁵ See the page 147 in this chapter for a quote of a Shanghai youth who was sent away mostly due to family pressure.

¹⁴⁶ There was a case where the high school assignment was hastened just because two children of the Municipal Committee in Changzhou happened to be graduating at that time in 1972. The cadres (and fathers) were afraid that recruitment plan could be halted due to tightening up of the economic plan that year. So the graduates were given assignment before the schedule and the whole assignment was done in just three days, much faster than ordinarily (Liu, 1998:350).

¹⁴⁷ In every recruitment, enlistment and enrollment, local cadres in rural communities used their power to substitute their children with urban youths. Their power was justified by the new standard which

a great exchange of youths on the scale of 10 million with urban youths going to the countryside and rural youths going in the opposite direction, to cities, which was very irrational, particularly given that the major concern of the state was unemployment in cities.¹⁴⁸

The next thing that the state had to do was to put rustication back on the priority list. The massive hiring severely strained the state's budget and caused panic in the center, since it resembled the situation before the famines in the early 60s. In mid 1973, the state decided to continue the rustication and to solve practical problems that had emerged in the movement so far. The state also restored the administration system, significantly increased funding and adopted a series of new institutional formats to ease the mobilization. Despite the great effort, the initial response and achievement were poor until a new institutional model was discovered. The Zhuzhou model was picked out for it was quite effective at mobilizing the urban youths through the work units of their parents.¹⁴⁹ In essence, the model eased the concerns of urban youths and their families by forming closer ties between state units and rural communities, which were often in suburban districts or counties. Also implied in the system was the rotation method that one could be hired and replaced by new rusticated youths after staying for two years in countryside. The rural communities were also happy because they could benefit from the resources and funding which state enterprises could bring.

As a result of all these measures, a new wave of rustication was launched in 1975. It was relatively at about the same scale as the first wave, in terms of the number of rusticated youths, but the pattern of rustication greatly changed. The state originally formulated a plan of 1.3 million rustication moves across provinces in the second wave, similar to the

emphasized the political performance and the procedures of recommendation by the mass first and the approval by the leaders (*qunzhong tuijian, lingdao pizhun*).

¹⁴⁸ There was an exchange about the possibility and rationality of the 'great exchange' in the 70s between Scharping (1987) and Chan (1987).

¹⁴⁹ Zhuzhou is a city in Hunan Province. It started the practice of connecting factories and communes to foster rustication and so this kind of practice was named after it. In China, a significant percentage of schools, more than 50% in some industrial cities, such as Zhuzhou, were run by state enterprises. So the enterprises had direct responsibilities for its offspring.

first one. But at the end, it was only able to mobilize 30,000. This is what we saw in the earlier figures. Even Shanghai that had the highest population density nationwide ended up with assigning most of its youths in the suburban areas, against its original intention. Although in this way the center and local governments were able to finish the quota of assignment plans, rustication totally lost its original purposes since it could no longer serve as a political tool of reeducation by assigning youths to the best of the countryside, or as an economic tool of developing rural areas and reducing unemployment since the suburban areas were already overpopulated.

There was no need to continue the practice of rustication from every conceivable perspective, except the fear of high unemployment in cities and ideological consistency. Rustication was not only disliked by the urban youths and their families, it was never welcomed by most rural communities, with the exception of state farms in some frontier provinces in the beginning. The arrivals of urban youths, who had little experience in farming did not help grain production and added to population pressure in a lot of places. It also gradually became a financial burden to the state. Significant fiscal and material resources were devoted to the allocation and continuing subsidy of rusticated youths, only to exchange for low economic returns due to bad management and morale. All state farms suffered financial losses due to bad management and large operating costs in which wages took the lion's share. In the later stage, the state actually ended up paying double allocation expenses to assign an urban youth to an urban job by sending her/him first to the countryside and recruiting her/him back a few years later to urban jobs. So rustication caused dissatisfactions to all parites.

As the leadership changed on the top level and practical leaders like Deng came to power, there emerged a subtle disagreement among the top leaders as to the continuation of the rustication movement. Once dissension and hesitation in the center were detected, dissatisfied local governments and individuals acted strategically. Some state farms and rural communities started to push rusticated youths away by excluding them from daily duties and giving them a less strict check on their claims to go back. State units were able

to have more leeway in recruiting children of their workers and staff. Gate-keepers in both sending and receiving governments were more accommodating in granting rusticated youths' return (Liu, 1998).

Although it was easier than before as policy relaxed, the process of returning was not smooth at all, particularly for youths in state farms. Portrayed widely in the popular literature, the return of rusticated youths was very dramatic, like a storm and flood sweeping the landscape, leaving economic production in farms and factories paralyzed. Rusticated youths fought hard to keep their rights to return by all means, those permissible and those not permissible. Some activated their social connections to get recruited in state units in origin cities. Some invoked humanitarian principles that were acknowledged by the state to appeal for exemption or early return, often assisted by bribing.¹⁵⁰ Some female youths even offered their bodies to get necessary documents. There were also open contentions for rusticated youths of state farms in several frontier provinces. They held demonstrations in local and national capitals. They held hunger strikes on various scales. Some even blocked the railway lines for days (Liu, 1998, Deng, 1996). In most cases the state yielded to the claims of rusticated youths despite the mounting pressure of unemployment in large cities.

One last note, state farms that were deeply in the red for many years turned profitable in the very next year after educated youths left. The originally perceived unemployment in cities and related instability concerns did not materialize. Despite the return of around 10 million rusticated youths to large cities and overwhelming size of current graduates from schools, the unemployment rates were only about 3% for most cities in the mid 1980s. Some cities, including Shanghai experienced labor shortages shortly after the mid 1980s.

¹⁵⁰ In their article on contested citizenship of Shanghai rusticated youths, Luis and Liu (1998) are right in pointing out that the submissive image of Chinese people was false. But their treatment of zhiqing fancheng (return of educated youths) and zhaogong dingti (recruitment by replacement) as distinctive forms of contesting citizenship is not justified. These means are not that all different since they all plead for the need to come back based on sickness and difficulties. Their actions and discourses were strictly framed in the socialist ideologies and power structure, in which modern citizenship is definitely a luxury.

5.4 Summary

This chapter focused on the important but often neglected aspect of the migration process, i.e., migrant agency, in the context of socialist societies. The previous chapter discussed various institutional and bureaucratic structures that the Chinese state was able to employ for planned allocation of labor and migration control. If that was the first block of institutional analysis, this chapter was the second block of institutional analysis of Chinese migration. Institutional structures and agency are two sides of one coin and interdependent for evolution of institutions over time. They can only be separated from an analytical point of view. This chapter demonstrates that migration agency is not only relevant to evaluation of migrant experiences. It is also essential to changing institutional structures that regulate migration in the first place.

The conventional approach to Chinese migration often treats the Chinese state as an entity with omnipresent power. According to that approach, migration outcomes are basically determined by policies and interests of the state, often in an automatic way. This chapter argues for the importance of migrant agency in socialist migration from three different angles or examples.

The first perspective distinguishes two types of migration, state-initiated and self-initiated migrations. This difference has critical implications on the degree and scope of migration agency. Although both migrations operate in the same institutional environment, they are drastically different in terms of the direction of effort to make migration possible. The major reason lies at different and even opposite preferences for migration between the state and people. The state prefers downward migration that goes down the social and urban hierarchy, for example, migration from coastal to inland areas in the Third Front Movement. But ordinary people desire upward social and spatial mobility that runs counter to state preferences. In state initiated migration, it is the state that has to make great effort in persuading people to comply to state plans through all sorts of measures, such as mobilization, education, political and economic incentives and ideological

propagation. In self-initiated migration, the effort is the opposite direction. Individuals need to convince or persuade government officials of the necessity of their migration by appealing to family and health considerations or utilizing personal connections. The balance of power tilts greatly towards the state when its ideology and legitimization are in full force. The divergent interests of local government and government officials, social networking, and dwindling ideology change that balance towards individuals.

The second perspective looks at a number of individual migration cases belonging to several major migration channels. These channels include job transfer of workers, cadre transfer, college graduate assignment, demobilization of soldiers, assignment of military officers, and rustication. A central observation is that all migrants and their family members attempted and often were able to change migration outcomes to their advantage, particularly through wide use of personal connections, *guanxi*. *Guanxi* is not only crucial to the success of self-initiated migration but also important to state-initiated migration such as college graduate assignment and assignment of demobilized soldiers. These migration cases provide another perspective to the migration process, which cannot be inferred from government statistics or aggregate data.

The last part of the chapter deals with an important migration event in the Chinese history, the Rustication Movement. Rustication of urban educated youths was the climax of various types of downward migration in modern Chinese history. It is analyzed through two major aspects. One is policy making and implementation, which is mostly related to the regulative aspect of institutions. The other is motivation and identity, mostly related to the cognitive aspect of institutions. I collapse the roles of ideology into the two aspects, since it shapes both processes greatly. Due to limited capacity of the Chinese state in collecting information, and monitoring and enforcing policies, priority and mobilization had been major instruments in achieving state's agendas. Since rustication was a downward migration, tremendous resources had been devoted to mobilize urban youths to go to countryside when rustication ranked high in the center's priority list. Yet results of that mobilization varied. In the late 60s, mobilization was so

effective that 1.4 million youths, mostly from the few largest cities, went to the frontier provinces where “the hardships are the greatest”. In the mid 1970s, similar mobilization could hardly motivate any youths to move to those places. Most ended up in the suburban areas of their own cities.

To understand the paradox, I looked at the experiences and motivations of individuals. There are subtle differences between compliance and enforcement. In the early peak of rustication, there was much higher compliance of urban youths partly due to their identities and expectations, which were molded by the official ideology through school education and the media. Once settled down in the rural areas, their identities and expectations were shattered by the harsh reality and social injustice. Their original identities as “revolutionary successors” and ground breakers were replaced by the underclass and burdens that the state was trying to throw away. Cadres at all levels and people with social networks were able to escape or avoid completely this undesirable migration for their children even by violating formal rules and regulations. As a result, the compliance from ordinary people dropped greatly and cadres could no longer enforced the plans resolutely because of their own nonconformity. Alternative models of rustication were “discovered” and patterns of rustication therefore changed.

The case of rustication demonstrates that a totalitarian state like China has its limits in seeking compliance and enforcing policies. Rustication of urban youths as semi-institutionalized social practices could only continue if the majority of cadres and ordinary people were willing, at least to some extent, to reproduce this social practice. When resistance (mostly not in open contention) and opportunistic behavior were pervasive, the state was forced either to change institutional formats to win compliance or stop the practices completely.

Conventional migration studies have a tendency to focus on macro patterns and universal factors. It misses out on the richness of the migration process and sometimes even the whole picture since subjective experiences of migrants situated in social institutions are

not systematically explained. By using biographies, diaries and popular literature, I am able to give a more nuanced account of the rustication process. From this perspective, Chinese migration under socialism is an untapped resource. The institutional model I propose may provide a conceptual angle to explore the vast experiences and complexities of Chinese migration in a systematic way.

This study also contributes to migration studies by linking migrant experiences to the changes in overall institutional structures. Current theorization in migration study hangs heavily on the individual end of the migration process by giving full attention to the social construction of migration identity and its intersection with place. It has yet to prove that analysis at this individual level can be meaningfully linked to the changes in the broad migration process and social structures. A well specified institutional framework taking account of local conditions in a particular social environment can be a good basis to achieve that.

Chapter Six. Structuring Chinese Migration: a baseline for evaluating and comparing national migration data sets

The previous chapters have explored Chinese migration through an institutional approach. Guided by a conceptual framework blending several institutional theories, I have examined both sides of migration institutions, i.e., regulative migration structures and migration agency. The major data for analysis is mostly qualitative, i.e., archival materials, government documents, circulars, ethnographic data from field interviews and so on. Except in Chapter Four, I have not touched on quantitative data of Chinese migration. It is an appropriate time to do so.

From an analytical point of view, I do not have a strong position for either a quantitative or a qualitative approach. It is observed that there has been a tendency for conflating research methods with theoretical approaches. Conventional migration analysis relies mostly on quantitative data from censuses and surveys to seek regularity in migration patterns, usually on a macro scale. On the other hand, post-structural studies use ethnographic data to gain insights into migrant experiences. As argued by several theorists, this alignment of research methods with theories does not necessarily have to be this way (Lawson, 1999). For my objective of understanding Chinese migration, both methods can be helpful since they reveal different aspects of the migration process. They can be complementary rather than contradictory. Inclusion of quantitative data makes a comprehensive view of Chinese migration possible.

Previous analysis of institutional structures and bureaucratic regulation provides background information for understanding various sources of migration data. Assessment of major migration data, in turn, is critical for deriving broad patterns of Chinese migration, which is the task of the next chapter.

In the following sections, I will briefly review migration research from a data perspective and argue the need for reassessment. Next I discuss several factors that increase the

complexity of Chinese migration and make cross data comparison difficult. Then I will introduce six large national surveys with comments on their characteristics and potential biases. The last section introduces a schematic framework that assists systematic comparison of major natural datasets and reveals the spatial-temporal structure of Chinese migration.

6.1 Review of Migration research and the need for reassessment

Although there are a large number of studies on Chinese migration, few attempts have been made to evaluate systematically the major national migration data sets. I argue that systematic comparison of existing national data is more important than further accumulation of data through surveys in order to get a broad picture of Chinese migration. Small surveys may be helpful to reveal migration mechanisms and processes on specific topics in particular regions, but they are not very useful in constructing overall patterns of migration on the national level. For that purpose only six major national data sets can be identified. They constitute the data base upon which any systematic study of Chinese migration in the long term perspective critically depend, since no other large data sets are available on the national level for the last fifty years.

There was little research on Chinese migration before the economic reforms either within and outside the country. This was mostly caused by the lack of information, particularly for Western scholars. Within China social sciences as a whole were forbidden areas for academic research, which included human migration.

In retrospect, there were only a few sources of data relevant to migration before economic reform. One was household registration migration statistics (hereafter *hukou* migration statistics) which includes detailed information about migration and residential mobility.¹⁵¹ This was only limited to government institutions and not published for public use. The second is the first two censuses in 1953 and 1964. There was no

migration question in the censuses; and the data were not published. The third were government documents on regional labor transfer in mid 1950s and investigation of urban employment and unemployment in the 1950s and 1960s. These sources of information were not published either.

Although the Chinese state had long been aware of the importance of migration and had developed a complex system to regulate and manipulate it to its advantage, research on it had been almost nil. Within the government, migration regulation and planning only existed on an anecdotal basis and were byproducts of economic planning and policy implementation. In the mid 1950s and early 1960s, labor departments at various levels of local government were required to investigate labor supply and demand at various levels. There were some centralized effort at cross-regional transfer in the mid 1950s. In academia, after the Anti-Rightest Movement and the Great Cultural Revolution, few dare to study any social events that were involved with comments on government policies. Studies on migration were no exception.

So it is understandable that most research on China came only after the economic reforms, with just a few exceptions. Bernstein's work on rustication of urban educated youths is an admirable work considering the difficulties to get information (Bernstein, 1977). The major source of data for him was the newspapers. It demanded pains-taking effort to collect, analyze and put them together to give a general picture. White's and Howe's work on the labor system also touched on migration in the 1950s and 1960s (White, 1978; Howe, 1971).

Migration studies did not proceed much even ten years after reform until the late 1980s. The biggest problem was the data availability. Without direct information on migration, some researchers used the 1982 census to estimate net migration at a provincial scale (Banister, 1986; Goldstein, 1990). But fundamental changes had happened. Migration

¹⁵¹ Hukou is the original Chinese word for household registration, meaning literally household and mouth (people within the household). The term has been used widely in the academic literature (Chen and Seldon,

started to attract the attention of academia and government in the late 1980s as rural laborers flooded coastal cities. A number of migration surveys at a national scale were conducted in the late 1980s, most notably the 1986 Urban Migration Survey of 74 cities and towns. Other large surveys also began to include migration questions, for example, the 1987 National Population Survey and even 1988 Fertility Survey. Added to these new data is publication of the *hukou* migration statistics which previously existed but were not available.

With these new data coming in and the 1990 census taken and published, data shortages in the migration field was gradually relieved although research based on these data only appeared several years later in the mid 1990s. Other sources of data are numerous small surveys on specialized topics and specific areas. The earliest were in the late 1980s, such as the Shanghai Floating Population Survey, but most are in the 1990s (Gui and Liu, 1992; Zhang, 1989; Goldstein and Goldstein, 1996).

Along with these new data source is the tremendous growth of research on migration in China. And these research studies greatly expand our understanding of Chinese migration. We now know the basic large scale migration patterns, and major factors of migration at different periods (Ma and Wang, 1993; Shen and Tong, 1992; Ma, 1996; Zhang and Wei, 1995). We know that economic transitions after reform greatly changed the migration patterns (Yang, 1994; Ma, 1997; Yang and Goldstein, 1990; Day and Ma, 1994) . We know that Chinese migration is strongly influenced by socialist institutions, particularly the *hukou* system (Zhang and Wang, 1995; Chen and Seldon, 1994; Yang, 1993). We know that internal migration is increasingly influenced by economic factors, although filtered through institutions (Chan et al, 1999; Chan and Zhang, 1999; Liang and White, 1996,1997; Fan, 1996; 1999). We know that rural migrants have become an increasingly important factor in Chinese internal migration (Rozzele, 1999; Roberts, 1997; Wan, 1995; Ma, 1999). We know basic interrelationships between migration and labor markets (Knight and Song, 1992; Solinger, 1997). We also

1994).

understand certain impacts of recent migration on Chinese society (Solinger, 1999; Chan, 1998; Smith, 1997; Zhou, 1996).

An interesting pattern has emerged from these studies. Many scholars tend to specialize only on one data set. For example, Ma and Wang published several monographs using the 1986 urban migration survey data (Ma and Wang, 1988; Ma and Wang, 1989; Ma and Wang, 1993; Ma and Wang, 1994; Day and Ma, 1994). Liang and White had several publications using the 1988 Fertility Survey (Liang and White, 1996; 1997). Ma and others focused on 1987 National Population Survey (Ma et al, 1997; Ma et al, 1996).¹⁵² Zhang published several articles on *hukou* migration and statistics (Zhang, 1994; Zhang and Wei, 1995; Zhang and Wang, 1995). Rarely has anyone worked on several data sets at the same time.¹⁵³ This is quite understandable since these data sets are not widely available. Even when one can have access to these data, there is a high fixed cost in getting oneself familiar with a data set. This is especially true for micro data since data clearing and adjusting to organize it into workable formats take tremendous amount of effort and time.

This specialization has some implications on migration studies in China. One is the relatively limited knowledge of other data sets or even of their existence for researchers in the field. It is not surprising that one tends to see the advantages of one's own data set and sometimes misjudge the limitations of other data sets. For example, Liang and White, as renowned scholars in the field, argued for the desirability of the 1988 Survey and discredited other migration data sets. Some of their comments were not based on a good knowledge of other data sets (Liang and White, 1996).¹⁵⁴ Another implication, which is even less desirable, is the difficulty to construct an overall picture of Chinese migration

¹⁵² These examples are for those who have micro data. Compared to published tabulated data, micro data has individual cases and allows further exploration and manipulation of data for the benefit of testing specific ideas.

¹⁵³ Exceptions are Yang, 1994 and Zhang, 1995.

¹⁵⁴ The reasons they give to discredit the *hukou* migration statistics cannot justify their arguments. The wide divergence of total migrants in the late 1960s was caused by including only 12 provinces and omitting others (Liang and White, 1996). This problem has been remedied long before their publication of that paper (Sheng and Tong, 1992; Yang, 1994; Zhuang, 1995).

in the long run. Despite numerous surveys and census, we are still unable to get the most basic facts of Chinese migration, i.e., a time series of migration rates in the last 50 years.

In the last few years, a large number of surveys have been conducted. But most of these are special surveys at a small scale (Goldstein and Goldstein, 1996; Wan, 1995; Rozelle et al, 1999; Liu, 1995; Zhao, 1999; Roberts, 1996). Though research based on these special surveys can show insights into the migration process, they are not very helpful in getting the overall picture of migration in a large temporal-spatial context. At the same time, many surveys and censuses only cover a period of time, for example, the 1990 census from 1985 to 1990, and 1987 National Population Survey from 1982 to 1987, and 1986 from 1949 to 1986. A single data set cannot show the changes over the entire period. It seems logical to me that there is a need to piece together all the major national data sets in order to get a comprehensive picture of Chinese migration in the both pre-reform and post-reform periods. The priority is no longer the need to conduct more surveys and accumulate more data, but to utilize them fully and connect them. The future development of migration research on China relies on being able to compare national data sets and derive an overall picture of long term change.

The difficulty in comparing migration data is not limited to survey data alone. It also applies to national surveys and censuses. There is a tendency for researchers to specialize in one or two national data probably due to data availability and high sunk costs, particularly for the microdata sets (See Appendix 6). Specialization yields efficiency but might not help construct an overall picture for Chinese migration.

I would like to argue that studies on Chinese internal migration have reached a point at which making sense of current data may have priority over acquiring new data. Despite the multitude of small surveys and several large national data sets, there are still not reliable answers on some basic questions, such as national migration rates in the post-reform period. Due to differences in definition, coverage, and data collection, even

national data sets are not strictly comparable. Therefore results based on a single data set may be biased and cannot be taken as the definite answers.

Despite the importance of critically assessing the major migration data sets on the national level in order to identify the utility and possible biases of each data set, there are few attempts to do that. One notable exception is Scharping's research work, which has been very aware of the subtleties of various datasets in definitions and coverage. He systematically compared three national data sets and some sub-national data sets in his overall evaluation of Chinese migration (Scharping, 1997). He commented on the biases of these data sets and tabulated some estimates for migration along the rural urban hierarchy. In another work on rural-urban migration in south China, he incorporated the 1986 Urban Migrant Survey and the 1987 microcensus with a local migrant survey in Guangdong in order to identify long term trends and changes in rural-urban migration (Scharping, 1999). Chan also presented estimates of rural-urban migration on the national scale by using the 1987 Survey, the 1990 Census and some other large surveys for the post-Mao period (1999). Zhang made several insightful observations on the comparison of the 1987 microcensus and the 1990 Census (Zhang, 1995).

In this chapter, I will focus on the discussion and comparison of six major national data sets, since they are the only data sets that are available with national coverage. They are the 1986 Urban Migration Survey, the 1987 One Percent National Population Survey, the 1988 Two Per Thousand Fertility Survey, the 1990 Census, the 1995 One Percent National Population Survey, and *hukou* registration migration statistics.

6.2 Factors in comparing national migration data

In addition to the academic division of labor and specialization of scholarly research on a few data sets, there are two other major obstacles that complicate the work. One is the complexity of migration regulation and the other is the complexity of migration data.

6.2.1 Complexities of institutional structure

We have seen the complexities of migration regulation and administration in earlier chapters; the various rules and procedures and the involvement of numerous government departments at multiple stages. This complexity has imprints on migration data.

Many surveys and the census have a question on the reasons for migration. *Hukou* migration statistics also tabulated migration in several categories. Fan argues that migration reasons reveal not only the causes of migration but also the channels and mechanisms of migration, which separate migration into distinctive categories (1999). I want to build on that by comparing the actual channels of migration regulation and their approximate categories in surveys and censuses. I also want to point out some related issues that we need to be aware of in migration analysis.

There are nine categories of migration reasons in the 1990 census, which are identical to those in the 1987 Survey. They are job transfer, job assignment, study and training, industry and business, joining relatives and friends, family migration, marriage migration, retirement, and other. These migration reasons are often divided into state planned migration and self-initiated migration, which are distinctive in their nature and mechanisms of migration. Planned migration includes job transfer, job assignment, study and training, family migration and retirement, which are sponsored by the state and associated with change of official residence (Zhang, 1995; Fan, 1999; Ma et al, 1997). The rest are basically self-initiated migrations that operate outside state plans and are often not involved with official change of *hukou* residence. The industry and business category is the largest among all categories. It consists of predominantly rural labor migrants, who have swept in the large Chinese cities like “tidal waves” since the late 1980s.

Although the nine categories of migration reasons in the census give a rough sense of the institutional process, they are far from accurate and true in representing the actual channels of migration regulation. Awareness of this is helpful in preventing wrong and

exaggerated inferences. Categories of migration reasons in major data sets vary substantially (see Appendix 6.1). The 1988 Fertility Survey and 1986 Urban Migration Survey included more categories than the 1990 Census. But they are just approximates of the institutional channels. Household registration statistics administered by the public security bureaus (PSB hereafter) reveal the actual channels of migration with more categories and sub-categories of migration reasons. Some of the categories are not shown in the census, such as reformed labor, rehabilitation, and the returned of educated youths. For those categories available in the census, some have sub-categories that provide better information on the process. For example, there are two sub-categories under job transfer. One is for workers and the other is for cadres. The two have very different institutional mechanisms, which reveal another type of social stratification in Chinese socialist society. Job transfer of workers goes through the system of labor bureaus, while that of cadres through the system of personnel bureaus. Each has different requirements, conditions and procedures. In the last column of the table are the government departments which are responsible for each type of migration.

As the case of job transfer shows, there is no necessary one-to-one correspondence between a migration category and a government department. Often one type of migration is involved with several government departments. Demobilization of military soldiers and officers is carried out through military departments, bureaus of civil affairs, and personnel bureaus. Assignment of college graduates is coordinated through planning commissions, educational commissions and personnel bureaus. So behind the general description of 'the state' are the complex government departments and their division of labor in regulating migration. To make things more complicated, this division of labor and government regulation also change over time.

I have a few things to point out about migration reasons in analyzing major migration data. One is the differences in migration reasons between *hukou* migration statistics and the census. Migration reasons in the census and surveys are chosen by individuals surveyed, whose understanding might not be the same as that of the survey designer. For

example, I found through the micro data from 1986 that many people who chose marriage migration as the reason had children at the time of their moves. They should not have had children if they migrated to marry as the term of marriage migration implies. They might have misunderstood marriage as the marriage relationship they already had. A similar problem may also exist in the 1990 Census and other surveys. In contrast to surveys, *hukou* migration statistics should record the *actual channels* through which migration is permitted by the state. Of course it covers only *hukou* migration. Another difference between *hukou* statistics and survey data is that the same migration category may include different types of migration. For example, job transfer in the 1990 Census also includes demobilization in addition to job transfer.¹⁵⁵

Another point one needs to be aware of is that migration reasons may not be taken at face value. One example is job transfer. Although job transfer has a connotation that migration in that category is job or work related, the actually majority of job transfers are for family reasons. According to the migration records of cadres in the Wuhan Municipal Personnel Bureau, about 50% of job transfer of cadres in and out of Wuhan in 1974 to 1981 were for spousal reunion.¹⁵⁶ Job transfer due to work-need only accounted for less than one third of the total. The most important category of job related migration is job recruitment, which is not included in migration reasons in the census.

In sum, the 1990 Census and surveys offer a glimpse of institutional processes by including a question on migration reasons. But one needs to cautious in interpreting the roles of the state and of the institutional process even for that brief glimpse since migration reasons should not be taken at face value. A little extra investigation and comparison would have avoided some obvious mistakes.¹⁵⁷ *Hukou* migration statistics

¹⁵⁵ Demobilization of military cadres is considered as job transfer in government regulation but it is still recorded under specific category in *hukou* migration statistics. Demobilization of ordinary soldiers has nothing in common with job transfer in terms of both regulation and statistics.

¹⁵⁶ Data came from my field interview with cadres in the Wuhan Personnel Bureau in 1998.

¹⁵⁷ The examples are not limited to what are mentioned above. In a recent article on the return of rusticated urban youths in Shanghai, Luis and Liu (1998) made a strong argument about citizenship and migration channels. They argued that return of educated youths (*zhiqing fancheng*) represented modern citizenship while recruitment and replacement (*zhaogong dingti*) was symbol of increasing dependence on the state.

provide more accurate information on migration channels and the institutional process.

But unfortunately national tabulations of *hukou* migration statistics do not include migration reasons. Another obvious drawback is that it only records *hukou* migration that is sanctioned by the state but neglects others.

6.2.2 *Complexities of migration data*

Data complexities come from two major sources. One is from how data are recorded and collected. Related to that are issues of *hukou* residence and status, extent of coverage, sampling errors and administrative mishandling. Another source is the definition of migration and urban places which are implied in the data collection, which may influence the interpretation and comparison of the results. I will discuss these under the sub headings of *hukou*, migration definition, urban definition, data collection, and data reliability.

