

China migration country study

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SUMMARY

Early rural reforms led to an initial increase in rural incomes; when these began to level off, farmers started looking for alternative sources of income. In the late 1990s, China's cities had attracted close to 100 million rural migrants, most of whom were short-term labourers rather than long-term settlers. Rural-urban migration continues to be an intrinsic part of China's rapid transition to a market economy.

Two aspects of the reforms are particularly important in explaining the rapid growth of rural-urban migration. First, de-collectivisation of agriculture freed rural households to allocate the household labour force both locally and much farther afield. Second, the transition to a market economy created a high regional disparity in economic development.

However, migrant labour has also made an indispensable and positive contribution to the rapid growth of the coastal areas. Not only have migrant labourers built much of China's new urban infrastructure, but migrant labour has also been a key factor in making the labour-intensive industries in the coastal areas internationally competitive.

Migration has also reduced some of the tensions produced by unequal economic development. Furthermore, migrants who are still residents of, and have land in, their area of origin are more likely to transfer resources (remittances, investments, human capital and information) back to their home base, so raising the standard of living and contributing to local economic development. Returned migrants in particular are vital sources of investment, entrepreneurship and experience.

The vital contribution made by migrants to China's economic 'miracle' was little recognised in the 1990s. In recent years, China's top leadership has referred several times to rural labour migrants as major contributors to the development of China. Several policy initiatives have been undertaken, all with the objective of freeing up the labour market across China,

guaranteeing a more equitable treatment of migrant workers in the cities, and envisioning a transition to a pattern of more permanent urban settlement of large numbers of rural migrants.

There is a risk that policy reforms may not go far enough to bridge the gap as far as rural-urban migration is concerned. Many current programmes for poverty reduction continue to deal with the urban and rural poor under separate programmes. Furthermore, both programmes are mainly concerned with the income level of the poor, and cater much less for other forms of deprivation or disadvantage; and rural migrants are not necessarily considered to be poor. Second, there is the risk that rural migrant labourers may become a more permanent underclass, especially as more settle permanently in the cities. There currently appears to be less interest in the impact of migration on the possible development of rural communities than on urban development. Consequently, the main thrust of migration policy both at the national level and in many sending areas continues to be to relieve the countryside of its 'surplus' population rather than to encourage rural economic growth in the context of a broader sensitivity to the institutional links between rural development, rural poverty and rural labour migration, especially with regard to their implications for the empowerment of rural people and for gender equality.

The experiences in some areas of origin and destination could be built upon to assist in designing an integrated development strategy that includes the creation of a viable and prosperous countryside as one of its key objectives. Migration can play an important role in achieving this objective. The strong links between migrants and their home communities created by the household registration and land tenure systems, along with the active involvement of governments of sending areas in the affairs of migrant communities, have many positive sides to them that should be preserved. Migrants could continue to have a stake in the development of their area of origin, even if they settle elsewhere more permanently, by allowing them to retain certain rural residency and land rights on top of similar rights they may enjoy in the area of destination.

China migration country study

The purpose of this study is to synthesise information on internal and international migration in order to inform DFID and strengthen DFID’s policy-making and project development on poverty reduction.

This study consisted of interviews with key researchers and policy advisers in China, a review of recent literature (mainly in Chinese) and analysis of published and unpublished research data.

In this report, migration primarily refers to the voluntary movement of rural labourers, who leave their home villages for urban areas (ranging from townships, county towns and other small cities within or outside the province of original residence, provincial capitals and metropolitan areas), seeking non-agricultural work opportunities, usually temporary or seasonal, for at least three months a year, sometimes together with their family members. However, migration in China also includes important flows of urban-urban and rural-rural migration, and even modest flows of urban-rural migration: these will be referred to where appropriate.

In Chinese research and policy advice, migration and development are conventionally linked by proposing migration as a way to relieve the countryside of its ‘surplus’ population. In other words, the countryside is seen as one of China’s chief obstacles to modernisation – part of the problem rather than part of the solution. In this report, we propose that research

and policy-making ought to take more seriously the contribution that migration makes to the development of the areas of origin. However, there is a clear lack of Chinese research in this area and we have had to rely mainly on the few existing publications written by researchers based outside China.

The study also includes limited information on international migration, both from traditional overseas Chinese source areas (mainly in the south eastern coastal provinces), and more recent flows of often highly educated migrants, who are mainly (but not exclusively) from China’s major urban centres. We will refer to such flows if and when relevant to the issues of development and poverty reduction.

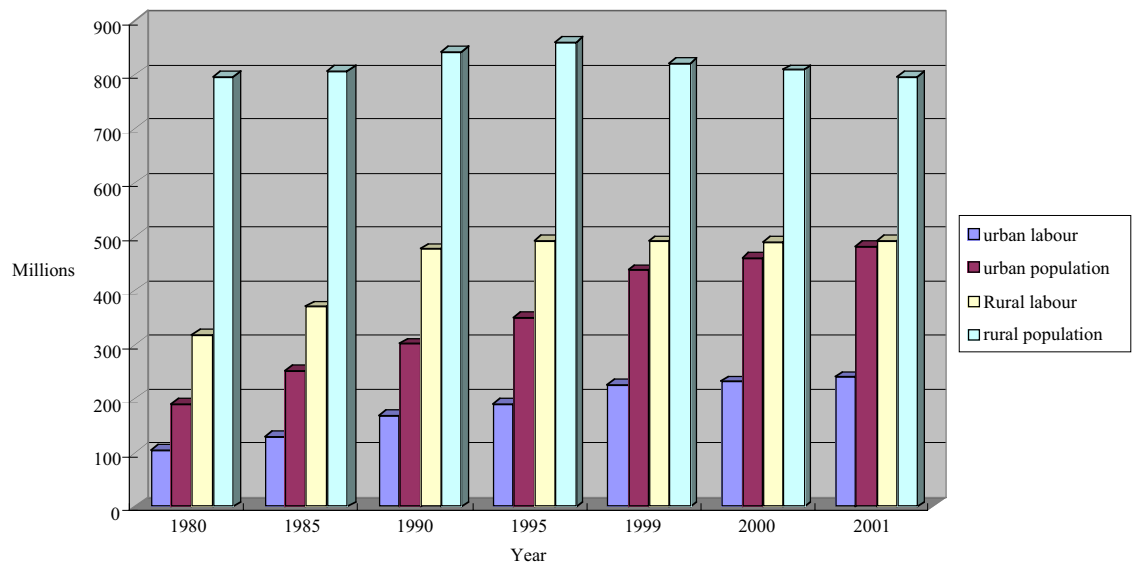
Background

The country

In 2001, China’s population was, at 1.276 billion – the largest in the world. The rural population was 795.63 million and the rural labour force 490.85 million (62.34% and 67.22% of the total respectively). Those with permanent urban registration numbered 480.64 million and the urban labour force was 239.4 million (37.66% and 32.78% respectively) (National Statistical Bureau, 2002a) (see Figure 1).

Although there are 13.004 billion hectares of arable farmland across the country, the per capita acreage is less than 0.11 hectare, or less than half the

Figure 1: Population and labourers, divided by rural and urban areas, 1980–2001



Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2002a

world's average. Per capita acreage exceeds 0.13 hectare in 12 provinces located in the north east, north west and south west, where per capita output of farming is, however, far lower than average due to the lack of rainfall, insufficient irrigation and infertility of the soil (National Statistical Bureau, 2002a).

Of the rural labour force of 490.85 million, about 329.83 million (67%) work in agriculture. Others either work in local non-agricultural enterprises or migrate to urban areas.¹ It is estimated that, of the total 161.02 million rural labourers who do not work in agriculture, about half are migrants who are absent from their place of residence for three to six months or longer every year.

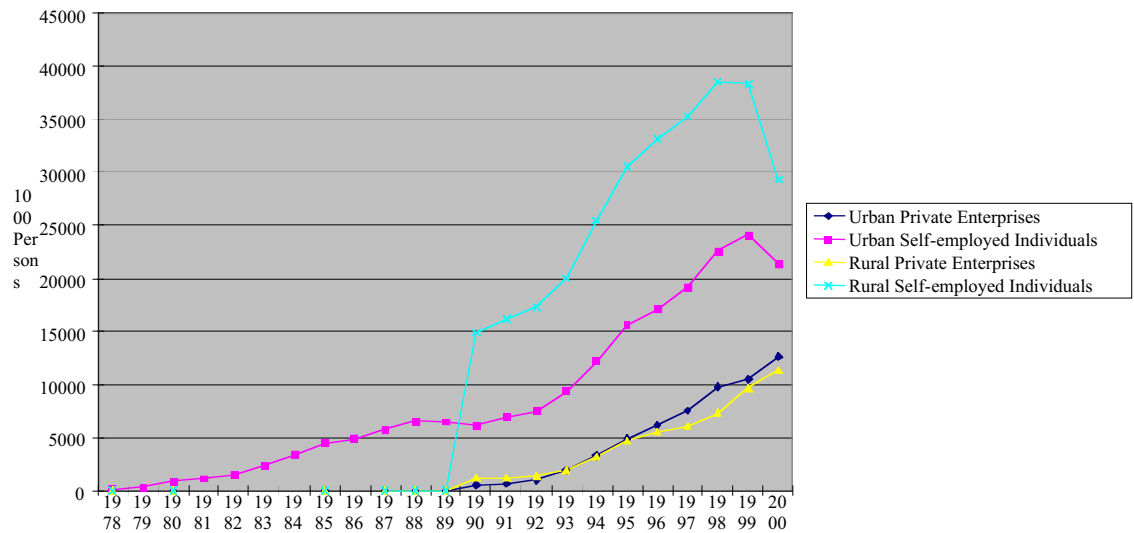
In 1978, China launched *gaige kaifang* (reform and opening up to the outside world), an umbrella term covering a whole range of policy areas. Most important for the purposes of this report is the emphasis on creating a 'socialist market economy', in which the state sector exists alongside collective, individual,

private and foreign invested enterprises. Since the onset of the reforms, the various components of the non-state sector have developed quickly, especially in the coastal areas (see Figures 2 and 3, and Tables 4 and 11 in Annex 1).²

The growth of a market economy has led to a remarkably rapid economic development with sustained average annual growth rates of almost 9% GDP (on average 9.2% annually from 1978 to 1997). This has led to a marked rise in the standard of living for both rural and urban residents, and a sharp drop in the total number of people living below the official poverty line; the number of rural people below the poverty line decreased from 250 million in 1980 (the poverty line then was only RMB 100) to 32 million in 2000 (with a poverty line of RMB 625) (see Tables 1 and 2 in Annex 1).³

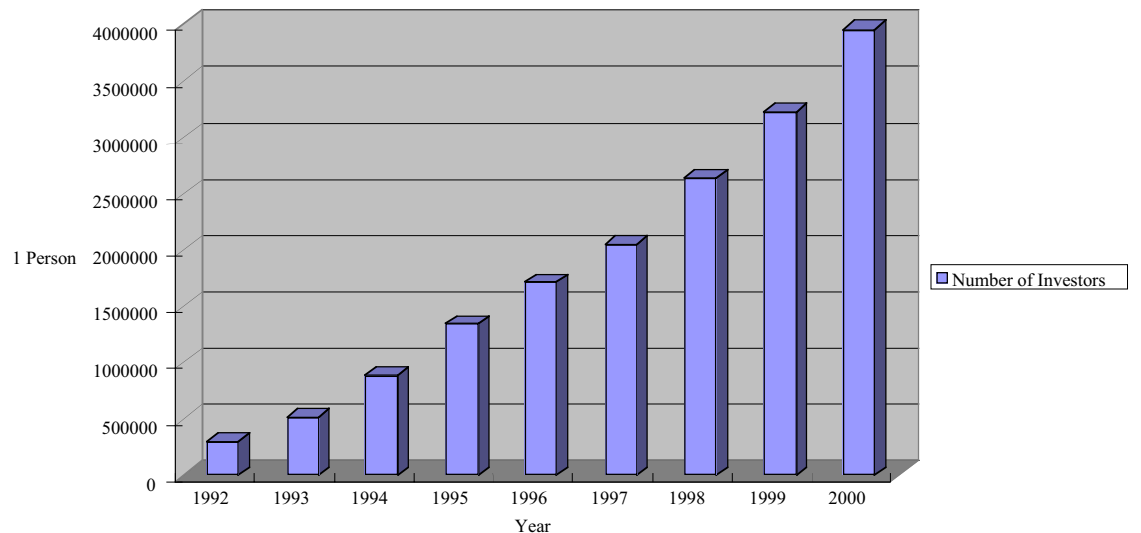
However, the reforms have also created or strengthened new forms of inequality, such as between coastal and inland areas, between the private/foreign

Figure 2: Change in employment in private and individual sectors



Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2001

Figure 3: Growth of number private owners and investors in China



Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2001

1 Official statistics do not differentiate between migrants and those involved in local non-agricultural activities.

2 Due to the fact that China banned private enterprises under socialist planning, many enterprises initially did not register as 'private', but rather as 'individual' or 'collective'. Thus, individual, collective and private enterprises are often only nominally different.

3 However, the achievements of China should not be overstated in this regard. According to Premier Wen Jiabao, the number of people under the poverty line rises threefold to 90 million if the line is slightly increased to ¥720 (People's Daily, 19 March 2003). Another way of calculating actual poverty is to include poor people living: in rural areas but outside the officially identified poor counties/townships; in urban areas who are either urban permanent residents whose benefits are lower than a half of the urban average or are rural labour migrants who are unemployed or whose salaries are less than half the urban average. If these all are included the number of poor people in China easily reaches 100 million or even more.

invested sector and the state or collectively owned sector, or between cities and the countryside. Initially, de-collectivisation of agriculture and an increase in state grain procurement prices in the late 1970s and early 1980s actually reduced the rural-urban gap and regional disparity.⁴ For example, the ration of urban income to rural income dropped from 2.36 in 1978 to 1.72 in 1985 (see Table 5 in Annex 1), while inequality within rural areas themselves during this period did not increase significantly (Gini coefficient only changed from 0.212 in 1978 to 0.264 in 1985; see Table 3 in Annex 1).

Since 1986, and especially after 1997–98, inequality widened again as the effects of other reform policies (particularly the growth of the non-state sector) started to make their impact felt (see Tables 5 and 10 in Annex 1). In addition to crude income inequality, differences in access to social security, social welfare, housing, education and health care have become increasingly acute as market driven forms replace the old system of collective provision.

However, the increasing inequality between the cities and the countryside, and between coastal areas and the interior was also due to policy choices. The governmental programme for reform and development has favoured the cities. It was believed that the countryside had already benefited sufficiently from the early de-collectivisation of agriculture, and that its outcome (a household-based agriculture) constituted the final solution for the rural economy. Conversely, the reforms were based on the deliberate premise of 'letting some get rich first'. Certain areas (for instance the coastal provinces) and groups (eg, the urban educated 'new rich') were allowed to use the opportunities presented by the market reforms first, in the hope and expectation that a gradual 'trickle-down' effect would take place later on. This could clearly be seen from the early strategy of southern coastal development, including the establishment of special economic zones (SEZs) in Shenzhen, Xiamen, Zhuhai and Shantou, followed by the opening of 14 cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, along the east coast, providing the world with an open door to the Chinese economy.

These policies go a long way to explaining the changes in the income gap between south eastern, central and western regions. In urban areas, the income gap between the three regions changed from 1.20:1:1.18 in 1981 to 1.48:1:1.10 in 1999, while in rural areas the changes were even more pronounced: from 1.25:1:0.91 in 1981 to 1.57:1:0.74 in 1999 (see Tables 6 and 7 in Annex 1). A comparison of Table 6 (income disparity in urban areas of the three regions) and Table 7 (income disparity in rural areas of the three regions) in Annex 1 reveals something else. In 1981 in all the three regions urban incomes were three times as high as in rural areas. By the end of 1999, the income gap between rural and urban areas in the west was still more than three times; by contrast, within the south eastern and central regions, it had shrunk to 2.5 times, while the national stood at less than 2.7. Clearly, the gap between urban and rural areas was at least in part an artefact of market reform. In coastal areas,

where the reforms have had the most impact, economic opportunities are now more evenly distributed between the cities and the countryside (or rather the difference between the two matters less). In the interior, by contrast, the old inequality between city and country has been less affected by market reform.

The government has been aware of these issues for some time, and in the late 1990s the time was deemed ripe for some profound modifications in national development strategies. After 20 years of pro-east development, the strategy of developing the east first, the central second and finally the west has been abandoned in favour of the much-publicised *xibu da kaifa* (go west) policy. This policy has caused many complaints from people in the central region, who felt that they had been ignored in the previous 20 years and were now being passed over again (*bu shi dongxi*).

Another modification is a change in the understanding of the concept of development from a one-sided emphasis on GDP or income to human sustainable development including the strategy of emphasising education and the environment (but not public health), and a greater sensitivity to the needs of disadvantaged groups, including migrant workers.

The third change in policy orientation since 2001 is the recognition of the significance of employment. Previously, it seemed that many policies favoured GDP growth, to the detriment of employment. In fact, sometimes the primacy of growth even justified huge numbers of redundancies from state-owned enterprises (SOEs). This policy change has, however, reduced employment opportunities for rural labour migrants in order to provide more jobs for the urban unemployed.

Historical development of labour migration

In the first few years after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, rural labourers were encouraged to participate in urban construction and development. During 1950–58, about 40 million workers from rural areas were recruited to urban industrial sectors. However, in the second half of the 1950s radical collectivisation of agriculture urged an increasing number of people off the land. To counter this flow, the government set up the *hukou* (household registration) system, which links entitlements to, for instance, land, work, housing, grain and other rations to the place of residence. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, as a result of the failures of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, some 25–30 million rural labours who participated in the urban constructions were asked to go back to their home villages "for the time being". Throughout the collective period (and to a certain extent still today), the *hukou* system has been the cornerstone of the government's control over population mobility and a key component of socialist planning more generally (Cheng and Selden, 1994).

In the late 1970s, de-collectivisation of agriculture gave China's farmers the freedom to allocate the labour of themselves and their household. Initially, agriculture (mainly of grain, cotton and other crops included in the state economic plan) remained the chief focus of attention, but as procurement prices

⁴ This was mainly a long overdue corrective to the so-called 'price of scissors' that underpriced agricultural products and overpriced industrial goods. This policy dated from the early 1950s with the institution of the unified procurement and marketing of agricultural products, and amounted to a net subsidy for urban industry at the expense of agriculture.

dropped and the state-guaranteed grain purchase was phased out, other forms of employment were needed to supplement grain agriculture. These included agricultural sideline production (vegetables, poultry, hogs), but non-agricultural private or collective enterprises in the village or township of residence, known as *xiangzhen qiye* (township and village enterprises (TVEs)), quickly became the main source of employment, particularly in the economically more developed coastal provinces. About 10 million every year managed to shift from farming to local industries during most of the 1980s (see Figure 4). However, this strategy, heralded as *litu bu lixiang* (leaving agriculture without leaving the village), was of only limited relevance to vast swathes of the Chinese countryside that were less favourably located.

From the mid 1980s, the increase of income from agriculture became slower. At the same time, the governmental reform programme spread to the urban areas. This was especially true in the SEZs and open cities in coastal areas. Urban construction projects, foreign invested, private or collective enterprises generated a new and rapidly growing demand for cheap, temporary, migrant labour. Their estimated number for 2002 was 94 million, up 4.7 million over 2001 (China Daily, 23 January 2003).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, a great number of towns and cities were expanded or built from scratch. As a result, the urban population with permanent residence status increased from 20.60% of the total population in 1982 to 26.23% in 1990, 36.09% in 2000, and almost 40% by 2002 (Major Figures on 2000 Population Census, 2001; National Statistical Bureau, 2002a). However, it should be noted that much of this urbanisation is a result of the change of household registration from rural to urban and therefore falls outside the scope of this study.

Rural-urban migration suddenly became a new socio-economic phenomenon in the late 1980s, and dealing with its consequences has become a major policy challenge for authorities both at the national level and locally in the sending and receiving areas.

