

**CHINA'S "TIDAL WAVE" OF MIGRANT LABOR: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM
MEXICAN UNDOCUMENTED MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES?**

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One of the positive aspects of China's socialist development period is that it avoided uncontrolled urbanization and its attendant problems, so visible in the cities of many developing countries. While this outcome was based upon a tightly woven and highly effective system that had restricted population mobility since the mid-1950s, it was hoped that the surge in rural prosperity of the early 1980s, the success of rural industry in the mid-1980s, and the policy of encouraging the development of small and medium-sized cities, could together represent a unique model of development “with Chinese characteristics ... that ensures that our peasants will never repeat the experience of those farmers who during the early stage of capitalism flooded into the cities after going bankrupt”(Fei 1986: 209).

Nevertheless, China is experiencing a “tidal wave of rural migrant labor”(mingong chao) to its cities. It began in the early 1980s with the loosening of the constraints that had prevented rural Chinese from living in the cities, increased each year until the 1989 economic austerity program reduced urban job opportunities, and picked up with renewed intensity in 1991. Since then it has grown to an estimated 80 million laborers, making it the largest flow of migrant labor in history.

Impossible to ignore in the large cities of China, the phenomenon has grabbed the attention of the foreign press: *Newsweek* (December 26, 1995) ran an article on China's “Nightmare Cities,” *The Washington Post* (October 9, 1994) called the phenomenon “The Dragon Within,” and the *Daily Telegraph* (February 24, 1995), in a seemingly gleeful expression of irony, noted, “forty-five years ago, the Communist stormed into the cities ... Now, they are under siege themselves as China's creaky urban infrastructure -- and its no less vulnerable social and political order -- start to buckle under the strain of the massive rural influx.” While more circumspect, the Chinese press has alternated between expressions of extreme concern and assurances that not only do the benefits provided by rural migrants outweigh their costs, but that new measures are being implemented to better control migration flows. What has been missing in many of these discussions is a context within which to place Chinese migration, with outsiders generally identifying it with the type of rural-urban migrations accompanying the transformations of rural life that occurred throughout Europe or in the American south, and Chinese rarely looking beyond their own borders or immediate experience for parallels from which lessons could be drawn.

The purpose of this paper is to provide this context for Chinese labor migration, by comparing it to undocumented Mexican migration to the United States. Why, of the many types and examples of labor mobility in the developing world, choose this unique case for comparison? There are five bases upon which the validity of the comparison rests. The first, applicable to migration in many developing countries, is that the process is predominantly circular, not permanent: migrants regularly return to their villages, and retain their ties to the land as part of a

strategy of spatial and sectoral diversification of household labor. The second is the existence of a very large gap in the wages and standards of living between sending and receiving areas. The large cities of China are relatively as developed (and as foreign) to a Chinese peasant as is the United States to a Mexican migrant worker. The third is that there are restrictions preventing settlement of labor migrants in both Chinese cities and in the United States, ranging from complex systems of work and residence permits to outright illegality. The capriciousness of enforcement of these regulations creates an ambiguous status for migrants: their labor is desired but their presence is not, particularly when it is perceived to impinge upon the privileges of residents. Together, these three factors make the Chinese case more like international labor migration between developing and developed countries than internal migration within developing countries, a similarity that has been noted by several scholars (Chan 1996; Solinger 1995b; Bonnin and Cartier 1988).¹

The fourth and fifth similarities make Mexico-US migration a particularly appropriate case for comparison. The fourth is that the proximity between sending and receiving areas allows the process to be spontaneous, not organized as is most labor migration between developing and developed countries. The fifth concerns the conditions that create surplus labor in agriculture while maintaining migrants' links to the land. Both Mexico and China experienced agrarian-based revolutions that gave land to the peasants that could not be rented or sold. Despite this history, government policy in both has consistently favored the cities at the expense of the peasants, keeping agricultural prices low and subsidizing urban consumption. I will suggest that these and other structural similarities are important in conditioning the response of peasants to agricultural change, and to circular migration having emerged as an important component of the survival strategies of rural households.

The example of undocumented migration from Mexico is appealing for two additional reasons. The first is that it was, until the Chinese case, “the largest sustained flow of migrant workers in the contemporary world”(Massey, *et al.* 1994: 705). Because of this and its direct implications for US immigration policy, it has received a great deal of scholarly attention and generated a large body of literature. The second is that the process is now over three decades old and has matured considerably over its course, so that its long-term dynamics can be explored.

After brief descriptions of the magnitude and proximate causes of the upsurge in labor mobility in China, this paper will explore the similarities and differences between Chinese and Mexican labor migration with regard to the type of agricultural development that has created and perpetuated circular migration, the migration process, including household strategies and networks, and the economic and social position of migrants in their destinations. The last section will draw upon this comparison and China's specific circumstances to generate predictions about the trajectory of Chinese labor migration.

The “Tidal Wave” of Migrant Labor in China: Magnitude and Proximate Causes

The magnitude of Chinese labor migration

It is as difficult to define the magnitude of Chinese labor migration as it has been to estimate the numbers of Mexican migrants in the United States, for both streams contain large numbers of persons who are not captured by population registers. For China, we must first distinguish between "migration" (*qianyi*), which is a move that is officially documented by a permanent change in an individual's place of household registration, and temporary population movement, whose participants are called the "floating population" (*liudong renkou*). Because of the difficulty of transferring household registration (see below), the first group is both far more skilled and much less numerous than the second: the 1990 census reports only about 18 million people above the age of 5 who moved during 1985-90 and changed their household registration to their new residence (Yang and Guo 1996). While it is true that market reforms have changed the character of all forms of population mobility, including that captured by the (Liang 1998) and marriage migration by young women (Gates 1996), the analysis here will be limited to the floating population, and within that category to its largest component, rural labor migrants.

Sampling surveys conducted in 1994 estimated the floating population in Beijing to be 3.3 million, up from 1.3 million in 1988, and that of Shanghai to be 3.31 million, up from 2.09 million in 1988 (Zhu 1995a; Wang 1995). These numbers represent 31 percent and 25 percent respectively of these two cities' officially registered 1990 population. If percentages of this magnitude are applied to China's total 1990 urban population of 296 million, the size of the floating population would be between 75 and 90 million people. Calculations of this sort appear to underlie the figure of 80 million that is commonly cited by government officials.

This estimate of the floating population is often taken to be comprised entirely of rural labor migrants. However, the floating population includes not only rural migrant laborers but also people traveling for business, education, tourism and to visit relatives -- that is, all people who are in a city at a particular time but who are not permanent residents of that city. A disaggregation of the floating population of Shanghai in 1993 shows that only about 60 percent of the total were labor migrants, though some of the others might have been family members accompanying labor migrants (Roberts and Wei 1996). Application of this lower percentage would reduce the estimate of the number of rural labor migrants in urban areas of China to around 48 million, which concurs with the estimate of the Ministry of Public Security, the administrative unit responsible for enforcing the household registration system, that there are around 50 million rural-to-urban migrants among the 80 million floaters (Tsai 1994).

A different perspective on labor migration from agriculture can be obtained by shifting the focus from urban to rural areas. A study of six of the principal migrant-sending provinces (Sichuan, Jiangxi, Henan, Hunan, Hubei and Anhui) found that in 1982 fewer than one million

people had left for seasonal labor. A decade later, at least 24 million were working in other provinces, with most migrating for the first time during the last two or three years. Sichuan alone exported 10 million laborers in 1993, prompting the provincial governor to call them “China’s third great phenomenon,” after the household responsibility system and rural industrialization (1994d). A nationwide survey conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the State Statistical Bureau in 1993 estimated that 49.2 million rural Chinese were working away from their home villages, 38.7 million of these in cities and towns (*China Daily* 1994a), and the Ministry of Labor estimates that 30 million migrants are working outside of their native province (*China Daily* 1996).

While the numbers can be debated, what is clear from the discussion above is that the overall numbers of rural migrants working in China's cities are large, both as a percentage of the labor force in agriculture (440 million), but especially as a percentage of the population in the major urban destinations. Moreover, whatever their absolute magnitude, their numbers appear to be growing rapidly.

Surplus labor in agriculture

The migration of China’s peasants to the cities is the product of two factors, the existence of surplus labor in agriculture and the breakdown of the effectiveness of the household registration system. Both are by-products of the economic reforms of the 1980s.

China's employment structure is grossly out of balance with its output structure: in 1992 73 percent of the labor force worked in agriculture, producing 27 percent of GDP, while in other countries at China's level of development, agriculture produced 16 percent of GDP with only 44 percent of the labor force (UNDP 1995). The Chinese acknowledge that the same level of output could be produced with far less labor, and estimate the amount of surplus labor in agriculture to be about 120 million persons (Problem 1995).

This number is even more problematical than the size of the floating population,² but it is indisputable that a very significant portion of China’s rural labor force is not needed for agricultural production. During the period from the late-1950s until the late 1970s, agricultural workers were prevented from moving and paid according to the number of days present in the fields. This incentive structure caused the number of days worked per rural laborer to rise from 119 in the early 1950s to 189 in 1959, and then to between 215 and 284 by 1975 (Taylor 1988). Under the current household responsibility system, households are paid for what they produce, so that each household has an incentive to economize on agricultural labor in order that its members can earn income from other activities.

However, the creation of surplus labor is only a precondition for migration: as Arizpe (1983) has noted for Mexico, “it would be inappropriate to turn the truism that the rural exodus is generally the result of the development of capitalism into an abstract principle to explain

migration.” Just as there are alternatives to migrating to the United States for rural Mexicans, there are alternatives to moving to the large cities of China. In order to understand why so many Chinese peasants have chosen to do just this, it is necessary to understand just how effective, until recently, were the restrictions against such a move.