1) Hukou

The *hukou* system is the central institution for residential control and the frame by which migration data are recorded and categorized. This affects *hukou* migration statistics and other national data through dividing migrants into those with local resident *hukou* (*hukou* migrants) and those without (non-*hukou* migrants). *Hukou* migration statistics only keep track of those who have local resident *hukou*, while censuses and surveys record both *hukou* and non-*hukou* migrants. In other words, *hukou* registration defines migration on a de jure basis, surveys and census on a de facto basis. Censuses and surveys use duration at survey residence to differentiate non-*hukou* migrants from short term visitors. The second census in 1964 used a one year standard to include those at the survey place, and this was similar for the two later censuses. In contrast, two national population surveys in 1987 and 1995 used six month standard.

The migration categories and data they used came from the 1986 Survey, which did not give any suggestion for their interpretation. They may take the migration reasons at face value in emphasizing the superiority of return to replacement. The two migration channels are not so different, at least not in terms of modern citizenship. Both are involved with courageous and corrupted actions to undermine the state's control but were under the overall regulation of the state at the same time. For details on the return of rusticated youths see Deng (1996) and Liu (1998).

This causes potential problems in comparing data since the shorter the duration requirement the more migrants can be included. The two national population surveys should imply a larger migration, everything else being equal, than the censuses do. Since everything else is not equal and there are many factors coming into play, it is very difficult to tease out precisely the impacts of this duration standard. This is particularly problematic in the post-reform period since non-*hukou* migration has increased greatly and has become as important as the *hukou* migration. For migration surveys, additional problems arise due to the fact that non-*hukou* migrants are not evenly distributed between regions (cities) and within regions (cities). Non-*hukou* migrants tend to concentrate in coastal regions and large cities, in the peripheral areas of large cities, and in construction sites and factory dorms. So surveys that sample mostly urban neighborhoods may underestimate the non-*hukou* migrants, which was the criticism of the 1986 urban migration survey.

Another possible source of confusion comes from equalizing three different things, *hukou* type, *hukou* status, and urban type. One simplification in the discussion of migration in China is to equate *hukou* migration to government planned migration. *Hukou* migrants are considered as those who have all state benefits and move through government channels while non-*hukou* migrants are those from rural origins without government benefits. Although largely this is true, it is nonetheless conceptually inadequate. Not all non-*hukou* migrants come from rural areas with agriculture *hukou*. Some of them have non-agriculture *hukou* and come from urban places. Similarly not all *hukou* migrants are government sponsored. *Hukou* migration within rural areas is distinctively different from that in urban areas. The three dichotomies, *hukou* type (local *hukou* vs non-local *hukou*), *hukou* status (agriculture vs non-agriculture *hukou*), and urban type (urban vs. rural) do not necessarily overlap and are not interchangeable. The subtle differences between them add complexities to migration analysis and interpretation.

2) Migration definition

Migration is differentiated from residential mobility or circulation by its duration and geographic extent (Prothero and Chapman, 1985; Lewis, 1982). Some minimum length of duration is required to separate it from short-term visits. As we discussed earlier, people are counted as migrants if they stay away from the usual *hukou* residence for either six months or one year depending on which surveys and census count them. This is a reasonable approach considering that a large number of moves are short-term in nature. There is no duration requirement for a *hukou* move.¹⁵⁸ It is an acceptable assumption since *hukou* moves are mostly likely to be permanent due to complicated procedures and potential difficulties in changing official residence.

Unlike the temporal dimension of migration definition, the spatial dimension applies to both *hukou* and non-*hukou* migration and is an important source of complexity. Migrants are generally required to cross certain administrative boundaries. And that requirement varies in the censuses and surveys that we are interested in. In the 1990 Census, county and city boundaries are adopted as the cut-off line for migration. In the 1987 Survey, the same requirement holds except for a small difference, i.e., any move involving registered towns within county boundaries is counted. In the 1995 Survey, the requirement changes in the other direction, i.e., moves within cities. Unlike previous censuses and surveys, it includes moves across boundaries of urban districts (for cities with urban districts). The 1986 Survey adopts a similar standard as the 1990 Census though it includes some intra-county movement. *Hukou* statistics from the Ministry of Public Security uses township, town and city as the spatial thresholds to distinguish migration from short-distance movement.¹⁵⁹ Finally, the spatial definition in the 1988 Survey is not quite clear.

The smaller the administrative units the more migration will be counted (Long, 1991). So part of the differences in migration numbers and scales between censuses and surveys comes from the spatial definition in addition to other factors. This greatly complicates

¹⁵⁸ I use move whenever it might include short-term visits or residential mobility. In that sense, it is equal to a more general concept, geographical mobility.

¹⁵⁹ There is some confusion on this issue, which I will discuss in detail later in this paper.

comparisons and any effort to reconstruct migration data. Another problem of the dissimilarity in spatial thresholds in the Chinese context are their impacts on the composition of migrants in terms of the nature of the moves. As we knew earlier, migration of different types, *hukou* vs. non-*hukou*, agricultural vs. non-agricultural, urban vs. rural, varies across places and spatial scales. This makes assessment of the changing nature of migration over time difficult.

3) Urban definition

One objective of migration studies is to assess the extent to which migration contributes to urban population growth, particularly for developing countries. However, existence of multiple standards of urban settlement complicates the task. Due to the rapid development of small towns and cities, the Chinese government relaxed the standards for towns and cities in 1984. As a result, the urban population escalated, but mostly due to the inclusion of large tracts of rural areas in cities and towns. For example, once a county was reclassified into a city, the whole population under its administration was changed to urban (Chan, 1994). But it is quite common that only 20 or 30% of the labor force worked in non-agricultural sectors. So the urban population is greatly exaggerated in this case. An alternative measure was adopted to give a more reasonable estimate of the urban population. The 1990 Census introduced a second standard different from the first standard in the 1987 Survey which used the official definition in a straightforward way. The second standard includes only residential committees (*jufehui*) in towns and cities without urban districts (*bu shequ de shi*) and excludes village committees (*cuiweihui*) which are predominantly rural.¹⁶⁰ (see Table 6.1). The 1995 Survey also adopted the second standard.

Complexities arise from two sources. One is that the census and the survey use different urban standards so they are hard to compare. By using the first standard, the 1987 Survey exaggerates the share of urban population and distorts the migration streams across the urban hierarchy. For example, it overestimates migration from rural areas to towns and

¹⁶⁰ For detailed explanations and controversial issues see Zhang and Zhao (1998) and Chan (1994).

cities. Since the 1990 Census and the 1987 Survey use different standards, we are unable to assess changes in migration streams over time. This is unfortunate since it is very important to know the implications of migration on the urban system.

Table 6.1 Comparison of urban definition of first and second standard

Urban standard	City	Town	Township
First standard	All population directly under city administration (including city administered towns, excluding city administered counties)	Total population in county administered towns (excluding city administered towns)	Population in county administered townships (excluding county administered towns)
Second standard	Total population within prefecture and above cities (excluding city administered counties) + population in urban street committees in county-level cities (excluding towns and townships)	Population in residential committees of towns within counties and county-level cities	Population in townships within counties and county-level cities + population in village committees of towns within counties and county-level cities

Sources: The Fourth Census in 1990 (1992: 594), see also Chan (1994:22)

The other source is more subtle and equally damaging. In the 1990 Census migration is classified differently at origins and destinations. Migration is enumerated by city, town and county at destination (current residence in 1990) for both urban standards. But it is classified by urban street, town and township at origins (usual residence in 1985). This classification varies with both standards in that urban street is only part of a city no matter how one defines it. Also includes all townships under city or county administration, which penetrate the two urban standards. So the "urban" at the destination is not the "urban" at the origin and the classification of migration streams is distorted again. This is problematic since we expect residence types are the same at origins and destination when we construct migration streams in the urban hierarchy. Fortunately this is rectified in the 1995 Survey by employing four categories, village committee in township, village committee in town, residential committee in town, and residential committee in urban street (see Appendix 6.2).

4) Data collection

Major data sets vary in terms of the nature of data collection and extent of coverage. For surveys and census, there are potential problems associated with their retrospective

nature, particularly if those cover a long span of time. In contrast, *hukou* registration has a continuous series of data as it happens. The largest problem of surveys and of the census is that they usually just ask about the last move or the residence five years ago. So they could underestimate greatly the actual volume of migration since it is well known that migration is very selective of people in terms of age, education and so on. Migration selectivity is true in China just as anywhere else (Yang, 1994). This problem could be particularly severe if surveys cover a long span of time, like the case of the 1986 Survey and the 1988 Survey. Other typical problems associated with retrospective surveys, such as memory loss and post-migration rationalization, may also apply (Bilsborrow et al., 1984).

In similar vein, the way in which the question on migration is asked also matters. There is a big difference between the question about the last move and that of residence five years ago. The 1990 Census asks about residence five years ago while other surveys ask mostly about the last move. The question on prior residence misses the migration loop that happened within the same period. A migrant moving from place A to place B then back to A before the survey time is not counted in the 1990 Census but will be counted for the last part of the move in the 1987 Survey. As a result, the residence question underestimates migration volume somewhat due to missing looped migration, everything else being equal. Unfortunately this problem might not be as minor as it appears to be at first glance. A significant part of *hukou* migration is in the nature of looped migration. For example, college education is often involved with a looped migration with going to a city for education and coming back after graduation. This is also true for military service and reformed labor (*laodong gaizao*). These looped migration, such as college enrollment and graduate assignment, military enlistment and demobilization, and reformed labor and release, together account for a significant proportion of *hukou* migration.

5) Data reliability

Data unreliability and its factors vary across major national data sets on migration.

Statistics on economic and social conditions in China are well known for problems of reliability (Chan, 1994). Data unreliability may come either from unintentional or intentional distortion. Unintentional distortion includes skills and knowledge of data collector, infrastructure and system maintenance, and sampling techniques for surveys. For example, statistics collection in rural areas is much worse than that in cities due to lower skills and resources devoted to data collection and maintenance. This applies to *hukou* registration too, so there are pleas for reforming the rural household registration system (Chen et al, 1990; Zhang and Wang, 1995). Within this category, a major problem for surveys is the unavoidable sampling error. Biases can be introduced by unequal sampling across regions and populations. For example, in the 86 Survey, most large cities were new industrial cities that grew in the socialist period. Since there was more migration into these large cities in the pre-reform period than into old large cities, conclusions drawn from this sample would introduce significant bias.

Intentional distortion comes when there are stakes attached to the statistical data. Often local governments are evaluated by their achievements in priority issues, such as economic development and family planning (Whiting, 2000). As a result, many illicit birth enter the *hukou* registration as immigrants (Yang, 1994). Sometimes, when individuals are sent to an undesirable place, they try to keep their *hukou* registration in origins. It is estimated that in the 1970s there were as many as half a million vacant *hukou* (*konghu*) with people actually living elsewhere instead of Beijing (Chen et al, 1990). In comparison, surveys and census are less susceptible to intentional distortion since they are not directly tied to material and political interests.

This is not an exhaustive list of factors that compound the data complexity. Other factor may be found. The central message is that we need to be aware of these factors as well as institutional complexities when we analyze these major data sets in order to understand patterns and changes of internal migration in recent Chinese history. It is particularly

important if one wants to compare migration data to make inferences about migration rates and spatial structures. In the next sections, I will discuss more explicitly each major data set and their characteristics regarding migration study.

6.3 Comparison of major national data sets

Having discussed some general factors that trouble Chinese migration data, I want to introduce the major migration data on the national level. They are the most important, if not the only, sources of migration data that cover the general patterns of Chinese migration in the last fifty years. They deserve close attention just for that reason. In addition to a simple introduction, I will discuss some relevant factors more explicitly. The purpose is to increase awareness of the coexistence of several data sets, their limitations and potentials.

In the last ten years or so the lack of migration data and information was greatly alleviated by progress on several fronts. One is the appearance of a multitude of special surveys that focused on small groups of migrants and regions. Another is the increase of migration questions in censuses and micro-censuses. The third is the compilation and publication of *hukou* registration data for migration by the MPS in 1988. The fourth is that some national surveys on migration and fertility also ask questions about past migration. For my purpose here, the first group has limited use due to their limited scope. Especially if they are exclusively about rural labor migration, that is only one piece of the overall migration picture¹⁶¹. I will focus mostly on the last three groups of migration data.

There was no specific migration question in the 1982 census except a question on *hukou* residence. Changes came when the 1987 1% micro census included two specific questions on migration related to migration reasons and origins and two other questions about *hukou* residence that are useful to extract migration information. The 1990 census

¹⁶¹ It would be a daunting task to work out the sampling design and migration definition in all those small surveys in order to piece out a complete picture, particularly considering the various qualities of sampling.

and the 1995 micro census basically kept the same format but with variations of definitions and number of questions (see Appendix 2).

Although the census and the micro-census have complete coverage of the whole nation in terms of spatial dimension, they have information only for the five year period prior to the survey time.¹⁶² So we have the whole pre-reform period not covered by these censuses. Fortunately we have other sources of data that can partially fill the gap. One important source is *hukou* migration statistics. They cover the whole period from 1953 to 1987 with some of the years missing for some of the provinces. These data only provide information on in and out migration for provinces, not disaggregated by spatial scale for this period (Zhuang, 1995). The Ministry of Public Security also publishes migration data for years since 1992. This time it provides information not only for migration on the provincial level but also at the city, town, and county level. In addition to *hukou* migration statistics, the 1986 and 1988 Survey also cover the whole history of the People's Republic. I will organize my discussion by separating data sets into the two periods they mostly covered, i.e., the pre-reform and post-reform period.

6.3.1 Data sources for migration before 1978

There are three major sources of information for migration before 1978. They are Migration Surveys of 74 Cities and Towns in 1986, the Two Per Thousand Fertility Survey in 1988, and PSB *hukou* migration statistics. For a brief comparison of the three data sets, see Appendix 3.

1) 1986 Urban Migration Survey

The 1986 Survey was conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences with the collaboration of 16 population research institutes and universities in July of 1986. It covered 74 cities and towns in 16 provinces (that is why it is also called the 74 Cities and Towns Survey). It includes 23,895 family households and 1643 collective households with a total sampling population of 100,267, representing an original urban population of

43.5 million. The overall sampling ratio is 2 per thousand. But the actual sampling ratio varies according to the size of cities and towns from 1 per thousand for large cities to 20 per thousand in small towns (Ma and Wang, 1993). The intention is to get a sample large enough to allow one to draw some inferences even for towns and small cities, which would be otherwise impossible. The total of 100,279 people is distributed along the urban hierarchy with 44,707 in 15 extra-large cities, 9,688 in 6 large cities, 16,939 in 12 medium-size cities, 10,855 in 10 small cities and 18,091 in 31 towns.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts in addition to the basic questions about households (Ma and Wang, 1988). The first part is about basic characteristics of permanent residents including those without local *hukou* but staying for more than a year. The second is of inmigration with questions about the migration process, circumstances and satisfaction after migration. The third is of short-term and long-term movement away from the survey place. The long- term movement is actually migration since it is defined as being away from survey place for more than a year. All the long term movement is return migration. The short-term movement may also include migration if one adopts the six-month criteria. But it is hard to separate it out from other very short term movement as brief as one day. And the last one is outmigration of those who migrated out of the family permanently. Of all types of migration, inmigration is the central concern of the 1986 Survey (Day and Ma, 1994).

In the 1986 Survey, non-*hukou* migrants needed to stay at the survey place for one year to be recorded in the inmigration panel. Migration is a move across the boundary of a city or town proper, which does not include suburban counties. Most of the migration is at an inter-county and inter-city level. There are about 11.6% of migrants who moved within the county, mostly town residents at the time of survey. As compared to the 1987 survey, the percentage of non-*hukou* migrants is much smaller, only about 6.2% of total migrants or 5.6% of total population. About 58% of non-*hukou* residents did not report any

¹⁶² Except Tibet in 1987 and 1990 census. There are data on outmigration from Tibet but no data on inmigration to Tibet in the 1990 census.

migration experience. One reason for the low percentage of non-*hukou* migrants might be that the survey was conducted at residential households and collective households. According to the Shanghai survey of "floating population" in 1988, a little more than half of "temporary" migrants stayed at places other than residential and collective households, such as hotels, boats, work sites and free markets (Zhang, 1989).¹⁶³

Of all the census and surveys, the 1986 survey is the only one primarily designed for migration and by far the most detailed and comprehensive about the migration process. It provides information on various types of migration at various scales. It also has income data for two separate years that can be linked to the migration data to evaluate impacts or causes of income related to migration. No other large data sets have income information. But it has its own problems, some of which are very serious if one intends to generalize a overall picture of migration, especially regional patterns. The selected cities and towns are not evenly distributed across regions. So general regional patterns cannot be derived reliably from such a data set. In addition, the selection of cities and towns was by considerations other than sampling. It turns out that some of cities are not very representative of their city level. For example, the selected large cities are all the newly established industrial cities which had larger overall mobility than others. The sampling ratio for each urban hierarchy is not the same, with 1 per thousand for cities with a population of 300,000 to 20 per thousand for cities and towns with a population less than 30,000 (Ma and Wang, 1988). Of course, it also shares all the types of problems associated with retrospective surveys for a long period, such as memory loss, attrition by mortality and outmigration, multiple moves and so on.¹⁶⁴

2) 1988 Fertility Survey

The 1988 Two per Thousand Fertility Survey was conducted by China's State Family Planning Commission in July 1988. Although the major interests were on fertility and

¹⁶³ This explanation cannot stand firmly given that the majority of these floaters stay less than three months. So it seems that survey place does not seem to explain satisfactorily the low percentage of non-*hukou* migrants in the 1986 survey.

¹⁶⁴ Due to limited space here, I will evaluate the effect of some of these factors elsewhere.

family planning, it does include questions on migration. In addition to questions on birth place and *hukou* residence, it has separate questions for migration and inter-provincial migration. Both have questions on migration reasons and time. The inter-provincial migration has a question on origin. It is quite unique to list the inter-provincial migration separately in the census and in surveys. An advantage of that is to be able to identify inter-provincial migration that would not be found otherwise. The disadvantage is that it is not quite economical, since inter-provincial migration is generally implied in the origin of migration.

Regarding data collection, the basic unit of the sampling was 815 villages and street committees (Lavely, 1991). The survey had a sampling population of 2,076,861. The sampling ratio varies across provinces with Sichuan being the lowest at 0.88 per thousand and Tibet the highest of 16.43 per thousand (Chang, 1993: 43). The final published tabulations are adjusted by weights of provinces. Out of the 2 million surveyed, there are 767576 cases of intra-provincial migration, and 113198 cases of inter-provincial migration. The 1988 survey covers both *hukou* and non-*hukou* migrants. It has a six month threshold for migration. Those who stayed less than six months were also captured by the sample but under a different category, *liudong renkou*, or floating population. The published tabulations do not present information on the extent of non-*hukou* migration over six months. Nonetheless, it lists numbers for the floating population, which is 1.8% for intra-provincial migration and 2.1% for inter-provincial migration (Liang and Chen 1993: 601-2). In reference to the Shanghai floating population survey in 1988 where more than half of total floaters stayed less than six months, the total number of non-*hukou* migrants might not be large in the 1988 survey.¹⁶⁵ Another thing that remains unclear is whether the moves within townships were counted. Under normal circumstances, such moves should not be considered as migration.

¹⁶⁵ It is not so different from the 1987 Survey and the 1990 Census considering the small percentage of floating population, unlike Liang and White's claim that the 1988 Survey is superior to the census and to micro censuses by including floating population (Liang and White, 1996).

Since migration is only of secondary importance to the major interests of fertility and family planning, the survey may have sample bias built into the design. The survey has quite extreme sex ratios for inter-provincial and intra-provincial migrations. It is 0.47 for intra-provincial migration and 1.66 for inter-provincial migration. The comparative figures for the 1987 1% survey are 0.71 and 1.24 respectively. Since we have reason to think that the 1987 1% survey is more representative due to its large coverage and resources, the sex ratios in the 1988 survey look a bit skewed. Despite the adoption of street and village committees, the urbanization level in the 1988 survey seems a little high. According to the tabulations on *hukou* population distribution, the percentage of the total sampling population in cities, towns and countryside are 10.5%, 22.7% and 66.6% respectively, which give a urbanization level of 33.2% for 1988 (Liang and Chen, 1993:503,527,539). Similar to the 1986 survey, 1988 survey may also suffer from the usual problems with retrospective surveys.

The categories of migration reasons in the 1988 Fertility Survey are very different from those in other surveys. There are no retirement, family migration, and joining relatives, which are available in other surveys. The survey singled out demobilization and has two separate categories of industry and business.

3) Hukou Migration Statistics

Since the passage of the Temporary Regulation of Urban *Hukou* Administration in 1951, urban residents were required to report and register when there is any change of household registration, such as death, birth and residential relocation. That was extended into the rural areas in 1955 on the eve of rural collectivization. *Hukou* registration statistics includes those moves across the boundary of *hukou* registration and administration (Zhang, 1999). The *hukou* administration area generally corresponds to the administration area of township and towns in the countryside and street government offices in urban areas. There are basically two types of households, residential (family) household and collective households. Each household has a *hukou* registration book. In rural areas, each village (production team) has a registration book. A local leader is

assigned to register *hukou* changes (*huji jing*). Compared to urban areas, *hukou* registration and management in rural areas are much more lax and problematic (Zhang and Wang, 1995). In cities, there are special *hukou* policemen, each of whom monitor the *hukou* changes of about 750 households. After many years work, they can develop a good and intimate knowledge of the neighborhood under their administration.

There are several types of forms in police substations at the level of street government offices related to migration. There are questions about in and out migration, the nature of the origin or destination, intra-provincial, inter-provincial or intra-city. The spatial scale becomes more detailed for within city moves after the early 1990s. It adds moves from other districts or other street government offices. There are several levels of registration. A move from or to outside the city proper (*shiqu*) is called in or out migration (*hukou qian ru* or *hukou qian chu*). A move within the city but between street governments is called *hukou* change (*yidong*). A move within the police substation or street government does not need to change the place of *hukou* registration. The registration itself is quite detailed in regard to migration.¹⁶⁶ Police substations (*jiedao paichusuo*) submit a report of *hukou* change to police sub-bureaus in district governments. They in turn report to the city public security bureau and the provincial public security departments.

Although the *hukou* migration registration is very detailed and has rich information on migration, the published statistics are very broad and general. Currently we have *hukou* registration migration data for two periods. The first period covers 1954-1987, with in and out migrant numbers for provincial level units. The second period covers the years of

¹⁶⁶ There are four types of registration forms related to *hukou* residence change. Two are for the family household and two are for the collective household. They are called *hukou yidong* (basically change, not migration) registration book. For a *hukou* decrement of family household, the form has items like moving out to another city (intra-province or inter-province), moving out to the countryside (intra-province or inter-province), moving out to other parts of the city, death, other removal, and reasons for removal. Other information includes current address, detailed address of the destination, name of household head, certificate number, the staff who processed the case and the signature of the cadre in charge. For *hukou* increment, items include moving in from city or town (intra-province or inter-province), moving in from countryside (intra-province or inter-province), moving in from other parts of the city, birth, other additions, reasons for addition. Other related items include the work unit which processed and sponsored the move,

1992 and after, with migration numbers for lower administrative levels, such as city, town and county. There are no migration reasons for these published statistics on a national level. But some published work and my interview shows more detailed statistics are indeed available for cities, just as primitive migration registration forms indicate (Yue, 1983).

Unlike data that are collected at one point of time, the *hukou* registration data are continuous and closely tied to administration. The nature of problems in their use comes not from technical issues, like sampling and coverage in surveys, but more from the intentional twists of the data to self-interest. So it is useful for us to examine possible problems from the perspective of the registration process and the incentive structure for the people involved. There are several types of people relevant to the registration and report process. The first are related to ordinary individuals who want to or actually change their resident *hukou*. The problem comes when some migrants were not allowed to change their official resident *hukou* due to government policies, but they stay anyway and become de facto residents. Others do not want to change their *hukou* when they move down to places lower in the urban hierarchy, such as the cases of the Third Front and rustication of urban youth (Ma et al, 1997). There are cases where *hukou* registration change is not associated with actual physical mobility. People may change their places of *hukou* registration but stay at the same place to take advantage of education and medical facilities and other benefits (Yang 1989; Zhang and Wang, 1995). The second set of problems is related to the government officials directly or indirectly involved in *hukou* registration. On the technical side, the registration staff might not be able to keep complete records or submit them on time. On the non-technical side, registrars and local officials might change *hukou* record to seek benefits from governments or individuals or to avoid punishment from higher level governments. In the 1960s, there was a widespread practice of creating non-existing *hukou* to increase population in order to get more government materials and benefits (Yang, 1996). Many extra births outside of

address of moving in, the original work unit, the archive numbers of documents related to the move, and the name of staff who processed the case.

family planning have entered the *hukou* records in the guise of inmigration since the mid 1970s through the manipulation of local officials.

Despite all these problems associated with *hukou* registration, it is still the only data source that keeps a record of in and out migration on a continuous basis for all the history of the People's Republic of China.¹⁶⁷ Also due to personal interests, people have an incentive to register their change of residence. They simply could not afford not registering on a long-term basis, otherwise it would be hard even just to survive, particularly in urban areas before the mid 1980s. From the government perspective, the manipulation by local government officials could not have been drastic since population change is generally modest and gradual. Any large change would have brought suspicion from upper level government and might have unintended outcomes. Besides there are direct and indirect quota controls for local governments.¹⁶⁸ Without assigned quotas, local governments are restricted in granting inmigration to local areas. In addition, censuses and special campaigns have tried to restore the accuracy and credibility of the *hukou* system once in while. The *hukou* migration statistics should not be discarded simply because of the existence of various possible problems.

6.3.2 Data sources for migration after economic reform

All previous sources (1986 and 1987 Surveys and the *hukou* migration statistics) also cover a large part of the 1980s. This overlap with the census and with the 1987 Survey is really helpful for making comparisons since it provides some continuity. Nonetheless they are limited in various ways. They have either limited coverage by being restricted to *hukou* migration or by being a small sampling ratio that makes them less representative.

¹⁶⁷ In the peak of the Great Cultural Revolution, some provinces stopped keeping records of migration and change in residence due to paralysis of government functions.

¹⁶⁸ *Hukou* migration control was centralized in the hands of the Economic Planning Commission in 1989. Before then, it was subject to several plans, such as labor plans and PSB quotas, administrated separately by many branches of government. After 1989 starting from large cities, the total number of non-agricultural *hukou* conversions and inmigration need to be planned and controlled by planning commissions (from field interview).

The 1987 Survey, 1990 Census and 1995 Survey, on the other hand, have much larger coverage and sampling ratios. A brief comparison of them is shown in Appendix 4.

1) The 1987 National Population Survey

The 1987 National Population Survey was conducted on July 1, 1987. This survey adopted a stratified sampling strategy of three layers. The residential committees and village committees are the basic units. The survey sampled 1045 counties or cities, 6270 townships or towns and urban street committees, 12540 village committees or residential committees. It recorded and registered 2.49 million households and 10.71 million people (including military people). The sampling ratio is 0.999% (SSB, 1988).

In the 1987 survey, sampling ratios were not the same across the provinces, ranging from 0.6% in Sichuan to 2.5% in Ningxia (Ma et al, 1997). Of particular interest is the over-sampling of three centrally administered cities. This problem has been fixed by the SSB in the published migration tabulation by applying appropriate weights (SSB, 1988).

There are four questions related to migration, one question on *hukou* status and three questions on migration (see Appendix 6.2). The question on *hukou* is concerned with *hukou* residence with only three choices, i.e., local *hukou*, non-local *hukou* and to be decided. This is relatively simpler than the 1990 census and the 1995 survey in which non-*hukou* migrants are divided into two types, staying at the survey place for more than a year and staying less than a year but away for more than a year from *hukou* residence. One question on migration is about the length of staying at the survey place with six choices from less than a year to more than five years. So it provides information on the extent of non-*hukou* migration prior to five years ago. For migrants in the five year period, there is information on origins of provinces but not specific cities and counties. So one cannot identify migration flows within provinces. The 1987 survey is the first large national survey which incorporated migration questions. It definitely had an influence on the 1990 census by providing a basic format for migration questions. The

1990 census also changed the urban definition in order to more closely reflect true urbanization, having learned for the mistakes in the 1987 Survey.

