Entry into First Marriage and Marital Outcomes of Rural Migrants in China:

The Influence of Initiation of Economic Migration by Men and Women

Introduction

Since the late 1980s, migration has gradually become a rite of passage for many young men and women in rural China, who are also at marriageable ages. However, the understandings of the relationship between migration and family formation behaviors in China are limited. In this research, drawing on the theories of marital opportunities and job-search and a gender perspective, we examine the relationship between migration and entry into first marriage, as well as the effect of migration on marital outcomes of rural migrants in China.

In rural China, there has always been a shortage of females at marriageable ages due to skewed sex ratios at birth (Coale and Bannister, 1994; Chen and Mueller, 2002). The problem got increasingly serious with the strict implementation of family planning in the early 1980s. Rural men are faced with the structural constraint of numerical shortage in the marriage market (Caldwell, Reddy and Caldwell, 1983; Jiang and Sanchez-Barricarte, 2012). From the perspectives of marital opportunities and the job search theory, it is very likely that rural males' prospect of getting married is improved after migration not only by accessing to an enlarged pool of potential mates, but also by increased socioeconomic status. In terms of marital outcomes, it is hypothesized that men's marital outcomes are affected by migration in a way that helps sustain the tendency to marry down in education, age and *hukou* type. That is, migration makes them more likely to marry those who are less educated, younger and with rural *hukou*.

For females, patriarchal culture exerts strong influence on their lives in rural China. Despite their numerical advantage in the marriage market, they tend to marry early. Research has found that migration increases the average age at marriage for females in rural China and helps redefine gender relations (Belanger and Linh, 2011; Li and Liang, 2016; Rahman, 2009; Zheng, 2002). It is, therefore, hypothesized that females' hazard of getting married is decreased by initiation of economic migration. In terms of marital outcomes, it is possible that participation in economic migration helps break down the norm of marry-up for female migrants.

Data and Methods

This research makes use of the 2015 data of the China National Migrant Population Monitoring Survey. The survey is conducted by the China Population and Development Research Center (CPDRC). It collects a nationally representative PPS sample of the floating population in China. Respondents of this survey are defined as inter-county temporary migrants (non-*hukou* migrants) with age 15 or above and who have been at

destinations for more than one month. The total sample size of the 2015 data is 206,000. We restrict our sample to those with rural *hukou*, who are now 15-59 years old, and who reported "jobs or business" as the reason for the first migration.

Discrete event history analysis is conducted to examine the relationship between initiation of economic migration and entry into first marriage and marital outcomes. This method requires person-year data. For each year until one first got married or right censored (i.e. not married till the survey), he/she is considered as being at the risk of entering first marriage and is contributing one person-year record to the sample. Since the youngest age at first marriage in the sample is 15 years old, the first person-year recode for each respondent starts at age 14.

In models of the effect of migration on entry into first marriage, the dependent variable is binary, with 1 indicating getting married and 0 indicating being single/right-censored. The key independent variable is migration status. Since the date of the first migration is known, it is treated as a time-varying variable. Other independent variables include the logarithm functions of current age minus 15 and 59 minus current age, education, ethnicity, time period (before 1978; 1978-2006; 2006-2015) and geographical area of the origin province (i.e. eastern, middle and western China). Age is also treated as a time-varying variable.

To examine the effect of migration on marital outcomes in terms of age, education, and *hukou* type, we construct three dependent variables. The dependent variables have a value of 0 indicating being single/right-censored, 1 indicating that the respondents marry those who are of the same age or younger, who are equally or less educated and who are with a rural *hukou*, and 2 indicating the respondents marry those who are older, who are more educated and who are with an urban *hukou*. The key independent variable is migration status constructed in the same way as above. Other variables included in models are the logarithm functions of current age minus 15 and 59 minus current age, education, time period (before 1978; 1978-2006; 2006-2015) and geographical area of the origin province (eastern, middle and western China).

To test our hypotheses on migration's effect on marital outcomes, we test whether the difference in the effect of migration on marrying those who are of the same age or younger, who are equally or less educated and who are with a rural *hukou* and the effect on marrying those who are older, who are more educated and who are with an urban *hukou* is statistically different.

For each dependent variable, we estimate two gender-specific models. Thus, we have a total of 8 models. All our results are weighted.

Preliminary Results

It is found that the start of one's migration career increases the hazard of entry into first marriage for both rural men and women. That is, the expected gendered effect of migration is not confirmed by our model results. Instead, it is found that males and females are affected equally by the initiation of migration.

From model results of the effect of migration on marital outcomes, it is found that migration increases the likelihood of entry into marriage both for males and females, regardless of their spouses' characteristics, which is consistent with results discussed above. Moreover, it is found that initiation of migration increases the probability of marrying those who are better educated, and with urban *hukou*, but not the probability of marrying those older than oneself. Interestingly, these patterns hold for both men and women.

REFERENCES

Caldwell, J. C., P.H. Reddy and Pat Caldwell. 1983. "The Causes of Marriage Change in South India." *Population Studies 37*(3): 343-361.

Chen, Youhua and Mueller, Ulrich. 2002. "Marriage Squeeze and its Perspective in China." *Population Research* 26(3): 56-63.