The household registration system

Every person in China is registered in a household registration book (*hukou bu*), which defines the family as either an agricultural household (*nongye hukou*) or urban resident household (*chengshi jumin hukou*), with most of the latter entitled to subsidized housing, social insurance, medical care and, until recently, employment. The division between the two categories is so inflexible that it has been characterized as a “structural cleavage”(Blecher 1985), with the *hukou* system “the institutional guardian of the deep urban-rural divide that has characterized China since the mid-1950s”(Cheng and Selden 1994: 667). Even administrative changes in the rural or urban status of a locality don’t affect *hukou* status, so as China has urbanized there has emerged a large population of agricultural residents in the cities, confusing the definitions of rural vs. urban and agricultural vs. non-agricultural (Goldstein 1990).

Grain -- increasing its production and restricting access to it -- is the key to understanding both the reason for implementation of the *hukou* system and its current lack of effectiveness in stemming the flow of migrants to the cities. If China were to rapidly industrialize, it had to channel its agricultural surplus to industry in order to keep wages low and investment high. Food output had to increase without absorbing resources that might be used for industrialization, which meant fully utilizing the only resource freely available in the countryside -- rural labor. Thus, Yingsheng Li (1994c: 162) contends that “the main motive for establishing controls on population migration was to ensure direct control of the rural population” in order to increase agricultural production. For this increased production to facilitate industrialization, competing demands for surplus grain, especially from the urban service sector, needed to be restricted. The function of the city was thus limited to serving as an industrial base and living quarters for workers and their families (Cheng 1990: 71).

Between 1953 and 1956, 19.8 million people had migrated to the cities. This “blind outflow of rural population” (*nongcun renkou mangmu wailiu*) gravely threatened the industrialization strategy outlined above, and in 1955 Shanghai expelled half a million peasants (Cheng and Selden 1994). But by 1957 the floating population in the large cities still numbered more than two million, and in response the National People’s Congress declared each household should be registered and prohibited from moving without prior permission (Kirkby 1985). Following the collapse of the Great Leap Forward in 1960, twenty million laborers who had been brought to the cities to work in industry were sent back to the countryside, and strict enforcement of household registration began (Cheng and Selden 1994). For the next twenty years, “One

would not ask, 'Is so-and-so classified as rural or urban personnel?' but rather, 'Does so-and-so eat the state's rice?'"(Potter and Potter 1990), because a secure job and state-subsidized grain were only available to workers in the urban areas. There were no outlets for grain in the cities other than state stores that required grain coupons, no rental housing, and no jobs for migrants; these and urban social welfare were the state-provided commodities that supported the *hukou* system (Mallee 1996). When the economic reforms undermined these key controls at the same time as the state relaxed the rules, it is little wonder that many rural Chinese sought what they had been denied for so long.

The Context: Agricultural Development in Mexico and China

Mexican and Chinese agricultural development have the following things in common: an agrarian-based revolution, a system of land reform that gave the peasants use rights to commonly-owned land, high population growth during the 1950s and 1960s that overwhelmed the ability of the agricultural sector to absorb the increasing labor force, rapid technological change in agriculture as part of a strategy of industrialization that consistently favored the cities over the country, and economic liberalization in the 1980s under an authoritarian party that transformed the economies of both countries. While the *strategy* employed by China is very different than Mexico's, generating a more egalitarian distribution of rural income, the *role* of agriculture was the same: to provide the food and raw materials for urban-based industrialization.

Agricultural development and import-substituting industrialization in Mexico

During the early 1940s the Mexican economy was in shambles, with problems in agriculture at the core. Peasants had benefited from the land reforms of the previous decade, but had increased their own consumption of grain rather than producing more for urban markets. In 1943 a poor harvest caused bread riots in the cities, and imports of grain absorbed increasing quantities of precious foreign exchange. The system created after the Revolution had divided up the large estates into *ejidos*, land that was commonly owned but usually individually farmed in small plots by peasants with their traditional technology. While some halfhearted efforts were made to provide the inputs necessary to make these *ejidal* plots productive, the basic strategy of the Mexican government had shifted from its earlier egalitarianism, and would consistently work against the interests of peasants until the early 1970s.

Mexico's basic development program during this period was import-substituting industrialization (ISI), which began during World War II when the United States curtailed its exports. Agriculture was the key to this industrial strategy, for it would have to provide the raw materials, particularly cotton, for Mexican factories, the labor to work in them, and food for these workers.

The strategy to increase agricultural output was based upon the twin pillars of irrigation and technological development. Starting in 1950, 70 percent of government investment in agriculture went to irrigation (Austin and Esteva 1987), increasing the cultivated area from 7.1 to 11.4 million hectares in the years between 1952 to 1958 (Cartas Contreras 1987). The green revolution in wheat that later spread to other less-developed countries began in the irrigated fields of Mexico in the early 1950s, and it required heavy inputs of commercial fertilizer, as well as hybrid seeds, insecticides and herbicides.

This strategy succeeded magnificently: agricultural production grew at 6.3 percent annually from 1950 to 1965 due to the increase in cultivated area, the increase in yields, and the shift in crop composition away from corn to high-value crops. Agriculture fulfilled all the roles assigned to it by the ISI program: it provided cheap food to the urban work force; it transferred savings to the industrial sector through a decline in the ratio of agricultural to industrial prices from 1.28 in 1950 to 0.82 in 1972; it produced agricultural exports that grew at more than 10 percent annually from 1940 to 1970; and it released two million laborers between 1950 and 1970, 30 percent of the increase in the rural labor force (Cartas Contreras 1987).

But the underlying cause of this labor transfer, to greatly oversimplify, lay not in the increasing labor-absorptive capacity of industry but the push from the farms. The Mexican strategy of agricultural development had created a bi-polar distribution of farms and rural wealth. Only the larger capitalist farms could afford the new technology, and the close links between their owners and the local and national political establishment insured easy access to cheap credit, technical assistance and other inputs. The *ejidos*, on the other hand, were progressively impoverished by the same process. Many never had a chance: they were located on marginal land that was good only for the subsistence cultivation of corn and beans. Others were located on some of the best land but, unable to mortgage their property, *ejidatarios* couldn't obtain credit to buy the inputs necessary for the green revolution technology. They began to illegally rent their land to capitalist farmers, becoming "wealthy indigents" where the rents were high or hiring themselves out as day laborers to work on their own parcels where the rents were low (Hewitt de Alcántara 1976). The economic function of the *ejido* evolved into being a repository of surplus labor to work on the capitalist farms.

The agricultural strategy of increased output based upon expanding area and higher yields on the large farms had reached its limits by the mid-1960s, and could no longer compensate for the decline in real agricultural prices caused by the government's policy of holding grain support prices constant for about two decades. Beginning in 1965 and lasting until 1980, the growth rate of agricultural production fell to 1.8 percent annually (Austin and Esteva 1987). More importantly, the area planted in the basic staples -- corn, wheat, rice and beans -- fell from 10.2 to 7.9 million hectares during the 1970s. Sorghum, grown as an animal feed, had begun to rapidly displace corn, to where it would become the second most important crop in terms of cultivated

area by 1984. The reasons for sorghum's phenomenal growth, called Mexico's "second green revolution" (DeWalt 1985), were increased demand for meat by urban dwellers, low prices paid farmers by the government for corn and wheat, and complementarity in the mechanization of the harvests of wheat and sorghum.

Just as agriculture's success had spurred industrialization, its problems spread to back to the city. Mexico's food policy was to provide cheap grain; if it were to raise agricultural procurement prices enough to stimulate the production of basic grains, it faced a choice between higher urban prices or subsidies. It chose the latter, and by the mid-1970s the government was buying corn at 2,178 pesos per ton and selling it at 1,863 pesos, costing the government 818 million pesos in 1975 alone (Appendini and Almeida Salles 1983). Even so, production was insufficient to meet demand, and Mexico had to import basic grains. By the end of the 1970s, well before the depression of the mid-1980s known as "La Crisis," there was an acknowledged crisis in food production.

The agricultural changes described above were devastating to peasant welfare. Not only could *ejidatarios* and other peasants not compete with the large capitalist farms, but just as their labor force was increasing during the 1950s and the 1960s due to low mortality and continued high fertility, they faced declining opportunities for agricultural employment. Mechanization was occurring in many crops, and the crop composition on capitalist farms was altered to favor less labor-intensive crops. In one important example, the suitability for the harvest of summer sorghum of combine harvesters initially purchased by large farmers for winter wheat provided an additional motivation for them to shift from corn, the crop that provided most of the jobs for peasants and landless laborers (Roberts 1986). Rough calculations indicate that 25,000 jobs in the state of Guanajuato, about one-sixth of the total held by agricultural day laborers, were eliminated during a four-year period in the mid-1960s due to this shift in crop composition.

As the ISI strategy progressively undermined peasant production and wage labor opportunities in agriculture, peasants faced the relentless monetization of their consumption necessities. Clothing that used to be made at home was purchased, corn was taken to the *tortillería* to be processed, and transportation on buses to find ever-scarcer work required money, to name just a few of the changes that may have improved peasants' lives but made wage income a necessity. Peasants from the poorest areas of Mexico, often indigenous peoples, responded by massive migration to the cities of Mexico, replicating their village communities in squatter settlements. But increased circular migration to the United States was an alternative response by those in regions where agricultural production and wage labor on commercial farms could still provide a complementary, if highly variable, source of income. The complex relationship between the type of agricultural change described above and circular migration will be explored in a following section; for now suffice it to say that, by the 1970s, US migration had emerged as one of the key elements of the survival strategy of households in many regions of central Mexico.

Agricultural development and urban bias in China

With the attention that has been paid to the success of the Household Responsibility System (HRS) in raising agricultural productivity, it is easy to overlook the progress that was made in Chinese agriculture prior to 1978. While Mexico relied upon large capitalist farms to provide the agricultural surplus needed for industrialization, creating a highly unequal distribution of agricultural income and wealth, China mobilized huge quantities of rural labor on communes to build agricultural infrastructure, especially irrigation, and increased the production and application of chemical fertilizers. Simultaneously with the hybridization of rice promulgated through the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines, China independently developed a rice variety that was equally productive. Grain output grew at a respectable 2.1 percent annually from 1957 to 1978 and, by the end of the period, yields in rice and wheat were comparable to those in the United States and far above world standards (Perkins and Yusuf 1984).