The 1987 Survey covers the five years from mid 1982 to mid 1987, when migration patterns began to shift. Rural labor migration was on the rise. Many large coastal cities witnessed exponential growth of rural migrant inflows. Also during the same period, the government relaxed the urban administration standard. As a result, the number of cities and towns increased several-fold (Chan, 1994). The 1987 Survey is well positioned to capture the change of migration during this period. Particularly, it has a much better representation of non-*hukou* migrants than previous surveys. On the other hand, it might also be hurt by the change of administration standard of cities and towns. The overall migration rate doubled from 3 per thousand in 1982 to 7 per thousand in 1986. Despite the great increase of migration in the early 1980s, an increase of this magnitude is probably exaggerated. The large increase might be influenced by the reclassification of cities and towns due to the change of urban administration standards starting in 1984. This is only a conjecture without firm evidence and knowledge of the actual mechanisms of how urban reclassification influenced the survey results.¹⁶⁹ As we discussed earlier, another problem for the 1987 Survey is its adoption of the first standard of urban definition. This may distort the migration streams along the urban hierarchy by exaggerating both in and out migration flows in urban places, particularly towns.

2) The 1990 Census

The 1990 census was conducted on the first of July in 1990 (renkouban, 1991). Since the census should cover everyone, there is no sampling error involved. But it is far from correct to say that everyone can be enumerated in his or her usual residence.¹⁷⁰ In the Chinese situation, before the census and micro-censuses, there are large scale campaigns

¹⁶⁹ Other research seems to share this assumption. Ma et al dropped the first two years of the 1987 Survey for fear of inconsistency across the years (1997).

¹⁷⁰ Just as in other countries, such as United States, there are certain people that censuses either double count or do not count. This problem may be less severe in China than in other countries, although China has its own particular problems discussed below.

and mobilization to assist the enumeration (Chen et. al., 1990; Yang, 1996). Often associated with answers is the clearing up of the population who are not in their de jure residence, not unlike what has been done before the celebration of the National Day Holiday. As a result, the censuses may undercount the usual number of non-*hukou* migrants since many of them are driven back to their *hukou* residence.

Undercounting of the non-*hukou* migrants might be less of a problem compared with some other issues. In the 1990 Census, the population aged five or less is not included in the migration count, unlike the micro censuses in 1987 and 1995. It does not have information on migration in each of the five years and beyond the five year bracket. It only has an overall figure for the five years as a whole.

The 1990 census has three questions related to migration (see Appendix 6.2). One is on *hukou* type and status. And it is the only national data set that has information on the *hukou* status, i.e., the agricultural and non-agricultural *hukou*. It has a question on migration reasons, which have identical categories with the 1987 Survey. It also has a question on the residence five years ago and urban type of that residence. A number of problems arise from the last question that complicate comparison with other data. One is the adoption of prior residence rather than the last move to measure migration. Prior residence five years ago tends to underestimate the extent of migration as compared to the last move question since it misses those who move and return to *hukou* residence within the five years. Another problem for the 1990 Census is the inconsistency of urban categories between origin and destination. The urban categories for origins are city street, town and township, while those for destinations are city, town and county. This inconsistency makes tabulation of migration flows along the rural-urban hierarchy problematic and comparison with other data sets difficult.

The 1990 Census has a one year requirement for non-*hukou* migrants, stricter than those in micro censuses, but the same as the 1986 Survey. Similarly its spatial threshold is larger than the micro censuses. Migration is counted only if it crosses the boundaries of

cities and counties. The minimum administrative units for the 1987 Survey are towns and for 1995 Survey urban districts. So the 1990 Census should include fewer migrants than the micro censuses due to the spatial definition.

3) *The 1995 National Population Survey*

The 1995 1% population survey was conducted in the October 1 of 1995. The survey sampled 1558 counties or cities, and 47471 survey unit districts. The total population covered is 12.37 million people (Renkouban, 1997). The survey was administrated by the National Population Sampling Survey Office under the State Council at the top and the population survey groups of township, town and street office governments at the bottom. The sample size of provinces is proportional to the squared root of total population in each province. The sample district is the residential committee or the village committee. There are two types of sampling strategies adopted by provincial governments. The two-stage sampling method consists of sampling townships (town, street) directly from provinces and then committees of residence and villages. The three-stage sampling method sampled county (city and urban district) first before going to township (town and street) and committees. As one can see, the 1995 survey is much more spread out than the 1987 survey, including almost four times as many basic units (village and residential committees) as in 1987. It is thus less clustered and should have higher accuracy.

There are five questions related to migration. There is one question on type of *hukou* similar to that of the 1990 census. There is another question on the time of immigrating into the survey place including whether moving in before 1990 and each year after 1990. The most peculiar part of 1995 survey is that it devoted the remaining three questions to origins of various types. One is specifically for non-*hukou* migrants who came from an other county, city or city district. The other two are place of origin and place of residence five years ago for those who moved within the five years. The two questions need not to be the same under a number of circumstances, for example, migration from a third place, return migration, and so on. One change in the migration questions of the 1995 Survey is the removal of the question on migration reasons. It is disappointing that we cannot know

the motivations and institutional categories of migration in the early 1990s and cannot compare their changes over time.

The 1995 survey keeps the six months standard of the 1987 survey but introducing other complexities. This time migration is defined as any move across the boundary of a city (county level), county, or urban district with a *hukou* change or away from origins for six months without a *hukou* change. Generally a city is regarded as an integrated unit with a single labor market. So moves within a city should not be taken as migration which is associated with change in employment and social networks. But there are researchers who argue the desirability of counting movement within a city, especially in the extra-large cities in China (Zhang, 1995).

There are several unique aspects of the 1995 Survey that can bring additional insights into Chinese migration. First is the inclusion of urban districts as minimum administrative units. For the first time we are able to know something about intra-city migration on the national level. Next, the 1995 Survey has several questions on migration origins, particularly for non-*hukou* migration. Cross-examination of these questions may yield additional information on interesting aspects of the migration process, such as return migration. The 1995 Survey is also the only one that includes information on actual origins for intra-provincial migration so the migration flow within provinces can be constructed.

6.4 Structuring Chinese migration: a schematic framework

Knowing characteristics of major national migration data sets and factors influencing their accuracy helps us choose data sets in doing research. But it is not sufficient to know the overall patterns of Chinese migration since results from these data sets are vastly different due to variations in standards and coverages. Table 6.2 shows migration rates captured by four major data sets in the early 1980s. As one can see, the largest difference is between *hukou* statistics and census and micro census results. The immigration rate from *hukou* statistics is around 17 and 18 per thousand in the mid 1980s, while the rates

from the 1987 Survey and the 1990 Census are only about 6 and 7 per thousand (see Table 6.2). This difference is in the order of two to three times. Particularly considering that *hukou* statistics only include *hukou* migration, this difference could only be even larger. I also calculated the immigration rates in the mid 1980s from the 1986 Migrant Survey micro data. It seems that its rates are even higher than the *hukou* migration statistics.

Table 6.2 Comparison of overall migration rates in the mid 1980s
In 1/1000

Year	PSB	86 survey	87 1%	1990
1982	17.24	17.7		
1983	14.98	15.8	3.40	
1984	17.43	21.8	4.83	
1985	19.01	26.4	6.52	
1986	17.52		7.40	6.25
1987	18.59		6.45	6.25

Notes:

The numbers are in thousands, representing the overall immigration rates on the national level.

Sources:

PSB, 1987, and 1990 data from Zhuang (1995)

The 1986 rates are calculated by the author based on the 1986 Survey micro data

This large divergence in migration rates from various data sets is disturbing since it questions the validity of research findings based on these data sets. If research results are so dependent on the data sets we use, how much confidence can we have in making statements of actual migration patterns and changes?

Some kind of frame is needed in order to compare systematically these major data sets. As we know, since migration is defined through temporal and spatial boundaries, it is a logical step to include time and space in the comparison framework. In addition, *hukou* should also be included for Chinese migration since it is a central factor in organizing data and structuring migration patterns. Using such a framework, we can position and compare major data sets. In the following sections, I will discuss specific factors under each dimension that influence the outcomes of data sets.

6.4.1 Temporal dimension

Explicit in the temporal dimension is the definition of migration in terms of minimum length of stay at the survey place. Implicit are many factors that may have large effects on migration measurement but fall outside the confines of definition. Examples include factors such as multiple moves, outmigration, and the way in which migration questions are asked. These factors fall in the temporal dimension since they are related to the temporal process of migration. Multiple moves refer to a migrant moving several times with only the last move being directly captured by the surveys or census. In terms of their temporal effect, outmigration is related to the stock concept of migration at the survey time and place in that those who moved completely with families could not be recorded at all by the census and surveys. Migration questions refer to whether the survey or census asks about residence five years ago or the last move. Unlike minimum length of stay at the survey place which only influences the non-*hukou* migrants, these other factors have effects on *hukou* migrants as well. In comparing major national data sets, these factors often outweigh the difference in minimum length of stay and introduce more confusion.

Duration of move is an important criterion for defining migration. There are different opinions on the minimum length of stay to qualify for migration (Prothero and Chapman, 1985). Consensus is in the range of six months to one year. Short of that a move is considered as circulation. In the Chinese case, this matters only for non-*hukou* migration since it does not have official approval at destinations. In contrast, by official standards, any move without a related change in resident *hukou* is regarded as temporary no matter how long a migrant has been in the survey place. In this respect, Chinese migration is different from other countries. This should only have impacts on non-*hukou* migration. The past censuses and large national surveys varied in their dealing with the temporal definition for non-*hukou* migration. The three censuses, i.e., 1964, 1982 and 1990, all adopted one year criterion, the same as with the 1986 urban migrant survey. The two one-percent micro censuses, i.e., 1987 and 1995, however, used a six month threshold to measure non-*hukou* migrants.

How large might be the differences in migration caused by these two definitions? If we agree that the minimum length for migration is six month, the task is then, to see how much of total migration is accounted for by migrants between six months and one year. The 1987 survey shows that about 18.6% of non-*hukou* migrants stay between six months and one year while 40.3% stayed for more than five years (see Table 6.3). If the numbers are adjusted to the scope of five years in order to compare them to census data, the six month to one year's share increases to 31.1%. The Shanghai survey gives an even higher number. Migrants staying between six months and one year accounts for 41.2% of total migrants bracketing in five years, which is much higher than the 31.1% in the 1987 survey. The Shanghai survey also shows that migrants staying six months and less consists of 53% of total migrants from one day to many years. It shows the substantial movement is short term. It is probably more reliable to use the 1987 Survey to estimate the effect of short-term moves than the Shanghai survey since it has much wider coverage. The 1995 Survey also has information on length of stay for non-*hukou* migrants. But unfortunately these data sets are not available in published tabulations.

Table 6.3 Effects of Temporal Definition on Migration Measurement

Length of stay	% (87)*	Adjusted (87)	% (Shanghai)	Adjusted
6 mo ~ 1 yr	18.58	31.14	32.78	41.165
1 ~ 2 yr	16.98	28.46	34.63	43.489
2 ~ 3 yr	11.62	19.48		
3 ~ 4 yr	7.51	12.59	12.22	15.346
4 ~ 5 yr	4.97	8.33		
> 5 yr	40.33		20.37	
total	100	100	100	100

Sources:

1987 survey data from Yang, 1994: 163

Shanghai survey data from Zhang, 1989: 281

Notes:

*The 87 data are only for those with non-local hukou.

The Shanghai survey was conducted in the October of 1988.

This information can be used to evaluate the extent of the underestimate in census data.

Using the number of non-*hukou* migrants as the base, census data with a definition of one

year misses about 45% ($=31.14 / 68.86$) of recorded non-*hukou* migrants (Table 6.3).¹⁷¹ If the 1987 survey is representative to some extent, the number of non-*hukou* migrants in the 1990 census should be adjusted 45% larger in order to compare to the 1987 figure. It is indeed not a small number. But there is a limit to the damage caused by different temporal definitions. Because migrants staying at a destination for less than one year must be by definition only in the last year, the last resort is to simply drop the last year for the sake of comparison. So this problem is not as severe as it appears to be.

Another problem in comparing census data with respect to temporal dimension is the way in which the migration question is asked. This difference in the migration question influences both *hukou* and non-*hukou* migrants. The 1990 census asked "where was your usual residence five years ago today?" But more surveys ask "when was your last move in the last five years and from where?" These seemingly similar questions cause difference in total migrants that can be identified. Questions about usual residence five years ago miss those who move away but come back before the date of the survey. These are return or circular migrants. How large is the difference caused by residence and last move questions? Fortunately the 1995 survey has both types of questions that allow us to compare. The last move question yields 11.3% more migrants than the residence question.¹⁷² The ratio differs according to destination type. It is a mere 6.5% for city destination but 13.7% for towns. In contrast, it is almost 20% for rural areas as destinations. If this ratio holds true for a little earlier period, then the 1990 census migration is underestimated by about 10% due to its asking the residence question instead of the last move question.

Return migration is only one type of multiple migration and it is relatively less damaging for the five year period. But multiple moves can be one of the most important problems in comparing surveys that covers long period, such as the 1986 and 1988 survey. When I

¹⁷¹ Assuming that the same ratio applies to census data, the census data should only record 68.86% of total non-*hukou* migrants if using the standard of six-month to one year. The missing ratio is then $31.14\% / 68.86\%$, or 45%.

¹⁷² The number is derived from comparing Table 3 and Table 4. Table 3 and Table 4...(add more).

compare the *hukou* registration data with the 1986 survey, I found that multiple moves might explain a substantial part of the discrepancy between them. *Hukou* registration keeps every move as long as it is officially approved. In contrast, the 1986 and 1988 surveys only ask about the last move, which could be underestimated if there were moves before the last move. The information in the 1986 survey about birth place, origin of last move and current place makes it possible to get a rough idea of the extent of multiple moves. It is only possible for inter-provincial migration since provinces could be identified, while migration origins for intra-provincial migration are not recorded.

Table 6.4 Extent of multiple moves in inter-provincial migration in 1986 Survey

Category	Number of Migrants	% in Total
Total inter-provincial moves reported ^a	11501	100
Single move ^b	6156	53.55
Return migrants ^c	3459	30.08
Moves with more than two provinces ^d	1883	16.37
Inter-provincial moves not reported ^e	6178	
Last move intra-provincial ^f	2467	21.45
Not reporting any move ^g	3711	32.26
Long-term move out ^h	1630	14.17
Multiple moves inferred (c+d+f) ⁱ	7809	67.90
Multiple moves in all (c+d+f+g+h)	13150	114.34

Sources: 1986 migration microdata set from USC in CUHK

Notes:

- a. Those reporting migration origins in other provinces in the immigration panel
- b. Those moves with the birth province same as the origin province
- c. Those moves with the birth province same as the current place
- d. Those moves with the birth province other than the origin and the current province
- e. Those not reporting an inter-provincial move but born in other provinces
- f. Those reporting intra-provincial move as the last move
- g. Those not reporting any move
- h. Those moves inferred but not reported in long-term move panel
- i. Total moves inferred from reported migration without counting non-reported moves.

By comparing the provinces of birth, the origin provinces of inter-provincial migration and of current residence, we can infer a move if there is a difference between those three provinces. It was found that multiple moves between the three places were very substantial, over 100% of recorded moves (Table 6.4). These can be differentiated into several categories, i.e., returned migration, inter-provincial to inter-provincial migration (another inter-provincial move before the last move), within-provincial to inter-provincial

(reported intra-provincial move but had inter-provincial move before that), long term out movement and not reporting. The analysis of the 1988 survey found a similar result with respect to return migration but no analysis is done for other multiple moves. Return migration is about 39% of all inter-provincial migrants in the 1988 survey comparing to the 30% in 86 survey (Wang ,1993). Similar exercises are possible in the 1988 survey to identify other types of multiple moves by analyzing the micro data.¹⁷³ This estimate provides a lower bound of multiple moves.

Multiple moves may be one of the most important factors to explain the discrepancies between *hukou* registration data and national surveys or censuses, particularly for the surveys covering a long time. Unclear at this point is the applicability of inter-provincial ratio to the intra-provincial migration. Does intra-provincial migration have more multiple moves or less? Factors like shorter distance and ease of move may increase the extent of multiple moves as we witness in the intra-county moves. But other factors like migrant selectivity favor inter-provincial migration for multiple moves. Without data it is hard to speculate. But it is worth to do so, in my opinion, when information becomes available in the future.

Another factor that matters greatly is the stock nature of residents at survey place. Those who left before the survey without leaving family members behind cannot be surveyed and interviewed by surveys and census, though their moves should be recorded by the *hukou* registration if they were *hukou* migrants. In this sense, those who stay at the survey place are only residual of the whole population which is constantly in change. No current data can give a reasonable estimate of the degree of impacts of permanent outmigration, although speculation on the factor is possible. The extent of permanent outmigration's impact varies by places and policies. Extra-large cities should have "high stickiness" of its residents due to their higher living standard. But they are also the centers for education

¹⁷³ It is possible to check the full extent of multiple moves for the inter-provincial migration in the 1988 survey through the micro data. The 88 survey includes necessary information on birth province, origin of the last migration, and current province. It may yield a more detailed information than the 1986 survey

and other activities which attract out of towners, who would eventually leave. Frontier provinces, such as Xinjiang and Qinghai, cannot hold the immigrants very well. Many of them were downward migrants sent by the government who would go back whenever the political environment changed. This problem applies to all the national data sets in different degrees. The longer period a data set covers, the larger the impact outmigration would have.

6.4.2 Spatial dimension

The spatial dimension is another axis of the definition of migration. Unlike the temporal definition which only affects non-*hukou* migrants, the spatial axis of the migration definition influences both non-*hukou* and *hukou* migrants. Under spatial dimension, there are two major aspects. One is the level of administrative areas, such as province, county and district, and township. Another is the type of settlement, such as cities, towns and townships. The two look similar but are quite different concepts. The first is about the spatial scale of movement and its impact on administrative systems. The second is concerned with the extent and impacts of movement between different urban hierarchies, particularly if that is of primary interest. For example, a migrant can move either from her or his township to a town within her or his original county or to a town in another province. But by the first aspect, this could be an intra-county or inter-provincial migration, quite different in terms of distance and administration. By the second aspect, it is basically the same. Both are a migration from a township to a town.

Of the two aspects, the first is relatively stable and easier to remedy. Administrative regions do change over time, especially on lower levels. But the change can be traced and is not too difficult to reconstruct for those higher levels, such as provinces. In contrast, the urban hierarchy is constantly changing due to population growth from natural increase, migration, and reclassification. Change in population growth is moderate and enduring. Its effect on migration structures is gradual and slow. Changes in urban

since the inter-provincial migration is asked directly so a migrant can report two last moves, one is for intra-provincial migration and one for inter-provincial move.

definitions, redesignation and reclassifications, however, can abruptly change the hierarchical structure of migration.

It is necessary to examine both aspects of the spatial dimension to compare and understand the national data sets. Let us first look at the regional aspect of the spatial dimension. National data sets vary in their minimum threshold of spatial unit. The migration statistics in *hukou* registration record moves between townships, towns and cities. So its threshold is the township in rural areas and the city in urban areas. The 1987 Survey has the town as the minimum unit in rural areas. The 1990 Census has the county as the unit. They are similar in not counting moves within city boundaries as migration. Different from all is the 1995 survey which uses urban district and county as the threshold. What impacts would these definitions have on migration measurement? This question is almost identical to another question that is seemingly very different. It is "what is the spatial structure of Chinese internal migration?"

If all the national data sets are put together and compared for their spatial coverage, one can have a good sense of the spatial structure or the impacts of different definitions. Table 6.5 gives a brief summary of differential coverage in the major national data sets. The table is divided into two panels. Panel A does not include intra-county migration and Panel B include all or part of intra-county migration. The most complete coverage for the non-*hukou* migrants is in the 1995 survey. The combination of table 7-1 and table 7-3 in the published tabulations gives the proportion of migration on inter-provincial, an intra-provincial but inter-county, and within county levels. It turns out that within county moves account for almost 40% (38.8%) of total migration. Inter-county but intra-provincial migration takes another 40%, leaving inter-provincial migration 18.5%, of total migrants. Similar to the treatment of the temporal dimension, migration also needs to be bracketed within a range in order to compare different data sets. If within-county migration is excluded and only migration between county and above is considered, for 1995 non-*hukou* migration, 31.6% of total migration belongs to inter-provincial migration and 68.4% to intra-provincial migration. How does this structure hold for overall

migration including *hukou* migrants? Table 7-5 in published tabulations for 1995 gives an excellent sample to compare. That table includes both *hukou* and non-*hukou* migration between counties and above. The percentages for intra-provincial and inter-provincial migration are almost identical to those for non-*hukou* migration alone. This shows that the gravity rule affects *hukou* and non-*hukou* similarly, at least for migrants in the early 1990s.

Table 6.5 The spatial structure of Chinese internal migration %

	A		B				
	IP	WP	IP	WP		Itw	Its
				IC	WC		
95 tab7-1, 7-3*	31.6*	68.4*	18.5	40	38.8		
95 tab7-5	32.1	67.9					
90 census	32	68					
88 survey			12.9		87.1		
86 survey*	34.2	65.8*					
87 survey			20.7	79.3			
PSB 1992			12.6		87.4		
PSB 1994			14.1		85.9		

Sources:

1995 rates from 1995 1% renkou chouxiang diaocha ziliao
Others from Zhuang, 1995;

Notes:

1. Some notations:
IP stands for inter-provincial migration;
WP for intra-provincial migration;
IC for inter-county migration;
WC for within county migration;
Itw for inter-towns migration;
Its for inter-township migration.
2. The A panel does not include within county moves. The B panel includes whole or part of within county moves.
3. Numbers are percentage of total migration.
4. * shows that these are estimated if within county move is excluded. The 1986 survey has about 11.7% of migrants who moved within county boundaries.

Comparing to the 1990 census, I found the same figure of 32% for between province migration and 68% for within province migration as those in the 1995 survey. The 1986 survey is also similar though it has a small number of intra-county migrants in small towns thus increases the percentage of within province migration. In addition to the 1995 survey, the 1988 survey, the 1987 survey and the PSB data also have coverage of intra-

county migration. The PSB data in early 1090s are very similar to the 1988 survey with about 13% of total migrants as inter-provincial, and 87% as intra-provincial. The percentage of inter-provincial migration in the 1987 survey is a little higher with 20.7%. But this is partly due to its partial coverage of intra-county migration. If I assume that inter-township is about the same size as inter-town, then the adjusted inter-provincial migration is about 16% of total migration for the 87 survey, falling in the range between that of the 1995 survey and the 1988 survey. We may see a little increase of inter-provincial migration as shown by the rates of 1988, 1987 and 1995. But more striking is the similar spatial structure of Chinese migration.

Having discussed the first aspect of spatial dimension of Chinese migration, let us now look at the second aspect, which is the migration streams along the rural-urban hierarchies. We know that a number of factors can influence the distribution of migrants along rural-urban hierarchies. One is simply population growth caused by the natural increase in the urban population and migration from rural areas. As the overall size of the urban population increases, the share of urban migration will increase correspondingly. Second is the urban reclassification of settlements, for example, from market towns to designated towns, from towns to cities, etc. Unlike the urban population increase which is gradual, the reclassification tends to bring abrupt changes in migration streams. The 1987 Survey used the first standard, while 1990 Census and the 1995 Survey used the second standard. To make the matter more complicated, the types of settlement of origins and destination in migration questions may not be the same, as is the case for the 1990 census. In the 1990 census, origin types are street committees, towns, and townships, while destination types are cities, towns and counties. This inconsistency means that there are two definitions in the same data set, which naturally distorts our understandings of the rural-urban streams (Zhang et al, 1995).

Table 6.6 shows migration streams along the rural-urban hierarchies for major national data sets that have available information. The 1988 survey covers migration before 1988, while the others only the five years before the census dates. A couple of regularized

patterns emerge from the table. The first is the small percentage of urban-rural migration in total migration. It not only holds true for the post-reform period, but also for the pre-reform period, contrary to conventional understanding of the involuntary nature of Chinese migration under Mao. The second is the gradual increase of urban to urban migration, particularly since the mid 1980s. This is related to the increasing urbanization in the last decade. Compared to the numerous studies on rural to urban migration, urban to urban migration has not been given any attention at all. At least from the table, it shows that the imbalance in migration research on China is not warranted. The third pattern is the substantial role of rural-urban migration in urban growth, although the relative share of the rural-urban migration stream fluctuates over time.

Table 6.6 Urban and rural streams of Chinese migration

Migration stream	88 survey	87 survey	90 census	95 survey
Total	100	100	100	100
R-R	39.9	17.4	13.4	23.8
R-U	26.6	50.6	49.0	36.0
U-R	4.0	6.2	3.9	4.8
U-U	29.5	25.8	33.7	35.5

Sources:

88 survey from Liang and Chen, 1993;
 1995 rates from 1995 1% renkou chouxiang diaocha ziliao;
 Other from Zhuang, 1995;

Notations:

U stands for urban areas, including both cities and designated towns.
 R stands for the rural areas, either county or townships.

One should be very cautious in interpreting the rural-urban migration structures as several problems can get in the way. Can we say safely that rural-urban migration increased dramatically by comparing 1987 and 1988 surveys? Not necessarily by just looking at the relative percentages. The 1988 survey has wider coverage than the 1987 survey by including townships. It also employs the second standard of urban definition. All these tend to give its rural-urban stream a significant downward bias. The urban definition, the spatial threshold of migration, and consistency between origin and destination definitions also influence the direct interpretation of changes between the 1987 survey and the 1990

census. Any conclusion of general change involving several data sets should start from the examination and comparison of their definitions and coverages.

6.4.3 *Hukou dimension*

The *hukou* dimension is important because migration data are coded through the lens of *hukou* registration. As we have seen previously, it is very important to differentiate *hukou* and non-*hukou* migration when we compare census and survey data. *Hukou* registration data provide valuable information on moves sanctioned by the state but are not very helpful for unsanctioned moves often disguised as temporary ones. Census and other national surveys all ask those surveyed about their status of resident *hukou*. But due to different sampling strategies, non-*hukou* migrants may not be fully and equally represented in these surveys. Even a census cannot avoid this problem because campaigns and mobilization before the census often reduce the magnitude of these “undesired” temporary migrants by the local government.¹⁷⁴ Consideration of non-*hukou* migration is essential in comparing and estimating scale and patterns of migration since the mid 1980s, although non-*hukou* migration has been a concern for previous years.

This section is devoted to a specific issue in *hukou* migration statistics, i.e., whether *hukou* migration data includes intra-city moves is not directly addressed in most documents and articles. Some suggest that intra-city moves are included in the *hukou* migration statistics (Scharping, 1997: 36; Zhang, 1999). Others suggest the opposite (Yang, 1994:128). Higher migration rates in *hukou* statistics is one argument for the possibly inclusion of intra-city moves. Another is that migration registration is based on the *hukou* administration area, which is a much smaller unit of cities.¹⁷⁵ A move across *hukou* administration areas needs registration of the move, which would be included in the statistics reported to the higher level government.

¹⁷⁴ Chen et al, 1990: 223-41 and personal communication with Yunyan Yang.

¹⁷⁵ According to the 10th regulation in “the Regulation” of the *hukou* registration institution, When citizens move out of their *hukou* administration area, they or their household heads should apply for outmigration to

Barring the case of mis-reporting, I will show that *hukou* migration statistics should not include intra-city movement, on the basis of several bits of evidence. First is the straightforward declaration from the Ministry of Public Security. In the preface to published migration statistics (SSB, 1988:3), the MPS defines migration as “inmigrants and outmigrants are those who move in or out of a city (excluding counties under city administration), a town or township. Those who change residential address within the city, town or township are not counted in the statistics of immigration or outmigration. They can be seen as population movement or population floating within city, town and township, thus not counted in the numbers of migration”. Here it is stated explicitly that within city movement is not counted in the national statistics of migration. One argument for the inclusion of within city moves is *hukou* registration of any move across *hukou* administration area. But even that respect, *hukou* migration across city boundaries is treated differently from those within the city. “Citizens are not granted migration certificates when they change their *hukou* residence within cities (not including suburban counties); it will be only given when they move out of cities, or moves between towns (townships) within counties” (Zhang and Wang 995: 517). The difference in registration procedure makes sense since the government’s major concern is to control migration from outside cities. So it is reasonable for the state to have specific statistics to monitor migration across city boundaries.¹⁷⁶

Another way to test is to compare the migration magnitude of a city from *hukou* migration statistics with that from surveys or the census which does not include within city movement. If the migration volumes from these sources are in a similar range, the result would suggest that within city movement is not included. If migration scale from *hukou* statistics is substantially higher than other sources, it would favor the inclusion

¹⁷⁶ *hukou* registration departments (usually PSB), in order to get migration documents, then they need to cancel their *hukou* at origins” (Zhang and Wang, 1995: 484).