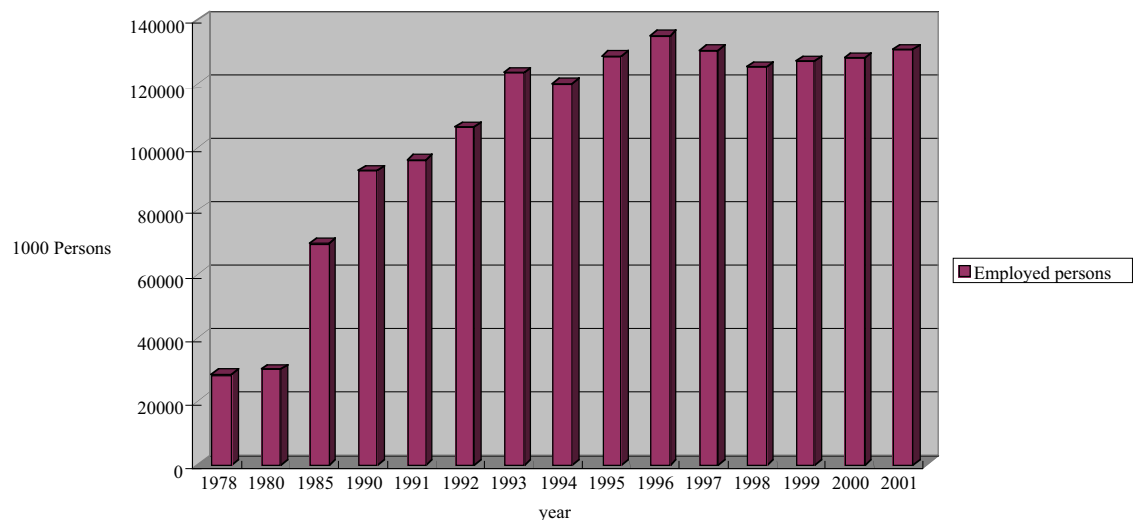
However, policy agendas do not always coincide. Whereas large cities on the whole wish to limit the inflow of migrant workers, national government and the local governments of the receiving areas are also keen to maximise the opportunities for local development that migration presents. Already in the mid-1980s, local policies had been drafted to encourage farmers to go to coastal cities, while in the early 1990s the Ministry of Labour promulgated a policy to allow migrants to do certain types of non-agricultural work.⁵

The different policy agendas of major sending and receiving areas are by no means easy to reconcile. The central government finds itself in the position of having to mediate between very different interests. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that the central government itself is divided. The Ministry of Public Security, in charge of registering and controlling migratory flows, for instance, has very different priorities than the Ministry of Labour and Social Security or the Ministry of Agriculture. These divisions are one of the main reasons that attempts at more radical reform have been repeatedly watered down or stalled. In fact, the most recent reforms of the *hukou* system (see below) again only partially apply to China's largest cities that have the discretion to limit and select in-migrants.

The different agendas of sending and receiving areas also have important implications for the status and rights of rural migrants in China's cities. As the case of Zhejiang village, a well-known Beijing community of successful businesspeople from Zhejiang province, reveals, in-migrants essentially have very few rights and have to rely on their own resources, for instance to build, buy or rent houses, run schools or find employment. The Beijing authorities at best tolerate their presence and at worst carry out raids aimed at chasing the migrants out of the city (Xiang, 2001).

Zhejiang migrants have proven remarkably resourceful and solved many of these problems by building their own residential area on the outskirts of Beijing. However, many other groups of rural labour migrants in Beijing and elsewhere lack the necessary financial or organisational resources (for instance

Figure 4: Number of employees in TVEs



Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2002a

⁵ For instance, as early as 1985, Sichuan province issued an official document listing rural labour migration out of the province as one of the "provincial strategies for development" (Huang, 1996). The Ministry of Labour 1994 policy document referred to here is Temporary regulations for employment of cross-regional rural labourers.

because they are in waged employment rather than being self-employed) of the Zhejiangese. They are more likely to live in fragmented communities, making collective action much more difficult. A bigger problem faced by many migrants is their lack of access to social security, welfare and other state provisions and services, including health care, education, housing and subsidies for water, electricity and heating. This is especially the case where the municipal government needs to concentrate on the problem of urban unemployment caused by the re-structuring of SOEs. According to surveys carried out in 2000 and 2002 (Wen *et al*, 2003), of all rural migrants who had come to Beijing in 2000 and 2002, 35.5% and 45.4% respectively had experienced joblessness for some period of time. Of these, 52.3% and 45.5% respectively had been jobless for more than three months. In 2002, 46% of respondents had been ill during their stay in Beijing, with the vast majority (93%) not receiving any form of payment for their medical expenses from their work unit.

Migrants, as non-residents, are not considered the responsibility of the destination area. As a consequence, the authorities from the migrants' areas of origin often play an important role, including public order and compliance with family planning quotas. Local representative offices of the authorities in the sending areas sometimes play a role here, for instance in liaising with the authorities in the sending areas, assisting migrants in cases of conflict with local employers, or disseminating information. In other cases, the authorities in the sending area may dispatch public security personnel to receiving areas or establish links with the public security authorities in the sending area. Activities of migrants, including family planning, may also be included in government evaluation of the rural households to which they still belong (Hoy, 1999; Xiang, 2001).

Rural-urban labour migration remains mainly seasonal or temporary. The existence of the *hukou* system not only makes it difficult to gain permanent residence elsewhere, but more importantly excludes

migrants from most state provisions in the cities. This effectively raises migrants' cost of living, especially the costs of education, housing and health care, making it uneconomical for them to stay. In addition, the social security system caters exclusively for permanent urban residents.

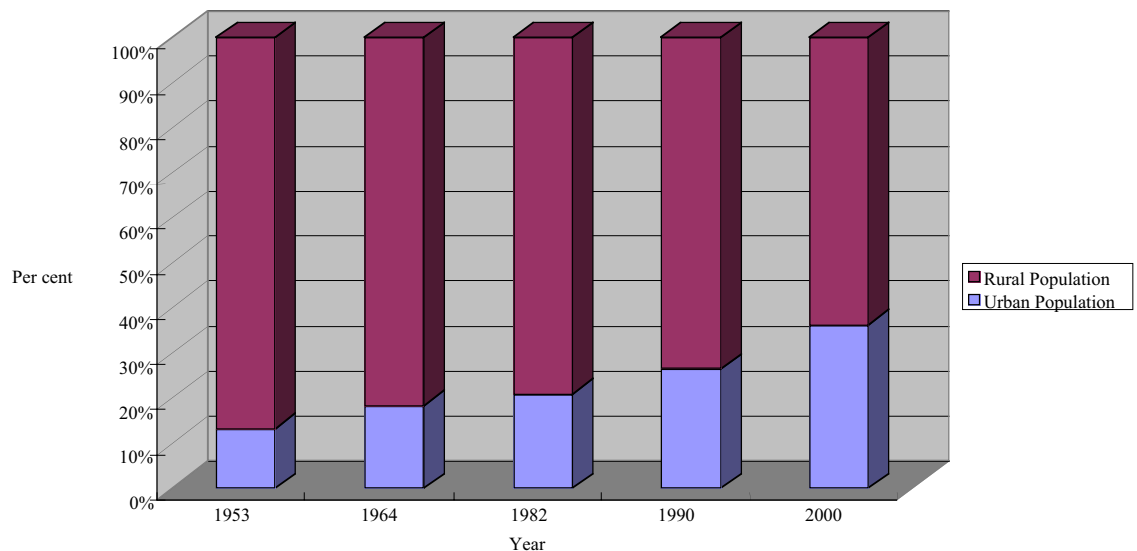
Furthermore, under the household responsibility system, migrants still have land in their place of permanent residence. Between 1997 and 1999, after the first 20 years of the household responsibility system, rural people were asked to sign new 30-year land contracts with the village. On the one hand, the household responsibility system ensures that rural people are entitled to land that guarantees a minimum level of subsistence even if everything else fails. On the other, however, they are under the obligation to keep their land under cultivation and to pay national land tax and other local levies. For migrant households with one or more of their most productive members working elsewhere this obligation constitutes a significant burden. Quite often, such households choose to sub-contract the cultivation of their land either to other households in the village, or else to migrant farmers from poorer areas, thus producing secondary rural-rural migratory flows into areas of rural-urban (or international) out-migration. Such secondary migratory flows generate income and, crucially, experience of the world beyond the village gate in areas that often have little opportunity to migrate to more prestigious and competitive jobs in the cities. This secondary migration may, however, also create an underclass of short-term and expendable contract farmers (Pieke *et al*, 2003; Murphy, 2002; Liu Yigao, Wang Xiaoyi and Yao Yang 2002).

INTERNAL MIGRATION

Scale of labour migration

As we noted in the previous chapter, during the final two decades of the 20th century, the rate of

Figure 5: Rural-urban population ratio in the 2000 national census



Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2002a

urbanisation has speeded up. A large number of towns and cities have emerged or expanded, and the urban population with permanent residence status increased from 191.4 million (19.4% of the total population) in 1980 to 301.9 million (26.4%) in 1990, and up to 455.9 million (36.9%) in 2000 (see Figure 5).⁶

When considering the issue of migration, it should first be realised that of the 160 million rural labourers who are not engaged in agriculture (see the previous section), the majority do not migrate to large cities. Instead, they tend to work in local industries or, alternatively, migrate to other rural areas where they either contract into agricultural work or find employment in rural industries.

Despite this important caveat, rural-urban migration has grown spectacularly. In the last two decades the number of rural-urban migrants increased from merely two million in the mid-1980s to 70 million in the mid-1990s, and, in spite of high unemployment in urban areas caused by redundancies from SOEs, the number of rural migrant labourers continued to grow

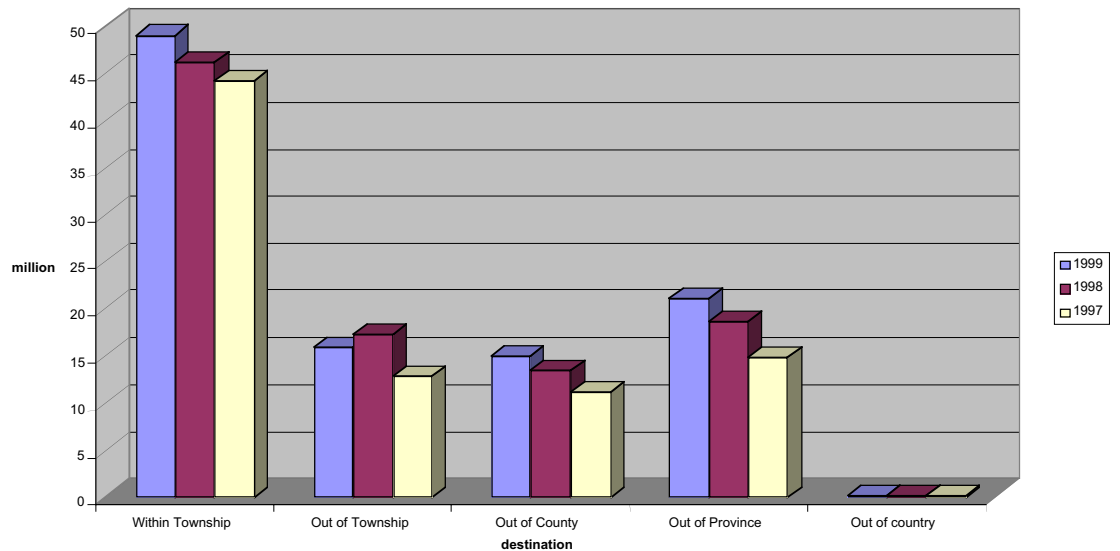
to 94 million in 2002, according to official resources from the National Statistical Bureau and top authorities (Cui Chuanyi, interview 2003; Wen Tiejun, interview 2003; Chen Xinwen and Han, 2002; People's Daily, 19 March 2003; Peasant Daily, 3 April 2003).

Other data sources confirm this picture, although the absolute numbers vary slightly. According to a rural survey by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1996, 72 million people left their own township for non-agricultural employment, of whom 45 million left their county, and 24 million their province.

The National Statistical Bureau's rural household survey team has shown that, based on its data for the period 1997–99, the number of rural migrant labourers to urban areas was 45 million in 1997, 55 million in 1998 and 67 million in 1999 (see Figure 6). An estimated further 30 million rural migrants moved to other rural areas by the end of 2000 (National Statistical Bureau and Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2000).⁷

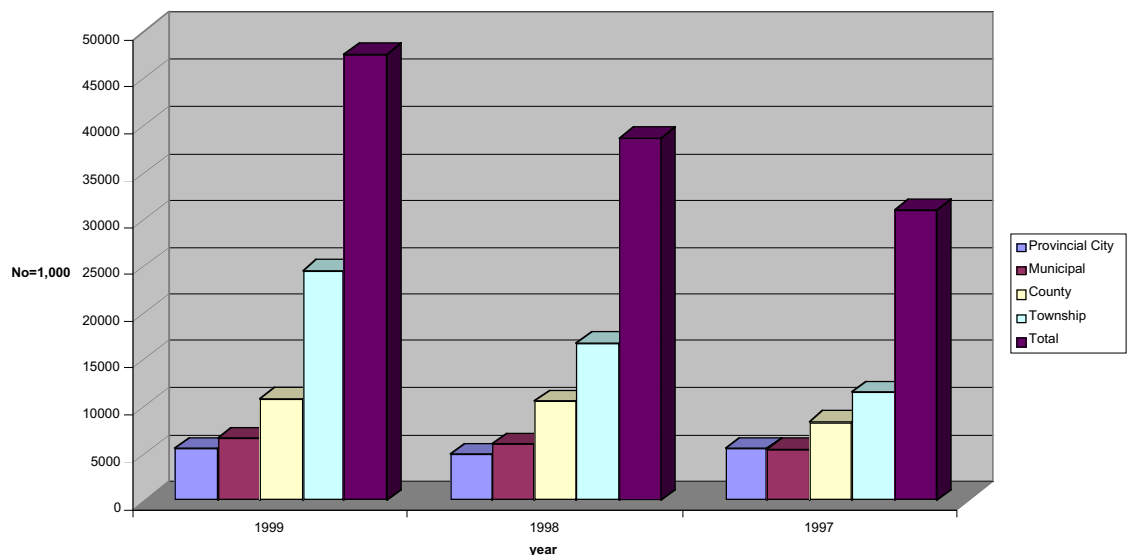
Of the 67 million rural-urban migrants in 1999,

Figure 6: Rural migrant labourers by destinations, 1997–99



Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999

Figure 7: Intra-provincial rural migrants, 1997–99

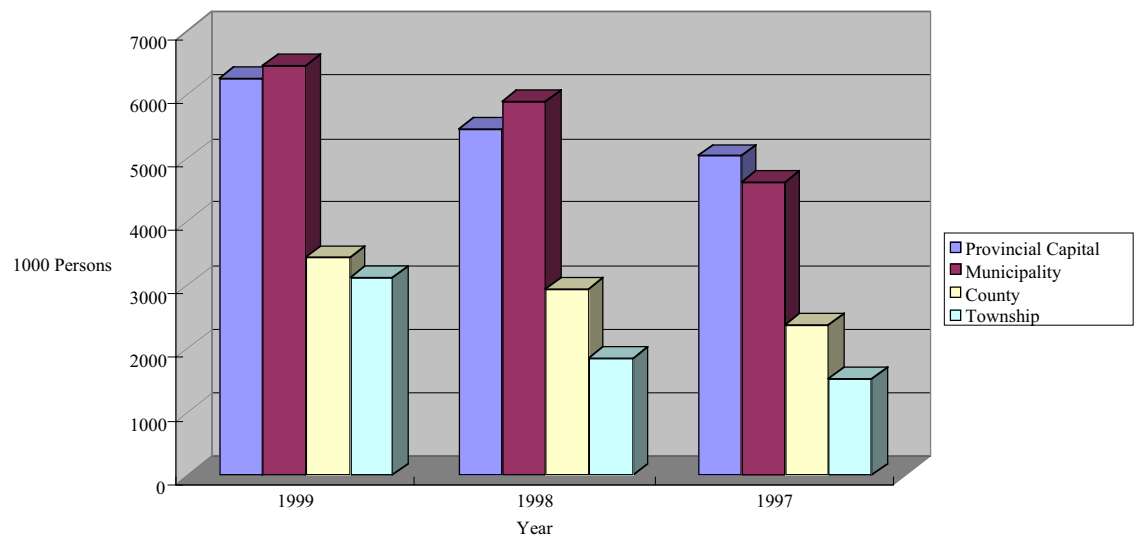


Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999

6 This officially indicates the extent of urbanisation, though sociologically it is not enough only to include those with urban permanent residence status. For example, rural labour migrants who have lived and worked in urban areas for more than a decade can hardly any longer be considered rural residents. Similarly, those living in one of the many villages already incorporated in an expanding city and who hold a rural registration are no longer rural residents. If these groups are included, the actual level of urbanisation in China is much higher.

7 For interesting case studies of rural-rural migration, see Liu Yigao, Wang Xiaoyi and Yao Yang. (2002).

Figure 8: Rural labour migrants who leave their own province



Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999.

19 million left their province. The remaining 48 million worked within their own province, but only 5.5 million got jobs in their provincial capitals. The others were employed within prefectural centres (6.7 million), county towns (10.9 million) or townships (24.5 million) (see Figure 7).

It is interesting to note that of the 19 million people who left their provinces, the trend was almost exactly the opposite, with a strong tendency to head for larger urban centres: only 3.1 million found jobs in townships and 3.5 million in county towns, whereas 6.46 million worked in prefectural centres and a further 6.2 in provincial capitals (see Figure 8).

Based on its 2001 household survey base, the Ministry of Agriculture estimated that there were 88 million rural migrants in 2001, of whom 55% came from the central region and 34% from the western region. Of these 88 million, nearly 90% went to urban areas (including nearby townships), with 82% moving

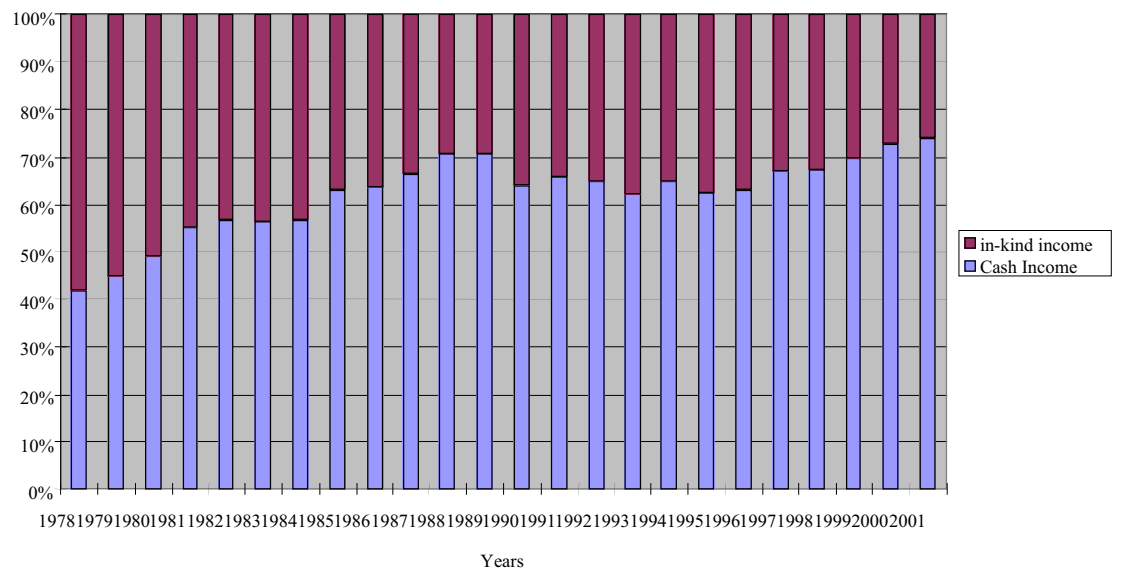
to the eastern region. Most of the people who went to the east got jobs and stayed in townships and county towns; migrants who went to provincial capitals and other large metropolitan areas were less than 30% of the total.

However, when interpreting the figures given above the following points need to be noted:

- The estimates do not categorise the rural construction labourers as migrants; instead, they are considered as part of the TVE workforce of 27 million
- The figures do not include the roughly 20 million people who come to cities registered, or in many cases not registered, as dependants of migrant labourers.

If migrants of the above two categories had been included, the total number would be close to 120 million.

Figure 9: Income for rural households, divided by cash and in-kind (%)



Source: National Statistics Bureau, 2001

Who migrates?

Region

Earning cash is the major objective of migration. In the western and central parts of the country the average income for rural people has been lower than that of national level, of which a considerable proportion has been in-kind rather than cash income (see Figure 9 and Table 1 below). It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the cross-province migrants are from these areas and are destined for the eastern coastal region (see Map 1 below, and Table 8 in Annex 1).

As in many other countries, it is not necessarily true that the poorest of the poor are the ones to migrate first. For instance, as data cited previously indicate, there are more migrants coming from central than from the relatively poorer western regions (see Table 8 in Annex 1) The reasons include the fact that the remote areas in the western region are often inhabited by minority peoples who may be less inclined to migrate. However, more important is the fact that in the central region population density is much higher and the rural population is more concentrated. Several provinces in the central region are locked into

TABLE 1: RURAL PER CAPITA INCOME: TOTAL AND CASH (%), 1999

Income	Total	Cash	%
National Average	3146.21	2381.6	75.70
Beijing	5515.65	5092.56	92.33
Tianjin	4649.13	3938.48	84.71
Hebei	3307.55	2607.23	78.83
Shanxi	2423.85	1836.31	75.76
Inner Mongolia	3440.31	2448.89	71.18
Liaoning	3704.29	3050.75	82.36
Jilin	3259.07	2290.07	70.27
Heilongjiang	3712.61	2654.57	71.50
Shanghai	6399.54	5914.94	92.43
Jiangsu	4542.03	3673.63	80.88
Zhejiang	5325.17	4863.37	91.33
Anhui	2585.56	1901.6	73.55
Fujian	4103.55	3617.21	88.15
Jiangxi	2833.8	2004.94	70.75
Shandong	3880.98	3090.67	79.64
Henan	2726.08	1854.4	68.02
Hubei	3008.13	2098.22	69.75
Hunan	3195.13	2440.74	76.39
Guangdong	4590.47	3759.51	81.90
Guangxi	2649.18	1975.68	74.58
Hainan	2840.75	2208.68	77.75
Chongqing	2594.95	1627.8	62.73
Sichuan	2829.93	1841.69	65.08
Guizhou	1947.47	1136.38	58.35
Yunnan	2246.94	1430.02	63.64
Tibet	1732.32	1174.8	67.82
Shaanxi	2032.79	1558.95	76.69
Gansu	1958	1309.03	66.86
Qinghai	2000.32	1365.72	68.28
Ningxia	2819.79	2169.24	76.93
Xinjiang	3129.35	2444.3	78.11

Source: China Yearbook of Rural Household Sample Survey 2000

subsistence agriculture and have made relatively little progress since the onset of the reforms, which is currently referred to as *san nong wenti* (the three rural problems – rural production, rural community and rural people).

