

From Migrant Workers to New Urban Migrants: A Concept and An Approach

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ABSTRACT After reviewing domestic and foreign studies of population migration, this paper analyzes the background of formation of migrant workers and its limitations from the perspective of the urban-rural dual structure. The researchers attempt to transform approaches of Chinese migration research with the concept of new urban migrant. Then get out of the idea of urban-rural dual opposition, and regard migration as an approach to social development. This paper also points out that researchers give priority to urban social reconstruction triggered by new urban migrants through social integration, which would result in the decomposition of the urban-rural dual structure, and eventually realize a harmonious urban-rural society. On this basis, this paper discusses the theoretical and strategic significance of the research approach of "new urban migrant".

INTRODUCTION

Understanding "Differences": Experience From Foreign Migration Studies

Migration is a prevalent phenomenon around the world during urbanization. In the early 19th century, the developed European countries represented by Britain first entered into modernization, and urban-rural labor transfer was completed over a century. British geographer Ravenstein wrote two papers to discuss inter-county migration in Britain, and judge the migration type of each area based on population gain and loss-absorption or dispersion, so as to obtain a national picture and sum up the rules of migration (Ravenstein 1876). In 1889, Ravenstein applied this method to demographic data of over 20 Western countries in an attempt to prove that "different countries have similar migration movements under similar conditions" (Ravenstein 1889). In the first half of the 20th century, numerous farmers were expelled out of rural areas to look for nonagricultural jobs in urban areas with the great economic development of the U.S. (Blaine 1965). Except rural-to-urban migration, developed countries are also destinations of large-scale transnational migration. With the development of traffic and information technology, a large population is going from underdeveloped regions to the West in the age of globaliza-

tion and time-space compression. According to the data from the United Nations, the number of transnational migrants the world rose sharply from 154 million in 1990 to 214 million by the end of 2008, setting a new historical record.

In developing countries, industrialization and urbanization have also driven large numbers of farmers to migrant to cities. For example, some developing countries in Latin America entered rapid urban population growth after World War II. In these countries, the proportion of urban population was 22% in the 1920s, much lower than half of the average level of the North American countries, and 31% in the 1940s, but rose rapidly to 64% in 1980, equivalent to the average level of the North American countries in the 1950s. In particular, the urban populations of Mexico and Brazil quadrupled from 1950 to 1980 alone, and that of Chile doubled (Ma and Chen 1985). In this process, a tremendous rural population migrated to cities spontaneously and gathered in the few biggest cities. Michael P. Todaro thought that rural-to-urban migration in developing countries depended on the rural-urban "expected" income differential, and probability of finding an urban job (Todaro 1969).

Migration is an objective social phenomenon in all countries whether in developed countries or developing countries. Migration has brought people of varying backgrounds together in cities. Wirth noticed the important role that

migration played in the formation of urbanism and regarded such heterogeneity arising from social flow as an important feature of urbanism (Wirth 1938). Such concern about differences is not only a hotspot of discussion in the field of migrant research but can also be used as a thread for understanding thoughts of migrant research. Among numerous studies based on cases from different countries and regions, scholars are concerned about diversified “differences”, including those between urban and rural areas, occupational, class, gender, racial and ethnic differences. Since these “differences” interwoven in reality, most scholars analyze their important impacts on migrants’ lives and urban society along the thread of a certain type of differences combined with other types.

Racial and ethnic differences are a type of differences hardly avoidable by scholars during research. Ethnic differences show in language, religion, race and culture, while racial difference is above all a biological concept. Racial and ethnic differences are a common feature of all countries and regions at different stages of social and economic development. Scholars once thought that due to the force of industrialization and modernization, the importance of ethnicity will drop gradually in an ethnically diversified society. Because people’s loyalty and identity will be guided to the national state other than internal racial and ethnic group (Deutsch 1966). However, the reality is that these two aspects are often close to certain institutions, culture and ideology. These two aspects become an important mechanism of social distinction and hierarchy. Racial and ethnic differences have even been internalized into people’s daily lives and become a system of beliefs after distinction were abolished.