With the institution of the HRS, which freed the peasants from the constraints of collective production and opened markets for their products, the growth of grain output accelerated to 5 percent during the period from 1978 to 1984. While various studies have reached different conclusions about the relative weight of the factors accounting for this increase, they agree that the most important components were increased prices for farm products (farmers still had to deliver a fixed quantity of grain to the state, but any production over this quota was paid a premium of 30 to 50 percent), technological change, the institutional changes of the HRS, and the resulting increase in inputs, especially fertilizer (Lin 1992; Huang and Rozelle 1996). By 1984, grain production had reached a record 407 million tons.

This level of production was not attained again until the 1990s. From 1984 to 1988 production actually fell an average of 0.8 percent annually, and from 1988 to 1994 it rose at only 2.0 percent. The record 1984 harvest had indicated to the government that China's grain production would be sufficient to meet urban demand without further price stimulus, so that subsidies, already one quarter of state revenues by 1981, could be reduced (Lardy 1984). Like Mexico during an earlier period, China felt it could lower the price paid farmers without deleterious effects on production. The alternative -- to cut urban subsidies -- was unattractive because, as Putterman (1993: 46) explains, "the state could only afford to increase prices for procured staples by a modest increment" without "abandoning either the implicit wage contract with the urban population or the drive for industrialization under state auspices." In 1985 grain procurement prices were lowered by an average of 9.2 percent, and the marginal price paid for above-quota grain even more (Lin 1992). In addition, the government no longer guaranteed to buy a fixed amount at above-quota prices, increasing uncertainty and reducing expected profits (Sicular 1993).

Lower agricultural prices are half of the "price scissors" that reduced rural incomes -- the other was rising agricultural costs. Urea, the principal fertilizer, sold for 450 yuan per ton until

1984; its official price rose to 700 yuan by 1988, and it could even then often be obtained only on the black market at over 1,000 yuan per ton (Aubert 1990). By 1995 its price, adjusted for inflation, had risen to almost 1400 yuan. The state attempted to solve this problem and that of declining grain procurement by linking the delivery of subsidized fertilizer and diesel fuel with sales of grain to the state, but these subsidized inputs were siphoned off into the black market by local officials. From 1984 to 1988, the per hectare monetary cost of production of wheat rose from 650 yuan to 1,200 yuan, and that of corn from 450 yuan to 900 yuan. Gross revenue rose from 1,500 to 2,000 yuan per hectare in these crops, but net revenue fell (Aubert 1990).

Declining growth in income from grain production was only one element of farmers' problems. The state had cut investment in agriculture from 8.7 billion yuan in 1979 to 2.0 billion yuan in 1986, causing "serious degradation of the collective infrastructure," with more than 40 percent of the irrigation reservoirs closed and one fourth of all the irrigation and drainage machinery worn out (Odgaard 1992: 44). Local governments compensated for the decline in state investment by placing levies and fees on farmers for every conceivable purpose -- roads, hospitals, water, and transport, to name a few. A survey by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1990 showed farmers paid an average of 8 percent of their income in local levies and an additional 3.1 percent in random fees and fines; their contribution to local governments was 70 percent higher than it had been in 1985 (Odgaard 1992). When the austerity program reduced the credit available to local governments, these units responded by allocating what funds they had to profitable township and village-run enterprises (TVEs), and gave peasants "white slips," or IOUs, for their grain. Aubert (1990: 28) concluded, "agriculture is continuing to finance China's industrial development, as it has been doing for a very long time."

While agricultural production stagnates, the demand for grain continues to grow.³ After decades of promoting a policy of grain self-sufficiency, China in 1995 turned from exporting to importing grain. Grain production must increase to 500 million tons by the year 2000, or massive imports will absorb foreign exchange and derail China's economic program, not to mention the additional leverage such dependence would give to trading partners. Many experts believe that production increases of this magnitude are unlikely without changing the scale of farm units, because the major determinants of yield increases, irrigation and fertilizer, have already been pushed to their limits, while farmland is decreasing and infrastructure deteriorating (Perkins 1992). Even if technologically possible, it would require raising the price paid farmers to induce them to devote more resources to grain, so that either subsidies would rise far above their 1989 level of 13.5 percent of government revenues, or urban dwellers would pay more for food (Johnson 1994).

Johnson (1992: 33) believes that China's relatively small urban population "cannot conceivably pay prices high enough to make the present-sized farm units economically viable for the next decade." Urban residents are very sensitive about food prices: they were complaining

bitterly about the high prices of meat and vegetables during the Spring of 1989, contributing to their support of the student uprising at Tiananmen (Aubert 1990: 26). Experiments in freeing grain prices at the end of 1993, combined with poor harvests, led to price increases of 62.2 percent in grain and 49.1 percent in fresh vegetables in China's cities by August of the following year, causing the State Council to shelve the reforms (1994). To do otherwise would have been "political suicide for China's Communist Party" (Putterman 1993: 44), because "the urban-biased policies are the insurance the regime buys to ensure that those in the urban area, most importantly the workers, will refrain from political activity that will endanger the stability of the regime" (Oi 1993: 145).

We have seen that both China and Mexico relegated agriculture to a subsidiary role of providing cheap food for industrialization, and that both did so through irrigation and the green revolution inputs of seeds and fertilizer. Mexico's strategy emphasized the large capitalist farms, letting the *ejido* sector stagnate while its resident labor force grew. These laborers worked on the large capitalist farms when they were nearby, and migrated to the cities of Mexico from those poor areas where there were no local opportunities to earn off-farm income. When mechanization dramatically reduced the demand for labor on capitalist farms while agricultural income from subsistence farming continued its decline, the large flows of undocumented migration to the United States began.

In China, the rapid growth in the population from the 1950s through the mid-1970s was absorbed within the agricultural sector as part of a deliberate strategy to limit the number of people dependent upon the urban industrial base. As a result, despite an economic structure that more resembles countries in the middle ranges of development, three out of four Chinese still live in rural areas. The shift in the locus of production to the household has made it apparent that a large portion of the agricultural labor force was redundant, and the opening of other income-generating opportunities has given this redundancy a cost. As China strives to generate further increases in agricultural production, it will probably be necessary to increase the size of farm units, further exacerbating the problem of surplus rural labor. This topic will be explored in the last section of the paper.

It is at this point that the similarity in agrarian structure between the two countries intersects with their converging paths of agricultural development. Land in both China and on Mexican *ejidos* cannot be sold or mortgaged, giving farmers a permanent stake in the rural area. This security, combined with surplus household labor, changes the economic function of the land from that of a productive unit to a base of household activities, which include farming, raising children, agricultural sideline activities, local wage labor, and migration. Therefore, in order to understand how a particular agrarian structure leads to circular migration, we must shift our analysis to the rural household.

The Migration Process and Household Strategies

Circular migration and household strategies

While there has been increasing settlement of Mexican migrants in the United States during the last decade, migration from the 1960s through the early 1980s -- the period most comparable to current Chinese labor migration -- was predominantly circular, with only one fifth of undocumented Mexican migrants staying in the US more than one year (Ranney and Kossoudji 1983). The literature on rural-urban migration in developing countries, which assumed permanent migration by individuals responding to higher urban incomes, shed little light upon this process of circular migration: if migrants were moving because of income differentials, why didn't they stay? The key to understanding the process came in conceptualizing circular migration as one component of a strategy employed by a *household* in allocating its available labor supply among sectors and regions (Wood 1981).

The next theoretical challenge was to understand how what appeared to be a particularly risky option like undocumented migration to the United States was embraced by risk-averse rural households. Once it was realized that the household could participate in several economic activities simultaneously, the concept of diversification became relevant: the rural household could diversify its risks by allocating labor between the farm and the city, and that what would be in itself a very risky occupation, with a high up-front cost and probability of apprehension, could actually reduce the risk of the household income portfolio by being relatively uncorrelated with village-based income (Stark and Levhari 1982).

If differences in expected income were no longer the only important determinant of migration, then people from the poorest sending areas -- those experiencing the widest income differentials -- would no longer necessarily be those that were the most prone to engage in undocumented migration. There was a higher incidence of undocumented migration from a Michoacán village where income was high than there was from a neighboring village with fewer resources (Dinerman 1982). A study of four regions of Mexico found the only one sending a significant number of migrants to the US in the mid-1970s was the Bajío of Guanajuato -- a rich agricultural valley where migrant income complemented the high monetary costs and low labor requirements of commercial agriculture. Whole families moved to Mexico City from the poorest region, while the other two eschewed long-distance migration altogether. Circular migration to the US, involving high risks but promising high monetary rewards, was most attractive to those households which needed a source of monetary income other than agriculture to reduce the variability in income caused by commercialization, but which, due to this same commercialization, could better afford the higher costs of undocumented migration (Roberts 1982).

The current wave of Chinese labor migration from the rural areas to the large cities is also predominantly circular. Over half of the rural labor migrants in Shanghai's 1993 floating

population had been in the city for less than six months, and another quarter had lived there between six months and one year (Roberts and Wei 1996). A 1992 survey of Beijing's floating population (of which peasant workers are only one part) showed 24 percent had been in the city less than three months, 21 percent three to six months, 31 percent six months to one year, 16 percent from one to three years, and 7 percent over three years (JPRS 1993a). While this same survey concluded that a significant group "is showing signs of striking roots," these roots may not go too deep: a 1993 survey in "Zhejiang village," one of the largest migrant communities of Beijing, found that 90 percent of the migrants planned on returning home after several years in the city (*China Daily* 1993b).