Education

The majority of rural migrants have junior high school or primary school education. The average level of education of migrants is higher than those who stay (see Figures 10 and 11). However a minority of educated youth prefer staying as local elites.

The generally higher level of education of rural migrants compared to the level of education of those who stay obscures the considerable complexities and contradictions of the relationship between migration and education). Rural Chinese labour migrants enter a strongly segmented urban labour market in which they have little realistic chance of moving from menial to higher status employment. Migrants often look to return to their area of origin to fulfil long-term life goals, which usually revolve around starting an independent business.

For rural-urban migrants there is thus little point in acquiring an education beyond elementary literacy and numeracy, with a reasonable command of standard spoken Chinese. In villages specialising in out-migration, pupils frequently drop out of school before completion of compulsory education to join their fellow-villagers in the cities.

Yet in other ways migration has a positive impact on education. The earnings of siblings in the cities can, for instance, be used to pay for the education of one or more of the others, thus contributing to a multi-pronged collective family strategy for upward mobility. Basic education in rural areas is another case. However, there is an important gender aspect to this. Migration in some instances confirms traditional attitudes against educating girls because they eventually will marry out.

For instance, some girls come to work in the 'entertainment sector' in southern China to earn money in order to support their younger brothers' education (Pan Suiming, 1999; Huang Ping, 2003a). Migrants' remittances may also in part be donated to schools in the area of origin, supplementing the increasingly tight budgets of village and township authorities. Furthermore, migration brings migrants into contact with modern city life and may thus gradually inculcate an appreciation of the long-term necessity to gain both general and vocational education.

Gender

Around one-third of rural migrant labours are women. One case study shows that whereas 73.9% of women engaged in non-farm activities work within their townships, the equivalent number for men is 58.8% (Matthews and Nee, 2000).

One of the reasons for less female labour migration is that women are considered as housewives, whose major duties are childcare, cooking and animal feeding,

MAP 1: MAPPING THE RURAL LABOUR MIGRATION: ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS IN CHINA



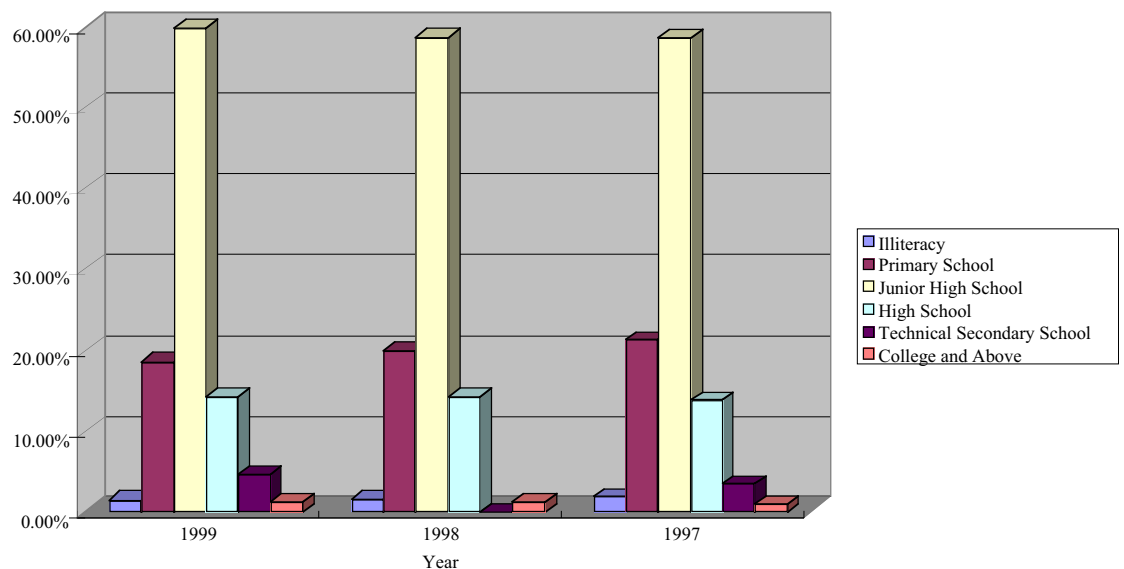
plus farming.⁸ There are many communities in the countryside where people think it is pointless to educate girls (Mei Fangquan and Huang Ping, 2003). In fact, falling educational standards for boys and girls in the countryside is a cause of considerable concern for the government, and the reason for a recent renewed effort to universalise primary and lower middle school education.

Other reasons why more men than women migrate are connected to the general process of reform and socio-economic change. Many rural labour migrants at the early 1990s were construction workers, an

almost exclusively male profession. Conversely, many Taiwanese, Hong Kong or overseas Chinese processing and manufacturing plants re-located or established in south coastal China preferred females to males, for they are “quick learners”, demanding lower salaries and are “easier to manage”.

The issue clearly is more complex than a simple gender bias in favour of either men or women. Whereas migrants are, on average, young, female migrants tend to be younger than men. Data from Zhejiang province in 2001 shows that female migrant labourers accounted for 39% of the total migrant

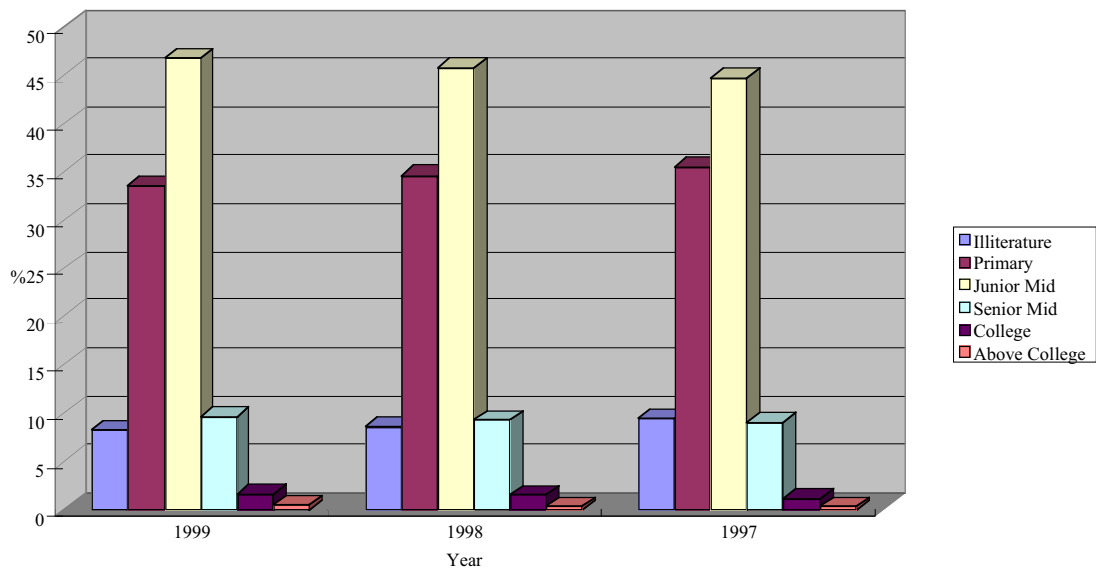
Figure 10: Educational background of rural labour migrants, 1999



Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999

⁸ Traditionally, farming was a male ('external') pursuit, with women being confined to ('internal') domestic duties and sideline production. Under the collectives, women and men were, for the first time, both expected to participate in farm work on a largely equal basis. However, with the growth of off-farm employment in the reform period this development continued towards the other extreme, with farming now often considered a female ('internal') activity and men seeking off-farm ('external') employment.

Figure 11: Educational background of rural labourers



Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999

labourers, 81% of whom had less than nine years of formal education; most were single and under the age of 30 (Zhejiang Women Federation Research Group, 2002). Other case studies show that the majority of female migrant labourers tend to be between 17 and 25 years of age, whereas male labourers from rural areas are mostly between 16 and 30. This is caused by the fact that women usually marry at a younger age than men, and the longer they stay away from their home villages, the more difficult it is for them to find a spouse (Huang Ping *et al*, 1997; Li Shi, 2001; Mei Fangquan and Huang Ping, 2003).

After the Asian financial crisis in 1997, many joint ventures, especially those in southern China owned by investors from Japan, Korea, Taiwan or Hong Kong immediately withdrew their investment or cancelled their contracts, leaving behind thousands of rural female migrant workers jobless and penniless. Many of the girls turned to work in restaurants and hotels, and some ended up as prostitutes (Pan Suiming, 2000).

Ethnicity

Case study research has corroborated the findings from the household surveys conducted by the National Statistical Bureau's rural household survey team that many *shaoshu minzu* (minority nationalities) do not leave their home villages. Ethnic minorities often live in remote and inhospitable mountainous areas, from which the distance to cities is much farther, and thus transportation and other costs much higher. They often have difficulties with the Chinese language (Wei, Zhong, 2002; Li Shi, 2002). However, it would be a mistake to dismiss minority ethnic group mobility as insignificant. Analysis of data from the 1990 census shows that minorities accounted for 6.5% of all inter-provincial mobility, which was lower than their proportion of the total population of 8%. However, their rate of intra-provincial mobility of 7.1% was only slightly below that of Han Chinese (Iredale *et al*, 2001).

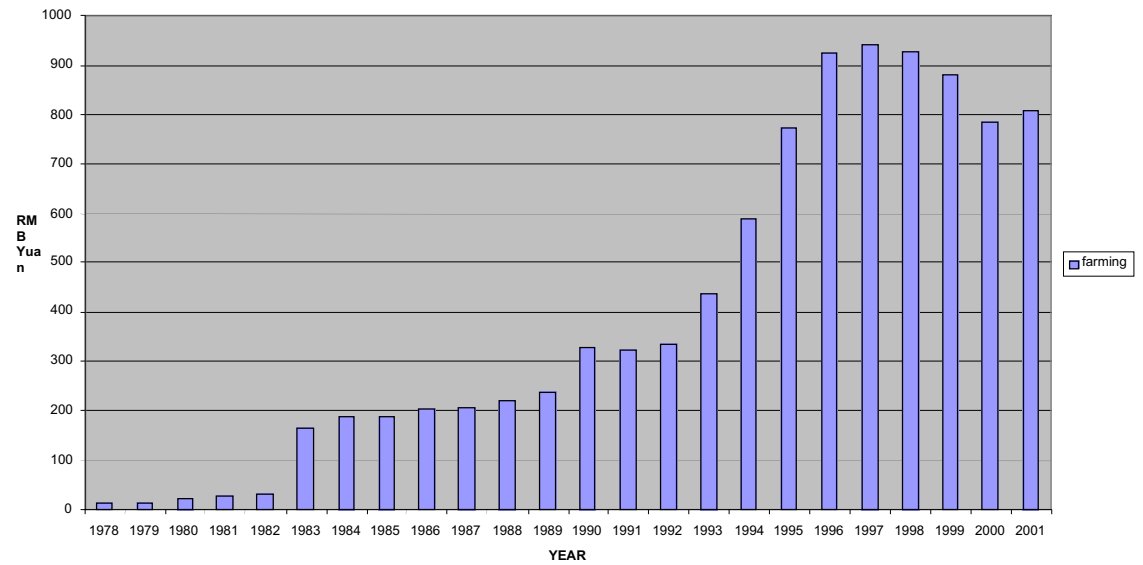
In recent years, the trend is that younger members of ethnic minorities increasingly prefer off-farm work to traditional animal husbandry and agriculture, either within or outside their own local area (Wang Luolin, Zhu, Ling *et al*, 2002).

In general, migration increases the ethnic mix across China. Minority migration serves to spread the minorities from areas with a high concentration of minorities in the north, west and south west to areas with relatively low numbers of minority populations. Few minority migrants go to areas with existing high concentrations of minorities; instead Han Chinese migrants from China's interior tend to head for such areas (Iredale *et al*, 2001).

A particularly sensitive aspect of migration in China is the issue of Han Chinese migration to non-Han areas. The government's minorities' policies are predicated on the need to preserve the identity, rights and interests of recognised non-Chinese groups (Mackerras, 1995). Yet considerable migration of Han Chinese has taken place to areas such as Inner-Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet due to other policies, and has had a positive impact on the economic development of these areas. There have been some unintended consequences of these policies. For instance, posting large numbers of state cadres and other highly qualified personnel to these areas undoubtedly makes a vital contribution to the quality of the local administration and economy, yet it also has led to a segregation (for instance in terms of residence and life style) between the local population and Han Chinese cadres rather than the latter's integration in local society (Ma, 1991). In Inner-Mongolia in particular, in-migration of Han Chinese has made the Mongols a minority in their own autonomous region (Jankowiak, 1993).

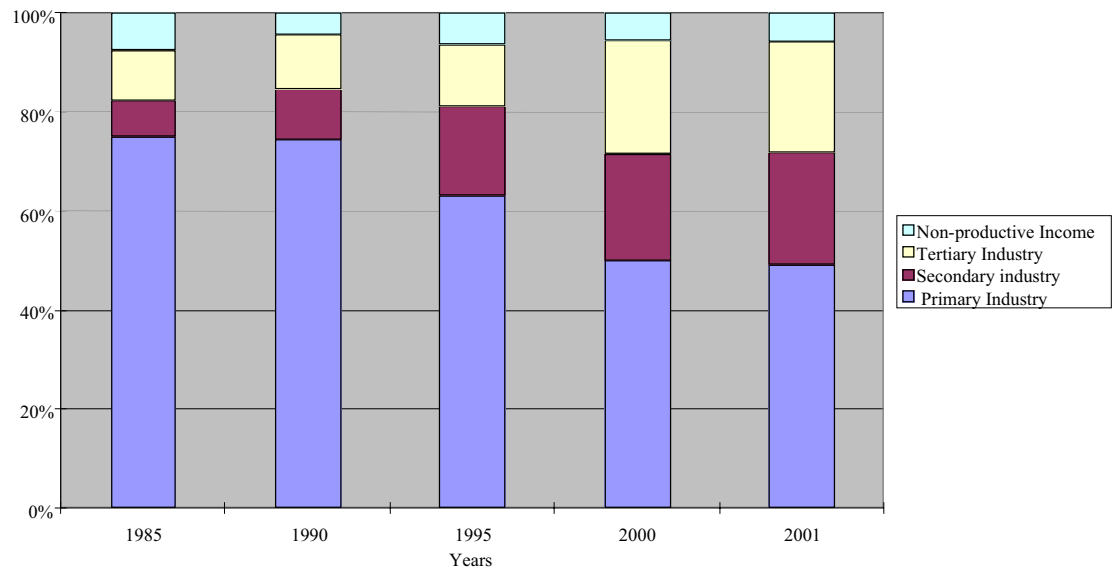
A related but separate issue is that of large-scale unplanned in-migration of Han Chinese in minority areas since the onset of the reforms. Those who come to Tibet, Qinghai, Inner-Mongolia and Xinjiang are mainly young men (sometimes with their families) from

Figure 12: Per capita net income from grain production, 1978–2001 (RMB)



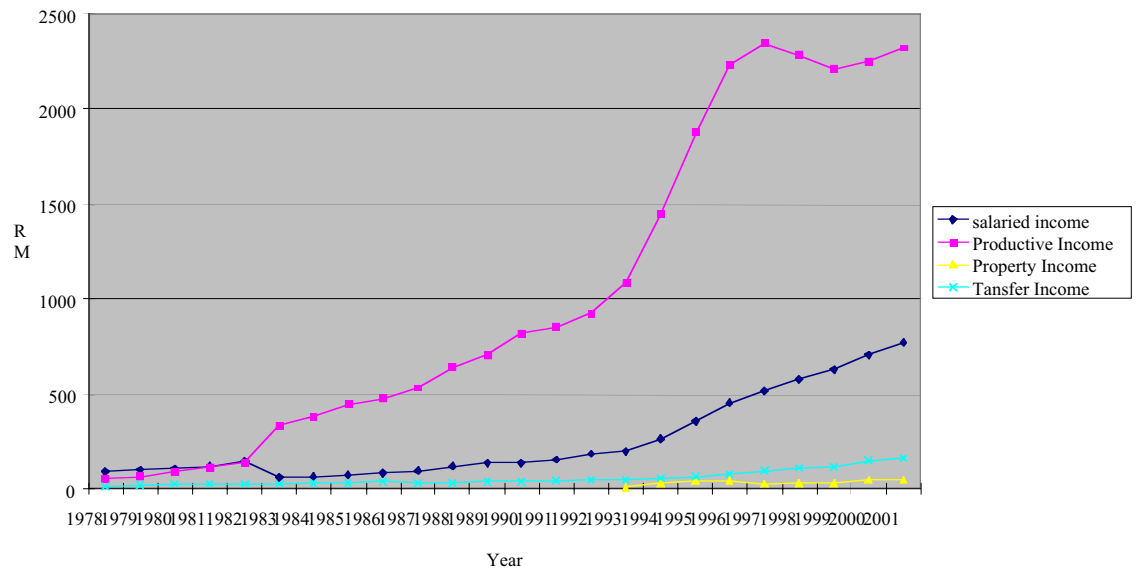
Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2002a

Figure 13: Percentage of per capita net income in rural areas by sector



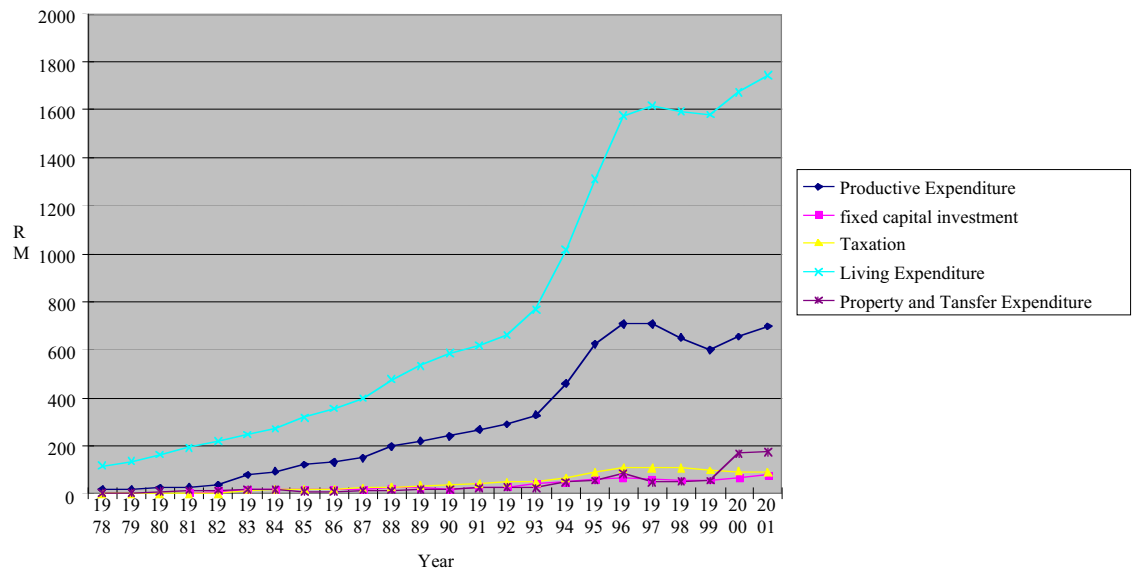
Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2002a

Figure 14: Income structure of rural households, 1978–2001 (RMB per capita)



Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2002b

Figure 15: Expenditure structure of rural households, 1978–2001 (RMB per capita)



Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2002b.

rural areas in Sichuan, Ningxia and Gansu. The lure of remote and often resource-rich areas attracts large numbers of Han Chinese, for instance tourists or those working in the tourist industry, vegetable gardeners (mainly catering to Han tourists and Han cadres stationed locally), traders or lorry drivers. The ‘get rich quick’ attitude of many of them not infrequently triggers conflict with the local population, while simultaneously reinforcing the perception that Han Chinese ways are the only road to achieve modernity (Halskov, 1999; Yeh, 2003).

Since the launch of the *xibu da kaifa* (go west) project, an increasing number of rural migrant labourers from China’s interior provinces have travelled to the western part of the country to work on infrastructural projects. However, these migrants have to compete with local rural labour migrants, often from non-Han ethnic groups.

Causes

Economic

The urban population has many prejudices about the *liudong renkou* (floating population) and *mingong* (rural labour migrants). Migrants encounter intolerance and discrimination every day. They are considered untrained/unskilled and even uncivilised, to have no idea about legal practices and hygiene and, most of all, they are perceived as being potential criminals. Yet without migrants there would be no Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou or Shenzhen.

Despite this discrimination, rural migrants keep on coming to the cities to earn money. This is the reason why so many young rural migrants bear the hard living and working conditions, unreasonable regulations and discrimination. So long as they can earn cash that can be taken home, they don’t mind too much that they are looked down on, and that the administrative system does not provide them with welfare and social security.