Foreign scholars often regard racial and ethnic differences as a social structure of modern society. They focus on ethnic hierarchy, discrimination, and cultural-social integration in their studies. This approach is especially prominent in studies on communities of migrants of different ethnic groups. Some scholars place it under the framework of global economic and national influence from a structural perspective. They think that the distinction of migrants based on racial and ethnic differences will bring a new urban social structure, and migrant communities will become “marginalized” and passive victims, and the “ghettoes” of the “underclass” (Marcus 1993; Wilson 1987). Other scholars regard it as a functional field with a positive “incuba-

tion” action from a post-modernistic and behaviorist perspective, and stress the “social field” across geographic, cultural and political boundaries established by migrants, thereby regarding migrant communities as a “melting pot” that promotes urban integration (Zhou 1992; Portes 1996; Davis 2004). Although scholars have different views on the social integration effect of migrant communities, all of them regard it as a product of the social distinction mechanism and discuss the integration issue thereof.

While much attention is paid to rural-to-urban migration differences in Chinese migration studies, foreign scholars lay more stress on economic, occupational and hierarchical discussions. While industrialization and urbanization provide the possibility and opportunity to strive for a decent life (Blaine 1965) to numerous farmers, the gathering of migrants may also result in the dilemma of infinite labor supply (Lewis 1954). Lipset and Bendix find that the expansion of urbanization creates different scenarios of flow for farmers in town and urban residents with the same conditions when studying the impact of rural migrants on urban occupation structure in industrial society – Rural migrants descend to the underclass, while the local underclass has an opportunity to realize an occupational up-flow (Lipset and Bendix 1959). Blau and Duncan propose a similar view that migrants with a rural background are disadvantaged in social and economic status. They are often at the worst occupational level, while urban residents and migrants with an urban background will naturally not have worse occupational status due to better educational and training conditions after rural migrants have occupied the underclass (Blau and Duncan 1967).

Nevertheless, according to many scholars from the perspective of urban-rural differences, rural migrants are not more disadvantaged than urban residents are. Hagen Koo (1978), Calvin Goldscheider et al. (1987) think that rural-to-urban migration is highly selective based on a study on developing countries. It finds out that a considerable part of rural migrants are from rural upper-middle class rather than from unskilled underclass groups as imagined, and they have sufficient education and resources to compete for better jobs with urban residents. So the underlying role of rural migrants does not exist. In particular, there will be limited systematic differences between them and urban residents. Education and skills affect the occupational attainment of rural migrants and urban residents in both formal and informal sectors.

Some scholars think that things differ among developing countries. Michael P. Todaro divides the whole migration process in developing countries into two stages (Todaro 1969) : Unskilled rural migrants first find jobs in traditional sectors in town, and then find jobs in modern sectors after a period (within a generation or for generations) of struggle and adaptation. Half a century later, the underdeveloped Asian countries and regions, such as Korea, Taiwan and Japan, completed transformation along this path successfully, where rural residents not only could find stable jobs in cities, but might also go back to rural areas to deal with nonagricultural occupations (Speare 1971). On the contrary, the Latin American countries did not get through the Lewis turning point, where economic and social development became stagnant. Large numbers of migrants gathered in traditional urban sectors, and they were unable to flow upward even for generations (Borges 2005).

In general, developed Western countries, East Asian countries and Latin American countries showed three patterns of change in urban-rural differences during the industrialization period. The Western countries completed rural-to-urban migration rapidly, and urban structure fully duplicated the urban-rural dual structure in a short period, but such differences were eliminated with economic development soon. The East Asian underdeveloped countries showed distinctly selective rural-to-urban migration, urban structure showed the tendency of elitism, and there were no significant systematic differences between rural migrants and urban residents. In the Latin American countries, rural-to-urban migration tended popular, and urban structure was seriously differentiated, which could not be eliminated with economic development.

With focus on “differences”, foreign scholars have proposed a number of migration research paradigms that reflect the universality, diversity and complexity of the migration issue, which help us reflect on the common and special features of this issue in China. As other countries in the world, the large-scale migration in China is an inevitable outcome of industrialization and urbanization, resulted in the high heterogeneity and liquidity of cities. That makes the Chinese case of migration most special is the existence of the urban-rural dual structure, which makes urban-rural differences structural differences involving identity, fairness and segrega-

tion. Although the urban-rural differences of China are special, similar differences are also prevalent in foreign migration but often appear in other forms and become a hotspot of foreign migration research. Based on the understanding of the common and special features of the Chinese case of migration, the researchers are able to review the course of migration research in China and think about the future development direction.

