Population Migration, Family Background, and Children's School Enrolments in China, 1990-2000

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Paper prepared for the Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 2006

(Abstract)

Population migration has been surging in China since the 1990. While most literature is focused on documenting the migration process and its impact on socioeconomic development in both origins and destinations, little attention is paid to the consequences of adult migration in children's wellbeing. This paper analyzes the micro-data of population censuses to investigate the impact of parents' migration on children's enrollments. We match the school-age children (6-19) to their parents' background information within the same households, and examine how parents' migration status, as well as occupational and educational achievement, affects children's school enrollment status. Specifically, we distinguish among three groups - local children living with both parents, local children whose parents have migrate to elsewhere, and children who migrate with their parents - and compare their school attendance to test hypotheses regarding *hukou* institution, residence place, family economic resources and social capital in the process of educational attainment. Our results show that migration children are significantly less likely to be enrolled in school. However, the educational consequences for children who do not migrate with one of the parents are mixed, largely varying with the local socioeconomic development.

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(Extended Research Proposal)

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Introduction

Market reforms and ensuing economic growth have brought about a surging wave of internal migration in China. In the pre-reform period, by virtue of the household registration system (*hukou*), the Chinese government has set up an "invisible wall" among different residence places, and especially between the urban and rural sector, to effectively controlled population migration (Chan 1994). Economic reform in the past next two decades has relaxed this administrative control and rendered geographic mobility and change of employment much easier. Most literature on internal migration in China is focused on documenting demographic patterns of migration and socioeconomic consequences for migrants and community development (Liang 2001; Liang and White 1996; Ma 2001; Yang and Guo 1996; Zhao 2000). Few studies have paid attention to the wellbeing of migrants' children (except for Liang and Chen 2002).

The nature of population internal migration in China has changed since 1990. In the 1980s, migrants were largely young adult males, whose stay for a long term was uncertain. Since the early 1990s, the market-oriented economic reform has become irreversible. Regional inequality in development has triggered an even large wave of migration; the size of migration population across provinces and counties has reached 79 million by 2000, where intra-county migration contributes another 66 million to the floating population (Liang and Ma 2004). Migrants tend to not only move further and stay longer, but also bring their spouse and children once they secure employment and settle down. Meanwhile, the early young migrants may get married, start family life, bear and raise children in the destination cities. The body of migration population becomes increasingly heterogeneous.

The Chinese household registration (*hukou*) system, with which the government used to control and regulated population migration, has far from being adapted to the tidal wave of migration. The sizable population continues to be denied of permanent residency on the basis of household registration status (Solinger 1999). Those without local (urban) registration are not entitled to allocate government subsidies, welfare, and employment opportunities to local urban permanent residents. Only temporary, undesirable, and menial jobs were open to migrants (Wang, Zuo and Ruan 2001; Yang and Guo 1996; Roberts 1997). Most government services were unavailable to them: they needed to pay extra fee to go to hospital, to rent an apartment, to have their children attend local schools (Cai 2002: 215). Moreover, many city governments often instituted a set of local regulations requiring migrants of several documents (3 certificates and 1 card) for their stay

to be considered legal. For those documents, on average, a migrant worker was charged about 223 RMB Yuan in 1995 (Zhao 1999: 777).

Such discrimination policy against migrants has created special hurdles in socioeconomic attainment not only for adult migrants themselves (Wu 2005), but also for their offspring, particularly in regard to their access to educational opportunities. First, in the 1990s, more city-born children of early migrants have reached school ages. Second, the new tidal wave of migration has been bringing to destination cities more children of school age who migrate with their parents. In a survey conducted in 1997, school-age children constitute 12 percent of the total migration population in Shanghai (op. cit. Liang and Chen 2002). Without local permanent registration status, migrant parents need to pay additional fee and surcharges to get their children access to local schools, a cost hardly affordable to many migrant families. A survey conducted in Beijing in 1995 reported that only 40 percent of school-age children were actually enrolled in schools (op. cit Liang and Chen 2002). The provision of education opportunities for migrants' children has been an increasingly important issue that concerns the public and education policy makers.

The institutional barriers and social exclusions associated with the *hukou* system create extra costs to some migrants who wish to bring their families with them. Many children are left by their migrant parents to their grandparents at home. Indeed, rural education finance reform in the 1990s has imposed extra economic burden for families and driven some parents to migrate for cash income to support their children's education. To what extent (one or both) parents' absence affects children's school enrollment? Current literature highlights the positive impact of migration on socioeconomic development in sending communities, either through remittance or return migration (Ma 1999; 2001). This suggests that parents' migration income could have positive effect on children's school enrollment by providing necessary economic resources. On the other hand, migrant parents' absence could have negative impact on children's school enrollment and performance, an empirical finding that has been interpreted as a result of lacking social capital. Much of scholarly work on migration and children's educational outcome is focused on the role of social capital (Coleman, 1988; Long, 1975; Loyd and Blanc, 1996; Pribesh and Downey1999).