Until prevented from doing so by the *hukou* system and the policy of "putting grain first" that predominated during the pre-reform years, Chinese peasants had always sought to diversify their sources of income. In the 1930s many peasant households near Suzhou derived half their income from non-agricultural activities, especially weaving (Fei 1986). In Shandong province in the 1940s, "when a second son is born, the parents do not worry that their small piece of land will be divided into two parts. Instead, they begin to hope that when their sons are grown up, one will be a hired laborer, another a mason, and that they will earn not only their own living but add fifty dollars or so to the family every year" (Yang 1947). Even in late imperial China, "a surer way to wealth was to diversify out of agriculture into commerce, artisanship, and money lending. Diversification often entailed spatial dispersal of family fortunes by opening up new commercial or wage labor opportunities. The more sons, the more activities a family could diversify into, the greater its ability to send workers to places of economic opportunity, and thus the greater its success in 'diversification/dispersal strategies'" (Greenhalgh 1988: 648).

Opportunities for diversification have resulted in a reallocation of labor within the rural Chinese household. Family members across generations and gender, from grandparents to grandchildren, have been pressed into some form of income-generating activity (Croll 1994: 165). This allocation of the household's labor supply considers the comparative advantage of each household member: "those who can work in factories do; the others, often women and the older members of the family, work the entire family's fields" (Oi 1989: 195). This has led to the phenomenon called the "three changes" (*sanhua*) in farm labor -- the change to the labor of women (*nuhua*), the elderly (*laohua*), and the weak and feeble (*ruanhua*) (Christiansen 1992). It has also increased the pressures on men to marry young in order to recruit a daughter-in-law into the household labor force, one factor in the decline in the average age of marriage in rural areas by 1.8 years since 1982 (Croll 1994).

Links to the land

An essential component of the strategy of circular migration is keeping a foot on the farm. In Mexico, these links to the land were strengthened by the *ejidal* system, under which farmers

would lose their rights to communally-owned but individually-farmed plots of land if it was left uncultivated for several years. The ideological legacy of the Revolution that created the *ejidos* undoubtedly strengthened these ties: one man said, "We don't want to lose our land because this is what we old folks fought for, at least to have a roof over our heads and a few beans to eat ... Today the young people aren't as interested in defending the land because they go outside, earn more and then bring back money for fiestas or to improve their houses, but not to invest in business"(Grindle 1988). More important, and implicit in his statement, is that the land represents security, a place to return to when old, sick, or unemployed.

Keeping one's land while migrating was not a difficult strategy to pursue: the services of tractors and combine harvesters were available for rental for the arduous tasks of planting and harvest in all but the most marginal regions. A family member could coordinate these services and use hired labor or rally the support of children and relatives in labor-intensive tasks such as weeding, that were difficult to mechanize. In a corn-producing *ejido* of Michoacán, 44 percent of all households rented a machine for all heavy tasks and an additional 14 percent for some tasks. Another 20 percent rented or sharecropped their land. One-half of those who used a tractor were employed elsewhere, and one-fifth no longer lived in the village at all. The author of the study concluded, "What we are witnessing today is the splitting up of the functions of the *ejidatario* as beneficiary, farmer and tiller of the soil" (Mummert 1987: 537).

Yet, as the quote from the old revolutionary above indicates, the money earned by migrating was usually not invested in agriculture or any other productive asset that would generate a source of income that could eventually replace migration. During the early days of undocumented migration there was often a target for remittances -- an emergency such as sickness, a wedding, and especially improved housing. But by the 1980s, migrant remittances were mainly used for family maintenance. The phenomenon of not reinvesting in the home community was so widespread that it was called the "migrant syndrome," leading to a concentration of wealth in migrant households and Galbraith's "private affluence and public squalor"(Reichert 1981). A recent study found that only five percent of the residents of three migrant communities in Mexico were interested in receiving credit or irrigation to improve agriculture, and that the younger generation of workers in high-emigration communities is not interested in agricultural labor, even if jobs could be made available year-round at higher than the prevailing local wage (Cornelius and Martin 1993: 503).

Keeping a foot on the farm is also integral to the diversification strategy of rural Chinese households. The reasons are the same as in the Mexican case: spatial and occupational diversification, security for times of unemployment, sickness, and old age, and the institution of community-owned land which one will lose if not farmed. However, in China there are five additional factors that intensify the relation between rural Chinese and the land. The first is that the right of resettlement in the village is lost by permanent outmigration: if household registration

is changed, the migrant is no longer entitled to village land upon which to build a house (Siu 1993). The second is that land allocations have been readjusted with some frequency in the past, and despite the more secure tenure promised by legislation, peasants are afraid they will forfeit their land in the next reallocation of land rights (Judd 1992). In Mexico, each family has kept the same *ejidal* plot since it was originally allocated, and local officials have turned a blind eye to illegal practices of rental or abandonment. The third is related and perhaps the most important: peasants fear there could be a major reversal of policy -- either that affecting tenure, off-farm employment opportunities, or migration -- and regard the land as their "route of retreat"(Li 1991: 116). Even in the urbanized suburbs surrounding Shanghai, most migrants didn't follow the regulation that requires them to transfer their land to others. The most common reason they gave was "the fear of being obligated to return to rural areas as a result of a possible change in the current policy" (Zhu 1990: 104). While reversals affecting tenure are becoming less likely, growing anti-migrant sentiment is having the same effect: "Witnessing periodic sweeps on unwanted and unemployed migrants in some big cities such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Beijing in 1988 and 1989, many peasant migrants have been careful not to relinquish totally ties with their home villages"(Chan 1994: 134). The fourth reason for keeping a foot on the farm is that Chinese peasants are more risk-averse with regard to basic food security than Mexican peasants: unlike in Mexico, subsidized staples are available only in the cities, and experience with famine is relatively recent. Therefore most Chinese peasants never abandon basic food production on at least a small plot of land (Odgaard 1992). The last reason is that labor requirements in Chinese agriculture are highly seasonal and, unlike in Mexico, there is little mechanization. A survey of 4,000 households in eight provinces found that even interprovincial migrants returned to work an average of 37 days on their own farms each year (Song 1996).

Surveys from all parts of China report an extremely low incidence of abandonment of land rights. In Kaiping county in the Pearl River Delta, only three of fifty households with members migrating let their land go back to the village; nine leased it to others and the rest let another household member do the farming (Woon 1993). In Henan province only four percent of the 600 farmers with non-agricultural jobs had transferred their contracted land to (Ling 1991). A nationwide survey of 37,422 farms concluded that farmers don't relinquish their rights when they work in other sectors, but rather the opposite: "the more the town and village enterprises develop, the more the farmers strengthen their grip over the land" (Kojima 1988: 730). The poorest don't have the assets to do much else, while the richest keep their rights as a form of insurance against policy changes .

But while migrant households may keep their land, they do not invest their remittances in agriculture. Insecurity of title, discussed above, is an important reason. Instead, as in Mexico, the first destination of migrant remittances (other than family maintenance) has been to improve housing. The Ministry of Construction estimates that every year an average of 600 million square

meters of housing were built in rural China, expanding the living space from 8 to 12.4 square meters per person from 1984 to 1992 (*China Daily* 1993a). A closely related reason is that rural home ownership, unlike private capital, has never been affected by the various political campaigns since the revolution to (Ling 1991: 143).

Another popular destination for earnings from migration is weddings and dowries. A desirable groom should be able to provide his bride a new house or at least a big room in his parent's house with carpets, wallpaper, new furniture, a refrigerator and a television set: the cost of these and the wedding in villages studied by Croll (1994) ranged from 1,000 yuan to 5,000 yuan, and more recently from 15,000 to 26,000 yuan in a northern Chinese village where 70 percent of newly-married couples built homes averaging five rooms (Zhang 1996). While these expenditures are often classified as "unproductive," they should more properly be viewed as rational investments in relationships that can expand the family's influence and its chances of economic prosperity.

Networks

One of the most compelling explanation for the migrants' continuing ties to their communities in Mexico is the existence of village-based networks that reduce the monetary and emotional costs to the migrant and increase the chances of success. Migrant networks "offer money for loans, company for the trip, a welcome mat upon arrival, reduction in the psychological costs of moving, food the migrant was accustomed to, and, most important of all, a job" (López Castro 1986: 96). Maintaining one's village contacts in the network through circular migration keeps the migrant informed of changing job opportunities, and thus significantly reduces the risk of unemployment.

The concept of networks explains other aspects of the migration process as well. Until recently, Mexican migrants have come predominantly from the central states of Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas, and these origin states had not changed significantly since the beginning of the century (Cardoso 1980).⁴ Migrants went mainly to only a few states in the US, and within these states migrants from specific areas of rural Mexico cluster in specific locales. Networks link these places of origin and destination, and hometown identity (*paisanaje*) is the basis of each network. Because networks are especially important in reducing the higher risks of international migration, they were one of the most important variables discriminating between internal migration and undocumented migration (Taylor 1986). Therefore, villages in similar economic circumstances might send very different proportions of their workers abroad because of their differential access to networks (Martin 1991).

What has emerged from this research was that the village network is a type of "social capital" that migrants can draw upon during their career. Poor as well as rich migrants enjoy access to the network: the most comprehensive study of migrant networks concluded "landless

jornaleros from a town such as Chamitlán may be poor in financial resources, but they are wealthy in social capital, which they can readily convert into jobs and earnings in the United States” (Massey, *et al.* 1987: 171). Returning home during the days of the village’s patron saint is an important component of the investment required to maintain this capital, for current migrants are reunited with former and potential migrants, reaffirming their position in the larger village community.