RESEARCH ON URBAN-RURAL DIFFERENCES AND MIGRANT WORKERS

The large-scale migration arising from industrialization and urbanization in China begun in the 1980s, in which urban and rural migrants were the main force of migration. The implementation of the household contract responsibility system released considerable rural surplus labor, and the easing of policies made it possible for farmers to flow. In the meantime, the booming industrialization in the coastal regions gave direction for the shift of such surplus labor. “One million migrant workers going to Guangzhou” is an authentic depiction of the migration rush then. The large-scale group of Chinese migrant workers rose in the late 1980s, and expanded sharply after the beginning of the 1990s and peaked in the mid 1990s. They were mainly from the sparsely populated and underdeveloped central and western regions, and went to major cities and the developed coastal regions mainly. The migration rush not only created new problems in urban and rural areas, but also caused migrant workers to face role change and urban adaptation.

The large-scale population flow from rural areas to urban areas since the 1980s is regarded as an important feature of China’s social transformation. It has always been a hotspot of academic concern in China and also a serious social problem to be addressed by governments at all levels. Studies in this field are significantly oriented to countermeasures and applications. The commitment to a series of social problems arising from the flow of migrant workers through research reflects the unity of problem awareness, practice awareness, social care and humanistic care in the academia. The initial focus of scholars was the so-called “migration rush”. Some papers discussed the causes, features, social actions, historical process of the “migration

rush”, and the problem of rural labor transfer, and studied its motivations, pathways, organizational pattern, influencing factors, consequences, etc. Subsequently, these studies expanded to involve many aspects related to migrant workers, such as the urban-rural dual structure, industrial and agricultural comparative advantages, China’s urbanization background, rural development, migrant workers’ role change and urban adaptation, etc. On one hand, scholars pointed out that the massive cross-regional flow of migrant workers was rational and realistic. They agreed that migrant workers contributed greatly to urban construction, economic development and rural urbanization. On the other hand, they made an in-depth analysis of various social problems arising from the flow of migrant workers, such as the centralized distribution of migrant workers, backward supply of urban public products, incomplete social security system based on household registration, fairness and efficiency of the distribution system, adaptation and integration of migrant workers, etc.

Different from foreign migration studies, both the academia and the government attribute the above social problems to urban-rural differences, and think that such differences are the product of the urban-rural dual structure. Therefore, in both research and practice, the urban-rural dual structure is regarded as both the cause of migration problems and the subject of reform. The urban-rural dual structure reflects the household registration barrier between urban and rural areas, the different systems of resource allocation in urban and rural areas, and the resulting differences in social identity and status between urban and rural residents. This research approach is close to China’s special institutional environment.

Scholars acknowledge that the “strategy of giving priority to heavy industry” under the planned economy had resulted in serious urban-rural segregation, which combined with industrialization and urbanization after the beginning of reform. This created a socioeconomic phenomenon that scholars termed as “semi-urbanization”—rural migrant population cannot become civilized (Wang 2006), as such, the term “migrant worker” has emerged in academic studies on migrant population. The term “migrant worker” stresses the perception that a dual structure related to household registration is duplicated in urban social compensation due to the institutional restrictions in household registra-

tion and identity (Chen -2005). It consists of the following key points:

- 1) Migrant population enters cities and towns from rural areas mainly, especially to major cities in the Pearl River Delta, Yangtze River Delta, and Beijing-Tianjin-Tangshan region, which have become the focus of the issue.
- 2) The household registration system and policy distinction are the main reasons why migrant population can hardly realize economic and social integration (Li 2009). As a basic system for urban-rural segregation, the household registration system divides people urban and rural residents, and different social classes, restricted migration, and made it institutionally impossible for migrant workers to share the services, rights and resources available to urban residents.
- 3) Migrant population generally lives at the bottom of urban society (Zhu 2003). Due to the existence of such system, migrant workers are often “marginal” in cities. How to overcome or mitigate a series of social repulsions that lead to “marginalization”, such as the wage level and labor environment of migrant workers, social security, protection of rights, identity change, and entitlement of urban public services, has become the focus of research.