¹⁷⁶ There are four basic tables in PSB to monitor the population and migration situation. They are the Population Change Statistic Table (*renkou biandong qingkuang tongji biao*), the Non-agricultural Population Change Statistic Table (*feinongye renkou zengjian qingkuang tongji biao*), the Population Age Statistic Table (*renkou nianling tongji biao*), and the Urban Population Migration Statistic Table (*chengshi renkou qianyi tongji biao*). (Wang, 1992:487). Migration across city boundaries should be specified in these tables. Otherwise there is no way to measure the natural increase and migration.

argument. The problem in this comparison is that one needs to make sure one is comparing the same place. The ideal case is to find a city which only includes the city proper and no suburban counties and administered counties. Inclusion of counties would complicate the comparison since *hukou* migration and other data may have different spatial thresholds. As we know, the 1990 census only counts those moving across county boundaries while *hukou* migration statistics counts those moving across towns and townships. And this difference will make *hukou* migration statistics upward biased. So we need to compare only the city proper.

Table 6.7 Comparison of Migration between MPS data and the 1995 Survey for 1992-5

A: PSB	GreaterSH	MetroSH	County	Town
92	175292	99245	76047	35239
93	185481	139361	46120	24669
94	199635	145354	54281	36569
95	194682	140236	54446	41044

B: 95 survey	total	city	county	town
92	258800	238800	10400	9600
93	377900	336100	15000	26700
94	444100	392200	25600	26300
95	395280	336840	34320	24120

C: comparison	PSB	95 survey
92	99245	88356
93	139361	124357
94	145354	145114
95	140236	124631

Sources:

PSB data from PSB *hukou* migration from Zhuang, 1995: 5, 241-283. The 1995 data from quanguo fenxianshi renkou tongji ziliao, 1995:34-5;
1995 data from 1995 1% renkou chouxiang diaocha ziliao: 554

Notes:

The number of migrants in 1995 has been adjusted by extrapolating the previous ten month number into the whole year.

The number of *hukou* migrants in C panel is calculated by assuming that the percentage of *hukou* migrants in 1990-5 is about 37% of total migrants in Shanghai.

On the national level, only the three centrally administered cities come close to this requirement. I chose Shanghai as an example and compare volumes of immigration from

1990 Census and *hukou* migrant statistics.¹⁷⁷ From the 1% 1990 Census Migrant Sample Data, I calculated the immigrants who came to the city proper with official *hukou* change.¹⁷⁸ The total immigrants were 341500.¹⁷⁹ On the other hand, the number of immigrants from *hukou* migration statistics can also be estimated, which yielded 511000.¹⁸⁰ So the census figure is only about 67% of that from *hukou* migrant statistics (Table 6.7). Thinking a little more carefully, we should expect a larger figure from *hukou* statistics due to a few factors. One is that the Census did not include those who immigrated at the age five and under. Another is that the Census did not include those who moved within the five years but returned before the survey time. And it only included one move of those who migrated several times during the five years. On the other hand, *hukou* migration statistics include every move of those above. The three factors might add another 30 to 40% to the census figure.¹⁸¹ That will make the census results not so different from the *hukou* statistics figure. So comparison of migration statistics supported the declaration of MPS (1988) that *hukou* migration statistics do not include within city movement.

We may approach this from yet another perspective. What is the magnitude of migration if we included the within city movement? Put in other words, how large is within city movement compared to across-city migration? Though I do not have systematic data, anecdotal evidence suggest that within city movement is substantial. *Hukou* statistics in Baotou shows that within city movement was close to three times of that across city boundaries during the period of 1974-1982 (Yue, 1983: 350). My field interviews in Wuhan also found about half of total mobility is within the city. I would like to assume

¹⁷⁷ It is also useful to compare the 1987 Survey and PSB data if one has the micro data set.

¹⁷⁸ Shanghai in the 1990 Census tabulation included all the counties. Here I need to restrict analysis to the immigrants coming into the city (not including towns and counties).

¹⁷⁹ The total migrants in the 100% census data was 873762, smaller than the 1179000 from the 1% micro migrant sample.

¹⁸⁰ The immigrant number is available for 1985 to 1988 in Gui and Liu (1992: 537). Since the Census covers the period from July 1, 1985 to July 1, 1990, I first extrapolated numbers for 1989 and 1990 then averaged those for six months in 1985 and 1990. This is reasonable since the *hukou* migrant numbers changed only mildly in this period.

¹⁸¹ This estimate is based on the 1986 Survey and the 1995 Survey.

that this should also apply to Shanghai.¹⁸² If *hukou* statistics did include within city movement in its published statistics, the figure would be several times larger than it is now.

In summary, I have introduced a conceptual framework in this section to facilitate the comparison of major national data sets. The three major dimensions of the framework are *hukou*, time, and space. Under each category I identify a number of factors that might cause the discrepancies in migration between these data sets. For example, I lay out a conceptual map for non-*hukou* migrants in terms of their types and changes over time. I discuss two different types of spatial structure for Chinese internal migration. The conceptual framework provides a frame in which major national data sets can be compared on an incremental basis. As new information comes in the factors can be specified and structures can be adjusted. Although the framework is intended for national data sets, it can also accommodate small surveys by locating them in the spatial-temporal context and by examining related factors. This framework also provides a benchmark to identify potential study areas which are worthy of research attentions.

¹⁸² Everything else being equal, the larger the city, and the more district it has, the larger the within city movement.

Appendix 6.1 Categories of Migration Reasons in Major Migration Data Sets

Category	PSB	1986	1988	1987	1990
State Sponsored Work	job transfer	job transfer	job transfer	job transfer	job transfer*
	college graduate assignment	job assignment	job assignment	job assignment	job assignment
	college enrollment	study and training	study	study and training	study and training
	enlistment and demobilization	demobilization	demobilization		
	sent-down and return	return of educated youth			
	retirement and dismiss	retirement and layoff		retirement and layoff	retirement and layoff
	recruitment	recruitment and replacement			
	replacement				
	rehabilitation	rehabilitation			
			floating		
Self Sponsored Work		industry and business	industry	industry and business	industry and business
			business		
Family	marriage migration	marriage migration	marriage migration	marriage migration	marriage migration
	families co-migration military families worker and staff families	family co-migration		family co-migration	family co-migration
	joining relatives and families joining husband parents children non-direct relatives adopting of children	join relative and adoption		join relative and adoption	join relative and adoption
Other	other		Other	other	
	going abroad and coming back				
	reform labor and release				
	back to origins				

Notes:

Migration reason categories come from questionnaire for surveys and the Census and statistical tabulations for PSB hukou migration statistics.

Job transfer in the 1990 Census also included demobilized soldiers and officers.

Appendix 6.2 Migration questions in census and major national surveys

	Hukou type and status	Time of migration	Origin and type	Migration reasons ^a
1987 Survey	Hukou type Local; outside; to be determined	Length at survey place Less than 1 years; 1~2 years; 2~3 years; 3~4 years; 4~5 years; more than 5 years	place of origin (province) type of origin (city, town and county)	Nine categories
1990 Census	hukou type local hukou non-local hukou staying >1 year non-local hukou staying <1 year, away>1 year to be determined; going abroad hukou status agricultural hukou non-agricultural hukou	N.A.	residence at July 1, 1985 within the city and county other city and county with the province outside the province type of origin urban street town township	Nine categories
1995 Survey	hukou type local hukou non-local hukou staying >1 year non-local hukou staying <1 year, away>1 year to be determined; going abroad	time period no migration came before sept.30, 1990 came after Oct. 1, 1990 specific time year, month	place of origin and hukou residence province prefecture (city) county (city) type of origin village committee in township village committee in town resident committee in town resident committee in urban street residence in Oct.1, 1990 same as origin 1. birth province 2. hukou residence province 3. origin province (for ip migrants)	N.A.
1988 Survey	Floating population migrants	(For all and ip migrants) ^b The last time to come to survey place Year, month	birth place and origin other province this province (other city; other county within city; suburban county; within town; within county outside town)	Nine categories
1986 Survey	Hukou type Local hukou Staying for more than a year, non-local hukou	Time of immigration after 1949	type city; town; rural; other place and type for origin in registration type for origin in tabulation	13 categories
PSB	Hukou	Time of registration		18 categories

Sources: 1986 Survey see Ma and Wang (1988: 292-4); 1987 Survey see SSB (1988:819)

1988 Survey see Chang (1993: 39); 1990 Census see SSB (1995)

Notes: a. See Table 2 for detailed comparison of migration reasons. b. Here ip stands for inter-provincial migrants.

Appendix 6.3 Coverage, Definition and Potential Biases of Migration Data before Reforms

Data sources	Coverage	Definition of Migration	Definition of Urban	Error and Bias
86 Survey of 74 Cities and Towns	74 cities and towns in 16 provinces; All types of movement (inmigration, migration, short and long term out movement, temporary migration);	One year for non-hukou migrants; City and town boundary as spatial threshold (including suburban district but excluding suburban county)	Large or small urban centers. N.A.	Non-random sampling in choosing cities and towns; Different sampling ratios for cities and towns
88 Two per thousand Fertility Survey	All China through 815 sampling units; Move into sampling units; Inter-provincial migration asked separately;	Six months for non-hukou migrants; Spatial threshold of township for sampling units ?	Resident and village committees (second standard?)	Migration questions as secondary importance; Extreme sex ratios for intra- and inter-provincial migrations; Urbanization over-estimated
Public Security Bureau Hukou Registration	Province as unit for 1953-1987; Hukou migration only; Further disaggregation into prefecture, city, town and county from 1992 onwards	Any move across the boundary of city, town, or township that is associated with official change in resident hukou (excluding suburban county)	Administrative status (first standard)	Problems associated with registration and administration, such as not register when move, underreport or over-report for political benefits

Sources:

1. for 86 survey, see Ma and Wang (1993);
2. for 88 survey, see Lavelle (1991), Liang and Chen (1993), Chang (1993)
3. for hukou migration statistics, see Zhuang (1995), Zhang (1994)

Appendix 6.4 Coverage, Definition and Potential Biases of Migration Data after Reforms

Data sources	Coverage	Definition of Migration	Definition of Urban	Error and Bias
1987 1 % Population Sample Survey	Whole of China Migration between 1982-87 Non-hukou migrants staying at survey place for more than five years	Six months for non-hukou migrants; City, town and county as the minimum unit (includes part of intra-county migration which is into registered towns); Ask about the last move and time stay in survey place (so non-hukou migrants for more than five years)	Administrative standard (first standard)	Different sampling ratios for provinces (e.g. higher for the three largest cities) but adjusted in published data
1990 The Fourth Population Census	Whole of China Migration between 1985-90 for age five and above	One year for non-hukou migrants; City and county as the spatial threshold; Ask about usual residence exactly five years ago	Village and street committees (second standard)	Inconsistency of urban definition for origin and destination;
1995 1 % Population Sample Survey	Whole of China Migration between 1990-95 Immigration before 90 non-hukou migration within county and urban district	Six months for non-hukou migrants; Spatial boundary of city (county-level), county and urban district; Ask about both usual residence exactly five years ago and the last move;	Village and street committees (second standard)	

Sources:

- 1 for 87 survey, see SSB (1988), Yang (1994), Ma et al (1997);
- 2 for 90 census, see Yang (1994);
- 3 for 95 survey, see renkouban (1997)

Appendix 6.5 Reference Guide to the Major National Data Sets

Major Data Set	Data Description	Related Research
1986 Urban Migration Survey	Ma and Wang (1988) Ma and Wang (1993)	Ma and Wang (1993) Day and Ma (1994) Yang (1993, 1996)
1987 1% National Population Survey	SSB (1988) Zhang (1994)	Ma (1996) Ma et al (1996) Ma et al (1997)
1988 Two Per Thousand Fertility Survey	Chong (1993) Liang and Chen (1993)	Chong (1993) Liang and White (1996) Liang and White (1998) Stinner et al (1993)
1990 Census	Renkouban (1991)	Chan et al (1999) Fan (1996, 1999) Yang (1994) Zhang (1995)
1995 1% National Population Survey	Renkouban (1997)	Ma (1999)
Hukou Migration Statistics	SSB (1988) Zhang (1994) Wang (1982)	Zhang (1994) Shen and Tong (1992)

Chapter Seven. Paradigm Shift of Internal Migration in Socialist China

The previous chapters have systematically explored the institutional structures and mechanisms of internal migration in socialist China. This chapter will build on that to examine how these factors played out in migration patterns and processes in the last fifty years. The goals of this chapter are: 1) to estimate the scale and patterns of migration based on the national migration data, 2) to identify the major and minor migration types for different periods, 3) to look for regularized patterns in migration and their changes and understand them from an institutional perspective.

The chapter consists of three sections. Section One is devoted to migration and institutional change in the pre-reform period. Section Two covers migration and institutional change in the reform period. The last section will identify the paradigm shift in Chinese migration over the whole period.

The first part of Section One and Section Two are natural extensions of the previous chapter. By using the schematic framework developed in Chapter Six, I aim at comparing and estimating immigration rates for both the pre-reform and post-reform periods. The comparison of several national data sets provides some ranges for immigration. Since international migration is negligible for China, analysis of immigration presents a reasonable picture for overall migration. In the second part of Section One and Section Two, I will focus on a few cities that represent different categories of regions and examine migration and changes in these cities. It is intended to give a more balanced view of migration process on the meso-level, in addition to the national and individual levels. The last part of each section discusses factors and institutional changes that are important to migration in each period.

The last section reveals a gradual shift of migration paradigms from state centered to non-state centered after the economic reforms. The transitional process is gradual and currently undergoing, unlike the conventional wisdom that assumes a drastic change from

planned migration to non-planned right after the reforms. This chapter also reveals internal changes within planned migration and non-planned migration. The analysis is made possible by the recent availability of various types of data, i.e., census and survey micro data sets, archival materials and field interviews.

7.1 Migration and Institutional change before reform

Migration before reform has been much less studied and understood than that after reform due to fewer sources of information and not much research interest. This situation is not warranted since socialist institutions still have important roles in structuring Chinese migration and recent changes in migration patterns cannot be apprehended without the background of the institutional sedimentation of the past. It is definitely needed especially if the objective is to understand long term change in Chinese migration and its underlying causes.

Existing research on pre-reform migration is rich in historical descriptions of migration events and related social events and lack of systematic analysis from both a quantitative and institutional perspective. This section can contribute to the literature by first constructing a series of migration rates by using several data sources and then looking at the institutional process and its impacts on migration at different scales.

7.1.1 *Reconstructing migration rates*

The only temporal series of migration rates comes from the MPS hukou migration statistics at the provincial level, which is widely cited and used. Despite the existence of the 1986 Survey and 1988 Survey, no attempt has been made to construct similar temporal series to compare with the MPS series. It would be definitely helpful to bring in new information so that we can have a sense of the possible range in migration rates over time.

It is possible to reconstruct the temporal series of migration rates from the 1986 Survey since the survey provides information on the number of migrants and total population alive in each year for the survey period (1949-86). The migrants reported were inmigrants coming to the survey places and total population were people at the survey places; the ratio yields immigration rates. Although strictly speaking, the total population at the survey place were not the at-risk population, it is a common practice to calculate the scale of migration into destination areas by using immigration rates. The number of migrants can be easily obtained for each year from the 1986 micro data. It is less straightforward to estimate the total population at each year that is used as the population base for calculating migration rates. The 1986 Survey has a question on the ages of all people at survey time, from which I can calculate their years of birth and reconstruct the "total" population for the survey sample as a whole at each year. This is only an approximation for the total population since it does not include those who died and migrated out before the survey.¹⁸³

In this way, I build a temporal series for overall migration and inter-provincial migration from the 1986 Survey.¹⁸⁴ Due to lack of access to the 1988 Survey, I am not able to reconstruct temporal series for overall migration. But fortunately information for inter-provincial migration is available and can be used to build such a series.¹⁸⁵ Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2 present the results.

Figure 7.1 shows changes of inmigration rates in the period of 1949-1987. It has two series, one is the widely used MPS hukou migration series. The other is the series from the 1986 Survey. Two obvious observations can be made. The first is that migration rates

¹⁸³ This approach takes the urban population of cities and towns as a whole. Those who migrated from one city to another should not have impacts on the "total" population. Those who exited by death and permanent migration to rural areas would make total population estimate smaller. Fortunately their impacts are small.

¹⁸⁴ Studies using the 1986 Survey data did not attempt to calculate the migration rates since 1949, which is a little surprising given the importance of migration rates in migration studies. Mostly they discuss age and temporal distributions of migrants (Day and Ma, 1993).

from hukou statistics are two to four time higher of those derived from the 1986 Survey in the early years. But over time, the differences narrow and eventually the migration rates from the 1986 Survey catch up to the MPS migration rates. The second observation is that despite the great differences in earlier years, the shapes of two curves correspond well. They have similar peaks and troughs. For example, one can identify easily the large increase of immigration in 1956 and 1979 from both lines. These are related to changes in the economic and political environment, which is well discussed in other publications (Day and Ma, 1993; Sheng and Tong, 1992). The good correspondence of migration rates with political and economic events in both series show at least some credibility for these data. But the question is how we could explain such a large early difference and the eventual convergence.

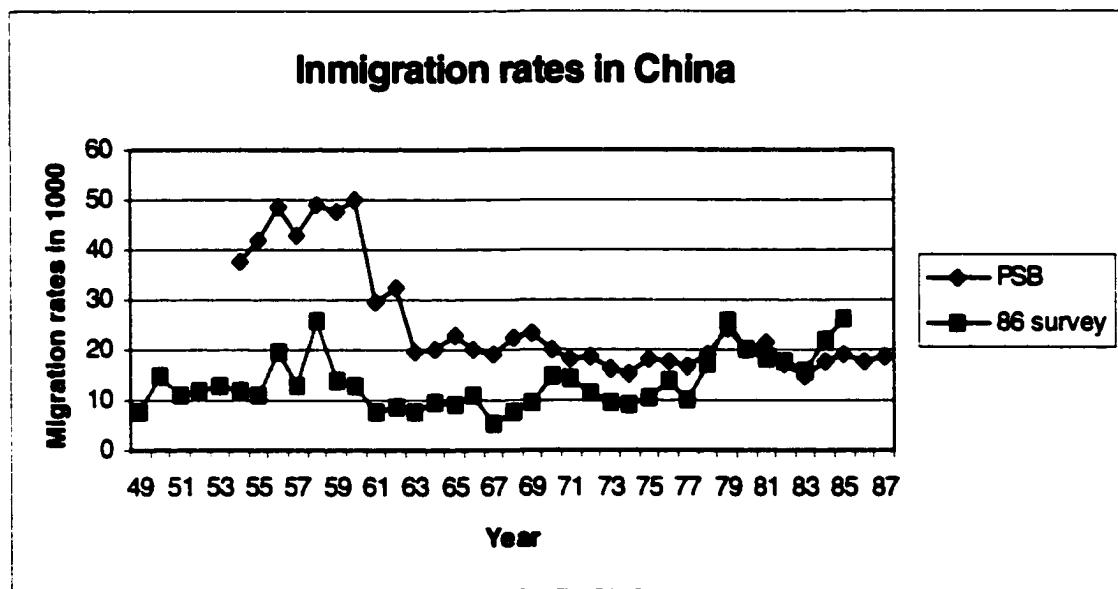


Figure 7.1 Overall immigration rates in China (1949-1987)

Sources:

MPS hukou migration data from Zhuang 1995: 5;
1986 Survey series derived from 86 micro data.

¹⁸⁵ In their paper, Liang and White calculated number of inter-provincial migrants and total population for a 10 percent micro data of the 1988 Survey. These data can be used to reconstruct a temporal series of inter-provincial migration.

Several plausible explanations can be advanced according to the schematic framework set out in Chapter Six. The first is that attrition by mortality and outmigration significantly reduces the inmigration captured by the 1986 Survey. The second is that 1986 Survey misses all multiple moves which could be very large. The third is that MPS migration data includes some intra-county migration, while the migration in the 1986 Survey is mostly at the inter-county level. The fourth is that the change in hukou control influences somehow differently the two data series. The first two concerns the temporal dimension. The third concerns the spatial dimension and the last one the hukou dimension.

The effects of mortality and outmigration could be quite different. Mortality tends to increase the migration rates, everything else being equal. Assume that the mortality rate of migrants is identical to that of non-migrants, death should not have any impact on the migration rates. In reality, migrants tend to be in their prime age and thus have lower mortality rate. Regarding death alone, it may increase the migration rate for the retrospective data. But due to the small mortality rates in population change, the effect caused by the differential mortality rates between migrants and non-migrants should be minor in changing migration rates.

In contrast, attrition by outmigration may significantly lower migration rates in a systematic way. We know that migrants tend to be selective in terms of demographic characteristics and social attributes, such as age and education. They are far more mobile than the average population. So outmigrants would be more likely to be earlier inmigrants than native residents. This is particularly true in China where the population has been encouraged to stay at their origins and current residence by various policies and where the state had initiated several large-scale downward migration campaigns. In the sent-down campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s, those who recently came to cities and towns should be the first to go back to their origins according to the clearly stated government policies. Downward migrants would like to move back to their origins whenever conditions were permissible. The effect of attrition by outmigration may be distributed unevenly across time. Earlier migrants suffer more outmigration proportionally due to

longer exposure. As a result migration rates at an earlier period would appear smaller. It is especially true since the survey only asks for information on the last migration. A typical example was a migrant who came to work in cities in 1958 at the peak of the Great Leap Forward. Then he was sent back to the countryside in the clearing up of urban population in early 1960s. He might then be recruited back and migrate again to cities, as government policies changed in the 1960s or 1970s. Only his most recent move would be recorded by the survey. It is very difficult to estimate the extent of outmigration from any retrospective survey. And the large differences in the 1950s demand other explanations.

A closer look at Figure 7.1 shows the dramatic decline of registered hukou migration in the early 1960s, when strong enforcement of hukou control was introduced. Research on the employment in the 1950s found extremely high turnover rates of employment in large cities (Howe, 1971; White, 1978). The fluidity of labor movement was made possible by a mildly controlled hukou registration system.¹⁸⁶ In a working report of the Beijing Youth League to the Municipal Committee in 1955 at the peak of the sent-down campaign, it was estimated that out of 97,000 youth league members who came to Beijing from the countryside about 67,000 got Beijing local hukou.¹⁸⁷ The relative ease to get hukou in cities may increase the turnover rate for it seemed possible for people to come back when the occasion arose. Many did not appreciate the importance of urban hukou until hukou became tightly controlled (Chen, 1991). Tightening up of hukou control reduced the turnover rate from two directions. On the one hand, government had fewer job openings for immigrants than before. On the other hand, people would hold on to their urban hukou even when they were transferred down to smaller settlements. This factor alone might explain a major part of the sharp drop of migration rates from 40-50 per thousand in the 1950s to 20 per thousand since 1963. Of course, economic conditions and development strategy may have significant effects too. Socialist countries tend to have high migration rates in the initial expansion period. Overtime the migration rates dwindled down to only

¹⁸⁶ Contrary to the common perception that migration before 1958 was free of control, hukou control was widely practiced, particularly in large cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai. The requirement and procedures, however, were quite different. It was much more decentralized than the later period.

¹⁸⁷ This information comes from the archival materials of the Municipal Labor Bureau of Beijing.

one half or to one third of their initial rates (Brown and Neuberger, 1977). Some of these countries, such as East Germany, did not have residential control systems.

The effect of the spatial dimension is difficult to evaluate. On the one hand, due to more detailed coverage of PSB hukou registration with intra-county movement included, the hukou statistics tend to be larger than the 86 survey. On the other hand, the mobility of urban folks is generally much higher than their counterparts in the countryside.

The last factor I have not discussed so far are multiple moves. Only inter-provincial migration allows us to examine the minimum extent of multiple moves since origins and destinations in intra-provincial migration are not identified. So let us have a look at the temporal series of inter-provincial migration first.

Figure 7.2 is about the inter-provincial migration revealed by the 1986 and 1988 surveys. A great advantage in analyzing inter-provincial migration is that one is no longer bothered by the spatial coverage of migration since by definition migration needs to go across provincial boundaries. The chart shows very similar temporal patterns with identical troughs and peaks with roughly the same range.¹⁸⁸ The only thing standing out is that the 1986 Survey has larger variations than the 1988 Survey, particularly in the peak migration years like 1958 and 1979. Knowing that the 1986 Survey is about urban areas and the 1988 survey covers all types of areas, the differences here may represent the differences in urban areas and the countryside as a whole. The large increase of migration in 1979 in cities was mostly caused by return migration, which was not present in the rural areas. The data seem to capture that difference.

The 1988 and 1986 data both reveal that a substantial part of inter-provincial migrants moved at least twice in their lifetime. While hukou registration should have kept track of these moves, the 1986 and 1988 surveys only asked about the last move. Existence of

large multiple moves could be another factor to cause difference in hukou registration data and the survey data. There are several types of multiple moves. One is return move since birth province is the current province. Another is the second inter-provincial move (at least) since the three provinces are all different. The third is the inter-provincial move which happened before the reported intra-provincial move. The three types of multiple moves together account for 68% of reported inter-provincial migration (See Table 6.4). If I add those moves which were not reported but should have happened based on information on birth place, the total multiple moves are about 114% of reported inter-provincial moves. In other words, the number of inter-provincial moves directly reported in the survey is less than half of total moves that must have occurred. And this estimate is rather conservative since there could be more moves not reflected by the three places.

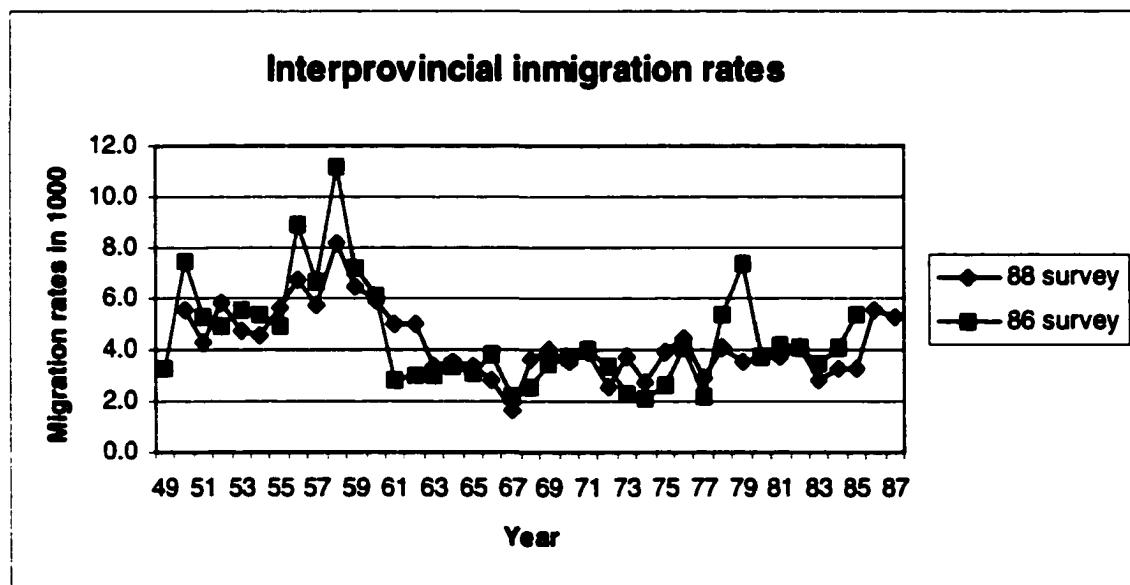


Figure 7.2 *Inter-provincial immigration rates in China (1949-1987)*

Sources:

86 survey series created from 86 micro data;

88 survey series recalculated from Liang and White, 1996: 379

¹⁸⁸ The 1988 survey may overestimate the inter-provincial migration rates since Liang and White selected only those between age 15 to 59. According to the published tabulation, the upside bias is about 22.2% due

There are similar findings from the 1988 Survey. It is discovered that about 39% of inter-provincial migrants were return migrants in the 1988 Survey (Wang, 1993). This figure is higher than the 30% in the 1986 Survey. It is unfortunate that further exploration of other types of multiple moves in the 1988 Survey was not conducted although the data contains these information.¹⁸⁹ The effect of multiple moves did not fall evenly on all the provinces. Migrants from some of the provinces, such as Beijing, Tianjing, Xinjiang, Qinghai and Ningxia were likely to move twice or more.

How does this conclusion apply to intra-provincial migration? There is no doubt that there are certain multiple moves not captured by the direct report of migrants. The question is what is the extent of multiple moves in intra-provincial migration. One can only speculate on that. It might be higher than the inter-provincial moves due to easiness of moves and the lower friction of distance. But it could also be lower due to less selectivity of migrants in intra-provincial than in inter-provincial moves. Without further evidence, I may just assume that they are similar at this point. If it is true, then a major part of difference between hukou registration data and 1986 Survey and the gradual convergence between the two over time can be explained by the existence of multiple moves. Since it is the former part of multiple moves that was missed, many multiple moves actually happened several or many years before the last migration. Taking the temporal distribution of multiple moves into consideration, the earlier years of the 1986 Survey are underestimated in addition to the attrition by outmigration. Simply because the return migration concentrated in the large cities, the migration rates in 1986 Survey even exceeded those of hukou registration data. The relatively large inclusion of non-hukou in the last few years in the 1986 survey may also contribute to its higher rates.