Native place identity (*tongxiang*) is a "critical component of personal identity" in China, perhaps even more so than *paisanaje* in Mexico because of the ethnic homogeneity of the Chinese population: it “was generally the first matter of inquiry among strangers, the first characteristic recorded about a person after name and pseudonyms, and the first fact to be ascertained regarding individuals coming before the law” (Goodman 1995: 44) It was the basis for the regional specificity of migration flows from particular rural areas to certain cities and jobs during the Qing dynasty (Skinner 1976), and remains so today: Sichuan migrants working in rural industry around Shanghai obtained their jobs "through personal connections established on the basis of the same native place” (Oshima 1990: 212). A recent study found that 80 percent of rural labor migrants obtained their jobs through informal networks of friends and relatives, 14 percent through labor contractors, and the rest on their own. Most of these migrants worked in destinations with 20 or more people from the same village, and 60 percent lived with these villagers (Zhao 1996a). To maintain their links to family and village, Chinese migrants usually return to the village during the nationwide Spring Festival.⁵

Networks of Mexican migrants that were established during the Bracero Program and developed during the unprecedented migration of the 1970s and 1980s have matured, linking Mexican villages and US destinations. For instance, Gómez Farias, Michoacán is linked with Watsonville, California, and 87 percent of the households in the village sent migrants to that destination (López Castro 1986). This has led to the development of “daughter communities,” with the destination locale consisting of nuclei of settlers, their families, and the migrants that circulate between the community and Mexico (Chavez 1988). Likewise, daughter communities are forming in Chinese cities: “Zhejiang Village” in the south of Beijing is estimated to have near 100,000 migrants; the majority of these come from only two counties in Zhejiang province (Wang 1996). Within these areas there are even sub-groupings, such as young women from Anhui and Hubei provinces employed by the Zhejiang entrepreneurs to work in garment manufacturing. Given the dormancy of the Chinese networks over the three previous decades, the formation of these links and daughter communities is remarkably rapid, perhaps because the lack of a good housing market requires new migrants to rely even more upon network connections to survive in the city.

Rural Migrants at their Destination

So far, we have seen that circular migration to the United States emerged in central Mexico in response to rapid agricultural change that commercialized peasant agriculture while maintaining peasants' stake in the land. Remittances from migration allowed peasant households in need of cash for necessities or agricultural inputs to live in the village, with its support networks, while participating in several economic sectors simultaneously. Over time, the contacts established both nationally and internationally have channeled villagers to specific occupations and destinations, further reducing the costs and risks associated with circular migration. The same processes of agricultural change and the formation of rural-based migrant networks seems to be happening in China.

However, there is still a major piece missing from the puzzle of circular migration persisting over long periods of time, which is the other side of the coin of why these migrants don't stay permanently where they work -- the conditions under which the society at their destination endures their presence. In both the United States and the cities of China, to varying degrees over time, unskilled migrant labor has been essential to the economy, but the migrants that perform this labor have been excluded from the society. As Solinger (1993: 98) points out, China's internal migrants are more "like immigrant labor in other settings ... eager to earn money at any price, grateful for the chance to live in the city, vulnerable to threats of deportation, subject to enormous competition, and powerless because of the state's unwillingness to offer them rights, welfare, or security." What makes the Mexican case especially relevant for comparison with China is that, in both cases, the proximity of origin and destination areas makes the flows spontaneous and particularly difficult to control.

Documentation, risk and restrictions against settlement

The most obvious similarity between the patterns of circular migration in the two countries is that there are restrictions, intended to prevent permanent settlement, that require migrants to obtain documentation in order to legally work and reside in their destination. Yet despite these restrictions, many migrants in both countries are undocumented or use forged documents (FBIS 1992). In the United States, all workers are required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) to provide their employer a social security number and proof of citizenship. Chinese migrants are required to obtain permission from the local government to work away from the village, and then to obtain a temporary residence permit (*zhanzhuzheng*) from the urban police. Their employer must apply for a work permit at the urban labor department, submitting all legal documents of the migrant. However, only about 55 percent of the floating population had a residence permit, according to the Ministry of Public Security, which is responsible for enforcing the system (*China Daily* 1995b). A total of only 580,000 work permits were issued in Shanghai in 1995 for an estimated working population of 2.8 million, even

though some workers were issued more than one during the (Wang and Zuo 1996). A survey by the State Council found that only 16 percent of rural labor migrants held a permit from their local government to work outside, and 25 percent a work permit at their destination (Zhao 1996a).

When they are working without documents, the circumstances of the illegality of Chinese and Mexican labor migrants are certainly quite different. Rural Chinese are migrating within their own country, and as part of the Han ethnic majority are not significantly different in physical characteristics from residents. When they are expelled, it is the result of police action in the cities, such as that which occurred on a July morning in 1993, when 100 uniformed police swept into a Beijing street labor market and rounded up 250 illegal residents, deporting them back to their villages (CND 1993). Mexicans cross a defined frontier, and once they have entered and obtained employment, they have been (until recently) reasonably safe from apprehension.

The principal consequence of illegality is that it significantly raises the risk of migration by requiring a high up-front payment to obtain entry (to the US) or a secure job (in urban China). Mexicans without work permits proceed to the border, and then usually pay a *coyote* to guide them through the border enforcement net and to the city of their employment. The fee is substantial, around \$500 by the mid-1980s, and is generally paid by relatives at the destination or subtracted from wages. If they are apprehended at the border, they usually try again: in the late 1980s the probability of apprehension was about 50 percent for any one attempted entry, but “every migrant who attempted to enter the United States eventually got in” (Donato, Durand and Massey 1992: 150).

Rural Chinese could merely board a train and hang around street labor markets waiting for a job, but they would face periods of unemployment, lower wages, and the possibility of being harassed or expelled by the police. In a “Sichuan village” outside Guangzhou, migrants who do not pay the police a fee of five yuan per month are “either driven out or beaten up and sent to the ‘blind migrants’ repatriation center. The repatriation center demands a fine of 300 yuan. Those who cannot pay are beaten up before repatriation” (Zhou and Zhang 1995: 59). Alternatively, Chinese migrants can raise their expected earnings and lower their risks by paying the local police for a residence permit and the rural government for a work permit, which cost 60 yuan in Guangxi and 200 yuan in southern Jiangxi (JPRS 1994b). Workers from Hunan province had to raise 350 yuan to give the rural labor bureau to obtain employment in a Shenzhen textile factory, as well as sending it an additional 50 yuan per month (Goldstein and Huus 1994). Construction workers from Dacaiyuan village in Henan province had 10 percent of their salary deducted and sent to the village to be used for social projects (Jervis 1992). Migrants not contracted in the rural area may have to pay their employer more than one month’s wage for a job in industry, and they are still subject to being fired without cause (Brauchli and Kahn 1994). These costs raise the risks of migration, and are an important element differentiating this migration process from that of local migration in both China and Mexico.

Occupations

Undocumented Mexican migrants, after decades of working principally in US agriculture, now work in every economic sector, but especially in construction and services. Their jobs tend to be unskilled, physically exhausting, with earnings that are significantly below the local average and with little chance of advancement or benefits. But, as Piore (1980: 427) has noted, “if one were forced to specify one single factor which characterizes all migrant jobs, it would be simply that the work is disdained by native workers.” Likewise, the work that rural migrants do in China’s cities is also “harsh, filthy and exhausting,” and “has been disdained by young urban people”(Solinger 1995b: 25).

The largest numbers of migrants in urban China are hired in construction, services, and manufacturing. Construction of factories, office buildings, and housing, the latter of which has been playing catch-up with demand that had been restricted for thirty years, has boomed, and it provides more jobs for male migrants than any other occupation. Of the half a million people migrating from Fujian province in 1988, 300,000 worked in construction (Banister and Taylor 1989). Booming Kaiping county in Guangdong province had 50,000 migrant construction workers in 1988, many from Sichuan province. They earned eight yuan for their twelve hour day, and usually slept in cardboard shacks on the construction site (Woon 1993). Beijing had over 350,000 migrant construction workers in 1994, one-fifth of its estimated floating population and a much higher proportion of its migrant labor force (*China Daily* 1995a), and as many as 1.0 million of Shanghai's migrant labor force of 1.8 million worked in construction in (Wang and Zuo 1996).

The section on agricultural development explained that China deliberately restricted the growth of the service sector during the three decades prior to the economic reforms. As a result, in 1988 the service sector in China contributed only 21 percent of Chinese GDP, compared to 38 percent for India, 40 percent for Indonesia and 44 percent for the Philippines. This has provided the economic space in China for the establishment of migrant enterprises. In Beijing, migrants provided 70 percent of the employees of the 140,000 private businesses, many of which were service-oriented, as well as 50,000 food transport workers and thousands more in coal delivery and sanitation (*China Daily* 1995a).

These services greatly ease the lives of urban residents. They buy high quality produce in markets run by migrants, who supplied 75 percent of the meat and 88 percent of the vegetables to the free markets of Wuhan in 1990 (Solinger 1993). They eat food prepared and sold in street stalls by migrants, and have their bicycles and appliances repaired cheaply by migrants. They hire young migrant women as full-time, live-in help or for as little as five yuan per day to work as maids, nannies, and in the care elderly parents. The thousands of rural young women working as maids and nannies in Beijing permit even ordinary urban residents to employ rural women as maids (Cheng 1990). Migrants thus greatly facilitate the continuing high labor participation rates

of urban Chinese, including moonlighting by employees of state enterprises, which gives these workers the security of the state enterprise and the income of the private sector. When migrants return home during the Spring Festival, life in Beijing becomes “very difficult,” according to one resident, for all these essential services remain undone.

The visibility of these categories of rural migrants in the large cities obscures one of their major sources of employment -- export manufacturing -- which is regionally concentrated in the export processing zones of Guangdong and southern Jiangsu province and generally employs more women than men. Dongguan, one of the most important export zones in Guangdong province, has 1.2 million migrant workers, nearly seven in ten of whom were (FBIS 1993; JPRS 1993b). They usually live in dormitories or at their work-station and work twelve-hour days in cramped and dangerous conditions, as evidenced by the rash of factory fires in the region. The primary parallel of their migration is not to undocumented Mexican migration, but instead to the migration of young Mexican women to the border to work in the *maquilas*, or special export factories. Manufacturing by migrants is also springing up in areas of major cities like Beijing’s “Zhejiang Village,” where migrants manufacture clothes in sweatshops run by entrepreneurs from Zhejiang province.