After a period of strict control over the “migration rush” and “blind migration” in the 1980s, population flow policies became orderly since the beginning of the 1990s. Competent authorities established agencies for migrant population management and coordination, and promulgated management policies on household registration, employment and social security to realize the orderly management of migrant population. Since 2003, documents of the central government have recognized the status and role of migrant workers in China’s modernization as industrial workers, and stated that the reform of the household registration system in major cities should be promoted, and the conditions for farmers to work and live in town eased many times. Thus, migrant workers are put into the framework for addressing issues concerning farmers, rural areas and agriculture at the state level in preparation for a household registration reform based on the urban-rural dual structure. The outline of the National Eleventh Five-year Plan points out, that “Migrant workers who already have stable

jobs and residences in cities should be allowed to become urban residents gradually”.

During the period of the Tenth and Eleventh Five-year Plans, the temporary residence permit was cancelled in major cities, and replaced by the residence permit and corresponding registration admission policies, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Hangzhou, Zhengzhou, Wuhan and Shenyang. In the meantime, the state encouraged rural population to settle in small cities and towns, and required megacities to establish a mechanism for controlling excessive rapid population growth by economic means from the source of industrial restructuring. After the 18th National Congress of the CPC, the issue of migrant workers has been placed on the level of urban and rural coordination in urbanization, industrialization and agricultural modernization in an effort to address deep social problems concerning farmers, rural areas and agriculture, including problems associated with migrant workers. Such policy evolution has fully embodied the state’s resolution to address the issue of migrant workers by breaking down the urban-rural dual structure.

It is a frequent academic topic that if rural population should be allowed to go to town,—local or non-local, along with the de-agriculturalization. Put it in different way, should migrant population be accepted as urban permanent residents or not, should implement a small town development strategy or a major city centralized development strategy. If it is necessary to control the size of urban population, so that many studies calculate “the maximum possible capacity of a city”, “acceptable migrant population”, “the social cost of civilization of migrant workers”, etc. quantitatively in an attempt to eliminate government concern and doubt. The researchers found an interesting thing that whenever the academia makes a call to improve the current situation of vulnerable groups, the central government would respond actively and issue a guiding document in a high-keyed manner. But corresponding policies of local governments would be conservative, such as “selective urban admission” and “comprehensive social security”, which are in fact inconsistent with academic care. These policies and some relevant studies mainly aim at how to improve their temporary residence in cities other than their development as resident population. When look back at the past 30 years, the researchers can see that

though farmers were to be prevented from going to town, they managed to do this; though city size was to be controlled, cities did grow and population broke through limits repeatedly. The conflicts between the ideals and reality always remind us of the difficulty of institutional reform. The conflicts result in a simplification trend of this issue-oriented academic research field. Many scholars will focus on the urban-rural dual structure, neglecting the complexity and diversity of the migration process itself. Is easing or canceling the urban-rural dual structure all of China’s migration research? If no, can the researchers understand the urban-rural dual structure otherwise? How should the researchers deal with the relationship between migration and the urban-rural dual structure? As time elapses, emerging trends of migration will bring a huge challenge to the research of migrant workers from the perspective of the urban-rural dual structure.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF NEW URBAN MIGRANT

Migrant workers are in fact part of employees in migrant population, and initially meant rural residents employed by urban state-owned or collective industrial enterprises (in such industries as construction, mining and machine making) to do forefront physical labor in contrast to regular workers. From the early studies on the “migration rush”, the concept “migrant worker” has become the identity of every rural migrant from the research perspective of the urban-rural dual structure (Chen 2005). Researchers have also used the concept “migrant worker” to refer generally to farmers who work or do business in town (Li 1999; Wang and Qin 2002), or even the whole of migrant population (Li and Tang 2002).