In sum, the 1986 and 1988 surveys are important sources of information for the overall change of migration before reform. By adjusting the data from the micro data sets, it is possible to reconstruct migration rates for the pre-reform period. By closely comparing

to the age selectivity (sources: Liang and Chen, 1993: 373;602).

temporal changes of migration rates from several sources, we can have a better grasp of overall change since these data measure and reflect the actual change from different angles. In addition, data comparison also allows us to derive information for migration processes, such as the extent of multiple moves, which would otherwise be impossible. The reconstructed series provide one piece of information for understanding migration and institutional change in the pre-reform period. Examination of the migration process at a lower level would provide another piece of information, which is the task of next section.

7.1.2 A tale of two cities and one factory

This subsection takes a closer look at migration processes in two cities with different characteristics. Baotou was one of the fastest growing new industrial cities in the 1950s while Wuxi was an old “consumer” city. They had very different migration experiences due to their positions in the new socialist economy, which were representative of migration processes in different types of cities and regions.

--The City of Baotou

Baotou was one of the cities that experienced dramatic population growth due to industrial development in the 1950s, like Daqing and many others in the north China. Before 1949, Baotou was a small trading center for goods to Mongolia and Xinjiang with a population of around 70,000. Its population grew gradually to 173,504 as its economy recovered in 1955. The pace of population change and migration drastically sped up as Baotou was selected as one of the key iron and steel industrial bases nationwide in the mid 1950s. Population almost doubled to 328,602 in 1956 alone. Then it skyrocketed to 874,471 in another four years (Yue, 1983:373). Construction workers, skilled industrial workers and cadres from Northeastern China and others regions were transferred to Baotou, sometimes as whole factories and workshops with machinery and workers. The Baotou Iron and Steel Company was one of the largest iron and steel companies in the country, supported by a number of mining districts in the surrounding areas, such as the

¹⁸⁹ One needs to have access to the micro data to conduct the matches in order to find out those moves that

Baiyun Ebo and Shiguai districts. The number of workers and staff in 1957 was ten times higher than that in 1952. During the Great Leap Forward from 1957 to 1960, the population increased by another 550,000, the non-agricultural population increased by 503,000. Total workers and staff more than doubled in less than four years.

Table 7.1 Baotou immigration rates in 1956-69: per thousand¹⁹⁰

Year	Total	Urban district				
		Sum	Old	New	Mine	Suburb
1956	750	923	822	1082		262
1957						
1958	390	509	262	764	432	240
1959	535	658	593	682	759	330
1960	595	661	381	869	486	468
1961	87	90	66	70	261	
1962	73	78	78	82	83	
1963	43	43	46	27	69	47
1964	31	36	28	40	44	12
1965	63	72	32	44	70	24
1966	37	44	19	61	49	7
1967	75	73	35	126	83	10
1968	51	59	47	69	36	16
1969	59	68	51	81	62	19

Source:

Retabulated from Yue(1983, 462-487)

This ten fold increase in the total population of Baotou was mostly contributed by migration from outside. As Table 7.1 shows, the immigration rate was 923 per thousand for the city as a whole in 1956. It was 509, 658, 661 per thousand respectively for 1958, 1959 and 1960. In other words, the total population increased 50% to 100% every year during 1956-1960. Within the city, there were also large differences between different types of districts. In general, the new industrial district tended to have the highest rates, followed by mining districts and then old urban districts and suburbs. These migration rates were exceedingly high, even compared to the most mobile countries and regions. One interesting observation is that high immigration rates were also associated with high outmigration rates, as Figure 7.3 shows. In the late 1950s when immigration rates were high, outmigration rates from Baotou were also very high. For example, there were

must have happened by information on birth, origin and current provinces.

¹⁹⁰ The data are from hukou statistics but should include most of migration before 1960.

221,480 people migrating into and 169,443 people migrating out from Baotou in 1958.

So the population was constantly in a state of flux (Yue, 1983:465). Net migration alternated over the years. It was extremely high in the late 1950s, around 300 per thousand, or 30% of population. Two years immediately following 1960 witnessed a negative migration rate of 140 per thousand. Since then, net migration has been very small, rarely in the double digits.

Figure 7.3 also shows the dramatic decline of migration rates after 1960. Both in and out migration rates dropped significantly with immigration rates dropping faster. The result was net outmigration of workers and urban residents. During the readjustment years from 1961 to 1963, 218,000 workers were laid off and 415,000 of the urban population were sent back to rural areas. And the total population in the city retracted to 574,000 in 1963.

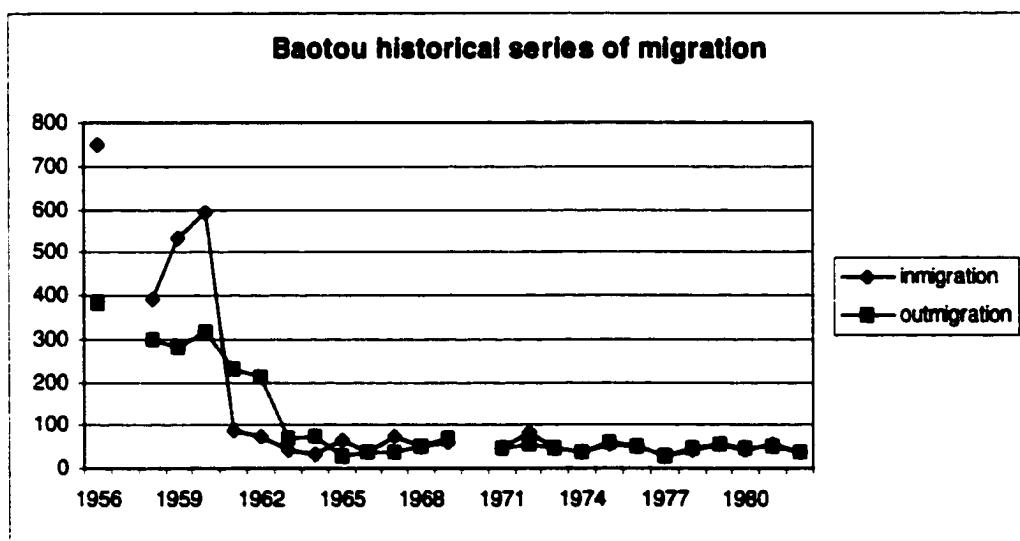


Figure 7.3 Historical series of migration rates in Baotou, 1956-82.

Baotou has detailed published information on hukou migration statistics that is available to public. It has detailed categories of migration channels. As I argued in the previous chapter, hukou migration statistics recorded actual migration channels as they were

administered by the government departments. Table 7.2 presents the migration channels for in and out migration in Baotou between 1974 and 1982. During this period, 121,367 moved into the city while 142,228 moved out. Baotou suffered a net loss of 47,427 with other provincial cities, 19,130 with other cities, and a net gain of 45,673 with rural areas. It appears that Baotou was in a middle position with the net loss of urban outmigrants compensated by inmigrants from rural areas.

There were 21 migration channels according to the tabulation of hukou migration statistics.¹⁹¹ A close inspection will reveal two migration circuits with distinct features. The table is organized into two major panels, with the top one representing immigration and bottom one outmigration. Within each panel, total in or out migration is decomposed into three parts, provincial cities, other cities and towns and rural areas. The first part is the number of migrants for each category and second part is the percentage of each category of total migrants.

Table 7.2 Migration channels of Baotou in 1974-82 (%)

	Total	Job transfer		Agricul-ture	Relative	Recruit	Enroll-ment			Other
		self	family				Soldiers	Graduate		
self family										
Immigration	100.00	15.08	6.37	0.37	22.09	26.31	10.96	4.97	2.80	4.07
Provincial cities	100.00	30.92	10.88	0.02	7.76	5.45	7.89	12.86	11.08	4.74
Other cities	100.00	34.00	15.58	0.08	12.74	6.69	13.00	7.68	1.13	2.99
Rural	100.00	1.14	0.95	0.64	31.78	42.67	11.51	0.56	0.09	3.96
Outmigration	100.00	32.69	24.89	9.33	6.38	3.08	10.54	3.76	3.14	0.69
Provincial cities	100.00	37.98	30.85	0.18	4.71	2.66	18.46	3.75	3.00	-6.75
Other cities	100.00	38.54	25.91	0.35	9.35	5.14	2.01	5.04	4.54	4.51
Rural	100.00	1.77	1.61	60.39	6.15	0.34	0.07	1.14	0.77	19.24

Source:

Calculated from Yue (1983, 428-439)

A close inspection will reveal distinct differences between urban and rural migration circuits. For migrations between Baotou and provincial cities and other cities and towns, job transfer and family members dominated all other migration channels. *Job transfer*

¹⁹¹ I regrouped several small channels in the table.

accounted for 42% and 50% of all migrants moving into Baotou from provincial cities and other cities and towns respectively.¹⁹² *Demobilization* and *graduate assignment* were the next two largest categories for immigrants from provincial cities, each accounting for a little over 10%. And *student enrollment* and *moving to relatives* were the next two largest channels for immigrants from other cities and towns. When it comes to outmigration, *job transfer* was even more dominant with 69% and 65% of total migrants for outmigration into provincial cities and other cities and towns respectively. For outmigration to provincial cities, *study enrollment* took another 18%, while *moving to relatives* accounted for around 10% for those moving to other cities and towns. The extremely high ratio of job transfer for outmigration to other cities was partially caused by the moving out of some companies as a whole formerly belonging to the Baotou Iron and Steel Company.

In contrast to the migration between Baotou and other urban centers, migration between Baotou and rural areas was characterized by very different migration channels. For both in and out migration, job transfer and their family members only accounted for less than 4% of total migration. The three largest migration channels for migration into Baotou from rural areas were job recruitment 43%, moving to relatives 32%, and study enrollment 12%. And the three largest channels for migration to rural areas were participating in agricultural production 60%, other 19%, and moving to relatives 6%. Hidden in the statistics for migrations between rural areas and Baotou was migration caused by the rustication movement of educated youths. There were close to 13,000 educated youths who went to rural areas, accounting for 60% of total migration to rural areas. About 15,347 educated youths were recruited back to Baotou in 1979, accounting for 71% of total migrants from rural areas in that year.

Hukou migration statistics tabulated from monthly reports in Baotou revealed some interesting aspects of Chinese migration in the late 1970s. There were two distinctive migration circuits. One is the urban migration circuit of migration between cities and

¹⁹² It is consistent with data in the 1986 Migration Survey that more than half of total immigrants into

towns. Job transfer of state employees and their family members are the largest channels, accounting for about half of total migration. Demobilization, graduate assignment and moving to relatives are complementary channels. The other circuit is migration between urban centers and rural areas. Job recruitment and student enrollment are major channels for migrating into cities, while sending down to countryside is the major reason for going to rural areas.

--*Wuhan Iron and Steel Corporation*

Baotou provides a portrait of migration to a rapid growing industrial city. It is found that key industrial companies or projects, such as Baotou Iron and Steel, had vital imprints on migration and urban population growth. So it is worth looking at more closely at the migration process of large industrial enterprises, which had been the flagships of Chinese industrialization characterized by heavy manufacturing. Wuhan Iron and Steel Corporation (WISC) was one of the largest companies in the country. Mao visited it during the peak of the Great Leap Forward for it was given such an importance in speeding up China's steel production. WISC was set up in 1954 after several years' preparation. Between November of 1954 and the end of 1957, a large number of administrative and demobilized cadres were transferred from all over the country, such as Shanghai, Anshan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan, Jiangxi and so on. It also had full support from other companies in the iron and steel sectors. Anshan Iron and Steel transferred 2900 technicians and skilled workers. Several companies, such as Zhongnan No.2 Company of the Construction Engineering Ministry, the construction and engineering section of Taiyuan Steel Company, and Harbin No.1 Company, were transferred as a whole with all people and machinery to Wuhan. The Central Military Committee ordered demobilization of the Second Division of Railway with thousands of soldiers going to WISC (Wugang zhi bianweihui, 1988:17). At the end of 1957, WISC had 7092 staff and workers.

Baotou were by the job transfer of state employees and their family members.

One observation from this is that centralized planning system was very powerful in mustering resources to build up large scale projects in a short time. Once these projects obtained high priority, consideration of financial costs became secondary to goal of finishing these projects on time. There was a high degree of cooperation among companies within same ministries or industries due to centralized administrative control. As it is discussed in Chapter Three, transferring of resources and personnel was sometimes easier within the same administrative system despite the fact that they could be thousands of kilometers apart. Companies within the same ministries tend to have a close relationship in sharing technology and resources embodied in machinery, skilled workers and professionals. A by-product was the massive migration with whole companies transferred across a great distance. WISC is one example of this, which can be widely observed in almost all large projects, such as Baotou Iron and Steel, the Daqing Oil Field, the Jianghan Oil Field and so on.

At the beginning of 1958, the central government decided to speed up the construction of WISC by assigning it a large construction company in Wuhan, adding 52597 people. During 1958 and 1960, another 8711 people were transferred from companies in the Ministry of Metallurgy and the Ministry of Railway. The Wuhan Municipal Government also transferred the Third Municipal Hospital to WISC. In July of 1958, the Hubei Provincial Government allocated WISC a recruitment quota of 40,000 people. WISC recruited 39,800 workers from both rural and urban areas in Hubei, Hunan and Henan provinces. During the peak of construction, WISC also employed 21,400 temporary workers.

During the readjustment years of the early 1960s, WISC laid off close to 25,000 staff and workers. It also supported enterprises of the Third Front by transferring 3439 people. At the end of 1966, WISC had 39,595 staff and workers. 1967 and 1968 were slow years of recruitment. WISC only increased a few thousand people from demobilization and college graduate assignment.

The early 1970s were also another hiring peak years when the Hubei Provincial Government assigned WISC a recruitment quota of 25,600 and allocation of 3400 demobilized soldiers and college graduates. WISC had close to 70,000 workers and staff in the 1974. In the rest of 1970s, there were frequent institutional mergers and breaking up involving branch companies of WISC and other organizations. WISC also transferred skilled workers to support construction of other companies, such as Baoshan Iron and Steel in Shanghai.

From 1981 to 1985, WISC received 2,650 demobilized soldiers, 5953 college graduates. At the end of 1985, WISC had around 120,000 total workers and staff, of whom most were permanent workers.

--*The City of Wuxi*

Although urban growth was driven largely by industrial expansion in socialist China, not every city had such a dramatic growth as Baotou had. Wuxi represented another type of city, “old consumer” cities developed before socialist China in contrast to the new industrial cities built primarily in the socialist period. Many large cities established before 1949 shared similar characteristics in terms of economic structures. They also experienced similar migration patterns in the beginning of the socialist period. Wuxi had a population size of 481,000 in 1949, quite large at that time. But its population did not experience substantial growth until the economic reforms. For most of the period between 1949 and 1970, Wuxi had net outmigration. Figure 7.4 shows the historical series of in and out migration rates. Like the overall national pattern, migration rates in Wuxi in the 1950s were higher than those in the following decades with the exception of a few special years. These migration rates, around 50 to 80 per thousand, however, were much smaller than those in Baotou, which were close to one thousand. This huge gap demonstrates differential paths of urban growth and central role of industrialization in socialist China.

During the economic recovery of 1950-52, some factories were moved to the inland and many urban residents went back to countryside. Outmigration was slightly larger than immigration. During the first five year plan period between 1953 and 1957, a large number of rural laborers moved into the city, so inmigrants outnumbered outmigrants with the exception of the year 1956. In that year, tens of thousands of workers and students were transferred to the frontier and inland areas to support industrial production and land reclamation. 1958 and 1959 were years when immigration far outnumbered outmigration as large numbers of rural labor migrants moved in during the peak of the Great Leap Forward. After that, Wuxi entered a phase of deurbanization stretching through the 1960s. During 1961 and 1965, there were 131,970 outmigrants, due to layoff of state employees, reduction of the urban population, rustication of urban youths and support for the Third Front Movement. During the three years between 1968 and 1970, outmigrants were as large as 119,351 when educated youths, cadres and urban residents were sent to rural areas. The outmigration in 1969 alone reached 77,741, the largest in Wuxi's history as Figure 7.4 shows. The netmigration during the three years was as much as 92,205.

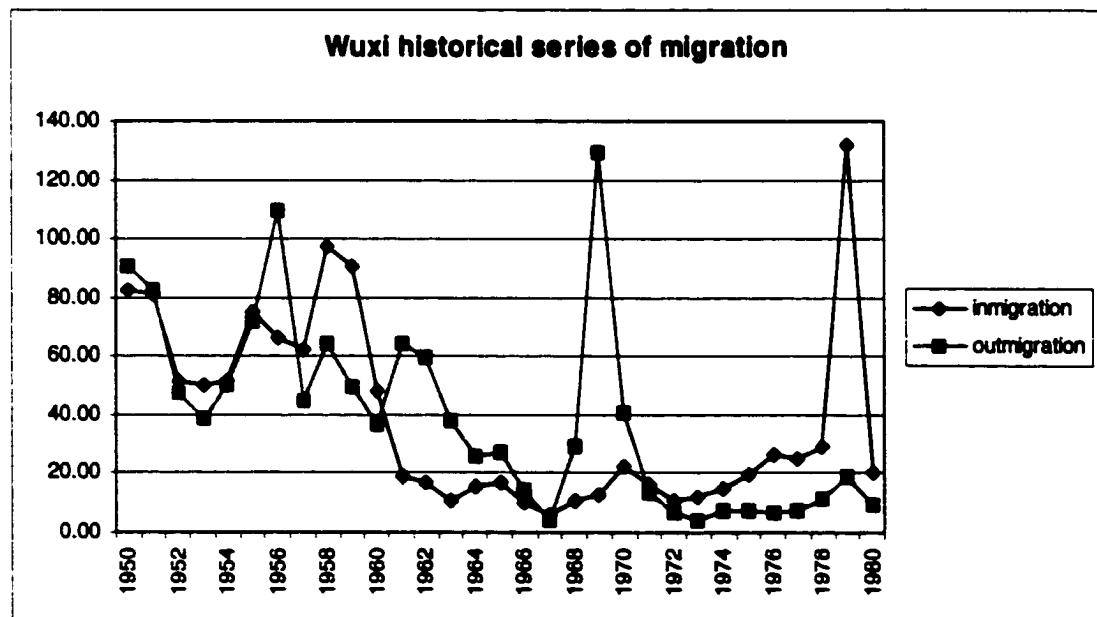


Figure 7.4 Wuxi historical series of migration

Source:

Wuxi Municipality Gazzete

The turning point in Wuxi's migration and urban population change was 1971. Before that, it was largely characterized by de-urbanization, with exception of the Great Leap Forward period. After that, Wuxi entered a new phase of sustainable urban population and net immigration. The largest increase occurred in 1979 as rusticated youths, cadres and their family members came back to Wuxi. This pattern of growth resembled that of Shanghai but was very different from that of Baotou. As we have seen earlier, Baotou had extremely fast urban population growth and net immigration throughout the 1950s. But from early 1970s onwards, its outmigration was slightly higher than immigration. Due to relocation of some large enterprises and outmigration of urban residents to other cities, it did not enjoy sustainable population growth. To certain extent, these two cities are symbols of the whole regions where they are located. The Western and Central regions had been recipients for migration, labor and capital throughout the pre-reform period. Eastern regions, on the other hand, had been the source of technology transfer and migration of skilled workers and personnel. Economic reforms turned this pattern on its head through changes in numerous areas. That will be the topic of next section.

7.1.3 Migration and institutional change

Underlying the changes in overall migration rates and their differential performances in different types of cities are socialist institutions and their changes. As argued in Chapter Three, migration and socialist institutions interacted with each other and co-evolved over time. This section takes a look at the some characteristics of migration and its relationship with institutional change.

The first important issue in analyzing migration in the pre-reform period is that we should not treat it as a homogenous period. There were systematic variations in migration during the 1949-1978 period, which were closely related to the evolution of socialist institutions. Although the pre-reform period is often taken as whole to contrast with the post-reform period, the 1950s were really an extraordinary time, which should be distinguished from

the rest of the pre-reform period. The 1950s witnessed the highest migration rates and socialist transformation of Chinese society. The period of 1960-78, on the other hand, was associated with full grown socialist institutions, economic stagnation, de-urbanization and low migration rates.

The conventional treatment is to use 1958 as the demarcation line to separate the two periods before reform because it was the year for the state's intention to rigorously control urbanward migration by tightening up the *hukou* system (Gui and Liu, 1992). I would like to argue that 1960 is a better option than 1958 in demarcating the pre-reform period for the purpose of migration studies. Although formalization of the *hukou* control was declared by the Ministry of Public Security in 1958, *hukou* control was not rigorously implemented until late 1959 and 1960 when the economic situation went out of control. Actually 1958 and 1959 were the years many cities had their largest immigration consisting mostly of rural laborers. Despite the state's plea at the beginning of 1958, *hukou* control was basically loosened up under the pressure of speeding up economic production. Many state enterprises and local governments even went to seek laborers in the rural areas and far away places due to the perceived labor shortage. At a certain time in 1959, the central government and labor departments proclaimed that unemployment, which had been a major concern of labor planning and administration, was finally eliminated due to the frenzied speed of the Great Leap Forward. The Municipal Labor Bureau of Beijing terminated its labor exchange departments in 1959 since labor exchange service departments (formerly set up for unemployment in the early 1950s) were no longer needed.¹⁹³ Under this circumstance, migration control was not considered necessary and could hardly be implemented even if it was desired since every industrial ministry and state enterprise were seeking laborers. Ironically one year later, these departments were again reestablished for dealing with large number of surplus workers and "redundant" urban population.

¹⁹³ From the archival materials on labor administration and planning in Beijing.

The 1950s was a special period from historical perspective. It was a period of recovery from wars, famines and national disintegration, which lasted for more than a couple hundred years in the late Ching Danasty. It was a period of rapid industrialization that transformed one of the world's oldest agricultural societies. It was also a period of building up socialist institutions, through learning from the former Soviet Union and more importantly, trial and error. Many practices and policies appeared in this period, and later evolved and developed into fuller versions. Almost every practice and institution can be traced back to this period, such as the rustication of educated youths, job replacement by children and relatives, the temporary worker system, the unified assignment system of graduates and demobilized soldiers, the permanent employment system, hukou, the work unit system, and labor planning. The list can go on. In short, the Chinese society and economy were in a state of great change and reconfiguration due to socialist transformations and industrialization. Associated with these changes and reconfiguration were high mobility and emergence of various types of migrations.

Ever since the Communist Party came to power in 1949, it has attempted to regulate the movement of labor (or non-labor) and their families to suit its social and economic plans.¹⁹⁴ It started with sending the “unproductive” population of unemployed and people with a bad class background, such as officials of the former Guomingdang government, capitalists and landlords, to the countryside from the large cities after the Communist Party took control of them (Shen and Tong, 1992). Many people lost their niches as cities were transformed into socialist cities. Many occupations were eliminated, such as prostitution, gambling, black societies, beggars, pawn exchange, money lenders, and homeless people. Harbin was the first city to reallocate these people back to their

¹⁹⁴ Socialist planned migration is not the first and only type of migration sponsored and forced by the Chinese state. There existed both official migration (guanshang qianyi) and self-sponsored migration (zifa qianyi) in most of Chinese history. If self-sponsored migration was for economic benefits or survival, official migration was often for land reclamation, social stability and reinvigoration of local economies, particularly after wars and famines (Huang and Chu, 1993). The socialist planned migration did share some objectives of past state migration, but there are significant differences. Planned migration is the result and component of the socialist system, which has distinctive features, in terms of official ideology, ownership structure and coordination mechanisms. In comparison, past state migration was much less systematically controlled and ideologically based.

origins or to adjacent rural areas in 1948 (Li and Shi, 1986). Beijing and Shanghai, and other cities followed the same approach as they fell into the hands of the Communist Party.

The original reason for sending these people away was mostly out of ideological and political considerations, such as a security of cities and the notion that people should live by their own hands. The top leaders and the Communist Party were expecting fast industrialization and urbanization based on the Soviet experiences. After several years of effort, it became increasingly clear that the state was unable to support the large number of urban residents, and more importantly the constant inflow of rural migrants. Economic considerations started to take on the major role of sending “unwanted” people away.

It also provided basic formats and experiences for de-urbanization throughout the pre-reform period. All the de-urbanization targeted “unwanted and surplus” people in the cities and towns. An interesting twist, as I have discussed in the Chapter Five, was the positive image added to the *shangshan xiāxiāng* Campaign.

At the same time, many new people were moving into cities. The new ruling class, new government officials, the military forces, Communist Party members, took over cities and towns. But the largest inflow was from rural migrants. New industrial cities like Baotou had exceedingly high immigration rates, while old consumer cities like Shanghai also had a substantial inflow of rural migrants. The high immigration rates were accompanied by high outmigration rates. On the average, new industrial cities gained many more migrants than those old consumer cities. For example, most of the migration gain for Baotou in the pre-reform period was in this period. Some new industrial cities, such as Baotou and Daqing, or new industrial districts in old cities, such Qingshan District in Wuhan, grew at a high pace that literally transformed a small city, town, or village into cities with over half-million people in a very short time.

Social reconfiguration and economic growth also greatly stimulated inter-regional migration. In the early 1950s, a large number of military officers and cadres moved to the south (*nanxia*) to take administrative positions in South China, such as in Fujian and Guangxi (Shen and Tong, 1992). But more importantly was the migration associated with economic development. In the early 1950s, Northeastern China had a large demand for skilled workers and personnel due to an early economic start and the Korean war. Skilled workers and professionals from other regions, such as Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Guangdong migrated there in an organized manner. In the first part of the 1950s, most demand was for construction workers since many new industrial projects and towns were built from scratch. The central government held annual work meetings for planning and coordinating construction workers across provinces and regions. As most new industrial projects, such as the so called 156 key industrial projects assisted technically and financially by the Soviet Union, were in the inland, the major direction of inter-regional migration was from the east coast to central and western China. The direct and explicit planning of laborers across regions was enabled by the newly institutionalized socialist planning system, which itself evolved over time and was influenced by migration.

Labor planning in the First Five Year Plan was basically copied from the Soviet Union. Its various components, such as a permanent employment system, wage planning, cadre management and planning, a unified assignment system for college graduates and demobilized soldiers took form around mid 1950s. But its execution was far from effective (Howe, 1971). As discussed in Chapter Three, the Soviet style of planning put a lot of pressure and workload upon administrative staff in labor departments and state enterprises. In addition, many enterprises and individuals simply did not follow labor plans and regulations issued by the labor planning departments. Most noncompliance came from two major sources. One source was the private enterprises, which were not under the direct planning of the state. The other source was the rural migration pouring into cities to seek benefits from the economic boom in the mid 1950s.

The nationalization of private enterprises basically eliminated the private sector by 1957. Most enterprises, except some neighborhood convenience stores, became state enterprises. The work unit system was also fully established, under which state employees were subject to not only economic management but also political control of the party (Lu and Perry, 1997; Walder, 1996). Nationalization, however, did not totally prevent enterprises from illegal hiring that was outside of labor plans. There were still a dozen large private labor exchanges (*renshi*) in Beijing in the late 1950s.¹⁹⁵ Most of the laborers in the labor exchanges were rural migrants coming from nearby provinces. It was reported that some departments of central ministries went to the labor exchanges to hire temporary laborers for odd jobs like making and transporting coal briquettes for winter heating. It was under this background that the state was under pressure to tighten up migration control, particularly through hukou registration and labor planning enforcement. By the early 1960s, every piece of the labor planning system and related institutions fell into place and became well fitted with each other.

After the initial push of industrialization and nationalization in the 1950s, the economy was on a different track characterized by slow economic growth for the next twenty years. The priority of government policies from the perspectives of migration and labor planning shifted greatly. In the 1950s, major challenges came from dealing with “growing pains” and finding solutions for various new problems in a rapidly expanding economy, such as unemployment, labor control, a regional balance of the labor force, migration control, the wage system, and unified assignment. In the second stage of the pre-reform period, the major concern was not how to deal with growth, but rather the lack of it. Over-expansion of the Great Leap Forward opened this period with the sending down millions of urban residents to countryside. This set the tone and became a recurring theme for the next twenty years.