Migrants rather than locals are employed in manufacturing for the same reasons that they are hired in other sectors -- they are cheaper, and there is a shortage of labor in these demanding and, by urban standards, relatively low-paying and low-status jobs. The silk industry in Hangzhou fulfilled only 4 percent of its 1986 recruiting plan using urban residents, who instead sought jobs in tourist-related activities like hotels, restaurants and shops. Migrants were recruited to fill 37 percent of the city’s total industrial jobs (Feng and Jiang 1988). In industries run by the village or township, the best jobs go to locals: they were paid 11 yuan per day in a Guangdong factory while migrants were paid by the piece, earning an average of 6 yuan per day. Locals got pensions, education, and medical benefits; migrants got none of these (Luo 1990). These savings are particularly important in urban China, where most social benefits are provided through the workplace. Solinger (1995a: 329) says, “textile factory managers openly acknowledge the savings they can garner by not having ... to provide day care centers, paid pregnancy leave, nursing allowances, or housing for workers’ families when they hire young single peasant women from the countryside and house ten to twenty in a room on bunk beds.” Likewise, in private enterprises in the cities, migrants are the preferred source of labor because they are “cheap and deferential”(Cheng 1990: 72), echoing the common accolade applied to Mexican labor by US employers. Even state enterprises employ migrant laborers, with the mining sector (another notoriously dangerous occupation, with 10,000 fatalities annually from explosions in coal mines) employing more than one million migrants (JPRS 1993b).

Significant numbers of Chinese migrants also work in agriculture, replacing locals who have chosen more remunerative employment. Residents of a township near Wuxi in booming

southern Jiangsu province work in rural enterprises, and the township meets its obligation to fulfill its grain quota and to supply vegetables to local markets by consolidating the peasants' land and operating these units with migrant labor from the northern part of the province (Oshima 1990). In Shenyang county in northern Shaanxi province, migrants from neighboring Gansu, one of the poorest provinces in China, work in the labor-intensive harvest of apples and tobacco, replacing locals who have gone to the provincial capital of Xi'an (Li 1994b). Migrants in the Jiading district outside Shanghai worked 68 percent of the land in 1994, up from 44 percent just two years earlier (Scale 1996). Poorer migrants are thus filling the slots vacated by those who can better afford the risk of long-distance migration to the cities.

Economic and social status

Compared to the ongoing controversy surrounding the economic impact of undocumented Mexican migration, there has been relatively little open criticism of the economic role of Chinese migrants. The most obvious reason is that China's phenomenal economic growth, combined with its reluctance to enforce bankruptcy on all but a few of the most inefficient state firms, has protected the jobs of most urban residents while providing migrants ample opportunities for employment in other occupations that benefit these residents (1994c).

The state, recognizing that migrants "float not against the state, but with it," has been tolerant and circumspect in its public criticism (Solinger 1993: 91). It can afford to be so because it reserves the power to expel migrants when they cease to be functional. It has exercised this immense power over urban residence on two notable occasions during the Maoist period: following the Great Leap Forward (see p. 6), and after the most chaotic period of the Cultural Revolution, when 18 million young people were sent to the countryside despite the fact that they held urban registrations (Wu 1994). More recently, millions of "redundant peasant workers" were released during the 1988-89 economic retrenchment, and there was increased enforcement of registration status in the cities (Christiansen 1992).

Urban resentment has instead focused on the societal impacts of migrants. They worry urban planners because of the increased demands they place on gas, water, and electricity. They congest transportation on trains, buses and subways. But the complaint most commonly lodged against migrants is that they are responsible for the rise in crime: 60 percent of the crimes in Jiangsu province were caused by migrants (FBIS 1994b), and in Beijing one half of the arrests in 1993 were of non-residents (FBIS 1994a). The suspicion that migrants will resort to criminal activity is understandable "within the context of the Chinese tradition of collective responsibility ... Not only the authorities but citizens in general have been frightened by such an influx of unaffiliated people and suspect that they are criminally inclined. It is assumed that without the constraints of a bonding group people will act in anti-social ways" (Pye 1991: 462-63). Migrants have also been blamed for non-fulfillment of birth control goals: many migrants, called "excess

birth guerrillas”(*chao sheng youdidui*), are said to have moved in order to escape rural supervision, and are held responsible for half of the out-of-plan births in Guangzhou (Cartier 1991).

Rural migrants in Chinese cities are at least as isolated culturally as Mexican migrants in the United States. “Ethnicity” in China has long been defined by place of origin, and the structural barriers that exist between rural and urban areas categorize not only migrants from other provinces but even rural dwellers from the local area as foreigners (Solinger 1995b). Their language, education, clothes and eating habits impose “considerable barriers” to their integration (Oshima 1990: 218). Describing migrants to the Pearl River Delta, Zhou (1993: 211) notes, “These non-Delta migrants do not attempt to adopt local culture ... They live with others of their kind and keep up their hometown customs, for they do not expect to be in the Delta long.” Even more isolating, 47 percent of the rural labor migrants in Shanghai in 1993 lived at their place of work, including construction sites, restaurants, and factory dormitories (Roberts and Wei 1996). Male migrants, lacking an urban *hukou* and of lower economic and social status, have little chance of finding an urban bride (Solinger 1995b). Were the families of married migrants to accompany them to the city, their children would not receive education even if the migrant was given a temporary living certificate, and their household registration would follow that of their mother even if their father were granted urban residency. In this regard, Chinese migrants are even more culturally isolated than undocumented Mexicans, whose children are still entitled to education and, if born in the US, are granted citizenship.

Wages

Another characteristic common to both Mexican undocumented migrants in the US and rural Chinese migrants in the cities is that their earnings far exceed what they could have earned at home. This is, of course, why they accept the jobs, working conditions and socioeconomic role assigned to them by natives, and what makes it worth the increased risks. Wages for Mexican migrants in the US have averaged between five and ten times local wages since the early days of migration.⁶ A survey by the Ministry of Agriculture and the World Bank found that farmers earned the equivalent of 2.8 yuan for each of the 44 days they spent farming rice in 1987, similar to the average daily agricultural wage of 2.5 yuan (Fleisher and Liu 1992). Migrants in Guangdong province earned 11 yuan per day in construction and 7.7 yuan plus room and board in manufacturing, and this for over 200 days per year (Hare 1994). Chinese migrants from Hunan province earned from 100 to 200 yuan per month and remitted an average of 1000 yuan during the year: each *mu* (.067 hectare) of wheat farmed would only have returned 100 yuan, and farms there averaged 5.5 *mu* per agricultural laborer (JPRS 1993b). A 1993 survey estimated that Chinese migrants, both intra- and inter-provincial, earned an average of 3,649 yuan during the 205 days they worked away from their homes (*China Daily* 1994a), while rural per capita income

averaged 922 yuan. The high relative earnings from migration to the cities of China or to the United States serves to further differentiate these processes from internal migration in most countries.

Demographic profile

Another obvious commonality between Mexican and Chinese migrants is their demographic profile: they are young and overwhelmingly male. Village studies in the Mexican state of Jalisco showed two-thirds of the migrants were between 15 and 29 years old, and that the great majority were male (Cornelius 1976). A 1978 study of Mexicans deported after apprehension revealed that 91 percent were male, with a modal age of 24 to 29. Their educational level was low, corresponding to that of most rural Mexicans (Ranney, and Kossoudji 1983). This profile has changed significantly during the 1980s as the process has matured (Cornelius 1992).

A similar migrant profile is emerging in studies of Chinese migration. According to the 1993 Sample Survey on the Movement of Rural Laborers in China, 58 percent of these migrants were between the ages of 18 and 30 and 25 percent from 31 to 40. Men were 82 percent of the total (Wei 1996). A 1992 survey of temporary residents in Beijing found that 77 percent were male, with 41 percent between 15 and 25 and 36 percent between 26 and 35 (JPRS 1993a), while a study that isolated rural labor migrants among the floating population of Shanghai found 72 percent were male, with a median age of 27. Only 7 percent of these migrants were educated above the level of junior middle school, half the national level for persons of the same age (Roberts and Wei 1996). This data is corroborated by a survey of outmigration from 50 rural towns and villages, where 7.4 percent of the migrants were illiterate (less than the national average, perhaps because illiterate migrants are at a great disadvantage when working in destinations with different dialects), 41.4 percent had a primary school education and 43 percent had a junior-middle-school education (Zhang 1994). Yaohui Zhao (1996b) finds that educated people tend to choose rural non-farm employment rather than migration despite its higher earnings of the latter, which she attributes to the loss of status an educated person would have to endure as a labor migrant in the city.

This is not the same as the demographic profile of internal migrants in Mexico or permanent migrants in China, especially those who have changed their household registration. Women comprised half of the rural-urban migrants in Mexico between 1960 and 1970, and migration rates were just as high for persons between 40 and 44 as those between 20 and 24 (Singelmann 1993). Mexican internal migrants were better educated than undocumented migrants, attributed to the higher return their human capital earns in the domestic market (Taylor 1987). In China, women were 56 percent of out-migrants from rural areas during 1982-87 according to the 1987 one percent population survey, and 45 percent between 1985-90 according

to the 1990 census (Wei 1996). Neither of these measures of official migration does a good job of capturing rural labor migrants because of their short duration. The educational level of permanent migrants exceeded not only rural but also urban standards (Yang 1994).

We have finally reached the logical conclusion of our comparison. The economic and demographic profile of migrants to Chinese cities and between Mexico and the US is similar because of restrictions by the host society and the economic roles these migrants fulfill within their rural households. Circular migration has emerged as a principal strategy of these rural households in order to diversify income across economic sectors and participate in the dynamism of the urban economy without abandoning the security provided by the land and village. But where does this comparison take us, other than to illuminate a relatively new, numerically important, and socially significant flow of labor migration with one that is familiar and more mature? What can we learn from over three decades of experience with undocumented Mexican migration (five decades, if the Bracero Program period is included) that might help us frame some of the important issues associated with Chinese labor migration, while recognizing the uniqueness of Chinese institutions and experience?