First, the composition of migrant workers is complex. In particular, the group is experiencing a process of sharp expansion and differentiation with the deepening of economic transformation and restructuring. As early as 1991, the authors noticed the fact of differentiation migrant workers, and began to investigate the sub-group of urban casual workers (Zhou 1994). Moreover, through over 30 years of urban and rural migration, some migrant workers have turned from underclass workers to migrants specializing in technology, investment or business in cities through their own efforts. Migrant workers “now belong entirely to three different social classes,

namely employers with a considerable productive capital, self-employers with a small productive capital, and salary earners living completely on employment" (Li 1996). Many other migrant workers no longer live temporarily in cities but tend to live permanently and have the tendency of whole-family migration. There is also a group of "new-generation migrant workers", who have almost no farming experience, and have stronger identification with urban areas than with rural areas. The real existence of these types of differentiation show that "migrant worker", as a general concept, "cannot be regarded as an essential substance, but as a temporary, variable connection established by members (identified by household registration) under a specified relationship of acceptance and rejection." (Wang 2009) Such expression has obvious limitations in face of the real differences and diversities in today's group of migrant workers.

Some scholars have attempted to expand the connotation of the concept migrant worker by proposing the issue of "civilization of migrant workers" It means that migrant population are all endowed with the attributes of "farmers" because they are in a non-citizen state, and then identified as "migrant workers". From the citizen and non-citizen perspective, scholars think China's urbanization process has two stages: 1) Farmers migrate to cities and become migrant workers, namely the "non-agriculturalization" process of farmers; and 2) Urban migrant workers turn to citizens in occupation and identity, namely the "civilization process" of migrant workers (Liu 2006). The civilization of migrant workers includes four aspects: 1) In occupation, they turn from migrant workers on secondary informal labor markets to nonagricultural workers on primary formal labor markets; 2) In social status, they turn from farmers to citizens; 3) They are further cultured and civilized; and 4) Their ideology, lifestyle and behaviors are urbanized. In the civilization of migrant workers, great importance is attached to the classification and differentiation of the class of "migrant workers" (Gu et al. 2006). Many scholars are particularly interested in "new-generation migrant workers" or "second-generation migrant workers" (Wang 2001; Zhang 2009). New-generation migrant workers are more urbanized and civilized. But they can "neither return to rural areas nor be integrated into cities". The civilization of migrant workers is focused on how farmers become citizens theoretic-

cally. But it can be practically regarded as an attempt to deal with the new trends of migrant workers. Researchers use the concept "civilization" to include all migrants other than migrant workers in the scope of research, including private business owners, self-employers and white-collars. Whether studies on this topic have fulfilled the purpose or not, it shows the conceptual limitations of the expression "migrant worker" in migrant population studies (Wang 2007).

In addition, migrant workers are only part of the huge migrant population in Chinese cities at all tiers. Experience from developing countries has also shown that rural-to-urban migration is not the only form of urbanization, and those migrants from towns and small cities to major cities and from major cities to metropolises are also integral parts of urban migrant population (Simmons and Ramiro 1972; Kim 1982; Kemper 1971). "Migrant workers are no longer all from rural areas, while more and more workers are migrating from small cities to major cities, from cities in underdeveloped regions to cities in developed regions, and from economically depressed cities to economically active cities:" (Li 2002). Second, the fact of differentiation of migrant population is an academic common understanding, which includes "labor in the economic underclass", white-collars and quasi-white-collars striving to flow upward, small business owners who "would return home after earning enough money", and migrants who "have got middle class or above economic and social status" (Zhai and Hou 2010). In industrial enterprises, "migrants are likely to stand out and compete with locals" (Li 2006). A scholar points out that Chinese studies on migrant population are excessively based on "special cases"—the unique household registration system of China makes it impossible for migrant population to migrate permanently (Zhu 2004). In fact, even if the household registration system is excluded or eliminated thoroughly, variables and mechanisms that affect the social status of migrant population, and differences from locals and social integration will still exist. The authors think that the practice of studying the topic of migrant population by origin (rural-urban) or identity (farmer-citizen), and social policies for migrant population should be improved.