The economic stagnation in most of the 1960s and 1970s aided effectiveness to the management of labor and its movement. In a state of ecstasy and great influx like the

¹⁹⁵ The information came from the archival materials of Beijing Municipal Labor Bureau.

Great Leap Forward, the rigid system of labor planning could not work well. During much of the sixties and seventies, political objectives had higher priority than economic objectives. There was less incentive for the state enterprises to push for more workers and staff. Now and then economic recessions forced the state to dismiss urban population to the countryside to reduce its fiscal burden, which generated downward migrations at a large scale. Examples are the reduction of urban population in 1961-3, sending close to 30 million people away from cities, and sending 17 million urban educated youths to frontiers and rural areas in 1967-79. There was also massive relocation of factories and workers from coastal areas to the "Third Front" in the inland areas due to military concerns.¹⁹⁶ These large scale downward migrations reflected government preferences of migration down the urban hierarchy and away from the coastal areas. They were counterbalanced to a certain extent by the reverse flows, for example, of the "great exchange".¹⁹⁷

During this time, institutions related to labor and migration planning and control were formalized. Migration control through labor planning and the *hukou* system became strictly enforced and migration was closely regulated. Migration channels were dominated by state initiated migration. Table 7.3 shows changes in migration channels revealed by the Shanghai Survey of Officially Registered Migration in 1984 (Gui and Liu, 1992). In 1954, most inmigration and outmigration were self-initiated migration, such as joining relatives, seeking a job and moving with family. Less than 10% of migration at that time was directly initiated by the state. Fast forwarding to 1964, state-initiated migration channels such as demobilization, job transfer and job assignment accounted for more than 30% of total inmigration, while supporting frontiers and job assignment accounted for close to 50% of total outmigration. In 1973, the share of three major state channels of demobilization, job transfer and job assignment took 68% of total inmigration, while job assignment alone took 56% of total outmigration. The domination

¹⁹⁶ Chinese territory was divided into three fronts against perceived possible military invasion. The "Third Front" is in interior China, which is often mountainous and difficult to access (Naughton, 1988). There was also a "Small Third Front", mountainous regions within coastal provinces.

¹⁹⁷ See Schrapping and Chan (1987), Shen and Tong (1992), and Zhao (1989a).

of state migration channels could also be observed in the case of Baotou discussed earlier.

Table 7.3. Changes in migration channels in Shanghai before Reform¹⁹⁸

	1954	%	1964	%	1973	%
Inmigrants						
Joining relatives	45	Joining relatives	33.1	Demobilization	33.1	
Seeking a job	25.9	Demobilization	11.4	Job transfer	25.9	
Moving with family	7.7	Moving with family	11	Joining relatives	9.4	
Job transfer	4.7	Job transfer	9.7	Job assignment	9	
Job assignment	3.4	Job assignment	9	Moving with family	4.1	
Other	13.2	Other	25.9	Other	18.4	
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	
Outmigrants						
Joining relatives	63.9	Supporting frontier	30.3	Job assignment	56.1	
Moving with family	12.1	Job assignment	16.9	Supporting frontier	26.1	
Job transfer	7.9	Joining relatives	15.7	Job transfer	4.2	
Housing assignment	3.9	Education	12.7	Joining relatives	4.2	
Education	2.7	Moving with family	7.8	Education	3.2	
Other	9.6	Other	16.6	Other	6.3	
Total	100	Total	100	Total	100	

Source: adapted from Gui and Liu (1992:545)

7.2 Migration and Institutional Process during the Reform Era

This section will compare migration rates from several national data sets for the post-reform period. It will also examine migration changes in two cities, Shenzhen and Wuhan, each representing a different category of city and region. The last part discusses the institutional changes after reform.

7.2.1 Temporal change

Compared to the 1986 and 1988 surveys and the MPS hukou registration data, the 1990 Census and micro censuses in 1987 and 1995 are more reliable due to their much larger covered population and tremendous resources devoted for data collection and processing.

¹⁹⁸ The Shanghai Survey conducted in 1984 only covered *hukou* migration. Since non-hukou migration was quite small, the numbers should be reasonably representative.

But as I have discussed in the Chapter Six, differences in definitions and coverage of these data sets prevent any straightforward comparison.

The annual immigration rates for all the data sets in the post-reform period are posted on the Table 7.4. It is easy to detect large differences in overall immigration rates between the MPS data and the 1986 Survey with those in the 1987, 1990 and 1995 censuses. MPS migration rates are generally in the range of 15 to 20 per thousand since the late 1970s, except for the height of 24 per thousand in 1979. The 1986 Survey immigration rates increased significantly from the low teens in 1976 to 25 per thousand in 1979. Then it came back to the high teens in the early 1980s and increased again to the lower 20s in mid 1980s. As I discussed in the earlier section, the larger increase of migration in 1979 from the 1986 Survey is related to the concentration of return migration to cities, particularly large cities. The high immigration rates in mid 1980s might be related to a large increase of non-hukou migrants in the last couple of years before the 1986 Survey.

In contrast, the immigration rates (those unadjusted) in censuses are only about one fourth to one half of the MPS rates. The 1987 Survey shows a large increase of immigration rates from 3.6 in 1983 to 6.7, an increase of 88%. The increase is confirmed by both the 1986 Survey and MPS data for the same period, although not as large as that in the 1987 Survey. The increase for the 1986 survey and the MPS migration in the same period is 62% and 27% respectively. The reason I explore this in detail is that such a large increase in a national representative survey is a little surprising for such a short time. It is particularly suspicious given that the number of registered towns more than doubled in the same period (Chan, 1994: 37). Hukou migration only mildly increased in the mid 80s judging from the data of the MPS migration statistics. Non-hukou migration might increase significantly but probably not as much as 88% on a national scale. It is very likely that change in urban reclassification had an effect on migration enumeration in the 1987 Survey.

Table 7.4 Overall immigration rates in post-reform period

Year	MPS	86 survey	87 1%	87 adjusted	1990	90 adjusted	95 1%	MPS adjusted
76	17.54	13.88					7.29	
77	16.56	9.91					6.88	
78	19.24	17.20					8.00	
79	24.17	25.75					10.05	
80	20.11	19.88					8.36	
81	21.21	18.15					8.82	
82	17.24	17.69					7.17	
83	14.98	15.77	3.57	2.20			6.23	
84	17.43	21.80	5.03	3.13			7.24	
85	19.01	26.43	6.72	4.23			7.90	
86	17.52		7.56	4.80	6.25	6.96		7.28
87	18.59		6.45	4.19	6.25	6.96		7.73
88					6.25	6.96		
89					6.25	6.96		
90					6.25	6.96	3.63	
91							3.70	
92	16.3						4.67	6.77
93	15.72						6.25	6.53
94	16.69						8.05	6.94
95	15.65						8.08	6.50

Sources:

MPS hukou migration from zhuang, 1995: 5; 241-283. The 1995 data from quanguo fenxianshi renkou tongji ziliao, 1995:34-5;

1986 rates reconstructed from micro data;

1987 rates from Yang 1994:118 and Zhuang, 1995: 176-7;

1987 adjusted rates are calculated by assuming same ratio between intra- and inter-provincial migration as the 90 census;

1990 census from zhongguo 1990 renkou pucha ziliao vol.1: 16-19 and Zhuang, 1995: 38-9;

1990 adjusted rates are calculated by assuming same percentage of return migration as 95 census to remove the effect of residence vs last move in migration questions;

1995 rates from 1995 1% renkou chouxiang diaocha ziliao: 554

Notes:

1995 rates from Table 7.4 are adjusted by the extrapolation of missing months based on the yearly average.

Then 95 adjusted rates are further adjusted by using the ratio of Tab7-4 and Tab7-5 since Tabe7-5 is more comparable to the 90 census which is also about residence exactly five years ago. Table7-4 is 11.34%

larger than Table7-5.

The 1990 Census does not have information on individual years so I divide total migration by total population in 1990 and by five years to get the average rate, which is 6.25 per thousand for years between 1986 and 1990. If the migration rates were related to the economic cycles as they were before, most likely the migration rates would be highest

in 1988 when the economy was heated and smaller in the next two years. The 1995 Micro Census has information on individual years. The migration rates increased steadily from 3.63 in 1991 to 8.08 per thousand in 1995. If we take a long view of the whole reform period, the immigration rates reflected by the three censuses show only a moderate increase of migration overall in the range of 5-8 per thousand, with some fluctuations in between. This is contradictory to a widely held view that migration has increased dramatically in the 1990s. As discussed in Chapter Six, these national data sets vary in their coverage and definitions. It is necessary to make adjustment in order to compare them on equal basis.

By following the schematic framework laid out in Chapter Six, I will look at the spatial, temporal and *hukou* dimensions in order. Spatial coverage influences overall migration number and rates because the smaller the spatial units the larger number of migrants will be captured.¹⁹⁹ As we learned from the previous discussion on the spatial structure of Chinese migration, a large share of migration can be added and the rates can be bloated if data contain intra-county migration. In order to remove the difference caused by the spatial dimension, I will adjust the data series of MPS hukou data and the 1987 Survey by assuming that they have the same spatial structure as the 1990 Census. Basically, I apply the ratio of intra to inter-provincial migration in the 1990 Census to MPS data and the 1987 Survey and exclude intra-county migration.²⁰⁰ The results are shown in those adjusted rates. This practice is valid since the spatial structure of Chinese migration is very stable as we discussed before. There are dramatic changes in the MPS migration rates, the average rates are down to about 7 per thousand from the formerly higher teens. The reason is that 87% of total migration in the MPS falls in intra-provincial migration and possibly a large part even within counties. The adjusted immigration rates for 1987

¹⁹⁹ I will spare the discussion of urban definitions here since I am only concerned with overall rates not the rural-urban migration streams.

²⁰⁰ The migration rates from the 1987 Survey and the MPS hukou data should be higher because they include intra-county moves. Their shares of intra-provincial migration are much larger than that of the 1990 Census. About 32% of total migration is inter-provincial migration, while it is 21% for the 1987 Survey and 13% for the MPS hukou data. As discussed in Chapter 6, the ratio of inter-provincial and intra-provincial migration is quite stable, so we can apply the ratio of the 1990 Census to these two data sets. By using the same ratio, we can remove the impact of intra-county migration.

survey now are also substantially (35%) lower than the original ones on the assumption of removing intra-county moves. This adjustment shows that a large part of difference between national data sets comes from variance in spatial coverage.

I can test this point further by examining places where the intra-county migration is small. The three extra-large cities, Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin are good candidates to test that. I will examine that in a moment. Before that, let us have a look at the effect of the adjustment on the 1987 Survey.

The first issue in the temporal dimension concerns the effect of the migration question of residence versus the last move. As discussed earlier, the 1995 survey shows that the two methods of survey have a difference of 11.34%. Those missed in the residence question are returned migrants who had the same resident place as five years ago yet they moved away during the five year period. Since only the 1990 census used the resident question, I should adjust the 1990 series upwards assuming the same extent of return migration in 1985-90 as that in 1990-95. The adjusted rates are listed in the table.

The next issue in the temporal dimension is to consider the attrition effect of outmigration and multiple moves. Since the time period is only five years (for censuses) and fairly recent, I should expect a much smaller effect by these factors. As before, I cannot estimate the effect of outmigration, but I can estimate the impacts of multiple moves. In the post-reform period, there are two types of return migrants. One are hukou migrants who, for example, went away to study or to join the army and then came back in three or four years. Another are non-hukou migrants, the majority from rural areas, who worked in the urban areas and returned to their origins after a few years. In the 1995 survey, it seems that the last group is more important. The return rates are close to 20% for counties, 14% for towns and 6.5% for cities as destinations on the national level.²⁰¹ Hukou registration should definitely be larger than the censuses since it records every

²⁰¹ The 1995 Survey has both types of questions, i.e., question on the last move and question on residence. Thus the difference between the two can be estimated and used for the reference for other data sets.

move while the censuses only record at most half of multiple moves (if the question is of the last move). But judging from the smaller extent of multiple moves in cities and towns, hukou migration statistics are likely biased upwards by only about 5-15% due to multiple moves.²⁰²

The last dimension of the framework is the hukou dimension. It should be more important in the post-reform period than the earlier period because of the increasing mobility of rural residents. The share of non-hukou migrants increased over time. In the 1987 Survey, 32.8% of total migrants were non-hukou migrants. In the 1990 Census, it was 46.3%. There is no direct figure from the published tabulations of the 1995 Survey. But it can be estimated indirectly. The 1995 Survey recorded a total migration of 33.2 million including both hukou and non-hukou migrants during 1990-1995.²⁰³ Assuming that hukou migration is off 10% of the level of the 1990 Census as suggested by the MPS data, the 1995 Survey should have a total of 17 million of hukou migrants and 16.2 million of non-hukou migrants.²⁰⁴ Another table in the published data of the 1995 Survey recorded about 29 million non-hukou migrants residing at the survey place. These non-hukou migrants could have come at anytime before the survey. Assuming 40% of them came before 1990 as was the case in the 1987 Survey, there would be 17.4 million non-hukou migrants between 1990-1995. These two estimates are quite close. With an estimated 17 million non-hukou migrants, the share of non-hukou migrants of total migration is about 50%, only marginally higher than in the late 1980s.

I have made adjustments to the migration rates from several national data sets according to these three dimensions. The readjusted rates are listed in the Table 7.5. If we compare the adjusted rates from these data sets, we will see that the differences between them are no longer incomprehensible. For example, MPS hukou migration rates are much closer

²⁰² The impact of multiple moves was much larger for the migration series in the pre-reform period.

²⁰³ The data is from the original Table 7-3 in published data of the 1995 Survey.

²⁰⁴ Total number of non-hukou migrants and its percentage in total migrants could be easily tabulated from the micro data set if it is available.

to the rates derived from censuses, although they still seem larger than they should be.²⁰⁵

It seems that the spatial coverage is essential in explaining the difference in various data sets in post-reform period, unlike the case in the pre-reform period, where the temporal dimension is more important.

Table 7.5 Inter-provincial immigration rates after reform (per thousand)

Year	MPS	1986 survey	1988 survey	88 adjusted by age and sex	1987_1%	1990	1995_1%
76	2.33	4.12	4.41		3.25		
77	2.20	2.15	2.92		2.15		
78	2.56	5.35	4.06		2.99		
79	3.21	7.33	3.51		2.59		
80	2.67	3.77	3.76		2.77		
81	2.82	4.17	3.74		2.75		
82	2.29	4.13	4.13		3.04	0.77	
83	1.99	3.45	2.84		2.09	1.02	
84	2.32	4.08	3.24		2.39	1.31	
85	2.53	5.37	3.28		2.41	1.61	
86	2.33		5.52		4.07	1.36	2.02
87	2.47		5.31		3.91		2.02
88			4.57		3.36		2.02
89							2.02
90							2.02
91							0.93
92	2.06						1.18
93	2.17						1.57
94	2.36						2.03
95	2.31						2.03

Sources:

MPS data 1992-95 from zhuang, 1995: 5; 241-283. The 1995 data from quanguo fenxianshi renkou tongji ziliao, 1995:34-5; rates for other years recalculated by applying average percentage of inter-provincial migration in the 92-5 period to previous period, which is 13.3%.

MPS data is calculated by multiplying gross migration rates with inter-provincial share, which is 13.3%; 1986 rates reconstructed from micro data;

1988 survey rates recalculated from Liang and White, 1996: 379;

1988 data adjusted by the skewness of age and sex based on the 1990 Census with a combined ratio of 1.36;

1987 survey, Yang 1994:118 and Zhuang, 1995: 176-7;

1995 rates recalculated assuming constant ratio between inter and intra-provincial migration over the five year period based on Table 7-5 in 1995 tabulated data.

It is possible to have a sense of overall change by putting these adjusted rates together.

First, there was a dramatic increase of migration in the middle part of 1980s from 1984 to

²⁰⁵ Since non-hukou migrants account for about half of total migration in the period 1985-95, hukou migration rates should be about half of the migration rates from censuses. After adjustment, hukou migration rates are about the same size as the rates from censuses. Factors like multiple moves would move hukou rates upward but not more than 15%. So there is still some discrepancy to account for after the adjustments.

1988. Looking at the adjusted rates for the 1987 and 1990 censuses, overall migration at the inter-county level more than doubled in this period. Then it slowed down in the last couple of years of the 1980s and the first couple of years of the 1990s. Migration steadily recovered to the level of late 1980s and even exceeded it by just a little. Overall, the scale of migration in the first half of the 1990s was similar to that in the late 1980s. In hindsight, the overwhelming response of the media and academia to the "tidal waves of rural migrants" in the 1990s was not supported by the data from national representative censuses and micro censuses. Many of the estimate and projects are based on small surveys, which might not as representative as the censuses.

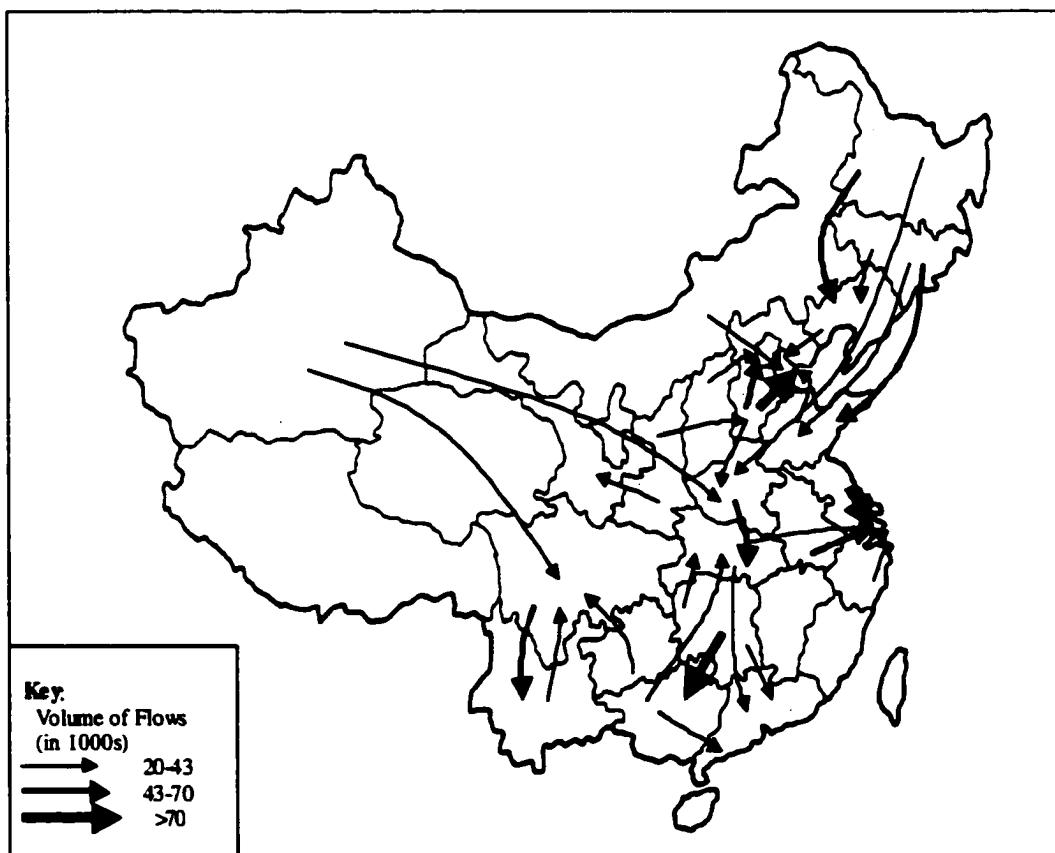


Figure 7.5 The 30 Largest Inter-provincial Flows of Hukou Migration in 1985-90

7.2.2 Spatial patterns

Having looked at the temporal change, let us examine spatial patterns of migration in the reform period. I will analyze the spatial patterns through two aspects, i.e., inter-provincial migration patterns and migration along the administrative hierarchy.

The largest 30 inter-provincial migration flows are displayed in Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.6. A quick skim shows that planned migration has short and diversified flows while unplanned migration is more centralized and has large long distance flows, like those from Sichuan Province. That impression can be confirmed by using indexes to measure the concentration of migration flows. One index to measure concentration is to calculate the percentage of the 30 largest migration flows of the total migration. The other is to estimate the percentage of inter-provincial migration in total migration. If we look at the share of the 30 largest migration flows, it is roughly 8% for the hukou migration and twice that for non-hukou migration. If we look at the share of inter-provincial migration in total migration, it is 27% for hukou migration versus 37% for non-hukou migration. Both indexes confirm that hukou migration is much more diversified and localized than the non-hukou migration. Only a little more than a fourth of its total migration occurred across provinces. Within inter-provincial migration, migration flows are more evenly distributed with the largest 30 flows only accounting for 8%.

Another characteristic of hukou migration is its more localized pattern. One can identify several major circles of hukou migration centered at usually an extra-large city. The North China circle includes Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, and Inner Mongolia centered on Beijing. A Northeast China circle includes Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, and Shandong with no obvious center. East China has Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, and Jiangxi, centered on Shanghai. Central China includes Hubei, Hunan, and Henan, centered on Wuhan. The Southeast China circle has Guangdong and Guangxi, centered on Guangzhou. The last

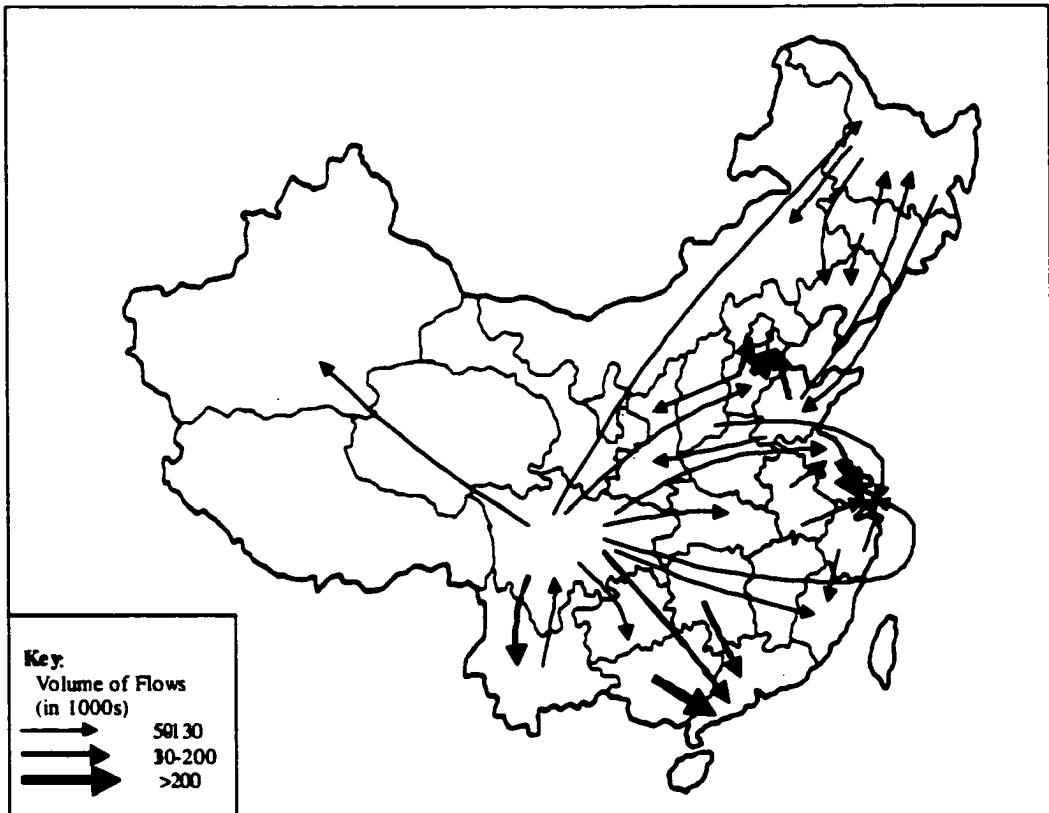


Figure 7.6 The 30 Largest Inter-provincial Flows of Non-hukou Migration in 1985-90

circle in the southwest includes Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunan. These regional patterns were broken in the non-hukou migration with migration flows across these circles. These circles correspond roughly to the large administrative regions (*da xingzheng qu*) or large military regions (*da junqu*).²⁰⁶

There are a number of plausible factors to account for these localized regional patterns. The first, directly related to planning, are the explicit government policies of restricting cross-regional labor movement. There is a clear list of ranking preferences when it comes to hiring. It is preferable to adjust the workers internally (*nebu tiaoji*) among state enterprises. If the need for laborers cannot be met and new employees are to be hired, there is a clear preference of local residents and non-agricultural hukou holders over non-

local and agricultural hukou holders (Zhao, 1989). The decision making power at the large scale of inter-provincial labor migration is centralized at the hands of the Ministry of Labor and the State Planning Commission.²⁰⁷ Local governments cannot make independent decisions involving cross regional movement of a large number of state employees. In addition to the explicit policies, the complicated administrative procedures and regulations naturally discourage both cadres and perspective migrants from attempting cross regional migration. There are more administrative barriers for migration across administrative regions or systems, as we discussed earlier in the administrative hierarchy of "lines and pieces" (*tiaotiao kuaikuai*).²⁰⁸ A self-initiated migration is potentially very disruptive for the planning system and bureaucratic coordination since everything related needs to be changed accordingly.

Another reason for the localized patterns is the centralized administrative system and its spatial structure. On the top of administrative hierarchy are the three centrally administered cities, i.e., Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, especially Beijing with the largest resources and decision making power. They are the "world cities" in the Chinese world. Second to them are provincial capitals which happen to be the center of large administrative regions or macro regions, such as Xi'an, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and Shenyang. Although large administrative regions were removed in mid 1950s, they are still the cities with many large state enterprises and especially higher education facilities. This is probably the most important factor in forming those regional migration circles in the post reform period as education related hukou migration dominates. We will see that in a moment when we look at the spatial patterns of specific migration channels.

Regional culture is also a relevant factor. Well known is the diversity of Chinese regions in terms of dialects, food, customs, climate and physical landscapes. This intra-Han

²⁰⁶ It also parallels William Skinner's macro regions (1985) . It is not clear, though, what are the implications of these similarities.

²⁰⁷ Just like investment control, there was a threshold over which local government needed the approval of the central government. The threshold often changed depending on situations and government perceptions. It was once 10 persons in the early 1960s and then relaxed to 50 in the mid 1960s.

²⁰⁸ Classical migration theories emphasize physical barriers in restricting migration. In socialist China, administrative barriers are probably more important.

ethnicity has important implications on migration through social network and cultural similarity (Goodman, 1995; Honig, 1992). Migrants tend to stay in places sharing similar regional cultures. Informants in my interviews often refer to food customs as their reason for choosing their current locations.²⁰⁹ Sedimenting upon layers of past migration are much denser social networks within regions than outside regions. These social networks in return reinforce the tendency to move within the macro regions (Massey, 1993).

Hukou migration is highly clustered spatially. The three centralized administered cities, Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai alone account for 71% of net planned migration (Table 7.6). If we include Hubei, Guangdong, Sichuan and Xi'an that are centers of large regions, the share increases to 91%. Due to their special position in the central planning system, all seven provinces have positive net planned migration while most provinces are negative. The extent of spatial clustering varies according to migration channels. I select four migration reasons to look at the provincial distribution of inter-provincial inmigration. They are job transfer, job assignment, study and training and family co-migration (Table 7.6). Together they account for 82% of hukou migration. Education-related migration, i.e., study and training and job assignment, is more concentrated than employment related migration. Similar to net migration, the big three cities alone account for 61% of total college migration.²¹⁰ In other words, 6 out of 10 college students who study in other provinces will end up in the three big cities.²¹¹ That ratio increases to 9 out of 10 if we include other regional centers. After graduation, a certain percentage of college students will move to other provinces. According to the 1990 Census, about 61% of them will end up in the big three and other regional centers. In contrast, job transfer and related family migration are more spatially diverse, with all regional centers accounting for only 36% of total job transfer. Related family migration has a similar

²⁰⁹ The differences in food customs and climate between North and South China are particularly large, creating an invisible cultural barrier in Chinese internal migration. In comparison, the often-cited Qinling Mountain and Huaihe River physical barrier is rather weak in restricting migration.

²¹⁰ Most study migration is migration due to college enrollment. Study in secondary school can rarely be permitted as a reason to migrate to another province.

²¹¹ Mostly likely in a couple of large cities in these provinces, such as Wuhan, Xi'an, Chengdu and Chongqing.

percentage 34%. An irony in the spatial pattern of hukou migration is that the government has had explicit policies to control immigration into the large cities, many of which are also top administrative centers. But the fact is that central and regional administrative centers have kept on adding skilled professionals and highly educated personnel.