The Outlook for Chinese Migration from Rural Areas

If one had to briefly characterize the evolution of Mexico-US labor migration, important aspects would include persistence, increasing magnitude of the flows, specificity of regions of origin, dependence within these regions on migrant remittances, continuing importance of networks, increasing hostility toward migrants in receiving areas, and increasing settlement. Although structural similarities exist between the Mexican and Chinese cases, it cannot be concluded that China will follow in Mexico's path, for the country is unique -- arguably the most singular economic, cultural and political entity existing in the world today. More to the point, it is different from Mexico in several important ways that might cause its rural development and labor mobility to diverge from the trajectory of Mexico-US migration. Because of different crops and technologies, Chinese agriculture is much more labor intensive. The government has encouraged diversification out of agriculture both with development of the TVEs, so that peasants can "leave the land but not the country" (*li tu bu li xiang*), and by the promotion of small cities and towns (for an evaluation of these two approaches, see Li 1994a; Lee 1989). Will these differences be enough to offset the similarities described in the previous sections of this paper, so that Chinese labor migration does not both intensify and evolve towards greater settlement, as has undocumented Mexican migration?

The first issue to be resolved concerns the potential supply of migrant labor, and here there is little disagreement that, even without technological change in agriculture, the surplus labor force will grow. China's options regarding surplus labor are constrained by the necessity to

increase grain production without significantly raising prices, and it is increasingly apparent that China's minuscule farms not only prevent economies of scale but limit farmers' potential incomes, thus forcing the most able family members to work elsewhere and exacerbating the problems of agriculture.

A solution to the problem of agricultural production that is heard with increasing frequency is to make farming more profitable by having fewer farms and farmers producing more of the total output. In an inspection of the agricultural situation of Zhejiang province in 1994, then Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji said that "the coastal areas ... cannot become dependent for food supplies on grain purchased at high prices from inland areas or on grain imports." Instead, he encouraged households to develop large-scale agriculture, and promised to aid such households with machinery, pesticides, seeds, technology and loans (FBIS 1994g).

Concentration of agricultural production has already appeared in some areas: in a village near Beijing more than half the population is working off-farm, and most of the planting, spraying, irrigating, and harvesting is mechanized and undertaken by agricultural machinery teams. The landholder contracts these services, and only uses family labor for weeding and other labor-intensive tasks. Likewise, in Shaanxi and Shandong provinces, mechanized teams have taken over the plowing, planting, and harvesting, reducing the labor requirements in cotton from 60 to 45 days per *mu*, and in wheat and corn from 60 days per *mu* to less than half of that (Croll 1994).

The potential for mechanization to reduce labor requirements is illustrated by a comparison with other countries at earlier stages in their development: Japan in 1971 used 141 days per hectare in rice production, Taiwan 84, and Java 144 (Barker, Herdt and Rose 1985); China in 1992 used 289 (Xu and Peel 1991). In the same year Chinese peasants worked 183 days in wheat and 245 days in corn, while Mexicans worked only 11 and 32 days respectively in those two crops (Young 1993). If China follows the example of these countries, whatever the highly-disputed absolute number of surplus farm laborers might actually be, it will certainly grow significantly. Moreover, even if farm incomes do rise with rural development, the Mexican case shows that the capitalization of agriculture might lead to the search for offsetting sources of income, thereby increasing circular migration.

Is it likely that rural industry can absorb the farm population displaced by mechanization or seeking to diversify their incomes? TVEs, run by the township, village or private individuals, were the dynamic sector of Chinese industry during the 1980s and early 1990s: their output and profits grew by 40 percent in 1993 alone, to comprise more than one third of GNP and 45 percent of the value of exports. The number of TVE workers rose from 25 to 93 million between 1980 to 1988 (Aubert 1990), and by 1993 employment was 112 million, comparable to that in the state sector (*China Daily* 1994d).

But there are indications that the phenomenal success of the TVEs has not resulted so much from a "unique model of development with Chinese characteristics," in which small-scale

rural industry absorbs the rural influx, as of distortions in the economic system that cause state enterprises to form links with rural industry to remain viable. TVEs are dependent on the state sector for capital, materials, specialized personnel, technology, and sales: two-thirds of the TVEs in southern Jiangsu have arrangements with state enterprises for these critical factors. Jefferson and Rawski (1994: 62) maintain that this dependence on the state sector, as well as their specialization in the production of low-technology goods and the artificial nature of their domestic cost advantage, "all suggest that their rapid gains owe much to specific circumstances of China's economy in the 1980s."

Even if TVEs remain successful, three factors are at work that restrict their ability to absorb the increasing supply of rural labor. The first is that they are becoming more capital intensive: the number of employees per 10,000 yuan of assets declined from 3.1 to 1.8 from 1988 to 1991, though the employment effects of the austerity program undertaken during this period could explain some of this reduction (FBIS 1994e). Second, they are regionally concentrated along the coast, especially in the Pearl River Delta near Guangzhou and southern Jiangsu near Shanghai. The inland provinces that contain large supplies of rural labor suffer from woefully inadequate infrastructure: poor transportation requires one half of China's rural population to travel between four and five hours to reach the nearest of 300 small cities (Perkins 1990). This leads Ho (1994: 293) to conclude, "a significant portion of China's rural population will not soon, if ever, benefit from the high income associated with the more productive non-agricultural activities ... In these areas, policies such as leave the land but not the countryside ... have little meaning." Nor can we expect the benefits of TVEs to spread to these other regions; instead, they are causing "a spatially disequalizing process of cumulative causation," where higher local income generates saving and investment and so breeds further development" (Knight and Song 1993: 210). Third, employment in rural collective industry is closed to non-locals except when local demand exceeds labor supply, and migrants are the first to be released in an economic downturn. TVE employment is viewed as a "communal asset," the purpose of which is to "provide the basic income for all (local) households"(Christiansen 1992: 85).

It is the strong links between TVEs and the state that is their greatest weakness in supporting rural incomes. The 1989 austerity program squeezed rural credit, causing many TVEs to close and lay off workers, locals as well as migrants: estimates of the number of farmers forced back to the land range as high as 15 million (Zweig 1991). Moreover, as urban construction projects were put on hold, migrants in construction were laid off. Earnings from TVEs and migrant remittances were often invested in rural housing and, as they fell, hundreds of thousands of rural construction workers also lost their jobs, and began moving to the cities in search of employment (Keidel 1991).

This sequence of events highlights a central difference between China and Mexico in the ability of circular migration to diversify rural incomes and promote economic and social stability.

Employment in the United States is relatively uncorrelated with employment opportunities in Mexico, and is itself diversified among regions. Migration to the United States intensified when “La Crisis” overwhelmed Mexico’s economy in the mid-1980s, and more recently with the devaluation of the peso. Migrants, receiving information from well-established networks, shifted to California from Texas and back again as these regional US economies experienced periods of boom and bust during the 1980s, thereby remaining employed during the crisis in Mexico. However, it is likely that a Chinese recession, brought on by a drop in export demand or another severe credit crunch to slow inflation, will be nationwide and affect both TVEs and state enterprises. A severe Chinese recession will reduce output and employment in the TVEs just as it creates even more millions of redundant workers in the state sector.⁷ Construction, one of the most cyclical industries, will come to a halt. Job opportunities in cities across China will evaporate, and urban residents might claim the jobs they formerly disdained, exacerbating tensions between residents and migrants; Beijing and Shanghai have already forbidden migrants from working as taxi drivers, shop attendants, ticket sellers and security guards (Gilley 1995). Two major sources of rural income -- local employment in TVEs and construction, and migrant remittances -- would shrink at the same time, bringing the urban economic crisis to the countryside.⁸

The third major issue is the future of the *hukou* reforms and other policies to control flows of labor. Given that the household registration system was “initially conceived as an instrument of development policy” (Mallee 1995: 19), most Chinese academics support its eventual abolishment, for they see it as retarding economic development by restricting labor markets and the natural process of urbanization (JPRS 1994a). In the interim, the government would like to see an orderly transition of population from the rural areas to the small and medium cities, with some form of registration regulating this flow; the Ministry of Public Security is developing a plan to implement this transition. Han Jun of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences doesn't expect a mass influx to the cities, but only several million rural residents to apply for permanent residence status. He justifies the proposed reforms by saying that they “will make life easier for the 20 million to 30 million farmers who are already living in cities by giving them status more consistent with that of other city dwellers” (Chen 1994). This language sounds remarkably like the justification for the amnesty provisions of IRCA, which most experts agree did not significantly deter undocumented immigration from Mexico (Donato, Durand, and Massey 1992).

On the other side is the hard-line view, articulated by Zhang Qingwu in the most comprehensive Chinese study of the household registration system. Explaining the regulations, he says:

Why must we legislate in this way? Because ... it is clear that over the last few years the phenomenon of rural migration blindly flowing into the cities has become a comparatively serious problem ... It led to a whole series of problems emerging in the areas of city

transportation, accommodation, supply, employment, study, etc. It thus created a very tense situation ... Because large numbers of the rural labor force had departed, a discernible influence began to be noted in rural production ... Therefore, it is not acceptable to allow the city labor force to increase blindly or to allow the rural work force to move away blindly (Zhang 1988: 73).