The latter point is indicative of the government’s

attitude that has only recently begun to change. Towards the end of 2000, members of the top leadership, including the current Party Secretary General Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, referred several times to rural labour migrants as part of ‘the working class’,⁹ and as major contributors to the development of China.

The ‘three rural problems’ have been made perceptibly worse by the fact that since the mid-1990s China has been confronted with a chronic overproduction of grain at uncompetitive prices on the world market. As a result, the increase in income (including in-kind) from agriculture – especially grain production – has slowed down even more (see Figures 12 and 13), whereas daily living expenses continue to rise (see Figures 14 and 15). In fact, between 1998 and 2000, farmers’ income from grain production decreased. The year 1998 witnessed a 2.3% drop, 1999 4.5%, 2000 4.7%. Only in 2001 did per capita income from grain production increase a little, but it was still RMB 15 less than that in 1999, and RMB 103 less than that in 1997 (National Statistical Bureau, 2002b).

Poverty is, of course, a key ‘push’ factor causing some to migrate out, but being poor on its own is not enough. In many impoverished counties in central regions, the local government’s poverty reduction strategy is to encourage at least one member from each family to migrate for off-farm work. In their own words, “if one manages to go out, a whole family is able to get rid of poverty” (Huang Ping, 1997).

Furthermore, at the village level, those who go out are usually not the poorest of the poor. Instead, in many cases young, educated men will go first, followed by their brothers and sisters. The poorest of the poor are the ones who may have to stay, due to lack of resources, information, contacts or confidence.

In recent years, another economic cause for rural-urban migration is that many TVEs have become less capable of absorbing rural labour, due to redundancies caused by privatisation or other forms of restructuring (*zhuanzhi*).

9 In Chinese communist parlance, ‘working class’ (*gongren jieji*) is a very positive term, whereas ‘rural migrant workers’ (*mingong*) sounds much more negative.

Institutional

As outlined previously, the *hukou* system was the main instrument for controlling population mobility. Before the reform of the *hukou* system in 2001 (see below), two earlier changes were vital in enabling a freer flow of migrants in China.

The first was the introduction of identity cards in the late 1980s, which enabled individuals, for the first time since the late 1950s, to travel around the country without showing any official permission letter from their local authorities. The second was abolition of the grain rationing coupons in the early 1990s. These coupons were normally only issued to residents of a town or city and could only be used in that particular place, thus effectively tying people to their place of residence.

Social

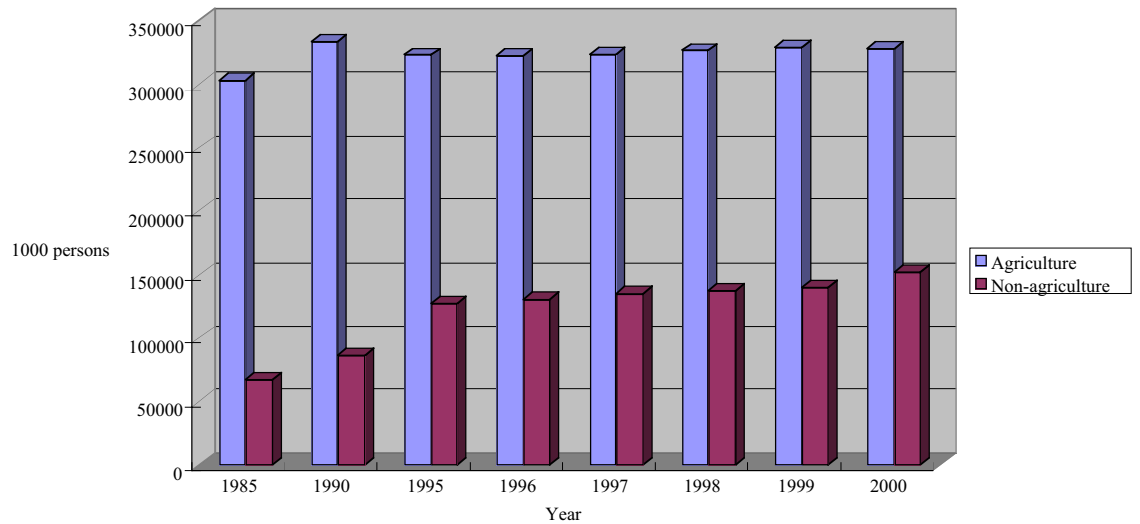
Many young rural labourers would rather do any

work in a city than work on a farm in their home village. In the words of one young migrant: "Litter collecting in a city is much better than farming in rural areas!" (Huang, Ping 2003b).

One key to understanding the attraction of cities is TV, which now reaches even the most remote rural areas. TV programmes, even the news, highlight the stark contrast between urban and rural life-styles.

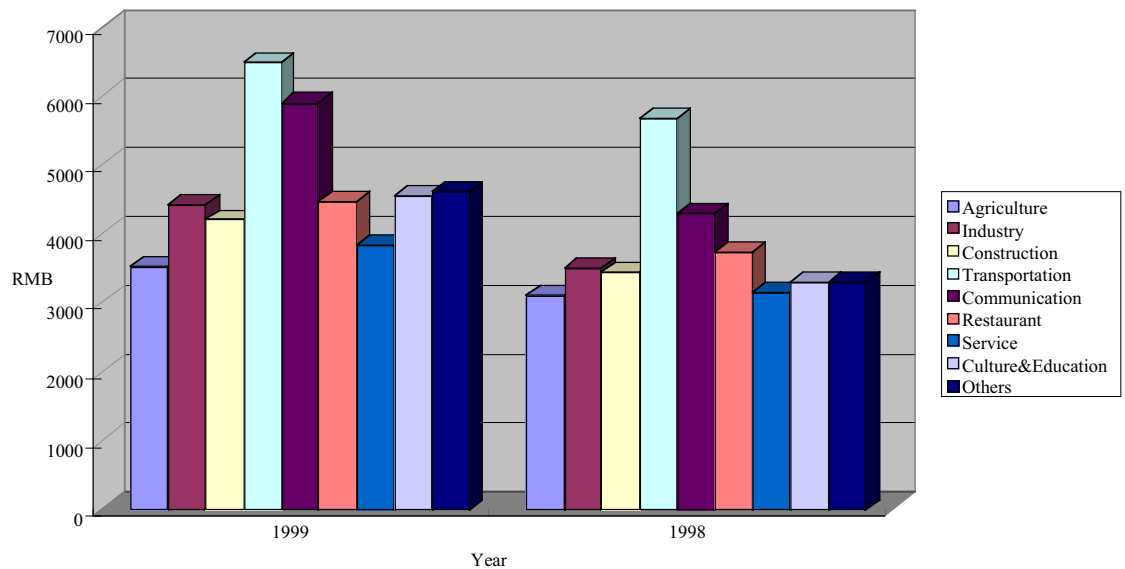
Furthermore, the decline of rural communities, particularly in those areas where market reforms have failed to make any real impact on living standards, often forces young labourers to leave. The decline does not only affect rural incomes, but also community life. Many villages and township governments with little or no independent sources of income have to rely on the relatively modest sums that are raised from local taxes and/or officially sanctioned local levies. Such governments struggle to provide even minimum standards of health care, education, public security,

Figure 16: Rural labourers in agricultural and non-agricultural employment



Source: National Statistical Bureau, 2001

Figure 17: Remittances from different industries, 1998–99 (RMB per migrant)



Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999

welfare and environmental protection. They are often forced to increase local levies beyond the nationally set limit of 5% of the average per capita net income, a problem often referred to as the *nongminde fudan* (peasant burden) in the media and official documents. However, research by Tao Ran and others reveals that the tax/levy burden is less serious a problem than the gap between the poor and rich within villages (Tao Ran, Liu Mingxing and Zhang, Qi 2002).

Importance of migration to poor people and to overall development

Impact on people in poor communities

The huge rural population and insufficient arable land is one of the most serious constraints on China's future development (Wen Tiejun, 2000). However, rural-urban migration in recent years has already contributed much to reducing the tension between population growth and insufficient land. As shown above, by the end of 2000 there were about 120 million rural residents working in urban areas. Some earlier studies have shown that, with the migration of labourers, the ratio of arable land to labour increased by more than one third at both household and village levels (Huang Ping *et al*, 1997).

It is important to realise that there are scholars who argue that, in spite of the quick rise in the number of rural labourers in non-agricultural sectors, in terms of both proportion and absolute number, rural migrants and those who work in TVEs come mainly from the ranks of the younger members of the rural population entering the workforce for the first time. People who are already economically active often remain engaged in agriculture. As a consequence, despite mass rural-urban migration, the total number of labourers in agriculture has not really decreased (Bai Nansheng, 2002), although obviously without migration pressure on the land would have significantly increased. Figure 16 shows that during the period of 1990–2000 the number of rural labourers engaged in

non-agricultural sectors almost doubled, while the number in agriculture decreased only very little.

In the short to medium term migration does not contribute much to alleviating pressure on the land, especially given China's young population structure. Despite the one child policy, the population will continue to rise to 1.6 billion in 2030, and will only start to decline thereafter. The effect of migration on the land/labour ratio will only be felt much later in the future.

Having said this, young rural migrants do contribute to raising the standard of living in the countryside. They usually send remittances back on a monthly or quarterly basis, and bring their savings back home yearly. Remittances are mostly used to meet daily expenses and have clearly contributed to the survival of many poor families and local communities.¹⁰ For instance, in one poor county in Sichuan in the mid-1990s, annual remittances via the county post office were five times higher than the total revenue of the county government. Moreover, remittances sent via post offices are likely to represent only half the total sent home by migrants, with the rest usually brought back at Chinese new year or the autumn harvest (Huang Ping *et al*, 1997; also Zhao Shukai, interview, 2003).

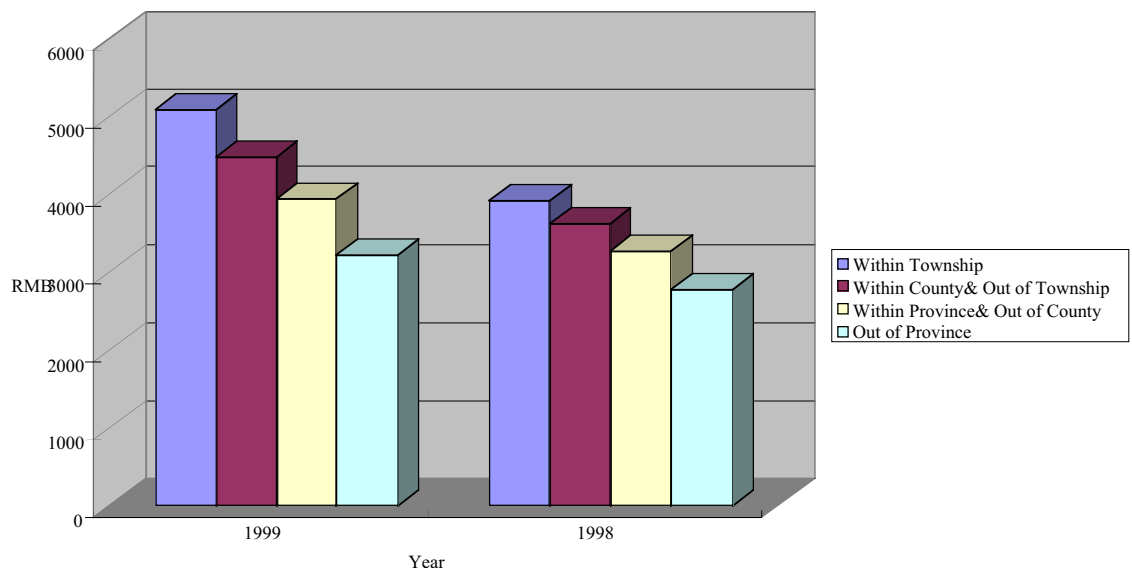
It is, however, worthwhile to notice, as Figure 17 shows, that certain types of employment generate substantially more remittances than others. Migrants working in agriculture remit the least, while those working in transportation, communication and industry remit the most.

Furthermore, the closer the migrants live and work to their home villages, the higher the amount they send home (see Figure 18). This is partly because the cost of sending is lower, and partly because the links with home are stronger.

Not surprisingly, the higher a migrant's educational level, the higher his or her wage. There is also a positive correlation between education and the amount of remittances (see Figure 20).

It might be too early to expect to see a direct economic and social impact of migration on rural

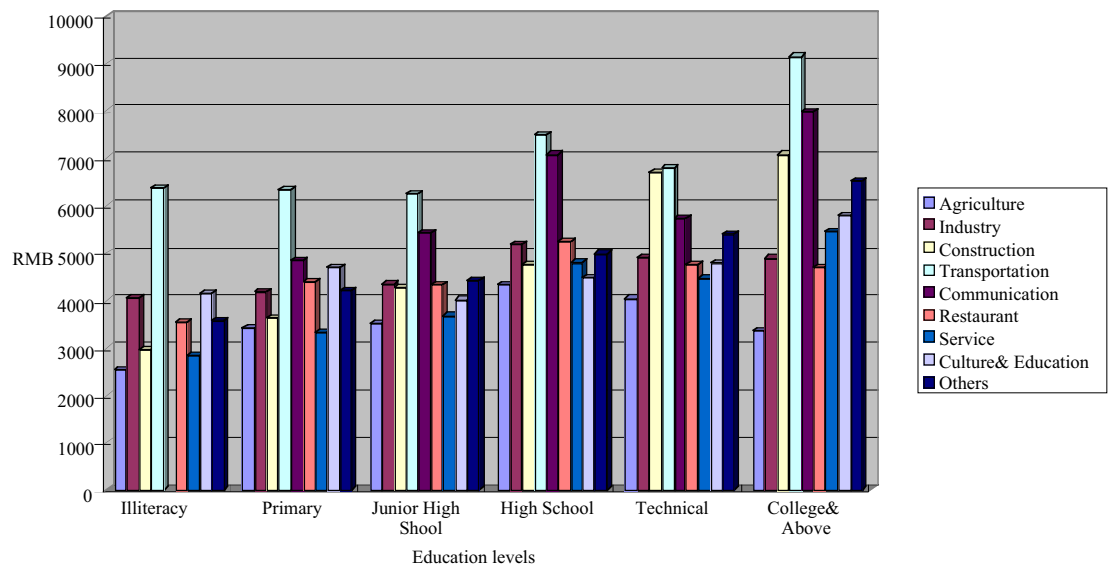
Figure 19: Remittances and distance between migrant's place of origin and destination, 1998–99 (RMB per migrant)



Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999

¹⁰ Remittances from international migrants are also predominantly used for daily expenses. An investigation of 186 returned overseas students revealed that 55.2% of the returnees had regularly remitted money to their family when they were abroad. Of these remittances 74.2% was used for daily expenses, 12.4% for study, 10.3% for medical care, and only 3.1% was saved (Luo, 2003).

Figure 20: Level of remittances by industry and education level, 1999 (RMB per migrant)



Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999

development, although many sending areas are now implementing policies to facilitate just that (see the next section). Labour migrants send a huge amount of remittances back, although most of this is used for household consumption and daily expenditure, including building and decorating new houses, and wedding and funeral ceremonies (Centre for Rural Economy Studies, 1996). Many young couples prefer an urban-style wedding, birthday parties and house decoration, even if they do not necessarily have migratory experiences themselves. This has changed the styles of rural rituals and other types of social activities. The younger generation in particular see urban life and life-styles as more attractive than traditional ways of living (Huang Ping, 2000).

To pay for such a life-style, many younger labourers from rural areas do not mind working long hours at heavy and dangerous tasks, usually without a formal written contract, and, in the last 10 years in particular, even having to wait for their wages to be paid as a lump sum at the end of the calendar year (Cai Fang, 2001; Lu Mai, Bai Nansheng and Zhao, Shukai 2001).

Earning cash has always been important, even more so in recent years as the costs of medical care for parents or relatives and for educating younger brothers and sisters have rapidly increased, often without any improvement in the services being provided. Due to the fiscal crisis facing many local rural governments, medical care and basic education have often suffered from a lack of financing and institutional support.

Medical care is a good example. In recent years, medical care in rural China has become a serious problem. While the growth rate of income from agricultural production has slowed, farmers' medical expenses have increased rapidly. In many rural areas, medical treatment and preventive care are managed separately and there is a tendency for the first to become more commercial. This tendency further aggravates the problem of medical care in rural areas. Many farmers cannot afford to go to clinics, let alone hospitals, which are much more expensive and further away from

villages. Curing illness has dragged many rural families into heavy debt. Quite often, only the remittances sent by sons and daughters have helped parents survive.

Contributions to rural and urban development

According to one research report, labour migration from rural to urban areas contributed 16% of total GDP growth in the past 18 years. Migration should therefore be regarded as one of the reasons for the high average annual growth rate of the national economy of 9.2% from 1978 to 1997 (Cai Fang, 2001). Through hard work, high savings, low consumption, and reducing demand for land, the tens of millions of rural labourers have helped their family members who have stayed behind. Had there been no or little migration, the gap between rural and urban societies would have been even wider than it is today.

Simultaneously, a deeper change has been taking place, of which migration and urbanisation are partly a cause and partly an effect; namely, the breakdown or weakening of many institutional boundaries in Chinese society, such as those between rural and urban areas, the eastern coastal and western central regions, and agriculture and industry. In the early 1980s, the farmers launched the reforms under the household responsibility system. In the mid-1980s farmers and rural governments embarked on the TVEs that absorbed many rural labourers. Rural-urban migration can therefore be regarded as the third wave of the farmers' contribution to the fundamental reform of Chinese society.

South east China in particular has witnessed profound changes to the pattern of social stratification due to overseas investment. Attracting such investment has enabled township and village governments to enhance their administrative power. Local officials are actively involved in attracting investment but are often seen as corrupt. Nevertheless, local populations recognise that their new wealth would not have been possible without these investments. Replicating the experience of Hong Kong's New Territories in the

1960s (Potter, 1968), many villagers on the other side of the border in Shenzhen have become small landlords who no longer need to work, either contracting their land out to young migrants from elsewhere, or else to agribusinesses who in turn employ migrant workers.

Rural-rural migrant labourers in the southern and central coastal areas usually sub-contract *zeren tian* (land that has to be cultivated to fulfil the village's state grain quota), but keep their own food grain land (*kouliang tian*) to grow grain for their own consumption. However, since the mid to late 1990s, subcontracting agricultural land in central or south eastern China has become less attractive. This was partly due to the Asian financial crisis of 1997, which resulted in less sub-contracts with overseas investors and joint-venture companies in commercial agriculture, and partly because of the abolition of the grain quota and a general reduction of state grain purchase prices. Instead, many rural labour migrants (mainly from Sichuan, Anhui, Hunan and Henan) now seek employment in the cities or, alternatively, go to the north eastern part of the country to sub-contract the production and harvest of cotton from state farms or local rural residents. Some migrants even go there with their whole family for a longer period.

The in-flowing rural-rural labour migrants are at the bottom of the social ladder. They are paid piece-rate wages and almost all work extra hours for no extra pay, few welfare benefits and little social protection (Chan, Madsen and Unger, 1992; She Xiaoye, 1997).

Although the main thrust of government migration policy (both at national level and in many sending areas) is to relieve the countryside of its 'surplus' population, local governments (counties and sometimes even provinces) of certain sending areas have gone beyond that and actively encourage out-migration. To such governments, migrants are beneficial not only for sending back remittances but also as vital sources of investment, entrepreneurship and experience on their return. Research on returned migrants has shown that they contribute positively to the economy of their home area. This is generally true even for those who have returned because their migration was unsuccessful or (in the case of women) because their husband wished to return. Successful migrants often return to escape the drudgery of urban wage labour and to use their savings and experience to set up small businesses in their home area, which is the ideal that most strive towards (Ma Zhongdong, 2001).

Provinces with large and relatively poor rural populations, such as Sichuan, Anhui, Hunan, Jiangxi and Guizhou, have implemented policies to harness migration in support of local development. Many of these focus on securing remittances and facilitating out-migration, but other measures, for instance building or expanding small towns, aim to accommodate returned migrants and the businesses they may want to set up. Some local governments even recruit returned migrants as cadres for a period of several years so they can bring their experiences to bear on improving village or township government. Many local authorities have also begun to realise the importance

of providing training to rural labourers *before* they leave, and of creating local labour markets on their return (Liu Huiping, 2001; Murphy, 2002; Xu Ping and Cheng, Yao 2001).

National governmental policies

In 2000–02, the top authorities made a concerted effort fundamentally to review their approach to migrant workers. Research carried out throughout the 1990s – often sponsored by organisations like the Ford Foundation and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) rather than the Chinese state – has played an important part in this. A large number of research projects and debates in academic journals and the mass media, drew attention to the many issues left unresolved regarding migration and the 'three rural problems'. Several policy initiatives have been undertaken in this period, all with the objective of freeing up the labour market across China and guaranteeing the more equitable treatment of migrant workers. Below, we discuss the most significant of these initiatives.