Table 7.6. Spatial decomposition of hukou migration

	In	Out	Net	Job transfer	Job assignment	Study or training	Migration with family
Beijing	3288	958	2330	384	536	1878	267
Tianjing	4873	488	4385	319	761	2365	217
Hebei	1062	3097	-2035	410	129	39	251
Shanxi	301	1157	-856	80	34	3	45
Neimengu	342	1177	-835	82	73	24	36
Liaoning	1349	1739	-390	321	123	369	334
Jilin	361	1516	-1155	160	73	2	80
Heilongjiang	490	2602	-2112	119	75	10	89
Shanghai	3612	768	2844	793	959	630	387
Jiangsu	1709	2080	-371	757	199	3	437
Zhejiang	1066	1065	1	494	171	10	258
Anhui	850	1479	-629	452	88	5	211
Fujian	456	822	-366	150	116	22	114
Jangxi	854	903	-49	203	109	176	78
Shandong	2587	1574	1013	1008	420	30	833
Henan	2411	1941	470	1039	161	28	856
Hubei	2168	1937	231	517	113	989	351
Hunan	1166	2224	-1058	483	214	4	253
Guangdong	2814	1220	1594	1013	604	140	606
Guangxi	1256	1003	253	1039	55	2	56
Sichuan	2150	1971	179	747	208	517	401
Guizhou	115	830	-715	41	23	5	21
Yunan	848	862	-14	371	153	11	157
Shaenxi	2100	1499	601	403	673	685	245
Gansu	1054	972	82	130	106	6	403
Qinghai	278	619	-341	14	38		149
Ningzia	104	401	-297	15	28		30
Xinjiang	203	1777	-1574	30	44	6	44
Big Three			0.7139	0.129	0.359	0.612	0.121
Top Five			0.9084	0.361	0.613	0.905	0.343

Data source: 1990 1% migrant subsample

Notes: "the Big Three" are Beijing, Tianjing and Shanghai. "the Top Five" also include Guangdong and Shandong.

The impact of the planning system on the spatial patterns of migration is not limited to inter-provincial migration. It is also reflected in migration at lower spatial and administrative scales. The spatial clustering is replicated at lower scales, such as the case of Wuxi, discussed in Chapter 3.

A direct result is that hukou migration decreases down the administrative hierarchy. Since administrative centers tend to be concentrated in cities and towns, the mobility of the urban population is much higher than its rural counterpart. The higher mobility of urban population is not limited to planned migration but applies to overall mobility as well. Despite the general perception that the rural population is very mobile, the migration rate for urban population is still much higher than for the rural population even in the 1990s. The 1990 Census shows that the migration rate for the non-agricultural hukou population is four times that of the agricultural population (Zhang, 1995). The data from the 1987 and 1995 National Population Surveys reveal even larger difference between migration rates of urban and rural residents. Annual migration rates for city residents are 11.6 and 17.1 per thousand in the 1987 Survey and 1995 Survey respectively, compared to 2.1 and 2.7 per thousand for the rural residents.²¹² Data from individual cities also confirm this difference in mobility between urban and rural areas. According to hukou migration statistics of Baotou City in Inner Mongolia during 1974-1982, the migration rate for population in the urban district was 69 per thousand, roughly three times those of suburbs and the suburban county, which are 25 and 23 only (Yue, 1983).

The planning system should also have implications on the distribution of hukou migration channels along the urban hierarchy. Migration channels are differentially influenced by socialist planning, for example, job assignment is more tightly integrated to planning than

²¹² Annual migration rates are averages for the five year period 1982-7 and 1990-5 and calculated from the data in Zhuang (1995) and 1995 Survey (1997). Migration data for the 1995 are from the question in migration questionnaire and tabulated data table 4, which asks whether any move is made. So the 1987 Survey and 1995 Survey are comparable in this sense.

marriage migration. So we expect that job assignment, job transfer and study and training should be over-represented in the urban centers relative to towns and countryside. The 1986 Survey and 1990 Census both confirm this expectation.

Table 7.7 and Table 7.8 show the composition of migration channels for migrants from city, town and countryside calculated from the 1986 Survey and the 1990 Census micro data sets. Table 7.7 is only for planned migration. "Job Transfer" and "Job Assignment" account for more than half of total migration for migrants coming from cities and only 20% for migrants coming from the countryside. Town and countryside are over-represented in categories of "Studying and Training" and "Joining the Relatives". The 1986 Survey shows similar results. "Job Transfer" and "Job Assignment" take about 40% of total migration for city and town as migration origins, compared to 10 % for the countryside as migration origin.

Table 7.7 Urban hierarchy and migration channels in the 1990 Census

	Job transfer assignment	Job assignment in industry & business	Study or training	Living with relatives & friends	Retirement resignation	Family co-migration	Marriage	Other	Total
City	27.8	25.2	0.5	17.9	2.5	3.8	13.0	1.1	8.2 100.0
Town	26.1	9.0	0.9	31.2	5.1	1.9	15.7	2.0	8.1 100.0
Countryside	13.2	6.1	1.0	34.2	9.7	1.6	16.9	1.8	15.3 100.0

Sources: 1990 Census 1% migrant sub sample calculated only planned migration by author.

Table 7.8 Urban hierarchy and migration channels during 1978-86

	Job transfer assignment	Job Studying or training	Join relatives	Demobilized	Return from rustication	Recruitmen t and danti	Marriage	Family	Other
City	21.8	19.6	4.0	5.0	10.3	0.7	2.5	6.6	21.1 8.3
Town	28.1	8.3	5.7	7.1	4.8	1.7	6.8	5.0	24.5 8.0
Countryside	8.5	2.7	4.7	9.8	2.0	10.1	14.5	10.9	23.1 13.7

Sources: 1986 Migrant Micro Data calculated for the period 1978-1986 by author.

There are some notable differences between Table 7.7 and Table 7.8, which are caused by temporal coverage of the 1986 Survey and the 1990 Census. "Study and Training" is a relative insignificant channel of hukou migration accounting only around 7% of total migration as shown in Table 7.8. It is around high the 20s for the 1990 Census in Table 7.7. This is consistent with previous analysis showing the increasing importance of higher

education related migration in the 1980s. Table 7.8 covers the period of 1978-1986 while 1990 Census covers 1985-1990. Another significant difference is also related to the internal change of hukou migration. “Recruitment and dinti (Replacement)”, “Return from Rustication” and “Marriage Migration” are the principle channels of rural urban migration in Table 7.8, while “Studying and Training” replaces them as the dominant channel to move to urban areas within the hukou migration. This is consistent with the general decline of state enterprises and stagnation of state recruitment since the mid 1980s. In short, there are distinctions in hukou migration channels between migrants coming from cities and towns and those from the countryside. It also shows the changes of planned migration channels for different types of urban origins over time.

7.2.2 A tale of two cities

As in the discussion for the pre-reform period, I also select two cities for the post-reform period. Wuhan represents old industrial cities dominated by the state sector, while Shenzhen represents new industrial cities driven mostly by non-state sectors in the coastal region.

--Shenzhen

Shenzhen is the embodiment of economic reforms and opening to the outside world. It will therefore be very interesting to examine its migration process and changes.

Economic growth is still the most important factor in determining the size of inmigration. The Shenzhen figure shows the close relationship between the growth rate of inmigration and the growth rate of GDP (Figure 7.7). Before the mid 1980s, both GDP and inmigration had very high growth rates due to small bases. They plunged to a trough in 1986 due to an economic slowdown. But they shot up two years later in the economic overheating with both growing at 60% a year. It was very dramatic particularly for population and migration change. It was not true for the next economic boom in 1994. Although the GDP grew at around 40%, the growth of non-hukou population was only about 15%. The smaller growth of the non-hukou population might be caused by the

increasingly large base of population, or by the upgrading of Shenzhen's industrial structures.

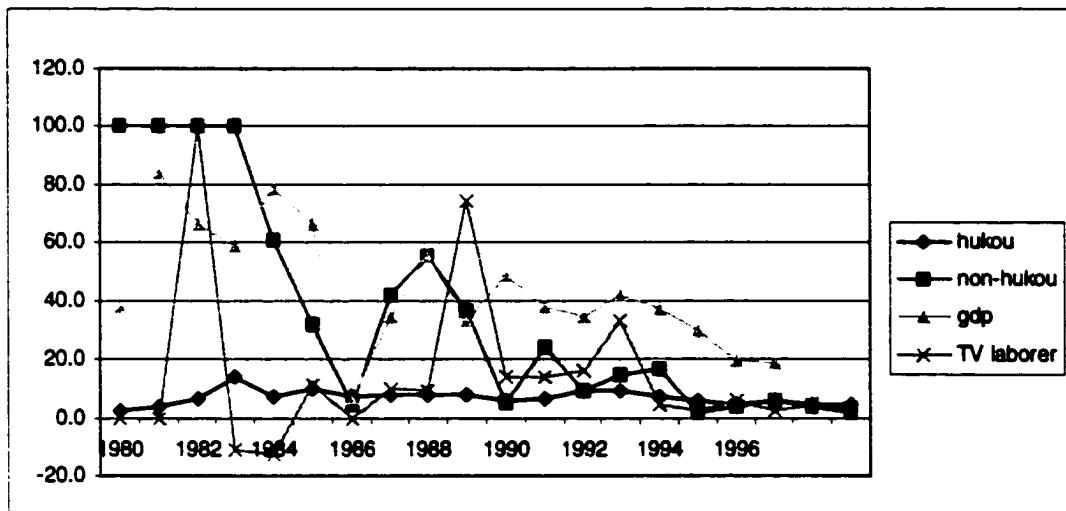


Figure 7.7 Shenzhen population and economic growth

Sources: Shenzhen tongji xinxi nianjian 2000

As anywhere else in the country, Shenzhen's population consists of two parts, those with hukou and those without hukou. There was dramatic difference between the two over time. Non-hukou population had much higher growth rates. It was constantly over 100% per year in the early years of Shenzhen's development. As a matter of fact, it had a yearly growth rate of 51.7% on average during 1979-1997. In contrast, hukou population rarely grew in double digits. Despite being a forerunner of reforms in the labor management, the Shenzhen government still used labor planning and the hukou system to control the growth of permanent residents. Immigration through formal government channels was much less than that through less formal channels. For example, the labor departments in Shenzhen allowed about 90000 workers and cadres into Shenzhen through job transfer, or about 5000 a year during 1979-1997 (Shenzhen Labor Bureau, 1998:30). In contrast, the growth of non-hukou labor has been at the scale of several hundreds of thousands every year.

Although the state sector contributed greatly in the early stage of the Shenzhen's miracle, it was foreign enterprises and private business that drove its economy. In 1999, workers and staff in state units accounted for only 11% of total employment, down dramatically from 50% in 1988 (Shenzhen tongji xinxian nianjian, 2000:102). Laborers in town and village enterprises accounted for 43% of total employed in 1999. Most of them worked in the manufacturing sector and were migrants from other places. In 1999, outside migrants were the majority of the total population in Shenzhen. They were about 2.85 million out of 4.05 million total population, roughly 70%. Also because of the presence of large numbers of migrants, the labor participation rate was 73%, much higher than in other places.

There is a claim that up to 100 million rural migrants roamed the country in the 1990s. And the number was on the rise around the mid 1990s. Early analysis using 1995 micro census data shows that the migration increase was actually less dramatic in the 1990s compared to the 1980s. Shenzhen is at the heart of the economic boom in terms of both policy and regions. Statistics show that not only non-hukou residents and Township and Village laborers increased greatly in the 1980s percentage wise. Their increases were the largest even in absolute terms. Coming into the 1990s, the rate of increase slowed down greatly, although the overall size of migrants was the largest in recent years.

Township and Village laborers are those working in the villages outside the Special Economic Zone, i.e., in the suburban districts of Shenzhen. Most of them were rural migrants working in small foreign enterprises, mostly Hong Kong and Taiwanese businesses.

As we see in Table 7.9, migration labor accounted for more than two thirds of the total labor force in Shenzhen. It is quite unique since only some other cities and counties in the Pearl River Delta have similarly high ratios. Normally migrants are a much smaller percentage of the total labor force. For large cities, it is around 25% (Li and Hu, 1990).

Even for the developed South Jiangsu areas, outside labor accounted for less than 15% of the total labor force.

Table 7.9 Structure of Migrant Labor Force in Shenzhen in 1997

	Sum	Female	Rural	Primary school	High school	Post-secondary
Outside Guangdong	1181437	66.1	56.7	9.5	77.6	12.9
Guangdong	1035051	65.0	57.8	10.9	89.1	0.0
Total	2216488	65.6	57.2	10.1	83.0	6.9

Sources:

Shenzhen tongjiu, 2000: 533

Note: all numbers are percentage except Sum

In addition to the extremely large share of the outside labor force, there are some other unique characteristics of migrant labor in Shenzhen. First is the unusual sex ratio.

Normally males dominate migration streams in developing countries (Nelson, 1970; Wu, 1995). In contrast, two thirds of migrants in Shenzhen are female. This is caused by the nature of the labor market in Shenzhen. Most of the jobs are manufacturing jobs in the electronic and textile sectors, which desire the "nimble" fingers of young female workers. The second unique characteristic is the large percentage of migrants coming from other provinces. Migrant laborers from outside Guangdong province are about 53%, more than half of total migrants. It is very different from the average situation, where inter-provincial migrants normally account for one third to one fourth of total migrants (See Chapter Six). This is related to the fact that Shenzhen is at the center of one of the largest national labor markets. The third characteristic is the higher percentage of migrants from urban areas. According to Table 7.9, about 43% of migrants came from urban areas in 1997. Normally, a larger share of migrant laborers comes from rural areas.

The last is a very large percentage of migrants from other provinces with post-secondary education. In the average situation, most migrant laborers have only a junior high or senior high school education. For migrants coming from outside Guangdong, about 13% have a post-secondary education. This percentage is much higher than the national

average of 1 to 2 percentage of population with a college education. Combined with the last point, we find that many migrants to Shenzhen were from urban areas and with advanced degrees and mostly likely with non-agricultural hukou. In other words, many young and educated urbanites migrated to Shenzhen without going through formal state migration channels that are involved with hukou conversion. The national labor market after reform consisted primarily of rural migrants who were outside of the direct allocation of labor by the state. The recent data in Shenzhen also show that labor market is growing into the planned economy by including those highly educated, non-agricultural hukou residents.

--*Wuhan*

Wuhan represents another type of city and region quite different from Shenzhen. Situated in the center of Mainland China, Wuhan enjoys tremendous locational advantages by being the largest port on the Changjiang River and having several railways and airlines going through. It is also the largest city in central China in terms of population, education facilities and economic power. Despite Wuhan's economic strength and potentials, it has been lagging behind most coastal cities, not to mention Shenzhen, in economic performance and reforms. Wuhan's unremarkable performance has been attributed to the domination of state heavy manufacturing sectors, unfavorable policies relative to coastal areas and local politics (Solinger, 1999). Wuhan also became a representative of central and west China in bargaining for more favorable policies. It is therefore very interesting to look into the migration patterns associated with the city after reforms.

The population with hukou registration in Wuhan City Proper had sustained growth after reform, increasing from 3.3 million in 1978 to 5.3 million in 1998 (Wuhan nianjian, 1999:155). On average, the city added 50,000 or 60,000 people per year. In 1996, its population jumped about 70,000, which was uncharacteristic of its past growth and very likely caused by urban reclassification. Without counting the increase by urban reclassification, Wuhan's population increased about 50% in the twenty year period after

reform (see Figure 7.8). This is quite modest compared to close to four-fold increase in hukou population in Shenzhen in the same period. There is no systematic data on non-hukou residents in the same period. According to my interview in 1998, the estimate from the Municipal Labor Bureau was 800,000 rural labor migrants. The estimate is on the conservative side given the elusive nature of rural migrants. Some upward adjustment put non-hukou residents at a little over one million. This is roughly in line with other large cities, where rural labor migrants accounted for one fifth to one third of hukou population (Li and Hu, 1989).

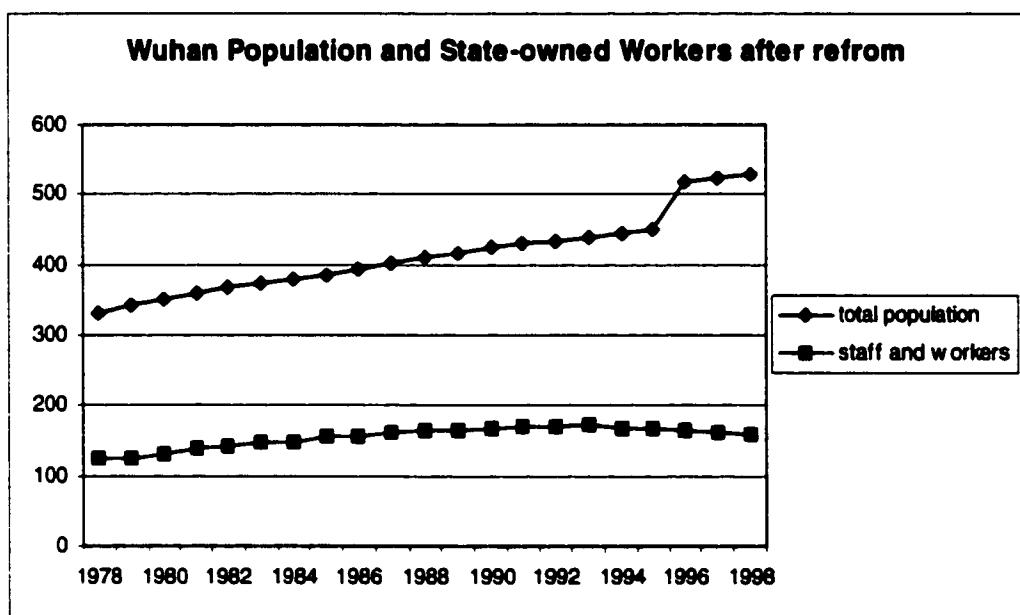


Figure 7.8 Wuhan population and state-owned workers after reform

Along with the moderate changes in total population and workers and staff in state sector, changes in hukou migration in and out of Wuhan are also quite limited. From hukou migration statistics from 1980 to 1989, there was a slight drop in the total number of immigrants during the period.²¹³ The 1980 and 1981 were special years that witnessed relatively high mobility caused by job transfer, recruitment and demobilization. The total immigrants were just over 100,000 in 1980, of whom 26% came from recruitment, 12%

²¹³ I would like to thank Yunyan Yang for providing this data.

from job transfer, 15% from student enrollment, 9% from job replacement and 7% from family co-migration. The number of inmigrants dropped a little bit to 88,000 in the next year, with a substantial drop in recruitment to 6%, and increases in job transfer, family co-migration, and military enlistment. For the rest of the 1980s, inmigrants were around 70,000 to 80,000. But its internal structure changed greatly. The importance of work-related migration declined while non-work related migration became dominant. Job transfer and family comigration together accounted for only 10% in 1989. Student enrollment accounted for 51% and "*sitou yibao*" (family migration) for 15% in the same year.

Outmigration went through similar changes in the composition although the overall number did not change at all. Through the 1980s, total outmigrants were around 40,000 with the only exception of 1981, which had less than 20,000 outmigrants. The dominant channels of outmigration were job transfer, retirement, demobilization and college graduate assignment. Reformed labor also accounted for over 20% of total outmigrants in 1981 and 1983. But in the late 1980s, college graduate assignment alone accounted for over 60% of total outmigrants. The second largest channel, reformed labor was 8% and the next largest channel of job transfer was 7%. Putting in and out migration together, the net inmigration into Wuhan decreased as a result of decrease in inmigration. It dropped from 60,000 in the 1980 to about 27,000 in 1989, but recovered to around 40,000 in the late 1990s.

This pattern continued to the late 1990s according to my field interview in the Wuhan Municipal Planning Commission. In 1997, job transfer brought in 4000 people, family comigration 1100, *sitou yibao* over 10,000, student enrollment 60,000, demobilization 3000, and reformed labor 1800. Student enrollment migration thus accounted for about 75% of total hukou inmigration. College graduate assignment also accounted for the lion's share of total outmigration. The total netmigration is about 43,000, a little larger than the figure in 1989.

Although we lack systematic data on non-hukou migrants in Wuhan, a recent survey does provide some interesting information on the characteristics and structure of non-hukou migrants in Wuhan in 1998 (Yang, Chan and Liu, 2001).²¹⁴ Out of the sample of 1645 non-hukou migrants, 59% were male and 67% married. This is very different from Shenzhen where non-hukou migrants were predominantly female and non-married, as we just have seen. It is Shenzhen that is the exception rather than the other way around. Notice that two thirds of migrants were married, which was much higher than before when most rural migrants were unmarried and young in the 1980s. It might be an indication that many migrants migrated in families rather than on their own. Most of the non-hukou migrants were in their twenties and early thirties, with a junior high school education and working in the manufacturing and service sectors.

Another interesting observation is the origin of non-hukou migrants. In Shenzhen, more than half of non-hukou migrants came from other provinces and close to half from urban areas. In Wuhan, however, 80% of them came from within Hubei Province and 78% from rural areas. Most of migrants came to Wuhan from a fairly close distance. If one draws a circle with a radius of 160 kilometers, it will include basically most of migrants within the province. In other words, there are few migrants from central and western Hubei province, where the natural resources and living standard are not as good as those in eastern Hubei. People there should have more incentives to migrate but did not do so likely because of lack of resources, such as networks, knowledge and transportation. In general, Wuhan is only a regional labor market as compared to Shenzhen, which is a national labor market.

7.2.3 Migration process and institutional change

In this section, I will look more closely at the changes of socialist migration and underlying reasons for migration after reform. I will search for junctions between planned migration and broader structural changes in a transitional socialist economy.

²¹⁴ The survey was conducted by Chan and Yang in 1998.

Despite the consistent growth of the economy, hukou migration dropped from its peak in the late 1970s and stagnated at around the high teens (per thousand) in much of the 1980s and early 1990s. Compared to the 1950s the links between hukou migration and economic growth seem broken after reform. Rapid economic growth had not been translated into high immigration rates of hukou migration. Also hukou migration was not very sensitive to the economic fluctuations, unlike the synchronic wild swings in the 1950s. One thing that helps explain the persistent stagnation of hukou migration is the rise of rural labor migration. Rural labor migration in some large cities increased several-fold since the mid 1980s (Li and Hu, 1992; Zhang, 1989). One can argue that rural urban migration replaced planned migration as the dominant source of labor supply for economic growth and planned migration stepped aside to assume subordinate roles. This quick explanation captures the major element of migration change in the post-reform era but may obscure the changes within hukou migration and links between the two.

Table 7.10 Shifting channels of hukou migration in early 1980s

	1954-77	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Job transfer	22.6	17.7	14.5	18.9	20.5	17.1	19.7	20.5	16.8	19.6
Job assignment	6.5	5.4	2.7	6.4	8.0	12.6	13.3	12.6	13.7	13.1
Studying or training	1.8	3.3	1.6	2.5	2.5	3.5	6.3	6.1	10.7	7.1
Moving to the relatives	8.3	6.0	4.4	4.5	6.4	4.5	5.6	7.0	6.7	6.9
Demobilized	6.3	6.7	3.7	7.3	8.6	8.1	7.6	4.3	3.9	5.1
Return from rustication	3.8	17.2	16.7	8.0	3.6	1.4	1.4	0.3	0.1	0.3
Retirement	0.7	1.2	1.0	1.9	2.1	1.2	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.3
Recruitment and dinti	9.4	10.9	21.3	13.1	11.4	10.0	8.8	5.1	4.6	3.9
Rehabilitation	1.2	3.0	4.9	2.9	1.5	2.1	1.5	2.4	1.3	3.2
Industry and business	1.1		0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.5	0.8
Marriage migration	9.6	5.7	5.2	7.2	9.1	10.9	8.1	6.4	6.7	6.4
Family co-migration	24.9	20.4	21.2	22.8	20.9	23.7	20.8	25.5	26.6	23.9
Other	5.2	2.5	2.3	3.9	4.8	4.7	4.8	7.4	6.1	8.3
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sources: calculated from 1986 Urban Migrant Survey micro data on hukou migration by author.

Despite the stagnation of overall scale, hukou migration underwent fundamental changes in its composition and process. Figure 2 shows the composition of hukou migration for 74 cities and towns captured by the 1986 Urban Migration Survey in 1978-86.²¹⁵

Looking across the rows of various migration channels, we can detect different trends of change. Several channels witnessed dramatic decline. Return from rustication accounts for about 17% of total immigration in 1978-9 and became less than 1% after 1984. Similarly recruitment and replacement (*dinti*) decreased from the height of 21% in 1979 to around 4% in mid 1980s. Recruitment was the major channel of planned migration in the past, such as in the Great Leap Forward. If we compare the change against the benchmark of 1954-77, we can see that recruitment actually dropped below the historical average of 9.4% after 1984 despite the significant economic growth. This is one of the most important changes in hukou migration after reform. Migration induced by the recruitment of state units started to decline in the 1980s.

At the same time, the share of other migration channels increased. Job assignment and studying both more than doubled during the period from 1978 to 1986 and became the largest channels of hukou migration in the mid 1980s, second only to job transfer and family migration. Job assignment and studying are closely related. They are actually two parts of a migration circle. Studying captures mostly the migration related to college enrollment while job assignment is about migration of college graduates. This is consistent with the recovery of higher education in 1978 and its substantial growth afterwards.

The two largest migration channels of hukou migration, job transfer and family co-migration had little change. Together they account for about 40% of total hukou migration, lower than the historical average of close to 50% during 1954-77 (see Table 7.10). Job transfer and family co-migration are also closely related. Family co-migration

²¹⁵ The 1986 Urban Migrant Survey may have potential bias due to sampling and other issues as discussed in Chapter Six. But it should be fine when we aim at the general structure of change over time. At least, it is

is the migration of dependents of state employees who migrated due to job transfers. In the hukou statistics, sometimes they are counted under the same category of job transfer (Yue 1983). We have discussed earlier that although job transfer conveys the image of migration due to worked related reasons, it is predominantly caused by family considerations, particularly spousal reunion after reform. Spousal separation had been prevalent in pre-reform China because of mandatory labor planning, various political movements and the overriding importance of state interests over individual interests (Zhao, 1989: 252; Ma et al, 1997). As part of reform policies, the state adopted a lenient stand towards spousal reunion in the late 1970s. As a result, migration due to spousal reunion increased greatly. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Labor, around 60% of workers' job transfers were for spousal reunion during 1980-85 (Zhao, 1989: 256). The same source also shows the decline of total job transfers of workers, with those in 1985 being only half of those in 1980. The remaining channels of hukou migration, such as demobilization and marriage, did not have substantial changes.

This information from the 1986 Survey only records the changes up to 1986. What about the changes afterwards? Did the trend of decline of state employment related migration continue? There is no comprehensive information for hukou migration on the national level for the recent period. But scattered evidence does show a continuous decline of job related plan migration and an increase of family and study related migration. Hukou migration statistics for Wuhan show a similar trend as the 1986 Survey. Not only did job recruitment drop precipitously from 26% of total migration to less than 2% in 1989, job transfer and family migration decreased to half in 1989 from 1980 with changes in the late 1980s the largest. On the other hand, migration due to school enrollment increased from 15% to 50% of total migration.²¹⁶ My interview with government officials in the Wuhan Personnel Bureau also shows that total number of cadre transfers decreased slightly from 1225 in 1988 to 1083 in 1993. According to the newly published Nanjing

more representative than data from individual cities.

²¹⁶ The data was provided by Prof. Yunyang Yang in Zhongnan University of Economics and Finance in Wuhan. He has my special acknowledgement here. The increase in migration due to school enrollment is

Labor Chronicle, worker transfers across the city decreased from 4325 in 1988 to 1796 in 1997 (Shu, 1999:167-8).

This anecdotal evidence fits well with broader changes in the transitional economy. As we can see from Figure 7.9, the number of staff and workers in state units had a mild increase in the early 1980s and has changed little since then. On the other hand, college enrollment increased dramatically in the early 1980s and throughout the 1990s. It is not surprising that planned migration shifted from employment centered channels to study and family centered channels. As a whole, planned migration has been on a mild decline after reform.