There already seems to be increased emphasis on identity and enforcement. The Ministry of Public Security issued a regulation requiring all transient workers to obtain a temporary residence permit in order to work or conduct business (*China Daily* 1994e). Shanghai is beginning to stage surprise inspections of companies to check for unregistered workers (Kahn and Smith 1995). The Ministry of Public Security, which is responsible for administering the household registration system, says that hologrammed identity cards with computerized bar codes to give officials instant access to information on the bearer will be issued to all citizens in the near future (*China Daily* 1994b). Coveted urban residence is being sold with official approval: while this was not an uncommon practice among the smaller cities as a means to raise money, even Beijing recently passed a regulation requiring companies to pay municipal authorities 100,000 yuan for each employee they bring to the city, and individuals to pay half of that amount. With exemptions for essential services like construction, “the announcement was intended as a warning to slow the influx of workers ... and to put pressure on local employers to look to the local labor market before importing cheaper labor from the countryside”(Tyler 1994). Some agencies have suggested that peasants be required to show their work permit before they can buy a train ticket (JPRS 1994b).

Less coercive forms of control over rural labor flows involve coordination between urban labor markets and rural sending areas and the education of migrants and potential migrants. Guangdong province has set up recruiting and information offices in several major sending provinces, with “dissuasive ads” appearing in the local press to discourage migration. The Ministry of Labor began a program to establish labor information centers in eighty percent of the townships in the major sending provinces, with computerized information available on employment opportunities in sixty cities (China Population Today 1994). The Shanghai Textile Workers Union, in partnership with the Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions and East China Normal University, has begun a school for its workers, forty percent of whom are women from rural areas, to teach “public order, laws, morals, techniques and culture” (FBIS 1994f). Guangzhou will offer citizenship to several young migrants who distinguish themselves in ten ways as “outstanding migrant youth”(FBIS 1994c). These efforts at coordination and education may evolve into a new form of temporary worker program, controlled by the municipalities in coordination with the sending provinces, with the latter demanding resources from the former to compensate for control over their rural workers.⁹

These often contradictory experiments in tightening and loosening are likely to continue

for the foreseeable future. Urban China cannot afford to “open its borders,” nor can it do without the rural labor that crosses them. The Chinese seem to be walking a very fine line between social control and constriction of the urban economy, much as did the United States during the many years when it was illegal to *work* in the US without documents, but not illegal to *hire* someone who didn't have them -- the so-called “Texas Proviso” that would supply farmers and ranchers a ready supply of cheap labor. One scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences summed up the dilemma: “Let up and it's chaos; crack down and it's stagnation”(Kuhn and Kaye 1994: 27). But it seem unlikely, given the previous discussion of agriculture and the TVEs, that the *hukou* system will be dismantled. As Blecher (1988: 110) notes, “a continuous commitment to regulating and controlling migration ... is one of the few consistent themes of an otherwise radically shifting Chinese development policy since 1949.”

As migration ebbs and flows with the vagaries of economic and political cycles, one thing the Mexican case clearly reveals is that migration networks will mature. The first implication of this growing maturity is that the magnitude of migration will grow as network development increases contacts and information and reduces costs and risks. These factors are still effective restraints on Chinese migration: a recent survey of 4000 households in eight provinces showed more than one-third wanted to increase their migration, but had not done so because of lack of contacts (36 percent) and information (25 percent). Of those who didn't want to migrate, 17 percent said it was too insecure, and 9 percent listed the costs and hardships of travel. Most had not even considered migration as an option, suggesting a lack of information was the single biggest constraint (Knight and Song 1996). Networks will exponentially increase the flow of information reaching these potential migrants.

The second implication of maturing networks is that the regional specificity of migrant flows between particular origins and destinations will likely intensify. Already, most intraprovincial migrants come from several provinces, and from within these provinces “the higher the socioeconomic development level (of a community)... the higher the probability of migration”(Zhu 1995b: 15). As networks mature and the relative deprivation of non-migrants compared to migrants combines with access to facilitating networks, more and more non-migrants from these communities will begin to migrate. Those areas that are the most economically marginal and culturally isolated will be precluded from urban migration unless specific channels are opened to ease entry of their residents into urban job markets. Thus, without state intervention, labor migration will cause the gap between rich and poor rural areas to grow.

The third implication of maturing networks is that the process of settlement will intensify. Wives will join their husbands, and young women will migrate to escape the constraints of village life. These migrants will cluster in specific neighborhoods in and around the cities, forming bi-local communities such as “Zhejiang Village.” And, like there, if the state doesn't officially recognize their existence with the provision of services comparable to those received by urban

residents, migrants will set up their own schools and clinics, making them increasingly independent of state control. As this continues, the analogy that I have made between Chinese migration and Mexican undocumented migration will eventually give way to the traditional model of permanent rural-to-urban migration, with the networks and migrant communities formed during the current period of circular migration providing the stepping-stones in the transition from one process to the other.

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1. Addressing the National People's Congress in 1995, China's Minister of Labor said the country would "begin the establishment of a system similar to international passport and visa requirements, which will aim at curbing transprovincial migration" (Saiget, 1995). The authors cited might argue that such a system is already in place.
 2. The figure of 120 million is derived by subtracting from the total rural labor force of 440 million the approximately 120 million workers in rural industries and services and the 200 million needed in agriculture. This latter number is derived by comparing agricultural labor demand and supply: labor demand by multiplying the number of labor days required per hectare in each crop by crop area, and labor supply by multiplying the "average annual labor days available per worker" times the size of the agricultural labor force. As Taylor and Banister Taylor, Jeffrey R., and Judith Banister. 1989. *China: The Problem of Employing Surplus Rural Labor*. Center for International Research, Bureau of Census, Washington, D.C. CIR Staff Paper No. 49. point out, these calculations are highly sensitive to the number of labor days assumed to be available. In a hypothetical example, if the necessary labor on a farm could be accomplished by one person in three forty-day periods, with help from other family members during the busiest seasons, then the other 240 days are "available" for outside work only if the farmer can continue to closely supervise the crop cycle. Adding up these days over all farmers to obtain the total amount of "surplus labor" in the economy abstracts from the seasonality of agriculture, itself dependent upon technology and crop composition, and confuses the number of surplus farm laborers with the number of days of surplus farm labor.
 3. A principal component of the growing grain demand is animal feed. Chinese consumed 21.1 kilos of red meat per capita in 1989, at four kilos of feed to produce a kilo of beef, meat production absorbed 23 percent of the grain harvest Crook, Frederick

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- W. 1991. "Preliminary Issues in China's Grain Economy in the 1990s," in U.S. Congress. Joint Economic Committee (ed.) *China's Economic Dilemmas in the 1990s: The Problems of Reforms, Modernization, and Interdependence*. Vol. I. edited by Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 385-402.. Per capita consumption is expected to rise to 29.7 kilos by 2000, but even then it is less than half of Taiwan's per capita meat consumption.
4. The origins of undocumented migrants have since broadened: Mixtec migrants from Guerrero are an increasing component of the migrant flow to California agriculture Zabin, Carol, Michael Kearney, David Runsten, and Anna Garcia. 1993. *Mixtec Migrants in California Agriculture*. Davis, California: California Institute for Rural Studies., and the cities and states most directly affected by the economic crisis of the 1980s now send significant numbers of migrants Cornelius, Wayne A. 1992. "From Sojourners To Settlers: the Changing Profile of Mexican Immigration to the United States," in Jorge A. Bustamante, Clark W. Reynolds, and Raúl A. Hinojosa Ojeda (eds.), *U.S.-Mexico Relations: Labor Market Interdependence*. edited by Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 155-95..
5. This concentrated period of migrant travel causes tremendous congestion on the railways. Railways carried an average of 3.2 million passengers daily during the 1994 Spring Festival, three-fourths of whom were migrants JPRS. 1994. "Causes, Solutions to Rural Migrant Upsurge." Beijing: *Zhongguo Nongcun Jingji* 12 (December 20, 1993). JPRS-CAR-94-018, March 18, 33-36., and 400 persons were found jammed into a single 116 passenger hard-seat rail car JPRS. 1993. "How Should We Regard the Labor Tide?" Beijing: *Jingji Ribao* (December 11). JPRS-CAR-94-011, February 16, 1994, 27-29. The State Council urged units that employ migrants in major cities to try to keep 60 percent of their workers from going home during the 1995 Spring Festival, and to encourage them to do so placed a one-month moratorium on the hiring of migrant workers in Guangdong following the Spring Festival FBIS. 1994. "Strict Measures Imposed on Migrant Labor." Hong Kong: *South China Morning Post* (December 14). FBIS-CHI-94-240, December 14, 10-11..
6. In 1923 a Mexican day laborer earned the equivalent of .50 pesos per hour working on US railroads compared to .80 pesos per day in Mexican agriculture Massey, Douglas S., Rafael Alarcón, Jorge Durand, and Humberto González. 1987. *Return to Aztlán: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.. There has been little if any convergence of wages since then, as neoclassical economic theory predicts would occur with closer economic integration and freer flows of capital and labor.
7. Already, as many as 15 to 17 percent of the urban work force are unemployed, if "off-post" (*xia gang*) workers who still have an employer but don't report to work and receive only a portion of their former income are added to the 2.8 percent of urban workers officially unemployed Kahn, Joseph, and Craig S. Smith. 1995. "Unemployment Boosts Tensions in China." *The Wall Street Journal*, February 6, A10..
8. This same principal operated in late 19th century Mexico: "Whenever a recession or crisis occurred separately, the agricultural workers could always resort to another occupation. If the harvest was bad they could go to the mines, if there was not work to be found in mining they could go to the United States, and if the Americans offered no work they could go to a *hacienda* and try sharecropping . But if all three employment opportunities were affected by the same crisis, their situation became desperate. This was precisely the case on the eve of the Mexican Revolution" Katz, Friedrich. 1974. "Labor Conditions on Haciendas in Porfirian Mexico: Some Trends and Tendencies," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 54, no. 1: 1-47..
9. A system of temporary contract labor (*linshi hetong gong*) existed in China before the economic reforms, and between 1966 and 1976 an average of 14 million rural contract laborers worked in the Chinese industry Kirkby, R.J.R. 1985. *Urbanization in China: Town and Country in a Developing Economy 1949-2000*. New York: Columbia University Press.. But, like the Bracero Program, these state-organized labor flows were dismantled, and current migration is usually either spontaneous or organized by the village-based work teams.