Hukou reform

Building on experimental reforms in, for instance, Zhejiang province, in March 2001 the national government decided to reform the *hukou* system, starting in small towns. It was decided to stop charging applicants for a temporary residency permit and to remove limitations on the period of stay. In the same year, the State Development and Planning Committee (renamed the State Development and Reform Committee (SDRC) from 2003) drafted a new five-year plan, which aimed to unify the national labour market, eliminate barriers to the flow of rural migrants, and establish a system of employment registration with a matching new social security system. Starting from 1 October 2001, China began an experimental reform of the residence registration system in more than 20,000 small towns (*Beijing qingnian bao* (*Beijing Youth Daily*), 28 September 2001).

Since the *hukou* reform of October 2001, the new policies on labour migration are:

- Residency in small towns and townships is open to all rural workers who legally have a job and a place to live
- Medium-sized cities and some provincial capitals have abolished the cap on the number of rural labourers who can apply for permanent residence status
- Metropolitan cities such as Shanghai and Beijing have adopted a policy of 'widening the gate, raising the price', which still limits the number of rural labourers applying for permanent residence status.

Creating a unified labour market

As far as local policies are concerned, there are two conflicting approaches. The first is the policy of sending areas to encourage rural 'surplus' labourers to seek off-farm opportunities in the cities. By contrast, receiving areas, particularly the larger cities, limit rural labourers to certain categories or sectors in order to give

opportunities to local workers with permanent residence status (Cai Fang, interview 2003).

For instance, in 1994, Shanghai municipality issued regulations that divided job vacancies into three categories: more than 100 types of employment were reserved exclusively for those with permanent residence status; around 20 to 30 types of employment were open to rural labourers provided no candidates with Shanghai permanent residence status applied; and no employment restrictions. Beijing and Shenzhen issued similar regulations in 1995 and 1996 (Zhao Shukai, interview 2003; Huang Ping, 1996).

In early 2002 the state council issued its no. 2 document of 2002 specifying how the freer flow of rural-urban migrants under the *hukou* reform should be catered for in the cities. The document's main points are:

- The coming of rural surplus labourers into urban areas or across boundaries is not a social problem that has to be minimised, but a normal consequence of both economic development and marketisation
- Migrant workers are 'members of the working class' instead of peasants, and they have contributed much to urban construction and urban development since the early 1980s
- No unreasonable limits or biased policies should be inflicted on migrants; on the contrary, they should be encouraged to migrate to urban areas
- New policies should aim at fair treatment, reasonable guidance, improvement of management and better services.

Ensuring equitable treatment of migrant workers

In September 2002, the central authorities once again emphasised the importance of providing fair conditions for rural migrants (New China News Agency, 4 September 2002). The main points are:

- Enterprises should sign formal contracts with rural labourers they employ
- Delay of wage payment to migrant labourers is forbidden
- No arbitrary fees should be collected from migrant workers
- Land must not be taken away from rural labourers who come to urban areas to work on temporary and seasonal jobs

In January 2003, the state council's no. 1 document for 2003 brings together in a unified framework the various elements of the earlier policies discussed above (see Annex 2). The comprehensive nature of the document makes it by far the most important policy statement issued so far by the central authorities in this area.

The document begins by listing some of the major problems for migrants:

- Unreasonable limitations to the types of employment they are allowed to have
- Lack of effective protection of the rights and benefits of migrants
- Frequent serious delay of wage payment and illegal collection of fees.

The document then reiterates the point made in earlier documents that the migration of rural surplus labour to non-agricultural sectors and urban areas is a key part of industrialisation and urbanisation, increasing the income of rural people, helping to re-structure the rural economy, quickening the pace of urbanisation and improving the social and economic development of urban areas. The document also repeats the slogan of 'fair treatment, reasonable guidance, improvement of management, better service' of the state council 2002 no. 2 document. More concretely, document no. 1 of 2003 includes the following:

- Abolition of any excessive unfair restrictions on rural labourers seeking either temporary or permanent employment in urban areas. For instance, all rural migrants are to be treated equally to urban residents when they apply for jobs, no more extra fees are to be charged, and they cannot be sent home by administrative means
- Assurance that proper legal procedures are followed in the employment of rural labourers, including contracts and on-time payment of wages
- Improvement in the working and living conditions of rural migrant labourers, especially women, including health care and social security
- Provision of skills and voluntary training for rural migrants; no unreasonable fees should be charged
- Provision of access to education to the children of migrant workers equally to that for the children of urban residents
- Enhance the proper management of migrant populations, including family planning, education for children, labour employment, health care and legal aid.

Policy gap

Despite the good intentions of the recent central policy documents, there is still an important policy gap as far as rural-urban migration is concerned. The current governmental programmes for poverty reduction are designed to cover two groups of poor people: roughly 30 million whose living standard is below the state poverty line; and the urban poor with permanent urban residence status who have been made redundant by SOEs, are retired on low pensions, or are elderly and in poor health, totalling another 30 million. Urban residents who have been made redundant or forced to take early retirement are relatively poor not only because they have a much lower cash income than they had before, but also because they can no longer fully benefit from their work unit's welfare system. Most SOEs no longer fully cover their employees' health care and pensions, let alone provide for those who have been laid-off, sometimes even refusing to pay for the latter's water and electricity. At the same time, redundant workers and pensioners cannot afford to buy themselves into the new health or other insurance schemes that have been set up to replace the old work unit provisions.

Moreover, the rural and urban poor are dealt with by separate departments. The rural poor fall under the State Poverty Alleviation Office, while the urban poor are the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.¹¹ The lack of connection between the

¹¹ The Ministry of Civil Affairs looks after a third group, disabled and abandoned children.

two leads to a waste of resources and even conflicts. Furthermore, both are mainly concerned with the income level of the poor, and cater much less for other forms of deprivation or disadvantage.

However, there is no single department or agency with responsibility for rural migrants. They are either simply treated as residents of their home villages, and thus of no concern to the urban administration as long as their welfare is concerned, or they are not considered to be poor as they are still supposed to have a piece of arable land in their home villages that guarantees their subsistence if everything else fails.

However, the issue of rural migrant labourers is not simply just one of 'working and eating'. As younger generations gradually join their elder brothers and sisters, more and more migrants will develop a stronger awareness of their marginal status and of the violations of their legal and civil rights and entitlements. At stake here is the risk that rural migrant labourers may well become a permanent underclass. If no administrative system and policy framework is put in place specifically to cater for their interests and concerns, this might well lead to consequences ultimately beyond the control of the authorities.

Key issues, problems, drivers of change

The relevance of rural-urban migration can only be grasped in the context of China's overall development strategy, which in the last five years has steadily moved in the direction of more radical marketisation of the economy and society. Discussions on migration take place against this background and there currently seems to be little interest among researchers or national policy-makers in the impact of migration on the possible development of rural communities which, after all, are perceived to be a major part of problem rather than an aspect of a solution. Migration is thus first and foremost discussed in the context of rural problems, chronic unemployment and underemployment, and fragmentation of the labour market. However, we argue that China needs an integrated development strategy that includes the sustenance of a viable and prosperous countryside as one of its key objectives. To achieve this objective, migration can also play an important role.

The three rural problems

The three rural problems (*san nong wenti*: rural economy, community and residents) have been long-standing issues in China. Until recently, however, the perception was that the rural economy, especially grain production, was the main issue. Various ways and means have been tried to increase grain production and the productivity of the land, quite often with considerable success. In the 1950s, collectivisation had a clear positive impact on grain production, but these gains were spectacularly wasted by the excesses of the Great Leap Forward (1958–61). Similarly, gains made in the early and mid-1960s could not be sustained after the first few years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). De-collectivisation and rising procurement prices in

the early 1980s triggered a spectacular rise in grain production. In the mid-1990s grain again became a chief concern of the central government, which used a range of administrative means to force local governments to keep land productive.

Indeed, until recently, guaranteeing China's self-sufficiency in food has been one of the key measures of success for all central governments since 1949 (see for instance the annual governmental reports at the National People's Congress between 1992–1997). Against this background it is ironic that total grain production has increased so much that both farmers and the authorities in charge of agriculture are now worrying about how to sell their products at reasonable prices, or even how to store them safely (Pieke, 2002).

Now that the problem of grain production finally seems to have been overcome, the other elements of the three rural problems have become higher priorities, especially since 1997.

First, lower prices for agricultural products, especially grain, mean less income for farmers and rural households. At the same time, county and township governments as well as village authorities are demanding more taxes and other levies from farmers while these same local governments can often not even afford to pay for the maintenance of public order, basic education, public health, irrigation and other infrastructural projects in rural areas, leading to conflicts between villagers, village leaders and township officials.

Mainstream research suggests that the solution is to find ways for country dwellers to leave the rural areas (Lin Yifu, 2003; Lu Xueyi, 2002; Pan Wei, 2003). The development of cities and towns, plus further reform of the system, will be the key to resolving the rural problem. "As long as you quicken the process of urbanisation, more off-farm employment opportunities will be ready for rural surplus labourers, and 'the three rural problems' will find a solution. The logic is, the more you push the reform, the quicker the development (of cities)".

However, these proposals are driven by the ideal of an urbanised society, which has been widely considered as the necessary path towards modernisation. Much research has little to say about possible alternatives to this model. Urbanisation, especially the development of metropolitan areas, characterised by the catchphrases of industrialisation, modernisation, urbanisation and, more recently, commercialisation and globalisation, can be seen as a new 'political correctness'.¹²

In such thinking, the problems in education, public health and social welfare are only an issue in urban areas and for urban permanent residents, and the only solution to these problems are marketisation and commercialisation. Rural areas are not only ignored, but are in fact seen as a part of the problems that have to be eradicated. Many scholars in rural studies are arguing, quite correctly on narrow technical grounds, that the best way to help the farmers is to reduce their numbers (Lu, Xueyi 2002; Pan, Wei 2003).

Wang Jian (2003) considers whether the solution is to find ways for people to leave the countryside, but argues that flawed policies have made the rural problem

¹² The most recent example of such thinking was the 16th CCP Congress in November 2002, which proposed a new strategy called the "jump-over-stages for industrialisation", referring to the fact that IT should be promoted first, which will then quicken the pace for industrialisation (People's Daily, 9 November 2002).

in China even more serious since the late 1990s. According to Wang, structural solutions are necessary.

First, stronger international market competition is needed, especially in light industries. For example, Chinese (including Hong Kong and Taiwan) exports of textiles to North America dropped from 49% in 1994 to 28% in 1998. Such a change has a direct impact on farmers' income, both from rural textile factories and from cotton farming.

Second, with the rise of incomes, urban residents spend proportionally less on agricultural products (mainly food) and more on cars, houses and other consumer items.

Third, a structural change in the agricultural economy itself is required, to make it more capital and less labour intensive, and thus more expensive for agricultural households, especially compared with rural income. For example, in 1999–2001 rural net income increased by 7%, whereas household expenditure on agricultural production rose 24%.

Fourth, the decrease in demand for agricultural products and the more capital-intensive nature of production have meant that rural surplus labour rose sharply from 33% in 1988 of the total rural labour force to 60% in 2000.

Wen Tiejun – among others – has shown that due to natural as well as historical constraints, especially the very limited per capita arable land in China, it is impossible to copy or follow the patterns of Western models of urbanisation. This includes the privatisation of arable land to encourage the emergence of large-scale farms and the urbanisation of society in order to transfer rural surplus labourers to urban sectors.

Other scholars have begun to talk about a possible decline of rural society. They point out that speedy urbanisation and rural-urban migration do not necessarily involve 'surplus' labourers. In fact, rural migrants are very likely to be those members of the labour force that the countryside needs most. A field village study conducted by a group of scholars in 1995–96 showed that, in spite of the long-lasting dilemma of limited arable land versus labour surplus, there is indeed a serious 'brain drain' from the country to the cities. Migrant labourers are mostly young males with higher educational background, and the people who stay behind are largely women, children, and the elderly (Huang Ping *et al.*, 1997).

Others, who believe in speedy urbanisation and marketisation as the solution to the rural problem, point out that these issues will in time be resolved by the free play of market forces. The vast surplus of labour in the countryside makes large-scale urbanisation and rural-urban migration inevitable. As long as migrants continue to be able to exercise a free choice in where they live, they will only return to the countryside if and when the opportunities there are better than those in the cities, ultimately leading to a balance between rural and urban development.

Unemployment and underemployment

After several years of research and reflection, researchers and policy-makers have reached a consensus that one

of the priorities for China's development in the next 10 to 20 years is how to maximise employment rather than economic growth. As a result, the early strategy has been modified. (*People's Daily*, 13 September 2002).

In trying to find solutions to unemployment an overlapping set of dilemmas must be confronted. These are (Huang Ping, 2003c):

- Total labour force versus structural constraints; some workers have little relevant experience and skills in an economy where old sectors are declining and new, often labour-extensive ones are emerging
- The urban unemployed versus rural 'surplus' labourers; the latter are now facing a new challenge – competition from the urban unemployed whose numbers have grown rapidly due to massive redundancies by SOEs
- Older workers versus new entrants in the labour market; in the next five years, there will be about 23 million labourers annually who need to find jobs in urban areas, but urban industry is expected to be able to absorb 8 million only, so almost 15 million annually will face the possibility of unemployment.

The reforms increasingly create winners and losers. Put differently, the social costs of the processes of privatisation, marketisation and liberalisation become increasingly apparent, and these costs are highly unevenly distributed across society. It is very likely that China will find it impossible to create jobs for the several hundred million rural 'surplus' labourers within one or two decades, on top of having to create jobs for the urban unemployed. According to Wen Tiejun, China therefore has no choice other than to: continue capital investment and expansion, in order to create more employment; allow the payment of low wages to a large number of labourers, sometimes even lower than the official minimal wages; and go through a (prolonged) stage of serious labour problems, including a very low level of protection of workers' rights, welfare and participation in management.

Many researchers and policy-makers now argue that it is too early to establish an overall social security and welfare system for the whole country. Instead, they think a more realistic approach is to create as many jobs as possible, even if these only command low wages and a low level of welfare and social security provision. However, a few argue that denying workers basic rights would not merely be unfair, but would also reduce the efficiency of the labour force (Jing Tiankui, 2002).

Privatisation of the land?

Against such a background, many scholars, especially economists, have begun to think of privatisation of arable land and large-scale farming as a solution to the rural problem. The theory is that by privatising arable land rather than the current long-term allocation of land-use rights, farmers will be able to sell and buy land. As a result there will be a gradual development of large-scale farms, which will benefit both agricultural productivity and the wealthier strata in rural areas. In turn, this will provide a base for the firmer establishment of the rule of law and democracy in rural society.

Mao (2003), for instance, has made the argument that the old-fashioned perception of exploitation (as a negative phenomenon), which was the main reason for banning private ownership, needs to be discarded. For the next 20 to 30 years, China needs both employment and development. In order to achieve these two goals privatisation is necessary.

The question remains: will there be a greater outpouring of rural labour migrants – ‘surplus’ or not – with the further weakening of rural economic, financial and social institutions? In other words: if a nationwide land privatisation programme is launched in the hope of increasing efficiency and productivity through the growth of large-scale modern farms, where will the displaced hundreds of millions of subsistence farmers go? Wen (2000) argues that the government simply cannot provide the required social security and social benefits to 800 million rural people in the countryside and therefore suggests that in rural China the basic conditions for land privatisation do not exist.

Since the start of the reforms, the rural population has had access to a piece of land sufficient for subsistence. This land is their safety net and has prevented the growth of a large landless class which, together with the *hukou* system, has ensured that China has not developed large urban slums like some other developing societies (interviews with Cai Fang, Cui Chuanyi and Wen Tiejun 2003).

Few scholars are openly against privatisation. However, people like Li Changping, a former young township official who wrote a well-known letter to the premier in 1999, openly oppose privatisation. The letter contained a sentence that later featured in many news headings: “Farmers are so poor, the countryside is so hard, and agriculture is in such a danger!” (Li, C., 2003).

Li argues that it is not the privatisation of land, but the lack of adequate access to legal rights and poor quality of life of the rural population that are the main issues confronting China’s rural policies. The authors of this paper believe that Li is fundamentally right. Even if land were to be privatised, it should be done in such a way that ordinary farmers are not simply displaced and left to fend for themselves. We furthermore argue that migration should play a key role in this, not only as a way of relieving the countryside of its surplus population, as current mainstream thinking in China prescribes, but also as a valuable way of bringing capital, knowledge and connections to the countryside.

A small but increasing number of scholars and policy researchers have begun to talk about, and publish papers on, rural alternatives, including the contribution of rural migration to rural development and the local, often modest practices, that may bring about sustainable solutions (Xiong Jingming *et al*, 2002; Lau Kinchi and Huang, Ping 2003; Ma, 2001; Ma, 2002; Murphy 2002; Yuan Peng, 2003; Zhang Xiaoshan, 2002).

What seems to be lacking, however, is a broader social perspective, combined with a sensitivity to how rural development and rural poverty can be linked with rural labour migration in a more institutional manner, as far as empowerment, participation of rural people, and gender equality are concerned.

It is in this area that research and policy advice will have much to contribute.

International migration

Historical development of international migration

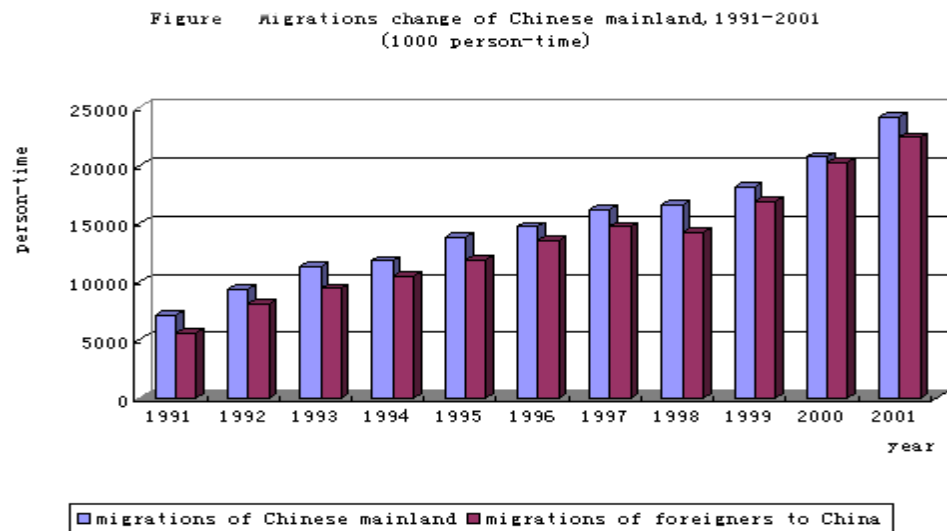
After the Opium War in 1842, China became the world’s most important source of voluntary and indentured migrant labour put to work, often under appalling conditions, to serve the rapid expansion of territory under western colonialist rule in the Americas, south east Asia, Australia, South Africa and Siberia. Due to a combination of factors, after roughly 1920 the level of Chinese emigration dropped, but nevertheless considerable numbers of Chinese continued to emigrate until the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 and even in the years immediately afterwards. However, as the new, collective structures of political control (rural collectives, urban neighbourhood committees and work units) began to take shape, from the mid-1950s onwards the Chinese government effectively put a stop to international migration, which came to be seen as an act of treason. The one important exception was substantial legal and illegal emigration from mainly Guangdong province to nearby Hong Kong, which was within swimming distance from the Chinese mainland. The last great wave of such migration happened in the late 1970s: between 1977 and 1982, almost half a million Chinese migrants arrived in Hong Kong (Skeldon, 1994).

From the mid-1970s, well before the onset of reform in 1978, Chinese emigration resumed from the traditional areas of origin of the overseas Chinese (*qiaoxiang*), mainly located in the coastal provinces of Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang. The timing of the resumption of international migration interestingly coincides with that of the resumption of modest internal migration in at least some of the areas with a tradition of internal migration or labour circulation. The causes for this change are complex, but include the waning of Cultural Revolution radicalism, the decentralisation of power caused by the Cultural Revolution, and the depressed state of the rural economy and local rural government finances.

Initially a mere trickle, overseas Chinese source areas again quickly produced massive flows of emigrants, particularly after the passing of the 1985 emigration law (see below). Initially, countries with communities from the area of origin were the main destinations. However, in the early 1990s emigration from overseas Chinese areas had become commercialised enough for emigrants to target countries across the globe in search of new opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship as yet untapped by other Chinese emigrants. Some of this migration was illegal, but it should be borne in mind that many migrants were legal emigrants (family reunification, study, labour migration), even if they employ the services of professional migration agents.

As emigration from traditional overseas Chinese source areas professionalised, globalised and universalised in the 1980s and 1990s, it blended with

Figure 21: Number of migrants to and from the People's Republic of China (excluding Hong Kong and Macao)



Source: Luo, Kebin 2003

other migratory flows that were much less linked to specific areas of origin; involved migrants from a broader spectrum of social backgrounds; were truly cosmopolitan from the very start; and often had no direct historical connection to earlier, pre-1949 types of migration.

With the onset of reform, significant numbers of Chinese students gained admission to North American, Japanese, Australian and European universities. However, international migration and study should increasingly no longer best be viewed as a separate flow, but should be considered part of the much broader phenomenon of increased social and geographical mobility in China. A significant number of Chinese explored their new freedom by looking for employment or business opportunities elsewhere, in large, modern cities such as Beijing, Shanghai or Canton, in one of the SEZs or, indeed, abroad. In the early 1990s, the new internal mobility of both urban and rural Chinese began to spill over beyond China's borders. The educated and skilled elite often found its way directly to the urban centres of North America, Australia, Japan, Europe, and even Africa as students, entrepreneurs or skilled professionals. However, equally important are the cross-border traders and teams of construction and agricultural workers in eastern Russia, who quickly became an essential part of the local economy. More recently, significant numbers of redundant state sector workers, particularly from the 'rustbelt' economies of north and north east China, have found their way to Europe or North America.