Despite of the importance of *hukou* status and institutional discrimination in school admission against migrants' children, the role of social capital in affecting children's school enrollment in a developing country like China should not be dismissed promptly without closely looking at how it interplays with family economic resources, community development, and institutional constraints (Buchmann and Hannum 2001; Kerckhoff 1995).

In this paper, we examine the rising educational inequality in the context of massive population migration in China in the 1990s. Specifically, we investigate how parents' migration affects children's school enrollments. This issue, we believe, has fundamental implications for the country sustainable development in the future. We adopt both origin and destination perspectives and depict an overall picture on school enrollment for school-age children whose parents are involved in migration, regardless of whether they themselves migrate or not.

Based in the analysis of a sample of the micro-data of population censuses in 1990 and 2000, we first document the growth of children in migrant families in accordance to the tidal wave of population in China in the 1990s. We then describe school enrollment status for these children, compare to local children in both the origin and destination places. Finally, we conduct the multivariate analyses to show how parents' migration status, occupation, and educational attainment affect the likelihood of children enrollment in school in different spatial contexts. We define school-age children between 6 to 15 years old, an age group required to receive 9-year of compulsory education.

Data and Variables

Data

The data sets analyzed here are the sub-sample from the micro-data of population censuses in China in both 1990s and 2000. We first extract those who aged between 6 and 15, and then match with their parents or household head if their parents are absent, based on the variable indicating the relationship of the respondent to the household. As a result, we are able to obtain children-parent records, as well as the household records including geographic location, household registration status, and migration status.

There are 5 variables related to migration in the 1990 census data. Based on the household's current address, we can create residence type. Whether the household holds agricultural *hukou* or not is also known. In the reform era, with increase in migration, people's residence type and hukou status are not necessarily consistent. Therefore, "migration status" indicates whether the individual are residing and registered in the current address, or residing over 1 year here but registered elsewhere, or residing here less one year but absent from the registration place over 1 year. The census also collects information on the reason for migration, and residence type in 1985.

The 2000 census data collected more detailed information on migration. Both a short form and a long form questionnaire are used but only 10 percent of the population was selected to answer the long-form questionnaire, which contained ten questions on migration. Three household-level variables captured the extent of migration: (1) the total number of household members residing outside the household for less than six months; (2) the total number of household members residing outside the household for more than six months; and (3) the total number of household members temporarily residing in the current location who had left their place of household registration for less than six months. In addition, each individual (most often the household head) was questioned about his/her hukou status and place of household registration, place of birth, and time of arrival at the current location. Those who had moved in the last five years (since 1 November 1995) were asked about county and province of origin, type of original residence (rural or urban), principal reason for migration, and province lived in five years ago.

As a source of data on migration, the 2000 census has three advantages over the 1990 census. First, intra-county migration, which represents a significant portion of overall migration, was ignored in the 1990 census but was counted in the 2000 census, allowing analysis of both rural-to-urban migration within a county (e.g., from a village to the county seat) and urban residential mobility. Second, the timing of migration was given precisely through a new question on "arrival

time at the current location." Third, the principal reasons for migration were reclassified in the 2000 census (Lavely 2001; Liang and Ma 2004).

We focus on analyze the 2000 census data to address the impact of migration on children school enrollments, with results from 1990 as benchmark.

Variables
Our dependent variables are the enrollment status of children aged between 6 and 15. We code it as a dummy variable (1 if in school, and 0 otherwise).

The main independent variables include
1. Children's gender, nationality
2. Father's and mother's education, father's occupation
3. Children's current residence
4. Children's current *hukou* type
5. Children's migration status
6. Whether father or mother is absent in the household and migrates to other place.

In a further step, we consider to search for education expenditure and socioeconomic development data in children current residence, and match them with the children-parents records.

Our analysis will focus on comparing school enrollment rates between (i) migrant children and local children in current residence; (ii) migration children and children in their origin residence; (iii) local children whose parents are absent and migrate to elsewhere and local children residing with parents whose *hukou* is registered in current residence. We will also consider the effect of contextual variables to how the variations in local education resources benefit children of different migration status.

Findings and Discussions
(to Be Completed)

Conclusions
(To Be Completed)

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