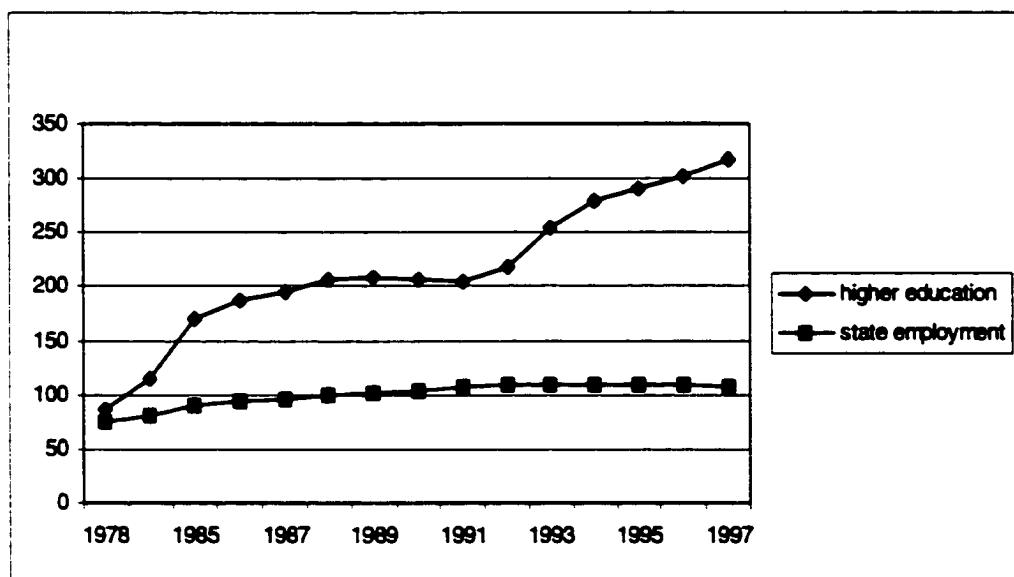


Figure 7.9 Changes in state employment and college enrollment

Notes: Higher education is college enrollment in 10,000. State employment is number of staff and workers in millions.

Sources: 1998 Chinese Statistical Yearbook

especially large for Wuhan due to the existence of the large number of universities, second only to Beijing and Shanghai. It is the leading city that exports college graduates to other cities.

These changes are rooted in a number of reforms and changes in state enterprises and the whole economy. The largest structural change is probably the rise of non-state sectors. The exponential growth of foreign funded enterprises and private business in urban China provide alternatives to employment in the state sector. Many state employees and college graduates migrated south to the Zhujiang River delta and other coastal cities without going through official migration procedures. Some even gave up their housing, job title and party membership. Much higher wages and benefits in non-state sectors could compensate for these losses. The turnover rate of college graduates in state enterprises increased greatly.²¹⁷ This migration could have been part of planned migration if the state still monopolized employment. The increasing mobility of those highly mobile college graduates and entrepreneurs grew outside of plans.

The emergence of non-state sectors also influenced hukou migration by undermining the state sectors. The artificially high profits generated by the state sector evaporated gradually as the entry of non-state enterprises increased competition and decreased product prices after reform (Naughton, 1996). In addition to the pressure from the market side, economic and labor planning within the state sector also changed substantially, creating pressure from the plan side. Since the beginning of reform, the government has been experimenting with various policies to increase incentives and the efficiency of state enterprises. The enterprise responsibility system, management reform, decentralization, delinking of employment and wages and so on all had impacts on the cost-benefit calculations of state enterprises (Naughton, 1995).

The state also promoted a number of policies explicitly targeting labor efficiency and mobility. As early as 1984, several local governments established personnel exchange centers (*rencai jiaoliu zhongxin*) to reduce the under-utilization of professionals and technicians in state enterprises (Zhao, 1989). Later on, the practice spread to most Chinese cities. Many built special buildings devoted to trading and exchange of labor and

²¹⁷ My fieldwork interview in several large cities, such as Wuhan and Wuxi shows that turnover rates of college graduates are substantial and has become a normal expectation. Enterprises in return form

personnel (*rencai* and *laodongli shichang*). Although this reform did not increase dramatically the labor mobility of state employees, it did introduce some flexibility by allowing state employees to keep their professional or cadre status while working in non-state sectors. Another policy which was more ambitious, the labor contract system, was formerly introduced in the 1986 (White 1987). Although nominally all state employees became contract workers or staff, the relationship between state units and employees did not change extensively. According to my interview, managers of several state enterprises complained about the ineffectiveness of the labor contract system. Managers simply could not fire employees (or terminate contracts even when contracts expired) due to community pressure and fear of possible retaliation (Lee, 1997). On balance, reform policies aiming at economic performance of state enterprises are probably more effective than the policies explicitly targeting labor mobility.

These reform policies and structural changes in the economy fundamentally changed the environment in which state enterprises operated. The previously unrestrained demand for labor in state enterprises due to soft-budget constraints subsided. State units had been overstaffed with 20-30% of underemployment by some estimates (Jefferson, 1992; Dai and Li, 1991; Karmel, 1996). As these reform measures changed the rules of the game, the substantial under-employment in state units was exposed. State enterprises now had little incentives to increase staff and workers. Rather they had more incentive to get rid of surplus and unwanted workers and staff. This sea change happened in the latter part of the 1980s. Often labor planning quotas assigned to state enterprises could not be filled. As the links between state enterprises and the market increased, the need for labor planning diminished. Mandatory labor planning was finally abandoned in 1993. As result, migration related to state employment and recruitment declined greatly. Even with the considerable increase of college graduate assignment, planned migration as a whole lost ground.

protective policies, such as a requirement of working at least three or five years after assignment.

There has been continuous pressure on state planned migration to change. College graduate assignment has been under reform since the late 1980s. A mechanism of direct meeting between potential employers and graduates (*gongxu jianmian and shuangxiang xuandezhe*) was introduced. Graduates are increasingly encouraged to find jobs for themselves in the market. Assignment by the state is going to decrease over time. More dramatic changes are expected since there have been large scale layoffs in state enterprises nation wide since the end of the 1990s. Increasing numbers of urban residents work in the non-state sectors. The old official migration procedure will soon be outdated since the basis of the regulation, the work unit system, would be fundamentally restructured.

7.3 Paradigm shift in Chinese migration

Having analyzed the scale and patterns of migration and its interrelationship with institutional change in socialist China, it is possible to extract two ideal types of migration regimes. One is the regime of planned migration and the other is that of out-of-plan migration. The two migration regimes are abstractions and don't correspond directly to actual migration. Nonetheless, they provide a basis to analyze and compare essential differences in migration processes and changes from the past.

The migration regimes are distinguished by reference to the socialist system. Planned migration regime refers to the systematic patterns of migration under the classical socialist system or when the socialist system was at its prime. Out-of-Plan migration, on the other hand, refers to the systematic patterns of migration when the socialist system was at its infancy or old age. Table 7.11 contrasts the essential characteristics of the two migration regimes.

Planned migration was driven by the state sector, particularly the heavy manufacturing sector. The lion's share of employment and migration quotas were devoted to heavy manufacturing due to its high priority in socialist planning as we discussed in Chapter

Three and the cases of Baotou and the Wuhan Iron and Steel Corporation. So the development strategy of heavy industries had direct implications on migration distribution in the spatial, economic and administrative hierarchy. The leading migration channels (or types) were state recruitment and job transfer, which were primarily job oriented. The accompanied channels included family migrations and downward migrations, which were associated with and partly caused by the migration of leading channels. Of course, there were numerous other channels associated with administrative division of labor and specific state policies.

Table 7.11 Two Ideal Types of Migration Regimes in Socialist China

<i>Migration Regime</i>	<i>Planned migration</i>	<i>Out of Plan migration</i>
<i>Engine of growth</i>	State sector	Non-state sector
<i>Leading sector</i>	Heavy manufacturing	Labor-intensive industries and farms
<i>Leading channels</i>	State recruitment and job transfer	Kinship and relatives
<i>Accompanied channels</i>	Family migration Downward migration	Family migration Return migration
<i>Decision making</i>	Negotiation between The state and individuals	Personal or family
<i>Motivation</i>	Objectives of central state	Economic and family considerations
<i>Regulative structure</i>	Labor and migration planning	Kinships and weakly regulated by local states
<i>Institutional environment</i>	Complex and integrated web of institutions	Marginally influenced by socialist institutions
<i>Approval of residence</i>	Change of residence officially sanctioned	No official change of residence
<i>State's policies</i>	Priority and supportive	Restrictive or ambivalent
<i>Ideology and social norms</i>	Socialist ideologies	Market oriented

Under the planned migration regime, both state-initiated and self-initiated migration required approval of related government departments for the physical move and the change of official residence. Due to inherent conflicts between various levels of state departments, and between state interests and individual interests, there was extensive negotiation among these parties in migration decision making. As we discussed earlier,

the initiation and direction of effort in negotiation were opposite for state-initiated and self-initiated migrations. Under the regime of planned migration, the objectives of the state overrode individual interests in most circumstances, although *guanxi* could be used to circumvent state regulations to achieve personal goals. The direct regulation and planning of migration were buttressed by a complex set of institutions, such as the *hukou* system, the work unit system, the grain rationing system, the personnel dossier system and so on. It was also supported by typical mind-sets and social norms, which were strongly influenced by socialist official ideology and state propaganda. Migration negotiations and discourse were carried out within the context or frame of official ideologies. Various types and specific requests for migration would be ranked according to their priorities in socialist planning.

The out-of-plan migration regime refers to systematic characteristics of migration outside of state plans. The reason for not using migration regime under market coordination is that the latter implies a fundamental shift of economic coordination from plan to market, while out-of-plan implies the co-existence of planned and unplanned migration.²¹⁸

Out-of-plan migration was driven by non-state sectors, particularly labor-intensive industries and farms. Migration under this regime was motivated by economic and family considerations, rather than objectives of state plans. The leading channel of migration was labor migration relying on kinship and relatives networks. Accompanying channels were family migration and return migration. Migration out of state plans did not seek official approval of change in residence, because the *hukou* system was not firmly established or there was no need to do it. Out-of-plan migration was only marginally influenced by socialist institutions, such as the requirement for temporary residence and various fees collected by local governments. This type of migration was also associated with different kinds of expectation and social norms. State policies and attitudes towards migration outside state plans ranged from restriction to ambivalence depending upon economic conditions. When the economy was on the expansion part of cycle, such as the

Great Leap Forward or the 1987-1988 “economy overheating”, the socialist state would either suspend restrictive policies or even add on new policies to accommodate the need for labor. But when the economy was in contraction, out-of-plan migration was not only strictly controlled, planned migration was often redirected to the lower end of the spatial-administrative hierarchy.

The planned migration regime and the out-of-plan migration regime do not simply correspond to the pre-reform and post-reform periods. From previous discussion in this chapter, it is possible to detect the similarities between migration patterns in 1950s and those since the 1980s. During both periods, the state sector was less dominant, the *hukou* system was less strictly enforced, and a large part of migration was not subject to central planning of labor and migration. Planned migration was dominant during the period of 1960 to 1977 when state sectors accounted for most of the economic activity. But even during this period, there were still substantial non-*hukou* migration flows, particularly to the frontier regions, such as Heilongjiang, Neimenggu and Xinjiang. It is also obvious to point out the significance of planned migration in the 1950s and after reform. Planned migration and out-of-plan migration co-existed in both periods. But the balance between planned migration and out-of-plan migration changed in opposite directions. In the 1950s, state sector was the growth engine of the economy and socialist institutions began to take form, which would dominate and regulate Chinese society for the next 30 some years. Planned migration expanded correspondingly. In the mid 1980s, in contrast, the state sector began to lose steam and an array of socialist institutions disintegrated. With the emergence of foreign enterprises, collective enterprises and private business, out-of-plan migration has been gaining share.

If we take a long-term perspective, we can detect systematic albeit gradual changes in migration patterns in the past 50 years. Planned migration emerged, expanded in the 1950s, leveled off in the 1960s and 1970s, and slowly retreated after reform. Out-of-plan migration, as the other side of Yin and Yang, had opposite changes during the time. The

²¹⁸ It has the same connotation as the “Growing Out of Plans” of Naughton (1995).

changes in migration patterns were clearly associated with those in socialist institutions. It should not be surprising since planned migration was an integral part of the socialist system and the largest change in China in recent history was the wax and wane of socialist system. The systematic change in migration regimes constitutes the paradigm shift in Chinese migration. The paradigm shift of Chinese migration does not imply drastic changes of migration patterns after only certain artificially chosen date. Rather it entails systematic changes in deeper structures of socialist institutions, including economic ownership, coordination mechanisms, ideology and social norms. The changes in the deeper structures reconfigured the landscape of migration.

As to the future of Chinese migration, no one is able to provide detailed prediction. But it is quite certain that the current trend of de-socialization will not be likely to reverse. State ownership in production and employment will continue to fall. And economic activities will be coordinated more by the market. Although specific policies or institutions may survive or be transformed into newer forms, socialist institutions as a whole will eventually become history. Migration into cities and towns will continue until the country is basically urbanized. The *hukou* system will be decentralized and evolved into local policies as high growth and high density regions and cities try to grapple with implications of high migration rates. It will probably die out in low density and low growth areas since blanket-type universal provision of state welfare will be replaced by local provisions of benefits. New social stratification is emerging as entrepreneurs and the highly educated replace administrative cadres to become elites in decision making and resource sharing. There will still be rural-urban divide. But its scale will likely be dwarfed by inequalities between regions and within cities.

7.4 Summary

This chapter brings together various themes covered in the previous chapters, such as institutional structures and data comparisons, in order to capture the patterns and characteristics of migration and its change in the last 50 years. The first step was to

reconstruct migration rates to have reliable information on the trend of temporal changes and spatial patterns. Then it looked at the different migration experiences of two cities for both pre-reform and post-reform periods. The last part explored linkages between migration and institutional changes and identified the paradigm shift in migration regimes.

The analysis in the Chapter had a number of findings that are contradictory to conventional wisdom. One common perception is that migration increased greatly in the 1990s. Careful comparison of data revealed the moderate increase, if not stagnation of migration in the 1990s. It also refuted another commonly held view that Chinese society was a static society with little mobility before reform. Quite the contrary, the 1950s witnessed the largest mobility in the last fifty years. Also implied in the great mobility of rural migrants in the post-reform period is the low mobility of urban residents. Data from national surveys showed clearly the opposite. The average migration rate for city residents was about 3 to 5 times of that of rural residents. It makes sense since urban residents are better educated and the privileged class, thus with more opportunities and higher mobility rates. In addition, manufacture and services tend to induce higher mobility rates than agriculture, so occupation may be related to this discrepancy of mobility rates.

A common conceptualization of migration in China is to treat pre-reform as plan dominated and post-reform as market dominated. As such, migration before reform is theorized and analyzed based on state policies, while migration after reform is explained basically by neoclassical theories. This bifurcation missed the gradual nature of the change and underlying institutional processes. An institutional approach and ideal types of migration regimes, as shown by this chapter and earlier chapters, are more sophisticated to capture the gradual and systematic shift in migration paradigms.

Chapter Eight. Conclusion

Migration in China has recently attracted a lot of attention from the public and from academia. Scholars from various disciplines around the world have invested time and energy in studying Chinese migration. On one hand, it is great to work in a field of excitement and wide interest. On the other hand, there is a tension in creating something new that is different from all other research in the field. At least, it was in my case. I felt the pressure from this voluminous research. I have been trying to find a sub-field of Chinese migration and a theoretical framework that may provide new perspectives and a meaningful contribution to a rapidly growing body of literature. I changed topics several times because of either data restriction or unavailability of a workable theoretical framework. During this process of exploring and experimenting, the theme of this dissertation gradually took form and became clearer over time.

This dissertation analyzes internal migration in socialist China as a whole. It may look too ambitious with such a large stretch of time and topics. I was certainly quite hesitant to proceed but did not have a reasonable alternative. Due to the lack of an available theoretical framework and little writing on the institutional aspects of Chinese migration, it was necessary to build the foundations by looking at essential characteristics and processes of the whole system. It would be impossible otherwise to specialize in one specific area of Chinese migration without losing sight of the big picture. Even if I chose specific geographic areas, say a city or two, I still needed to discuss the major features of the entire system and the overall patterns on the national level. Instead of circumventing the central features of the socialist migration, I would rather take on them directly. But this approach came with a trade-off that I could not go as deeply into some sub-topics as I wished.

Although the dissertation is concerned with overall patterns of internal migration in China, it does have a special interest and a particular approach. The special interest is on the government regulated migration instead of recent rural-urban migration. The

particular approach is the institutional approach. These choices were made based on a basic observation that most of the current voluminous research focuses on rural-urban migration in the post-Mao era. At the same time, government regulated migration and migration before reform in general did not provoke much research interest. The lopsided distribution is understandable but not warranted. Current rural-urban migration is a strong force in reshaping the Chinese economy and social institutions. It also has potential implications on the political and economic configurations of Chinese society. From the perspective of migration research, it can be studied readily with the classical migration theories. In contrast, the government planned migration does not look so attractive. It is not as visible as rural-urban migration is, although it has changed dramatically at the same time. Moreover, there is no readily available theoretical framework that one can use to tackle and analyze it. So, as Pieke commented, researchers were interested in the areas mostly outside of government monitoring and administration (Pieke, 1999).

The neglect of government regulated migration is not justified for a number of reasons. First of all, *hukou* migration had been the largest part of overall migration. It still accounted for about half of overall migration based on the 1990 Census and 1995 Survey even in the late 1990s. Secondly, migration planning and regulation were integral parts of the socialist system, thus important for understanding socialist societies. Thirdly, planned migration is a rare species in contemporary societies. It is interesting to examine how a government could control the mobility of its citizens over a long historical period and a vast geographic territory. Lastly, it is critical to analyze links between planned and out-of-plan migration for the two were not independent of each other. Rural-labor migration cannot be understood fully without being situated in the institutional context of migration regulation and labor planning.

The dissertation touched upon several aspects of internal migration in socialist China. It started with a systematic overview of migration theories up to date and discussed their relevance to migration in socialist systems. After discovering that there was no theory that can be readily applied to the Chinese migration experiences, I had to face the

challenge to build a conceptual framework for analyzing socialist migration in China. By drawing insights from literature in institutional theories, socialist economies and Chinese bureaucratic structure, I built an analytical framework that could trace migration decision-making at multiple levels and integrate factors from cost-benefit calculations to ideology. The framework emphasized the dialectical relationships between the institutional structure and migrant agency.

The next two chapters, Chapter Three and Chapter Four, were devoted to socialist institutional structures that regulated migration and their implications for social stratification. Socialist ideology, state ownership, and bureaucratic coordination were the three founding blocks of the socialist system. The evolution of socialist institutions was essentially underlined by changes in these key elements, which in turn determined the direction and characteristics of migration patterns in socialist China. Building upon these foundation blocks was a web of specific socialist institutions in China, such as the *hukou* registration system, the work unit system, the *dang'an* system, neighborhood system and so on. I went over each of them to examine how they were related to migration regulation and planning. These general and specific socialist institutions provided the institutional context in which migration planning and regulation were implemented and carried through by the state bureaucracies. The State Planning Commission, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Personnel, and the Ministry of Public Security are the key bureaucratic departments that directly regulated and coordinated migration. The Higher Education Commission, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, industrial ministries, the National Establishment Control Office, and other departments, were also closely involved in certain types or aspects of migration and its regulation.

These bureaucratic departments and their replicates at lower administrative levels effectively divided socialist migration into a number of channels. The most important of them were job transfers, job assignments, demobilization, state recruitment, family migration, joining family or relatives, rehabilitation, and so on. Migration planning was embedded mostly in annual labor plans, which set up quotas for subordinated

administrative units. This bureaucratic structure created spatial and social stratifications in which large cities were favored over small cities, which in turn fared better than rural areas. Administrative cadres and military officers fared better in wage income and other benefits than workers and farmers according to the data analysis based on the 1986 Survey.

Institutional analysis would not be complete without looking at the other end of structure, which is agency. Chapter Five examined migrant agency in socialist China from three perspectives. The first perspective was from the analysis of migration dynamics on the conceptual level. Socialist migration could be divided into two broad categories, state-initiated migration vs. individual-initiated migration. They varied greatly in terms of the tools they could use to achieve their objectives. The socialist state regularly employed mobilization and ideological campaigns for large scale migration, in addition to bureaucratic regulation and various incentives. Individuals, on the other hand, could draw from persuasion to personal connections. The second perspective is gained through looking at several migration cases from major migration channels. These cases revealed the prevalence of *guanxi* in various types of migration, especially for the post-reform period. Socialist migration normally consisted of multiple stages involving multiple government departments and work units. Prospective migrants might influence migration decisions to their favor at any stage. The third perspective looked at a historical event, *shangshan xiaxiang*, which sent 17 million urban youths to the frontier regions and rural areas during 1967-1980. Although widely perceived as a forced migration, *shangshan xiaxiang* illustrated the subtleties of the migration process and decision making. The institutional formats of this sent down migration changed as mobilization could not generate enough compliance from urban residents. And it was eventually brought to an end as millions of urban youths returned to their city origins against the preferences and restrictions of the state. This event demonstrated the power of migrant agency even for the most successfully implemented downward migration in recent Chinese history.

With insights gained from an institutional analysis of internal migration, the dissertation turned to overall patterns and structure of Chinese migration. One major obstacle in estimating the overall patterns of migration is different definitions and coverage in various national data sets. After examining major factors in comparing major national data sets and strengths and weaknesses of each data set, Chapter Six set up a schematic framework consisting of *hukou*, spatial and temporal dimensions to evaluate and compare migration data sets. A by-product of this framework was a discovery of rather stable ratios of migration between various levels of spatial scale, such as inter-provincial to intra-provincial migration. These findings were utilized to reconstruct migration rates for both pre-reform and post-reform periods in Chapter Seven. Four cities were chosen to illustrate divergent migration experiences of cities and regions in the second part of the 20th Century. Long term changes in migration rates were traced back to underlying changes in institutions. Two ideal types of migration regimes can be identified, which were helpful to bring out the systematic and gradual changes in migration paradigms.

Upon reflection, this dissertation made specific contributions to research on the following aspects of internal migration in China.

- Theoretical framework

There are two widely adopted approaches for studying internal migration in China. One is the neoclassical approach for the post-reform period, building upon the fact that the market is gaining importance and rural labor migration became substantial. For migration in the pre-reform period, research inevitably resorts to a state-centered approach that explains migration outcomes by specific state policies and state intentions. These are no obvious logical links between these two approaches. Their usage implies a dichotomy between plan and market artificially separated by the year 1978. Missing in them both is the decision making process where socialist institutions and bureaucratic regulation fare most prominently. The theoretical framework of the dissertation takes into account directly the institutional structures and institutional process that regulate migration in socialist China. By doing so, it can trace actual decision making processes in migration

and negotiation at multiple levels. It can also provide a frame to incorporate various factors, such as planning, cost-benefit calculation, ideology, and social networking. It leaves room for interplay between institutional structure and migrant agency. And best of all, pre-reform and post-reform can be analyzed within a single framework.

- Migration data

Current research on Chinese migration based on census and survey data uses mostly a single data set. Since data sets have different definitions and coverage, results from one data set can be different from those from another. Generalizations about migration patterns and process based on a single data set are mansions built upon precarious ground. This dissertation contributes to the literature by offering a schematic framework to compare migration data and by comparing six national data sets. The schematic framework is composed of three dimensions, i.e., *hukou*, space and time, under each of which there are a list specific factors. For example, in the temporal dimension, the minimum length of stay at destination, the survey question of the last move or previous residence, multiple moves, and outmigration all have impacts on how much migration can be captured. This framework could help explain the large differences in migration rates between national data sets, and theoretically, provides a basis for reassessing results from various data sets. Six national sets that have information on migration at different periods of time were evaluated to assess their characteristics, biases and utilities. Since they are the only data sources for migration on the national level for the past fifty years, systematic comparison of them provides a way to reconstruct overall patterns of Chinese migration.

- Institutional structures and bureaucratic regulation

Although it is widely acknowledged that Chinese migration was planned and regulated by the state, there was little systematic attempt to investigate how it was actually achieved. This dissertation fills the literature gap by examining various institutions and bureaucratic structures and procedures that regulated socialist migration. Currently the most recognized institution in migration regulation is the *hukou* registration system. However,

as demonstrated in the dissertation, other institutions, such as the work unit system and the *dang'an* system, are not less important than the *hukou* system. The dissertation provides an extensive account of socialist institutions and specific institutions and their impacts on Chinese migration. It also analysed explicitly bureaucratic structures, procedures and mechanisms for the state to control and regulate migration. For example, one of these mechanisms is quota control, which included labor planning quotas, wage quotas, establishment and personnel quotas, and cadre quotas.

- **Migrant agency**

Many publications on migration in China are macro-level analyses using quantitative data. Few studies deal explicitly with migration experiences by focusing on migrants as individuals with motivations, desires and experiences. This dissertation argued that migrant agency was essential in understanding socialist migration. It is so not only because socialist migration was based on negotiation between the state and individuals. The outcomes of negotiation cannot be predetermined due to the latitude of government officials in decision making, general policy environment, migrant characteristics, social connections and even personalities involved. It is also true because migrant agency did have impacts on migration outcomes, as convincingly demonstrated by the pervasive use of personal connections in job reallocation and migration. This finding contradicted the common perception that migration under socialist China was largely involuntary due to omnipotence of the socialist state. Bringing in migrant agency also enriches an understanding of socialist system and social change.

- **Long-term change**

Numerous articles and books covered migration in both the pre- and post-reform period. The dissertation contributed to the literature by reconstructing migration rates based on major national data sets and by identifying the paradigm shift in Chinese migration based on institutional analysis. Reconstructed migration data gave a much clearer account of the scale, characteristics and structure of migration. Institutional analysis revealed changes in socialist institutions that were underlying the changes in migration patterns. The

dissertation proposed a paradigm shift in Chinese migration that consisted of gradual and systematic changes in migration regimes over time.

It goes without saying that for a project on such a scale and with limited time, there are limitations. The main limitation I can see is that the topic is so broad that each sub-topic cannot be covered as it deserves to be. It seems that each sub-topic, such as institution structure, migrant agency and data comparison can be developed into a thesis by itself. Another limitation is that I intentionally focused more on hukou migration than on non-hukou migration due to the limitation of space. Given the rich materials and research materials on recent rural-urban migration, it will be useful to incorporate those findings into the general patterns of migration.

I am aware that this dissertation only marks the beginning rather than the end. During the process of research, I realized how much work could be done in the field of socialist migration in China and how much improvement will occur if this work can be carried out. I can come up easily with dozens of topics that I would like to work on in the future. The following are just some of them.

I would like to see more active theoretical engagement in the field of Chinese migration. Studies on Chinese migration have been quite detached from theoretical discourse in population geography. References to migration theories tended to be those of established theories. The recent cultural turn of migration theories in emphasizing migrant identities, institutions and discourses could be a pathway for Chinese migration specialists to participate in the discourse of migration theories. It was a difficult task in the past since neoclassical theories were mostly interested in economic forces based upon market coordination. The redirection of interests to institutions and agencies opens a door for incorporating Chinese experiences in a planning system into more comprehensive theories.

As new data sets become available, particularly the micro data set of 1995 Survey and the 2000 Census, there are many things to be done by exploring new data sets. For example, it would be interesting to find out the extent of non-hukou migration and its distribution in the spatial and urban hierarchy. It would be interesting to look at the extent of multiple moves in the 1990s and compare them to earlier periods. The 1995 Survey opens up a small window to study residential mobility, i.e., moves within a city boundary. This is still an unexplored territory since there is barely any research on intra-city mobility in China. Combined with data from hukou registration and surveys of local areas, it is possible to generate some interesting results on residential mobility. It is particularly interesting in the context of restructuring of the state sector and urban economies. There has been a significant increase in residential mobility in many large cities as old urban centers have been replaced by new commercial complexes and as more people can afford commercial housing.

It is observed that cities vary in their requirements of immigration for various migration channels, such as job transfer, demobilization and return of educated youths. It would be very interesting to examine the variance of local policies. A number of questions can be asked: how these policies were formed, did they change over time, what were the factors that caused the variance across cities, and so on. In a centralized planning system, how much initiative could local governments have, and how much of that was in labor and migration planning compared to other sectors, such as material allocation? Or one can do a comparison of two major types of cities as suggested in the Chapter Seven, but in greater detail.

Each of the government migration channels deserves a separate research. These channels, as we know, are job transfer, assignment of college graduates, assignment of demobilized soldiers and cadres, state recruitment, joining relatives, family migration, reformed labor, rehabilitation, and so on. For example, it would be very useful to document the numbers, patterns, and process of demobilization across regions and their changes over time. And the topic can be pinned to different directions as linked with military tensions, economic

restructuring, and demographic structure. Similarly, college graduate assignment, family migration and other channels all have many stories to tell. I can run down the list. My intention is only to show that this is an exciting field. And these examples would suffice for that objective. If this dissertation can generate some interest in this field, I will really be satisfied.

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