Number of international migrants

The number of Chinese emigrants rose sharply throughout the 1990s and into 2000 (see Figure 21). Nevertheless, in 2001 it still only reached 3,148,000, of whom 458,000 people emigrated to seek employment abroad. This nevertheless represented an increase of 23.8% over 2000. However, it has to be pointed out that these figures exclude those who leave China illegally. Obviously, the exact number of illegal

emigrants is impossible to measure accurately, but estimates by Chinese public security authorities tend to be around 400,000, or almost the same number of legal emigrants seeking employment abroad.

The dynamics of international migration partially mirror those of internal migration, particularly from traditional overseas Chinese source areas. Obviously, in such areas the opportunities provided by existing overseas connections were the main reason why emigration restarted. However, not all overseas Chinese areas are equally important sources of the so-called 'new migrants'. As with internal migration, those overseas Chinese areas that, for one reason or another, were unable to capitalise on the 1980s reforms, turned to emigration. Furthermore, recent research by one of the authors of this paper has revealed that a demonstration effect has led to migration to areas adjacent to areas of overseas Chinese migration, often with active support from local authorities (Pieke *et al*, 2003).

International migration and government policy

During the last two decades the Chinese government has fundamentally redefined its position on emigration, which is now regarded as an individual citizen's right. Consequently, the government considers its role as one of service provision rather than control, and internationally opposes any linkage between migration and political or ideological issues. Since 1985, several laws and regulations have come into force that have granted increasingly more rights to citizens seeking to travel abroad. The objective is that by 2005 all Chinese will have the right to apply for a passport on production of their identity card and residence papers (Xiang, 2002).

At the national level, the key legal document continues to be the *Migration management law*, which came into effect on 1 February 1986. This grants ordinary citizens the right to a passport under certain conditions. It was followed by the *Implementation rules of migration management law*, which came into force on 15 July 1994 and made obtaining a passport

much easier for those who already had travelled abroad at least once before.

The migration law and its implementation rules provide the framework for more detailed legislation on the management of international migration. However, the actual procedures and rights of going abroad continue to vary from locality to locality, and it is fair to say that no unified approach exists to manage the rapidly growing out-flows of international migrants. On the whole, both the national government and local governments in overseas Chinese areas are much more interested in cultivating relationships with the long-established overseas Chinese communities, particularly those in south east Asia, who are a vital source of foreign investment, remittances, expertise and support.

Official awareness at the national level of the relevance of 'new migration' dates from around 1995. More recently, the national government has made a concerted effort to establish a detailed and consistent regulatory framework for international migration. For instance, in order to regulate the proliferation of travel agencies and to guarantee the legitimate interests of travellers and travel operators, the *Method for the travel management of Chinese citizens* came into force on 1 July 2002. Other examples are *The management stipulations of exit service work training* (revised draft) of February 2002, and *Methods for transacting the exit procedures for labourers* of 1 April 2002.

The issue of illegal migration and asylum abuse informs much of the west's perception of Chinese international migration. The Chinese national government is also concerned about the issue and, in the last 10 years has made repeated efforts to urge local authorities in sending areas (particularly central Fujian province, where the migration trade is most developed) to crack down on migration agents. However, in statements and negotiations with western governments, the Chinese government always points out that illegal Chinese migration is fundamentally a western, not a Chinese problem. The western emphasis on human rights issues (including family planning) leaves the asylum system wide open to abuse. Furthermore, western countries are reluctant to create or open up further regular immigration channels for Chinese migrants that would make it no longer necessary for bona fide immigrants to abuse the asylum system.

As far as skilled migrants are concerned, particularly those who have left to study abroad, a whole package of penalties (in case their study is paid for by the Chinese government) and incentives (tax breaks, cash gifts, higher salaries, and in the past access to special shops) has been created to encourage their return (either temporary or permanently) upon completion of their studies. The incentives to return have recently been raised markedly, ranging from higher wages to the creation of special passport control channels for Chinese citizens at international airports. These policies attract only a small percentage of those who have left; nevertheless they do make a difference as they allow (former) citizens to re-establish a foothold in China, even if they do not wish to settle there permanently (Xiang, 2002).

Connections between China and the overseas Chinese

The national government and overseas Chinese source areas have many decades of experience in fostering and capitalising on their overseas links, and nationally the overseas Chinese (including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan) are by far the most important foreign investors in China (for an overview of the development of overseas Chinese policies, see Thunø, 2001). However, overseas Chinese investment usually flows to areas best suited to foreign investment, either in the vicinity of the overseas Chinese's home village (usually in or near a major city), or for instance, Shanghai, Beijing or other national urban centres.

Overseas Chinese may also donate much smaller sums to their home village, but these tend to be for non-commercial projects (roads, schools, temples) that raise the standard of living and improve the local infrastructure. Their conspicuousness often reinforces the belief among the local population that emigration is the only way to get ahead in life. However, there are important areas where overseas Chinese investment has had a more direct developmental impact, particularly in southern Fujian and the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong. These areas managed to mobilise their overseas connections very early on in the reforms when investment opportunities for foreigners and overseas Chinese elsewhere in China were still limited. In addition, they could capitalise on their proximity to Hong Kong or Taiwan. Until recently, the focus of overseas Chinese policies has been the Chinese communities established for generations in south east Asia or North America, rather than the often much poorer new migrants who have recently started flowing out of China (Pieke *et al*, 2003; She Xiaoye, 1997; Zhu, 2000; Woon, 1998).

Over the last 20 years, governments of overseas Chinese areas of origin have developed strong ties with leaders and organisations of overseas Chinese communities from their area, with delegations frequently going back and forth, overseas Chinese leaders being appointed to local political consultative conferences, and large-scale meetings of overseas Chinese associations from a particular area being held in China, southeast Asia, or elsewhere. These ties forged between overseas Chinese and local government in China play an important role in coordinating investment or donations, and in mobilising overseas Chinese for the development of their area of origin.

Conclusions

In terms of numbers, migration in China is mainly the internal movement of rural labourers to urban areas, bringing tens of millions of young people from villages to nearby townships, county towns, prefectural centres and provincial capitals, as well as the coastal and metropolitan areas.

This trend will last for at least another 20 to 30 years, and it may even increase to hundreds of millions, given the fact that by 2030 more than 50% of the population will still live in the countryside, and the

government will continue to push modernisation, marketisation and urbanisation as the national priority.

Particularly in the long term, rural-urban labour migration (including more permanent urbanisation) will reduce China's long-standing problem of having too little arable land per capita, while in the meantime earning a large amount of off-farm cash income for rural residents and communities.

On the other hand, rural-urban migration could also add to the formation of a massive underclass of urban poor in cities, coupled with a decline of rural communities and the rural economy.

Migration in China is inextricably linked with the long-term project of a fundamental structural transition from a planned to a market economy. As such, the patterns and implications of migration are informed both by the old institutions of the collective period and by market forces. In this report, we have argued that this unique configuration presents both challenges and opportunities. The main challenges are to promote greater equity for migrants, who continue to have limited rights, while simultaneously avoiding competition and conflict between migrants and poor permanent urban residents. The main opportunities lie in mobilising the still exceptionally strong local rural administrative structures (counties, townships, villages) and the bonds (both formal and informal) that continue to tie migrants to these rural areas of origin.

If China manages migration with these broader objectives in mind it could, in the longer term, engineer a transition to a fully-fledged socialist market economy without many of the dislocations and lopsided developments that are often associated with mass rural-urban migration in other countries. In order to maximise the benefits that rural-urban migration brings and to avoid its potentially disastrous consequences, we have to ask ourselves how this migration of labourers and their relatives – children, parents, or younger siblings – from rural areas can be a 'win-win' game for both the rural and urban segments of society, in the end leading to a narrowing rather than widening of the gap between rural and urban areas. In view of this, we should also ask to what extent the current pace and volume of labour migration from rural to urban areas can continue or even expand.

The governmental agenda for urbanisation envisions that by 2030 about 50% of the total population should be living and working in cities and towns. Even if all future rural-urban migration happens successfully and smoothly – that is, migrants will be able to change their status to urban permanent residents and will not become jobless or homeless – the problem of poverty will not automatically be solved. In the cities the number of urban poor will remain large, including both recent migrants, those who have been shed by SOE reform and, increasingly, younger unemployed people. The urban poor will often have to be content with low pay and few securities and benefits, little protection, and social marginalisation.

Migration will also not be a cure for all the countryside's ills. Even with 50% urbanisation in 2030, there will still be as many as 800 million people

remaining in rural areas. The reforms will continue to produce a stratum of rural poor. The rural poor are not necessarily only those who fall under the state poverty line, but also include those who cannot afford the cost of basic medical care or compulsory education.

Suggestions for DFID

Poverty is multi-dimensional in nature, having economic, social, absolute and relative aspects. First, it is not always meaningful to use averages as proxies for the overall situation, because of local polarisation within a community. Second, a reliance on economic indicators may lead to bias. An increase in income does not necessarily improve a person's rights or access to services. Rural labour migrants may earn more than they otherwise would have, but they have little social or legal protection and, in addition, have to shoulder burdens and responsibilities in their home village. They are, therefore, often in a much worse position than their urban counterparts, even if they earn the same or more. Third, applying a standardised poverty line does not accurately gauge the level of poverty in a community. For instance, some may earn an income above the poverty line, but need to spend significant amounts on health care, education or, perhaps, re-settlement. Again, this point applies particularly to rural labour migrants. In general, it is crucial: to introduce the concept of the urban poor or relative poor into the main discourse; to include at least some rural labour migrants as a part of the urban poor; and to monitor poverty in a more multi-dimensional way.

It is time for to consider the introduction of the idea of sustainable development for rural areas in a more practical way, and to tackle the issue of migration against that background. Examples of sustainable development concepts and indicators include green GDP, human development, community-based development (such as community identity, security and solidarity), and quality of life (including indicators for mutual support and neighbourhood trust, cultural security and ecological diversity). Monitoring and evaluating the work of local officials and authorities only on the basis of narrow economic indicators, such as the annual growth of GDP, income, investment, revenue and so on, has led to a lopsided pattern of development that must be corrected. DFID could explore ways of working with the excellent system of rural household base observation of the Ministry of Agriculture and the household questionnaire system of the National Statistical Bureau to further improve indicators.

In dealing with the issue of migration it is useful to establish a set of guiding principles. DFID should be aware that first, it will be impossible to stop rural-urban labour migration. Second, it is too early and risky to provide subsidies to the rural agricultural economy using revenue raised in urban sectors (Lin, Yifu 2003).

On the basis of these two principles, we recommend that DFID explores ways of engaging with the national government in order to enhance and learn from processes to develop a comprehensive policy framework for the management of migration, whose objectives are:

- To facilitate a viable pattern of urbanisation and balanced urban economic development
- To strengthen the development of rural communities and the rural economy
- To safeguard the rights of migrants as residents of both sending and receiving areas

These general objectives lead us to make the following policy suggestions to DFID for their potential engagement with national government:

- (a) The immediate and complete abolition of the *hukou* system is undesirable. We argue for improving the system in a gradual manner, giving migrants the right to permanent residency, plus relevant entitlements in the destination area, while retaining at least some of the residency rights in the place of origin, thus continuing ties and commitment to the area of origin.
- (b) Likewise, migrants and their dependants should be allowed to keep their village land if they so wish, but they (and other village residents) should also be allowed to sub-contract, lease, or mortgage their land to raise funds for enterprises, education, out-migration, or the purchase of a house elsewhere.
- (c) Creating a more balanced rural educational system that includes locally-relevant training in appropriate technologies and skills for youth who do not want, or are not able, to progress to higher educational levels, but who aspire to local non-agricultural employment and/or out-migration.
- (d) Requiring transfer of government funds between villages, townships, counties, or even provinces if needed to maintain a minimum-level of local government infrastructure and services in poor areas.
- (e) Strengthening the legal and administrative framework guaranteeing the rights of migrants as long-term residents of the place of destination, including the right to purchase or rent housing, access to medical care and education. Attention should be paid to the fact that many migrants do not have sufficient bargaining power on the job market to be able to enter into full and formal contractual relations with their employers; as a rule it is this group who need the most protection.
- (f) Further foster cooperation between migrants and the authorities of sending and receiving areas in jointly setting up and funding government provisions for migrants. As part of this, the system of national and local individual taxation of migrants and their employers has to be strengthened, and a system must be established for intra-governmental revenue sharing to raise funds for government services needed by migrants, both in the areas of origin and destination.
- (g) Explore the potential for higher levels of autonomy for local governments in sending areas to develop policies that link out-migration with local development. This includes not only the provision of services to potential migrants and outside employers, but also enlisting the resources and experience of migrants and returned migrants in local administration and the development of local urban areas, industry and services.

- (h) Facilitate mechanisms for migrant groups to be given a role in policy-making that takes account of their interests. Here, the experience of the areas of origin of overseas Chinese should be carefully studied as a model for the development of a consultative and participatory structure. The close links between local and national Chinese government and overseas Chinese associations could at least in part be usefully translated to the domestic arena as a way to give migrant groups a voice, both in the affairs of the area of origin and the area of destination.
- (i) Support training for higher level officials on the emerging lessons of urbanisation from a variety of countries. This will provide a corrective to the exclusive focus of such officials on the developmental path followed by the currently developed and industrial societies. It should also include paying more attention to the range of local government experiences in enlisting rural-urban migration for development of the sending areas in China itself.
- (j) Before the onset of the reforms some real advances were made regarding gender equality in rural China. It is significant to re-think these gains in order to work out new strategies for narrowing the rural-urban, rich-poor and eastern-western gaps in order to close the gender gap. We must ward against a reduction in gender equality with an increase in economic growth. Indicators for gender (in)equality should include not only the actual situation, but also, and more importantly, the relative (lack of) opportunities available to both genders.
- (k) The government has increased the income level for scientists, academics, university lecturers and schoolteachers, which has been one of the major changes since the reform. However, the time has now come for these experts and elites to contribute to a more humane development that narrows the gap between rural and urban areas, poor and rich strata, and eastern and western regions. The evaluation system in universities, colleges, schools and research institutes needs to be modified into an issue- and locality-oriented one, encouraging highly qualified personnel to work for, or even within, poor communities, marginal groups and less developed areas.

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TABLE 1: PER CAPITA INCOME FOR RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001
Total net income	397.6	686.31	1577.74	2253.42	2366.4
Wage income	72.15	138.8	353.7	702.3	771.9
Agricultural income	202.10	344.59	799.44	833.93	863.62
Of which, from grain	191.46	330.11	775.12	783.64	809.56

Source: China Statistical Yearbook, 2002.

TABLE 2: PROPORTION OF CASH AND IN-KIND INCOME FOR RURAL HOUSEHOLDS (%)

Year	Cash	In-kind
1978	41.92	58.08
1979	44.96	55.04
1980	49.32	50.68
1981	55.21	44.79
1982	56.85	43.15
1983	56.38	43.62
1984	56.95	43.05
1985	63.1	36.90
1986	63.68	36.32
1987	66.59	33.41
1988	70.91	29.09
1989	70.82	29.18
1990	64.07	35.93
1991	65.99	34.01
1992	64.86	35.14
1993	61.98	38.02
1994	64.85	35.15
1995	62.56	37.44
1996	63.27	36.73
1997	67.16	32.84
1998	67.33	32.67
1999	69.59	30.41
2000	72.82	27.18
2001	73.87	26.13

Source: China Statistical Yearbook, 2002.

TABLE 3: GINI COEFFICIENT IN RURAL AND URBAN CHINA

Year	Rural	Urban
1978	0.212	0.16
1979	0.237	0.16
1980	0.238	0.15
1981	0.239	0.15
1982	0.232	0.15
1983	0.246	0.15
1984	0.258	0.16
1985	0.264	0.19
1986	0.288	0.19
1987	0.292	0.20
1988	0.301	0.23
1989	0.300	0.23
1990	0.310	0.23
1991	0.307	0.24
1992	0.314	0.25
1993	0.320	0.27
1994	0.330	0.30
1995	0.341	0.28
1996	0.323	0.28
1997	0.330	0.29
1998	0.327	0.30
1999	0.336	0.295
2000	0.354	0.32

Sources: China Statistical Yearbook, 2001, NSB, China Statistics Press, Beijing, 2001.

Note: Some researchers argue that the actual gini coefficient during 1985–1990 in rural China may be lower than is apparent from the data provided by the NSB (see Ravallion and Chen in Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics 61 (1), 1999: 33-56.)

TABLE 4: GROSS INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT VALUE BY OWNERSHIP IN CHINA (BILLION RMB)

Item	1988	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999
Gross value	1822	2662	4840	9189	11373	12611
(%)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
State-owned enterprises	1035.1	1495.1	2272.5	3122.0	3596.8	3557.1
(%)	(56.8)	(56.2)	(47.0)	(34.0)	(31.6)	(28.2)
Collective enterprises	658.8	878.3	1646.4	3362.3	4334.7	4460.7
(%)	(36.2)	(33.0)	(34.0)	(36.6)	(38.1)	(35.4)
Individual-private enter	79.1	128.7	386.1	1182.1	2037.6	2292.8
(%)	(4.3)	(4.8)	(8.0)	(12.9)	(17.9)	(18.2)
mixed enterprises	49.5	163.1	517.4	1523.1	2098.2	3296.2
(%)	(2.7)	(6.1)	(10.7)	(16.6)	(18.4)	(26.8)

Sources: China Statistical Yearbook 1994, 1996, 2000, NSB, China Statistics Press, Beijing.

Notes: Gross output values are in current prices.

TABLE 5: INCOME OF URBAN AND RURAL HOUSEHOLDS AND THE URBAN-RURAL GAP (RMB)

Year	Per capita income of rural households (RMB)	Per capita income of urban households (RMB)	Ratio of urban income to rural income
1978	134	316	2.36
1979	—	—	—
1980	191	439	2.30
1981	233	458	2.05
1982	270	500	1.83
1983	310	526	1.70
1984	355	608	1.71
1985	398	685	1.72
1986	424	828	1.95
1987	463	916	1.98
1988	545	1119	2.05
1989	602	1261	2.10
1990	686	1387	2.02
1991	709	1544	2.18
1992	784	1826	2.33
1993	922	2337	2.54
1994	1221	3179	2.60
1995	1578	3893	2.47
1996	1926	4839	2.27
1997	2090	5160	2.48
1998	2162	5425	2.52
1999	2210	5854	2.65
2000	2253	6316	2.80

Source: NSB, China Statistical Yearbook, 1994, 1996, and 2001.

TABLE 6: REGIONAL DISPARITY: PER CAPITA INCOME OF URBAN HOUSEHOLDS (RMB)

Region	1981	1989	1993	1996	1997	1998	1999
Average	458	1261	2337	4377	5160	5425	5854
Eastern region	476	1441	3140	5371	6277	6574	7146
Central region	397	1084	2118	3576	4318	4492	4837
Western region	468	1200	2287	3733	4379	4665	5302
Ratio of Eastern to Central to Western	1.20:1:1.18	1.33:1:1.11	1.48:1:1.08	1.50:1:1.04	1.45:1:1.01	1.46:1:1.04	1.48:1:1.10

Source: Calculated from NSB, China Statistical Yearbook, 1994, 1996 and 2000

TABLE 7: REGIONAL DISPARITY: PER CAPITA INCOME OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS (RMB)

Region	1978	1985	1992	1995	1996	1998	1999
Average	133.6	397.6	784.0	1577	1926	2162	2210
Eastern region	164.1	513.0	1156	2346	2776	3154	3236
Central region	131.5	380.3	711.7	1422	1797	2054	2058
Western region	120.0	322.6	619.0	1051	1271	1476	1519
Ratio of Eastern to Central to Western	1.25:1:0.91	1.35:1:0.85	1.62:1:0.87	1.65:1:0.78	1.54:1:0.71	1.54:1:0.72	1.57:1:0.74

Source: Calculated from NSB, China Statistical Yearbook, 1994, 1996 and 2000

TABLE 8: ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS, INTER-PROVINCIAL RURAL MIGRATION IN 1999 (%)

	Eastern	Central	Western	Total
Eastern	6.7	48.9	25.9	81.5
Central	2.5	4.6	2.1	9.2
Western	1.1	1.4	6.8	9.3
Total	10.3	54.9	34.8	100

Source: Employment and Migration of Rural Labourers in China, 1999, MLSS & NSB, p.29.

TABLE 9: RURAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, 1978-2001 (RMB PER CAPITA)

Year	Total income	Salaried income	Productive Income	Total Expenditure	Productive Expenditure	Living Expenditure
1978	151.79	88.38	54.01	135.82	16.79	116.06
1980	216.93	106.38	87.44	196.23	25.32	162.21
1985	547.31	72.15	445.25	485.51	121.39	317.42
1990	990.38	138.80	815.79	903.47	241.09	584.63
1995	2337.87	353.70	1877.42	2138.33	621.71	1310.36
1998	2995.48	573.56	2286.84	2457.17	652.48	1590.33
2000	3146.21	702.30	2251.28	2652.42	654.27	1670.13
2001	3306.92	771.90	2325.23	2779.96	695.97	1741.09

Source: China Household Survey Yearbook, 2002.