In recent years, the academia has noticed perspectives out of the urban-rural dual structure, and begun to break away from the concept of "migrant worker" to discuss the differentia-

tion and diversification of migrant population, and include other migrant groups neglected in past studies on migrant workers in the scope of research. Chen Yingfang (2004) once raised an objection to the use of such concepts as “migrant population” and “migrant worker”, and tried to describe the rural-urban migrant group as “new urban migrants”, and associate their rights and interests with “citizenship”. Zhu Li (2003) refers migrant population collectively to new urban migrants, and divides them into intelligent, capital and physical labor migrant population, but he is concerned mainly about the subsistence and social status of physical labor migrant population, namely migrant workers. Wen Jun (2005) also focuses on physical labor migrant population and call them “new labor migrants”, which refer to “a group of migrants who have engaged mainly in simple reproduction focused on physical labor, but have received stable jobs and fixed residences in cities, and are subjectively willing to live in cities permanently.” Zhang Wenhong (2008) and Lei Kaichun (2009) regard all migrant population as new urban migrants, and study white-collars in them mainly. Lu Wei (2005) thinks that “the settlement of new migrants should never be limited to the improvement of living conditions for migrant workers, but should be extended to the essence of urban inhabitation and livability, thereby extended to the perspective of China’s urbanization, industrialization and modernization.” Li Zhigang (2013) regarded floating groups, nongmingong, Shuzu and Yizu, as new urban migrants, and he found that new urban migrants can be divided into three different groups: labor migrants, intellectual migrants and investor migrants.

With the deepening of industrialization, industry shift has begun orderly, and a scattered layout of industrial development is taking shape; Tier-1 and 2 cities are seeking industry upgrading and developing the service economy; with the rollout of new countryside building, China’s urbanization will be increasingly diversified and occupational differentiation will be increasingly significant. Today’s social and economic environment has changed dramatically from the background in which the term “migrant worker” was created. First, the urbanization process is being accelerated and urbanization provide the main impetus to economic development in future; second, the proportion of urban migrant population keep rising based on research findings; third,

migrant population varies greatly in human capital and deals with extensive occupations, such as engineer, white-collar, private business owner, self-employer, industrial worker and casual worker; fourth, the distribution of migrant population in different classes is scattered; fifth, the social flow of migrant population in cities is a fact (The researchers think that the social flow of migrant population is shown largely in the transformation from the outside into the system, and this cannot be noticed in the context of “migrant workers”.); sixth, the household registration system and segregated security system will remain; seventh, liberalization reform has largely broken down the institutional barrier to population flow and helps to strip off institutional benefits. These are the realistic foundation on which the researchers propose the concept “new urban migrants”.

AN APPROACH: MIGRATION AS A MODE OF DEVELOPMENT

The concept “new urban migrants” reflects the sensitivity of the academia to China’s new migration trends. This concept breaks through the possible limitations in subjects of research from past concepts, and pays attention to the complexity and diversity of the migrant group itself. Also, it includes the dynamism of the migration process into the scope of research. Therefore, this concept can help scholars focus on the migrant groups that are willing to settle in destination cities, and also help to adjust migration policies on the practical level to include migrant population not covered by rural-to-urban migration in the scope of policy application. However, there is still no common understanding on how to adjust China’s approach to migration research in the academia. In many cases, scholars use this concept to describe new problems arising from migration only without using a new research approach to analyze and explain such problems.

The authors think that the greatest theoretical function of the concept “new urban migrant” is to break away from the approach of urban-rural dual opposition, and enable us to focus on urban society. The urban-rural dual structure based on the household registration system is an institutional design in China’s special development background, and is so close to national and regional society and economic development on the macroscopic level, and people’s daily lives

on the microscopic level that it has been internalized into an important fact of China's social structure. Pay attention to migration processes in other countries. Various "differences" always exist objectively whether in domestic or international migration, such as institutional, ethnic and radical differences that interact with one another. Foreign scholars mostly take it as a mechanism of social distinction and an embodiment of social structure. They are concerned not only about how to break down a certain segregation mechanism but also about analyzing how these mechanisms are created and how migration has affected the multi-cultural composition of urban society in their studies. So they want to think about and explore the evolution of these mechanisms. This research approach has broken through the scope of applied research dominated by how to solve "migration problems", and can include more extensive topics in discussions to show the diversity of the migration process.

This research approach of foreign scholars enlightens Chinese migration studies greatly. The authors think the urban-rural dual structure is a Chinese characteristic but can hardly be eliminated through policy reform as a mode of social composition. In anthropology, social structure has certain continuity and can hardly be overwhelmed by human interference. But it will change with institutional reform, industry restructuring and people's daily lives. The migration process that covers many changing factors is a modernization and transformation process of the urban-rural dual economic and social structure itself. In other words, migration is a mode of social development. The term "new urban migrant" provides an effective way of illustrating this mode of development (see Fig. 1).

To begin with, the starting point of urbanization process is the expansion and upgrading of

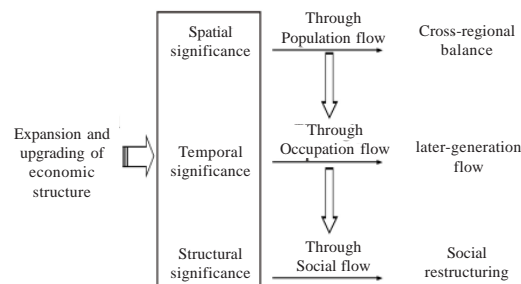


Fig. 1. Illustration of "migration as a mode of development"

the urban economic structure that attracts a substantial population flow into cities that flow promotes -cross-regional balance spatially. Then, new urban migrants realize the inter-generation flow through labor reproduction and occupational flow. Third, the local society accepts new urban migrants to realize a structurally social flow. Finally, urban society is restructured.

When this macroscopic process comes to the urban level, our perspective is diverted to the "social integration" of new migrants in cities (DeWind and Kasinitz 1997). The terms "social integration" and "new migrant" mean that under the same conditions (for example, institutional and economic environment), new urban migrants and local residents with the same background (for example, education) will enjoy equal opportunities to find jobs of the same pay level and enter the same level in the social structure. Since urban migrant population has reached 200 million, it is more necessary to study a mechanism for giving full play to migrants' talent and promoting their integration into urban society.

First, the urban life of migrant population tends to be permanent, home-based and settled, indicating that migrant population has been integrated into urban society in some way and to some extent.

Second, social integration is an important idea for understanding and an important method for solving urban society problems, so social integration is also a social process and an ultimate goal.

Third, social integration includes two processes of economic and structural integration. Economic integration means that migrants with different human capitals have equal opportunities to find jobs with local residents and realize intra- and inter-generation occupational flow to ascend economic status. And structural integration (Gordon 1961) means that after gaining the corresponding economic status, migrants have sufficient opportunities to make social connections (for example, intermarriage) with local residents of similar classes. For the migrant group, social integration enables them to cross the boundary of their own group, and get free from discrimination by local residents, which is shown as the approximation in identification and the mutual tolerance of cultural customs. For individual migrants and their families, social integration enables migrants and local residents to span social space segregation, and enhances com-

munications in schools, workplaces and neighborhoods. This process appears as the narrowing of social distance, and the mutual respect of behaviors and habits.

The researchers have found that domestic scholars often compare “mentality”, “culture”, “identity”, “behavioral habit”, etc. to “economic integration”, and pay attention to their interdependent and interactive relations when studying the social integration of urban migrant population. These studies think that relevant foreign theories and experience lay stress on culture, and the “integration and penetration among cultures”, and are influenced to put acculturation side by side with economic integration (Yang 2009; Zhang and Lei 2008). Let us look at the migrant integration theory of Milton M. Gordon (1961) Although Gordon (1961) defines structural integration and acculturation as the two processes of integration, he thinks that “once structural integration is realized, all other types of integration will take place” In the U.S., the structural integration of the whole society has not taken place due to complex radical relations, but intra-race acculturation has so largely (Alba and Nee 1997).