TABLE 10: PER CAPITA ANNUAL INCOME AND ENGLE COEFFICIENT OF URBAN AND RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

Year	Per capita annual net income of rural households (yuan)	Per capita annual disposable income of urban households (yuan)	Engle Coefficient of Rural Households(%)	Engle Coefficient of Urban Households(%)
1978	133.6	343.4	67.7	57.5
1979	160.2	387.0	64.0	57.2
1980	191.3	477.6	61.8	56.9
1981	223.4	491.9	59.9	56.7
1982	270.1	526.6	60.7	58.7
1983	309.8	564.0	59.4	59.2
1984	355.3	651.2	59.2	58.0
1985	397.6	739.1	57.8	53.3
1986	423.8	899.6	56.4	52.4
1987	462.6	1002.2	55.8	53.5
1988	544.9	1181.4	54.0	51.4
1989	601.	1375.7	54.8	54.4
1990	686.3	1510.2	58.8	54.2
1991	708.6	1700.6	57.6	53.8
1992	784.0	2026.6	57.6	52.9
1993	921.6	2577.4	58.1	50.1
1994	1221.0	3496.2	58.9	49.9
1995	1577.7	4283.0	58.6	49.9
1996	1926.1	4838.9	56.3	48.6
1997	2090.1	5160.3	55.1	46.4
1998	2162.0	5425.1	53.4	44.5
1999	2210.3	5854.0	52.6	41.9
2000	2253.4	6280.0	49.1	39.2
2001	2366.4	6859.6	47.7	37.9

Source: China Statistical Yearbook, 2000.

TABLE 11: REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF REALISED FDI IN CHINA (US\$ MILLION)

Regions	1983-89		1990-96	
	Value	%	Value	%
Eastern	10225	90.7	138855	88.1
Central	470	4.2	13388	8.5
Western	584	5.2	4948	3.1
Total*	11279	100	157596	100

* The 'total' here refers to the total FDI registered in all regions. It does not include FDI introduced by government ministries, which was less than two per cent of the national total in 1990-1996.

Source: NSB, China Statistical Yearbook, 1984-1997 and China Regional Economy: A Profile of 17 Years of Reform and Opening-Up.

TABLE 12: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TVES IN 1998

	Eastern region	Central region	Western region	National
Number of TVEs (million)	8.42	7.31	4.23	20.03
Share of TVEs (%)	42	37	21	100
Number of employees (million)	64.31	42.17	18.89	125.37
Share of employees (%)	51	34	15	100
Value-added (billion RMB)	1340.30	688.60	189.80	2218.70
Share of value-added (%)	60	31	9	100

Source: NSB, China Statistical Yearbook, 1999. The regional figures and shares have been calculated by the author.

TABLE 13: PER CAPITA NET INCOME OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS BY SOURCE AND BY REGION, 2000 (RMB)

Region	Net Income	Wage	Family Business	Property	Transfer
	Income	Income	Income	Income	
National Total	2253.42	702.30	1427.27	45.04	78.81
Beijing	4604.55	2819.06	1437.63	158.28	189.58
Tianjin	3622.39	1638.28	1857.36	42.88	83.88
Hebei	2478.86	949.25	1417.99	62.66	48.96
Shanxi	1905.61	726.05	1113.56	19.70	46.29
Inner Mongolia	2038.21	287.63	1690.81	35.18	24.58
Liaoning	2355.58	882.96	1353.39	58.19	61.05
Jilin	2022.50	343.86	1611.20	31.26	36.18
Heilongjiang	2148.22	337.97	1699.37	60.62	50.26
Shanghai	5596.37	4309.89	933.74	142.83	209.92
Jiangsu	3595.09	1663.11	1770.87	48.09	113.02
Zhejiang	4253.67	2000.51	1917.92	181.01	154.23
Anhui	1934.57	547.83	1298.40	24.70	63.64
Fujian	3230.49	1069.01	1844.27	76.97	240.23
Jiangxi	2135.30	744.47	1319.94	18.80	52.09
Shandong	2659.20	850.56	1676.90	57.80	73.94
Henan	1985.82	473.68	1427.24	29.15	55.75
Hubei	2268.59	547.69	1617.81	19.55	83.54
Hunan	2197.16	789.74	1329.10	20.74	57.58
Guangdong	3654.48	1362.16	2002.92	73.67	215.73
Guangxi	1864.51	483.75	1297.16	7.47	76.13
Hainan	2182.26	151.38	1897.73	38.15	95.00
Chongqing	1892.44	623.32	1155.63	8.54	104.96
Sichuan	1903.60	606.93	1194.19	29.96	72.52
Guizhou	1374.16	274.90	1029.45	6.97	62.84
Yunnan	1478.60	263.58	1115.68	47.94	51.40
Tibet	1330.81	227.63	934.48	106.54	62.16
Shaanxi	1443.86	445.97	901.15	47.03	49.71
Gansu	1428.68	355.03	1011.78	16.13	45.73
Qinghai	1490.49	312.30	1119.77	24.70	33.72
Ningxia	1724.30	484.02	1121.38	80.77	38.13
Xinjiang	1618.08	104.58	1451.33	40.43	21.74

Source: NSB, China Statistical Yearbook, 2001, Chapter 10, section 19.

ANNEX 2: CHINA'S POLICIES ON RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION

1979–1983: PROHIBITING MIGRATION

Date	Department	Document	Main points
1980	CC, CCCP & State Council	Guidelines on promoting employment in cities and towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and develop village teams and village enterprises to absorb surplus rural labourers and develop small towns step by step • Control the expansion of towns and cities and farmers' flow into towns and cities • Send rural workers back to villages
1981	CC, CCCP & State Council	Decisions to seek ways of stimulating economy and promoting employment in towns and cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent farmers entering towns and cities by developing businesses and village and township enterprises • Restrict employment of rural labourers in cities • Control the procedure of rural residents' migration to cities
1981	State Council	Guidelines on restricting migration of rural labourers and residents to cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict the employment of rural labourers • Fire rural migrant workers in cities and send them back to villages • Strengthen management of Hukou and food systems.

1984–1988: ALLOWING MIGRATION

Date	Department	Document	Main points
April 1, 1984	CC, CCCP	Guidelines on governments' work on rural areas in 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow farmers to enter towns and cities on condition that provide food for themselves
October 13, 1984	State Council	Guidelines on farmers' settlement in towns and cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support farmers to enter towns and cities to own businesses and have commercial, self-employed jobs • Bureaux of public security should have arrangements rural migrants to settle down in towns and cities • Help migrants to solve their problems with food, housing, etc. • Relevant government departments should serve rural migrants in their hometowns and cities • Allow those who wish to do so to migrate back to their village
January 1, 1985	CCCP, State Council	10 policies on activating rural economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding economic relations between rural and urban economies • Allow farmers to enter cities for economic reasons • Governments should provide good services to such migrants
July, 1986	State Council	Temporary regulations on state-owned enterprise employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents in both rural and urban areas can apply for jobs in state-owned enterprises
July 5, 1988	Ministry of Labour State Council	Guidelines on developing labour force resources in poor areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress the importance of labour migration • Organise labourers to migrate across regions • Enterprises in developed coastal areas are encouraged to absorb rural migrant labourers from poor areas • Mobilise all organisations and individuals to establish the labour market and activate labour migration

1979–1983: PROHIBITING MIGRATION

Date	Department	Document	Main points
March 1989	State Council	Guidelines on restricting rural labour migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governments should adopt measures to restrict rural labour migration
April 1989	Ministry of Civil Affairs Ministry of Public Security	Guidelines on furthering restrictions on rural labour blindly migrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governments should adopt measures to restrict rural labourers to migrate blindly
April 27, 1990	State Council	Guidelines on governments' working on labour and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise rural surplus labourers not to leave their hometown and develop primary industry and village and township enterprises Control and manage strictly rural migrant workers in cities Supervise enterprises' employment of rural migrant workers and adopt planned employment of rural migrant workers Restrict rural residents' settlement in cities and correct non-regulated migration and settlement
February 1991	State Council	Guidelines on advising rural migrant workers not to seek jobs in Guangdong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governments should not provide farmers documents for working outside and advise prospective migrant workers not seek jobs in Guangdong Local government should advise and stop migrant workers going to Guangdong and inform Guangdong government
1991	Ministry of Civil Affairs	Guidelines on advising and preventing emigration of victims of a natural calamity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In areas of immigration and emigration of victims of a natural calamity, local governments should serve and advise them not to emigrate Distinguish victims of a natural calamity from rural migrant labourers, serve the former and stop the latter

1999–2000: REGULATING MIGRATION

Date	Department	Document	Main points
November 3, 1993	Ministry of Labour	'Re-employment Project' and 'Order Migration of Rural Labourers across Regions: Employment in Both Rural and Urban Areas' No.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make rural-urban labour migration well-ordered • Establish a system to accomplish the above purpose
November, 1993	CC, CCCP	Decisions on the establishment of socialist market-oriented economic system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and help rural surplus labourers to transfer to non-agriculture industries and make this migration well-ordered
December, 1993	Ministry of Labour	Establishment of pilot framework for the labour system of socialist market-oriented economic system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and develop a socialist labour market model and break down the obstacles to labour migration • In the long run, break down the obstacles to labour migration between rural-urban areas and across regions • Regulate and adjust labour migration to make it well-ordered • During the 9th Five Year Plan, eliminate biased policies on workers with different identities to promote competition more widely • Establish a modern labour-market system by the end of 1990s
August, 1994	Ministry of Labour	Working plan to promote development of the labour market and improve the employment service system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a good employment service system in a short time • In 1994, begin to establish labour market information centres in South China (Guangdong), East China (Shanghai) and North China (Beijing), and develop village and township labour service systems to promote a healthy and good system of labour migration • In 1995- establish effective management, service and adjustment systems in important areas to organise rural labour migration
November, 1994	Ministry of Labour	Temporary regulations on rural labour migration across provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulate the certificate-card system at the first time • Rural migrant labourers must have ID Card, other necessary official letters, employment registration card, and employment card issued by the local Labour Bureau when searching for jobs.
1995	CC, CCCP State Council	Guidelines on strengthening the management of migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote absorption of rural surplus labourers within their hometowns • Organise rural labour migration to make it well-ordered • Unify the systems of employment and temporary staying in cities • Regulate labour market
June, 1997	State Council	Experimental project to reform hukou system in towns and small cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform hukou System to allow farmers to settle down in towns and small cities • Settled farmers will be treated the same as local urban residents • Prohibit illegal charges imposed on those farmers
November, 1997	State Council	Guidelines on organising rural migrant workers and order migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quicken construction of labour market and keep labour market well-ordered and legal
June, 1998	CC, CCCP; State Council	Guidelines on social security of laid-off workers of state-owned enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party Committees, governments and the related departments should attach much importance to laid-off workers' lives and employment • Encourage and organise rural surplus labourers to employ closely to their villages • Control the scale of rural migrant workers
September, 1998	State Council	Guidelines on employment in flooding areas and organise rural migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment mainly close to villages and organise migration • Organise, plan to send out labour force • Reinforce management of labour market and advise rural migrant workers to return • Monitoring and reporting rural labour migration
October, 1998	CC, CCCP	Decisions on urgent agricultural problems and governmental work on rural issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet needs of urban and developed areas and leading order migration of rural labourers
January, 2000	Ministry of Labour	Guidelines on management of rural migrant workers' employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a information system to forecast migrant employment • Industrialise labour transfer • Develop and promote coordination of labour transfer across regions • Monitoring migrant employment and ensure legal rights of employees

SINCE 2000: ENCOURAGING MIGRATION

Date	Department	Document	Main points
July, 2000	Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Water Resources, Development Research Centre, State Council	Guidelines on strengthening Experimentation to develop rural labour employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow the rural-urban gap and abolish unreasonable restriction on employment of rural migrant labourers in cities
June, 2000	CC; CCCP; State Council	Instructions on developing towns and small cities healthily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers working in county-level towns and small cities can apply to become non-agriculture residents and will enjoy the same social services as other residents • Exploring new social security systems suitable for towns and small cities
March, 2001	National People's Congress	Outline of 10th five-year plan for PRC National Economy and Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break the system of rural-urban division and establish a new rural-urban relationship • Reform the hukou system in cities and construct mechanisms of rural-urban migration • Break down inter-regional isolation, intra-regional protectionism and abolish regulations that impede developing an integrated market • Maintain developing a whole planning system and rural-urban labour market
March, 2001	State Council	Decision to quicken hukou system reform in towns and small cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working and living in towns and county-level cities, farmers and their direct relatives can apply for non-agriculture identities • They will be treated the same as urban residents there • No illegal charges from these farmers when they become urban residents
May, 2001	National Planning and Development Commission	Publish and distribute main urbanising projects, National Economy and Social Development 10th Five-Year Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting coordinated development of rural and urban areas • On the one hand, prevent cities from 'over-urbanisation'; on the other develop a system of reasonable migration between rural and urban areas • Barring one or two big cities, abolish the rural-urban division in the employment system • Abolish those restricted policies of rural labour migration and biased policies for outsiders • Serve migrant labourers and provide helpful condition for those migrant workers, such as housing, education, health and other social services • Promote integration between rural migrants and urban residents

MOST RECENT POLICIES AND TRENDS

Date	Department	Document	Main points
September 4, 2002	CCP Central Committee Office State Council Office	Speech by Wen Jiabao	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee the legal rights of rural labour migrants, abolish any unreasonable fees, timely pay their salaries, sign proper contracts with them, and allow them to keep their arable land at home villages
January 7, 2003	CCP Central Committee	Central Session on Rural Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More conditions will be created for 'fair treatment, reasonable guidance, improvement of management, better service' • Additional budget allocated for health care and education will be used in rural areas
January 5, 2003	State Council Office	Document No. 1, 2003: Improving management and services for rural labour migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major problems for migrants • Unreasonable limits for their employment • No effective protection of rights and benefits of migrants • Serious delay of payment and illegal collection of fees • The migration of rural surplus labour to non-agricultural sectors and urban areas is the key part of industrialisation and urbanisation, which: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increases the income of rural people 2. Helps to restructure the rural economy 3. Quickens the pace of urbanisation 4. Improves the social and economic development in urban areas • Repeat the point of 'fair treatment, reasonable guidance, improvement of management, better service' from State Council Document No. 2, 2002, requiring: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abolition of excessive unfair bounds for rural labourers' seeking employment or temporary work in urban areas, for instance, all rural migrants are to be treated equally as urban residents when they apply for jobs, no more extra fees to be charged, nor do they be sent home by any administrative means 2. Ensuring proper legal procedures, including contract with rural labourers and timely payment 3. Improving the working and living conditions for rural migrant labourers, especially female labourers, including health care and security 4. Providing skills and legal training for rural migrants. Training must be voluntary and unreasonable charges prohibited 5. Arranging for the education of migrants' children to standard equal to that received by the children of urban residents 6. Enhancing services to migrants, including family planning, child education, employment, health care and legal aid
March 6, 2003	State Commission for Development and Planning	Annual Work Report for 2002 and Planning for 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide orderly flows of the rural migrants • No more biased policies or unreasonable fees

ANNEX 3: GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND RELATED RESEARCH & CONSULTATIVE ORGANISATIONS

1. Overview of the main departments and organisations concerned with rural-urban labour migration

The departments and organisations listed below are responsible for policy-making and the supervision and monitoring of policy implementation at central and local levels, conducting research, raising policy issues and making suggestions. Main responsibilities for each are given.

Central government

- State Council
Main responsibilities: policymaking; supervising and monitoring policy implementation at central and local level.
- China Centre for Town Reform and Development, State Council
Main responsibilities: studies on rural labour migration and its impacts on urbanisation; suggestion of policy-making (strategies of town and city building, suggestion on the reform of the resident registration system, policies on rural migrant workers).
- Research Centre for Development Studies, State Council
Main responsibilities: studies on rural labour migration (including its impact on rural and urban areas, migrant workers' livelihood and employment in cities, development issues of rural labour migration); suggests for policy-making.
- Poverty Alleviation Office, State Council
Current responsibility is helping the poor areas (mainly in rural areas) to reduce poverty. Beneficiaries are almost all poor farmers. As might be imagined, this department is responsible for poor migrant workers in towns and cities.
- Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, State Council
Administration and policy-making on overseas Chinese affairs and supervision of overseas Chinese Affairs Bureaux. Conducting surveys and data collection on overseas Chinese.
- Ministry of Labour and Social Security
Policymaking on rural migrant workers' legal rights, employment, training and education, supervision and monitoring policy implementation at the local level, labour market survey and release of labour market information, especially information of rural migrant workers' employment.
- Ministry of Agriculture
This has been the major department for agricultural production, farming, fishery, forestry, livestock, etc. and, in the last 20 years, for rural industry, too. Rural poverty and rural migration are also partly its responsibility.
- Research Centre for Rural Economy, Ministry of Agriculture
Studies on rural labour migration and its impact on the rural economy, suggestions to policy-makers.
- Ministry of Public Security
Policy-making and -altering on residents' registration systems; supervision and monitoring of policy

implementation at local level. Issuing of passports to international migrants; data collection on international migration.

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Coordinating government work on international migration, including liaison and negotiation with governments of receiving countries

National academies and universities

Below are listed the main academic research institutes and centres:

- Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in particular the following affiliated institutes:
- Institute of Rural Development
- Institute of Population and Human Capital Studies
- Institute of Sociology
- Economics Research Centre, Peking University
- Rural Research Centre, Chinese Academy of Sciences

In addition, the departments (mainly) of economics, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, and demography of China's main research universities (Qinghua University, Peking University, Renmin University, Fudan University, Zhongshan University, Nankai University) and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences are all major centres of research on migration in China. Main centres for research on international migration and the overseas Chinese include Xiamen University, Zhongshan University, Peking University and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

Local government in sending areas

- The chief local (provincial, municipal and county level) government departments and organisations in sending areas involved in labour migration are usually the following:
- Bureau of Labour and Social Security
- Bureau of Agriculture
- Bureau of Public Security
- Women's Federation
- Communist Youth League

In some areas, an *ad hoc* government work group exists to encourage and organise migrant workers. Members of such groups include officials from the above departments and organisations, sometimes directed by the highest official in the local government. The group's main responsibilities include encouraging and organising farmers outside the area, providing training courses for potential migrant workers, creating favourable conditions for emigration, such as issuing ID Cards, collecting and providing information on employment, and so on.

The Association of Overseas Chinese is a pseudo-government organisation with branches in all overseas Chinese home areas. Their main function is to act as a bridge between the local government (including its overseas Chinese affairs bureau) and returned overseas Chinese and dependants of overseas Chinese,

representing overseas Chinese interests on the one hand and assisting in the dissemination government policy on the other.

Local government in receiving areas

These departments and organisations include among others:

- Bureau of Labour and Social Security
- Bureau of Public Security
- Street administrative offices

Local government departments in receiving areas are mainly responsible for:

- policy-making at the local level,
- supervising and monitoring the labour market and compliance with the Labour Law,
- protection of the rights of migrant workers in the city,
- coordination in case of conflict between migrant workers and their employers, and possibly providing training and education for migrant workers,
- compiling statistics on rural labour (Bureau of Labour and Social Security),
- *hukou* and registration system reform, registration and management of rural migrants,
- release of temporary residency Cards (Bureau of Public Security),
- registration and management of rural migrants in the streets and villages (Street Administrative Office and Village Committee).

Donors and NGOs

There are some international donors (World Vision, UNESCO, Oxfam, Ford Foundation) involved in poverty

reduction work among migrant workers. They provide financial support, training and education to migrant workers and their families. NGO research has had an influence on policy-making.