In fact, the background of relevant foreign studies differs somewhat from China’s. On one hand, subjects of foreign studies on the social integration of migrants are international migrants (especially those from developing countries) based on race differences, while Chinese studies on the social integration of urban migrant population obviously based on class differences. On the other hand, international migration studied abroad occurs at the stage of developed industry, while China is in a period of modernization and transformation. So this paper proposes the term “new urban migrant” and deducts a social integration process suited to China’s practical conditions—economic integration occurs ahead of structural integration and makes structural integration possible. Cultural differences are the outcome that “members of different classes are bound by their respective habits and attributes to enter fields of different tastes, and demonstrate their class status by selecting different lifestyles” (Bourdieu 1984). Also cultural differences will change with the situation of social integration, and reflect on the relationships between individuals and families, and between individuals and groups (Liu 2003).

In sum, the term “new urban migrant” has not only deepened our understanding of the

mode of social development but can also deduct the perspective of “social integration” for new urban migrants. Such a theoretical turn attempts to put the change in the composition of urban society, and the structural relationship between migrants and local residents at the core of research, and lay a foundation for the research of the issue of new urban migrants. Generally, the process of migration can be divided into three stages. In the early stage, researchers want to know the basic situation of new urban migrants and its impacts on urban society. They figure out what has happened. In the mid stage, they attempt to define the ultimate goal of urban social integration. Also, they focus on what should happen. In the late stage, scholars describe the process of urban social integration (Pay attention to how does it happen. As subjects, migrants can be fit into the above three topics on the macroscopic, mid-scopic and microscopic levels; therefore, there is not only macroscopic demonstration, but also influence by mid-scopic and microscopic variables in practical research, making the empirical research of the issue of new urban migrants more vivid.

In addition, the researchers should pay particular attention to the chronicity and continuity of social integration of migrants in this research approach. Based on foreign experience in migration research, a new group of migrants can only be regarded as the first generation, or somewhat as 1.5th generation for their settlement process, and they are often the starting point of the integration process (Rumbaut 1994; Zhou and Cheng 2009). This is the important background for our study on new urban migrants. Large-scale migration has occurred in China for just three decades. Although “new-generation migrants” and “second-generation migrant workers” have become hotspots of academic concern, new-generation migrants discussed in foreign migration studies are not entirely the same as Chinese counterparts (Hirschman 1994). Most of early Chinese migrant workers flew but did not migrate Most of new-generation migrants are willing to settle and the social integration process of new urban migrants has just begun. However, the increasingly clear tendency of urban settlement and family-based migration, and the inter-generation reproduction of migrants in cities shown in today’s migrant group indicate a good beginning of urban social integration (Liebersohn 1973). Thus, the researchers must pay attention to the elimi-

nation of the urban-rural dual structure for a relatively long period.

CONCLUSION

A scholar proposed that China was entering a migration age, and thought that measures should be taken to accept these new urban migrants. So that migrants who are willing to settle and develop in cities can settle and be finally integrated into urban society. The period of over 30 years is not long for this process, and it is right time to extend China's migration research. The researchers should realize the deep influence of the past agriculture and non-agriculture classification in household registration, and local and non-local dual opposition in cities on research thinking and analysis. For example, there are often serious deviations and errors in sample selection in studies on urban society flow. The researchers should also recognize that migrant worker or migrant population is not the migration phenomenon unique to China. That promoting the shift of the term "migrant worker" to "new urban migrant" means migrant population studies should draw on migration research from developing and underdeveloped countries, and social theories on migration from developed countries. On this basis, focus should be placed on the migration issues that have accumulated for over 30 years, especially the integration issue of urban society.

This paper proposes the research approach of "new urban migrant", regards migration as a mode of social development, and pay attention to the urban society restructuring arising from migration, while the final vision of urban society restructuring is a harmonious urban-rural society. This approach places the structural relationship between migrants and local residents at the center of research. It is not limited to a single-direction macroscopic process, and also trace from social mentality and group interaction to the hierarchy of social structure from the mid-scope and microscopic perspective. These orientations are used to explore the authentic qualities of China's urban society in the period of transformation, thereby helping to understand the truth of urban social integration.

This research approach is also inspiration on the practical level. The authors think that a "sustainable" approach to urban migration should also be established. Researchers should understand the development pattern of the urban-ru-

ral dual structure as a type of social structure, and the chronicity and continuity of social integration of migrants. Then develop policies for new urban migrants who are willing to settle in cities to be integrated into cities, and promote the realization of the ideal state of thorough labor flow, occupational flow and social flow in the long run.

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