In recent years, UNESCO has supported two research projects in China:

- Asian Pacific Migration Research Network (APMRN) under the umbrella of MOST (Management of Social Transformation), 1997-2000
- Urban poverty among young migrants, 2002-2005

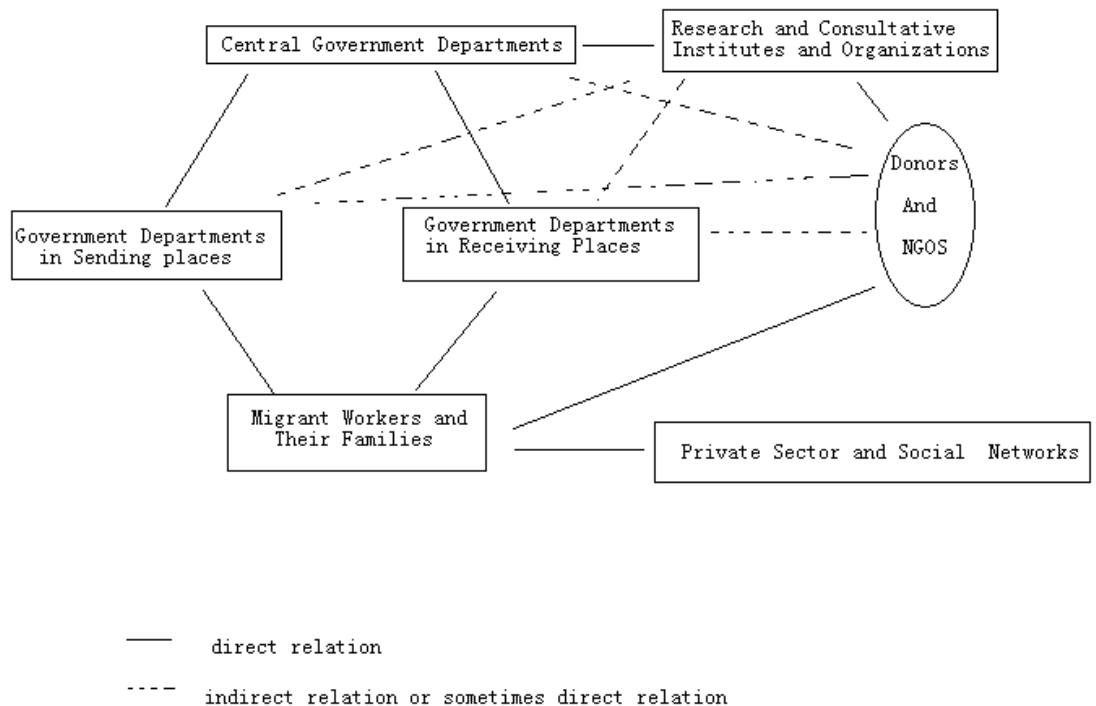
The Ford Foundation has supported eight research projects in China on rural-urban migration during 1996–1999, and FAO has supported one on the impact of migration on rural development (1995–1996).

Oxfam has done a lot of action research and work on poverty/development at the local level, especially in villages.

World Vision has worked mainly in counties.

Private sector and independent organisations

There are a few private organisations and individuals that assist migrant workers, such private schools for migrant children, or psycho-consultative hotlines for migrant workers. There are few formal self-help associations, but a great variety of informal social networks including migrant workers groups based on kinship and pseudo-kinship appliances or those based on place of origin.



ANNEX 4: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON CHINESE MIGRATION

- Bai Nansheng and He Yupeng. 2002. 'Huixiang haishi jin Cheng: Zhongguo nongmin waichu laodongli huiliu yanjiu' [Return or go to cities? A study of returned Chinese rural migrant workers]. *Shehuixue yanjiu* 6(3): 64-78. Reprinted in Li Peilin 2003, pp. 4-30. The authors review the history of income and employment of rural residents since rural reform from 1978 onwards. They argue that being migrant workers in towns and cities is the preferred choice for rural surplus labourers in the first place, even though some returned migrant workers have begun to develop their own non-agricultural businesses in their home area.
- Chan, Kam Wing and Li Zhang. 1999. 'The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes.' *The China Quarterly* 160: 818-55. A study of the recent changes in the hukou system and their consequences. Should be read in conjunction with the article by Cheng & Selden (see below).
- Cai Fang. 1997. Guanyu zhengfu ruhe guanli liudong laodongli sikao [How governments manage migrant labour]. *Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan yanjiushengyuan xuebao* 6(4): 59-65. This article outlines the Chinese government's strategy in managing rural-urban labour migration and argues against government control and restriction of rural-urban labour migration. The author also compares the domestic situation with western countries and emphasises the importance of building an integrated rural-urban labour market.
- Cai Fang. 1999. Chaichu laodongli liudongde zhidu zhang'ai' [Removing institutional obstacles to labour migration]. *Zhongguo renkou kexue* 6(4). This article points out several institutional obstacles to rural-urban migration and attaches much importance to the cooperation between the sending and receiving areas to facilitate migration and establish a comprehensive labour market.
- Cai Fang. 2000. *Zhongguo liudong renkou wenti* [The problem of China's floating population]. Zhengzhou: Henan Renmin Chubanshe. A leading economist writes on the issue of rural-urban migration. He argues that the market mechanism will re-arrange human capital and labour in a more rational way but, in the meantime, the government has to responsibility.
- Cai Fang and Du Yang. 2003. Qianyiye shuangchong dongyin jiqi zhengce hanyi: jianyan xiangdui diwei bianhua jiashuo [The double motives of rural labour migration and related policy issues: a test of the hypothesis of relative deprivation]. In Li Peilin, 2003. Migratory behaviour of rural residents has a double motive: earning net income and overcoming relative deprivation in community of origin. Policies should be made to encourage rural-urban migration and to narrow the income gap within villages.
- Cheng, Tiejun, and Mark Selden. 1994. The Origins and Consequences of China's Hukou System. *The China Quarterly* 139: 644-668. The best study to date on the hukou system that continues to inform the pattern and impact of migration in China.
- Davin, Delia. 1999. *Internal Migration in Contemporary China*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. Well-written and accessible introduction to the subject.
- Du Ying. 1995. 'Zenyang kandai Zhongguo nongcun laodongli liudong [How to deal with rural labour migration in China].' *Zhongguo Dangzheng Ganbu Luntan* 12(12). The author analyses rural labour migration from a macro perspective and argues that it has been an important means for farmers to improve their incomes. Furthermore, writes the author, rural labour migration reduces the rural-urban gap and regional disparity and should be promoted and facilitated rather than restricted and controlled.
- Du Ying and Bai Nansheng, eds. 1997. Zouchu xiangcun: *Zhongguo nongcun laodongli shizheng yanjiu* [Leaving the countryside: a study of rural labour migration in China]. Beijing: Jingji Kexue Chubanshe. On the basis survey data from Sichuan and Anhui provinces, this book presents a comprehensive exploration of the issue of rural-urban migration in China, including the group characteristics of migrants, the impact on the sending and receiving areas and the labour market, policy issues, and so on.
- Du Ying. 1997. 'Xianjieduan Zhongguo nongcun laodongli liudongde quanti tezheng yu hongguan beijing fenxi [Analysis of group characteristics and macro background of rural migrant labour in China].' *Zhongguo Nongcun Jingji* 12(6). The author analyses the macro-economic background of rural-urban labour migration in terms of the rural economy, national strategy of reform and opening-up, institutions, the rural-urban relationship, stressing the positive effects of rural labour migration.
- Huang Ping. 1996. 'Hukou system and rural-urban Migration in China.' *CERES*, Rome: FAO. One of the first papers in China dealing with the problem of the hukou system in general and more recent regulations issued by municipal governments, in Shanghai and Beijing in particular.

Huang Ping et al. 1997. *Xunqiu shengcun* [Seeking survival]. Kunming: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe. Based on a field study in eight villages in southern, central, north-western and south-western China, this book is one of the few exploring the causes of migration and its impact on rural communities. It argues that, along with the increase of young labour migrants for non-agricultural activities (especially in urban areas), rural communities might decline even though long-term pressure on limited arable land might be relieved.

Huang Ping. 2000. 'When Young Farmers Leave the Farm: What will Happen to Rural Development in China When Rural-Urban Migration Takes Place at a High Pace under Impacts of Globalisation?' In Cecilia Lindqvist, ed. *Globalization and Its Impact*. Stockholm: FRN, pp. 56-67. This paper links the local issue of rural-urban migration with the coming challenges of globalisation, arguing that globalisation will have contradictory consequences for rural development.

Huang Ping. 2002. 'Jiankang zhengce [Health policies].' In Wang Luolin and Zhu Ling, 2002, pp. 156-183. On the basis of local fieldwork, the author shows that basic health care should be the highest priority in poor remote areas.

Huang Ping. 2003. 'China: Rural Problems under Uneven Development in Recent Years.' In Lau Kin Chi and Huang Ping, 2003. A rethinking of existing rural problems, and a critique of mainstream paradigms and related policies.

Iredale, Robyn, Naran Bilik and Wang Su, with contributions from Fei Guo and Caroline Hoy. 2001. *Contemporary Minority Migration, Education and Ethnicity in China*. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar, 2001. Important because of its subject matter (minority migration) and the cooperation between Chinese and western specialists on Chinese migration. The individual chapters are slightly uneven, with some mainly confined to familiar background information. Others provide a much more challenging overview of particular fields of study.

Jing Tiankui. 2002. *Zhongguo shehui baozhangde linian jichu*. [Philosophical basis of China's social security system]. *Shehui Zhengce Pinglun* 4(4): 1-5.

The author presents a deeper theoretical approach to the problem of social security reform, arguing that cost analysis is insufficient.

Lau Kin Chi and Huang Ping, eds. 2003. *China Reflected*. Hong Kong: ARENA Press. A recent collection of critical papers by scholars who are out of the mainstream. About one third of the papers deals with rural issues.

Li Changping. 2003. 'Shenyang nongcun tudi siyoushua' [Be careful about the privatisation of arable land]. *Dushu* 2003(5).

A new, rare paper which openly claims that it will not be possible to resolve the 'three rural problems' simply by privatising arable land.

Li Peilin, ed. 2003. *Nongmingong: Zhongguo jincheng nongmingongde jingji shehui fenxi* [Rural migrant workers: social and economical analysis of rural migrant workers in cities in China]. Beijing. Sheke Wenxian Chubanshe.

This book is a collection of papers, 19 of which are studies on rural migrants and migration from a sociological, economic, or policy perspective. It covers almost all issues on rural-urban migration and represents the most recent academic research in the field.

Li Qiang. 2003. Dangqian Woguo chengshihua he liudong renkoude jige lilun wenti [Urbanisation and theoretical issues in rural-urban migration in China], in Li Peilin 2003.

This article reviews the historical process of urbanisation from the foundation of the PRC in 1949 and raises academic questions on several issues: contemporary strategies of urbanisation in China; the hukou system in past, present and future; labour resources; income distribution.

Li Shi. 1999. 'Zhongguo nongcun laodongli liudong yu shouru zengzhang he fenpei' [Income growth and distribution of rural migrant workers in China]. *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue* 6(2): 16-33.

The article analyses and explains theoretically the income growth and distribution of rural migrant workers, connecting this issue with income disparities within rural areas and between rural and urban areas. The author argues that rural labour migration plays an important role in narrowing the rural-urban gap.

Liu Yigao, Wang Xiaoyi and Yao Yang. 2002. *Cunzhuang Neiwai* [Inside and outside of villages]. Shijiazhuang: Hebei Renmin Chubanshe.

An book which deals with the issue of rural-rural migration, based on one of the few researches focusing on rural-rural migration, showing that it is the rural-rural migration that many young labours will prefer when the cost is lower.

Lu Mai, Bai Nansheng and Zhao Shukai. 2001. *Zhongguo nongcun laodongli liudongde huigu yu zhanwang* [Review and prospect of rural labour migration]. Draft document provided by Zhao Shukai. Review of rural-urban migration from a policy point of view.

Lu Xueyi. 2002. *Nongmin yu nongcun wenti* [On peasants and the countryside]. Beijing: Shehui Kexue Wenxian Chubanshe.

Selected papers by the author in which there is a continuous concern with food production, rural incomes, and policies suggestions for solutions.

Mao Yushi. 2003. 'Gaigede dongli zai Dang nei [The driving force for further reform is in the Party].' In *Gaige Neican* 2003(11): 19-21.

This piece suggests that there is a possibility that the ruling party becomes more open to change in terms of theories and conceptions, such as the privatisation of land.

Mei Fangquan and Huang Ping. 2003. 'Basic Education for Girls in Ethnic Ningxia and Sichuan.' In Zhou Daming *et al.* 2003.

A report based on recent field work in Ningxia and Sichuan, where the authors visited ethnic minorities to understand school dropout at an early age among minority children, especially girls.

Mo Rong, Jia Hongmei and Li Hong. 2002. Zhongguo nongcun laodongli liudong jiuye zuixin tongji fenxi [Newest statistical analysis of employment of rural migrant workers in China]. *Jingji yu guanli yanjiu* 12(1): 41-44.

The article analyses survey data from monitoring pilot sites of rural-urban migration in the third quarter in 2001. The authors describe the characteristics of rural migrants in tables and figures, including the number of rural labourers in sending and receiving areas, regional differences and employment.

Murphy, Rachel. 2002. *How Migrant Labour is Changing Rural China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A meticulous, detailed and highly informative study, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, of the neglected issue of the impact of migration on the economic development of sending communities. The study's strength is its focus on the agency of migrants and migrant families, revealing how migration, backward and forward linkages and return migration are part of and informed by life strategies and relationships within families and village communities.

Pan Suiming. 2000. *Cunzai yu huangmiu* [Surviving and conflicting]. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe.

A study based on in-depth interviews and observation of rural girls in 'entertainment services' (night clubs, karaoke bars, etcetera). The book is mainly on the question of why they have become involved in such activities and the girls' opinions about their future.

Pan Wei. 2003. 'Tiaochu nongcun kan nongcun' [Understanding rural issues beyond rural perspectives]. In *Gaige Neican* 2003(4): 22-25.

This paper argues that the solution of rural problems lies beyond rural boundaries. It is impossible for rural people to improve their circumstances if they continue small-scale farming. The state cannot subsidise agriculture, and privatisation of land will worsen rural problems. Leaving agriculture and transferring to non-agricultural rural activities must be the macro strategy; this would involve the development of local industries, allowing the exchange of rural land for urban real estate, organising rural labourers to move to urban areas for seasonal and contract work (some will stay) and abolishing the hukou system.

Pieke, Frank N., Pál Nyíri, Mette Thunø and Antonella Ceccagno. 2003. *Transnational Chinese: Fujianese Migrants in Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming.

This study investigates the origins and mechanics of recent Chinese migration, the work and life of Chinese migrants in three European societies (the UK, Hungary and Italy) and the many transnational connections between Fujianese in Europe, the US and China itself. The focus on the transnational linkages between sending communities and migrants in Europe lends this volume (particularly chapter 2) a relevance to the issue of migration and development that most other studies of overseas Chinese migration do not have.

Wailai Nü Laogong Ketizu [Rural female migrant labourers research team, Institute of Sociology, CASS]. 2002. *Nongcun laodongli liudong yu xingbie* [Gender and rural labour migration]. Zhengzhou: Zhongyuan Nongmin Chubanshe.

A collection of papers and reports on female migrants in cities, especially in southern coastal areas. Questions explored include where the migrants originated, why they came, how they manage to stay, how much they earn, and how long they stay. Study is based on fieldwork and interviews.

Solinger, Dorothy J. 1999. *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China: Peasant Migrants, the State, and the Logic of the Market*. Berkeley: University of California Press. The most comprehensive and authoritative study in English to date of the new internal migration in China, with a particular focus on the impact that increased mobility of the population has and will have on the structure of Chinese society, the economy and the political system.

Sun Liping. 2003. Chengxiang zhijiande 'xin eryuan jiegou' yu nongmingong liudong [The new duality of rural-urban areas and rural labour migration]. In Li Peilin, 2003, pp. 149-160.

The author coins the term 'the new duality of rural-urban areas' to depict the gap between rural-urban areas in recent years as a product of the market in contrast with the administratively induced gap of the past. Many potential issues on rural labour migration are raised in this article, including the legal rights of migrant workers, new rural-urban relations, widening of the rural-urban gap, marginalisation and re-socialisation of migrant workers.

Tan Shen. 1997. Nongcun laodongli liudongde xingbie chayi [Gender difference of rural labour migrants]. *Shehuixue yanjiu* 6(1): 42-48.

This article discusses the issue of gender among rural migrant labourers using national statistics and survey data from the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong province. The proportion of female migrant labourers and their occupational characteristics are analysed to explore gender inequality and related issues, such as institutional factors and the gendered division of labour.

Thunø, Mette. 2001. 'Reaching Out and Incorporating Chinese Overseas: The Trans-territorial Scope of the PRC by the End of the Twentieth Century.' *The China Quarterly* 168: 939-958.

Wang Fenyu and Li Lulu etc. 2001. *Zhongguo chengshi laodongli liudong* [Migration of labour in cities in China]. Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe.

This book is mainly concerned with the labour market, the occupational structure and the connection between individual occupational change and the macro socio-economic structure of Chinese cities. The issue of rural migration has been included to explore urbanisation and labour market construction.

Wang Jian. 2003. 'Jiushi niandai xiabanqi yilai Zhongguo nongcun jingjide xinbianhua yiji 'sannong' wentide xingcheng yuanyin' [New changes of rural economy and reasons for the 'three rural problems' since the late 1990s in China]. *Xianggang Chuanzhen* 2003(8).

The author argues that structural explanations are necessary to understand why the three-dimension rural problem in China grew more serious in the late 1990s.

Wang Luolin and Zhu Ling, eds. *Houfan diqude fazhan tujing xuanze: Yunnan Zangqu anli yanjiu* [Choosing ways of development in underdeveloped areas: a case study of the Tibetan prefecture in Yunnan province]. Beijing: Jingji Guanli Chubanshe.

This is a collection of field studies in a poverty area in Yunnan carried out by a group comprising economists, sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists. In the study area the issues of rural finance, income, health care and education are all challenged and reformed, and this study shows there are lots of local possibilities in the meantime.

Wang Xiyu, Cui Chuanyi, Zhao Yang and Ma Zhongdong. 2000. 'Zhongguo eryuan jiegouxiade nongcun laodongli liudong jiqi zhengce xuanze. [Rural labour migration and policy-making within dual rural-urban structure]. *Guanli Shijie* 12(5): 61-69.

This article reviews the historical process and national strategy since the onset of the reforms and opening-up and theorises rural labour migration as part of the dual rural-urban structure. The authors emphasise the transformation of the national economy from a planned economy to a market-orientated one and argue that the government should introduce policies and institutional arrangements on rural migration in accordance with this trend.

Wen Tiejun. 2000. 'Sannong wentide shiji fansi [Reflections at the turn of the 20th century on the three rural problems].' *Dushu* 12(1).

The author argues for a macro analysis of the three rural problems that includes natural as well as historical constraints, especially the very limited per capita arable land in China. Because of this unique circumstance, it is impossible to copy or follow western models of urbanisation, including the privatisation of arable land in order to legitimise large-scale farms, and the urbanisation of society in order to transfer rural surplus labourers to urban sectors.

Xiang Biao. 2001. *Kuayue bianjiede shequ: Beijing 'Zhejiangcun' de shenghuo shi* [A community beyond borders: a history of life in Beijing's 'Zhejiang village']. Beijing: Sanlian Chubanshe. A shortened and updated English translation will be published by Brill Publishers (Leiden) later on in 2003.

An extraordinarily detailed and vivid ethnography of one of the best known, and arguably most successful, groups of rural-urban migrants: the trading community from southern Zhejiang province. Although the main hubs of this community are Beijing and the home communities in Zhejiang, their trading networks span the length and breath of China and even beyond (Russia and Eastern Europe), thus being a prime example of the connections between international and internal migration.

Xiang, Biao. 2002. *Emigration from China: The Sending Country's Perspective*. Geneva: IOM, unpublished paper. A study of the evolution of China's emigration policies from the 1950s until today. Useful complement to the many studies on China's overseas Chinese connections and policies.

Xiong Jingming, Huang Ping *et al.* 2002. 'Cuowei: nongmin xuqiu wenti' [Wrong directions: the real needs of the rural people]. *Kaifang shidai* 2.

This article is based on a round-table discussion in which Cui Chuanyi, Huang Ping, Wen Tiejun, Xiong Jingming and others participated. Among the issues discussed were the reasons for the gap between rural policies and the real needs of rural people. They conclude that a re-thinking and deeper investigations of rural problems are needed before embarking on institutional innovations.

Yang Yunyan. 2001. 'Renkou qianyi yu laodongli liudongde nüxingzhuyi fenxi kuangjia' [A feminist analytical framework for migration and labour migration]. *Zhongnan Caijing Daxue Xuebao* 6(6): 12-17.

This article analysed the changing sex ratio of rural migrant workers and the gender structure of their occupations from 1978 to 1990 according to national statistics. The article provides a theoretical explanation of this change and raises the relevant policy issues.

Zhang Xiaoshan. 2002. *Lianjie nonghu yu shichang: Zhongguo nongmin zhongjie zuzhi tuanjiu* [Connecting rural households with the market: a study of intermediary organisations of Chinese peasants]. Beijing. Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe.

The author studies rural issues with the special focus on existing and possible intermediary organisations for local cooperation and mutual aid. It shows that between a complete privatisation and state-collectivisation there is ample social space for local cooperation on rural sustainable development.

Zhao Shukai. 1998. *Zonghen chengxiang: nongmin liudongde guancha yu yanjiu* [Across rural and urban areas: observation and study of rural migrant workers]. Beijing: Zhongguo Nongye Chubanshe.

This book reviews the historical process of rural-urban migration and argues that rural labour migration should be dealt with both from a rural and an urban perspective. The author stresses that a comprehensive rural-urban system must be established to solve the problem of surplus of rural labour.

Zhongguo Chengshi Laodongli Liudong Ketizu [Labour Migration in Chinese Cities'Research Team]. 2002. *Zhongguo laodongli shichang jianshe yu laodongli liudong*. [Labour migration and establishing labour market in China]. *Guanli shijie* 12(3).

On the basis of the survey data from three cities, this article analyses occupational change and employment in Chinese cities and explores the issues of livelihood and employment of rural migrants, including urban poverty, labour market, policy issues and social justice.



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The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit is an inter-disciplinary research institution based at the University of Dhaka. It specialises in refugee, migration and displacement related issues, conducting research and organising consultations with policy makers, academics, researchers, civil society activists, professional groups and civil servants to influence public opinion and policy decisions.

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