Coale, Ansley J. and Judith Banister. 1994. "Five Decades of Missing Females in China." *Demography* 31(3): 459-479.

Fan, C.C. and Huang, Y., 1998."Waves of Rural Brides: Female Marriage Migration in China." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88(2): 227-251.

Fan, C. C. and Li, L. 2002."Marriage and Migration in Transitional China: a Field Study of Gaozhou, Western Guangdong." *Environment and Planning* A 34(4): 619-638.

Guilmoto, C.Z. 2009. "The Sex Ration Transition in Asia."*Population and Development Review* 35(3): 519-549.

Hu, Yang. 2016."Impact of Rural-to-Urban Migration on Family and Gender Values in China."*Asian Population Studies* DOI: 10.1080/17441730.2016.1169753.

Lloyd, Kim M. and Scott J. South. 1996. "Contextual Influences on Young Men's Transition to First Marriage."*Social Forces* 73 (3): 1097-1119.

Li, Zhen and Zai Liang. 2016. "Gender and Job Mobility Among Rural to Urban Temporary Migrants in the Pearl River Delta in China." *Urban Studies* DOI: 10.1177/0042098015615747.

Liu, Hou-lian. 2014. "Analysis on the Age of First Marriage of New Generation Floating Population and its Determinant: Based on the Floating Population Dynamic Monitoring Data." *Population and Development* 20(5): 77-84.

Liu, Lake. 2017. "*Hukou* Intermarriage in China: Patterns and Trends." *Chinese Sociological Review* 49(2): 110-137.

Jampaklay, A. 2006. "How does Leaving Home Affect Marital Timing? An Event-History

Analysis of Migration and Marriage in Nang Rong, Thailand." *Demography* 43(4): 711-725.

Jang, Joy Bohyun, John B. Casterline and Anastasia Snyder. 2014. "Migration and Marriage: Modeling the Joint Process." *Demographic Research* 30:1339-1366.

Jiang, Q., & S ánchez-Barricarte, J. J. 2012. "Bride Price in China: The Obstacle to 'Bare Branches' Seeking Marriage." *The History of the Family* 17(1): 2-15.

Jiang, Q., Feldman, M. W., & Li, S. 2014. "Marriage Squeeze, Never-Married Proportion, and Mean Age at First Marriage in China." *Population Research and Policy Review* 33(2): 189-204.

Michielin, F. and Mulder, C.H. 2008. Family Events and the Residential Mobility of Couples. *Environment and Planning A* 40(11): 2770-2790.

Mulder, C.H. and Wagner, M., 1993."Migration and Marriage in the Life Course: a Method for Studying Synchronized Events." *European Journal of Population/Revue europ éenne de D émographie* 9(1): 55-76.

Mu, Z. and Xie, Y., 2014. "Marital Age Homogamy in China: A Reversal of Trend in the Reform Era?" *Social Science Research* 44: 141-157.

Oppenheimer, Valerie Kincade. 1988. "A Theory of Marriage Timing."*The American Journal of Sociology* 94(3): 563-591.

Parrado, E.A. 1998. "Marriage and International Migration: Timing and Ordering of Life Course Transitions Among Men in Western Mexico." Paper presented at the Seminar on Men, Family Formation, and Reproduction, IUSSP/CENEP, Buenos Aires, May 13–15.

Qian, Yue and Zhencao Qian. 2017. "Assortative Mating by Education and *Hukou* in Shanghai." *Chinese Sociological Review*DOI: 10.1080/21620555.2017.1288066.

Shen, Jianfa. 2013. "Increasing Internal Migration in China from 1985 to 2005: Institutional versus Economic Drivers." *Habitat International* 39: 1-7.

Sun, D. 2012. "Sex Ratio Imbalance and Rural-to-Urban Migration." *Population Research* 36(6): 57-70.

Xu, Qi. 2015. "Migration and Its Effect on the Marriage Timing of Rural Migrant Workers: Gender Differences."*Population &Economics* 4: 39-51.

Zheng, Zhenzhen. 2002. "The Effect of Migration Experience on Age at First Marriage for Rural Women."*Chinese Journal of Population Science* 2: 61-65.

Table 1. Socioeconomic Characteristics for females, males and the full sample

	Females	Males	All
Age	34.99	36.21	35.66
	9.01	9.23	9.15
Age at first marriage	22.88	24.72	23.88
	3.39	4.23	3.98
Age at first migration	25.66	25.93	25.8
	8.45	8.57	8.52
Gender (%)			
Male	-	-	54.47
Female	-	-	45.53
Education (%)			
Elementary or less	21.78	13.85	17.46
Junior high school	54.26	58.54	56.59
Senior high school	18.48	22.09	20.44
College or above	5.47	5.53	5.5
Marital Status(%)			
Not married	11.49	15.86	13.87
Married	88.51	84.14	86.13
Marital Status before Migration (%)			
Not married	48.85	55.62	52.54
Married	51.15	44.38	47.46
Ethnicity			
Han	93.58	93.64	93.61
Non-Han	6.42	6.36	6.39
Area			
East	30.85	30.52	30.67
Middle	44.33	44.22	44.27
West	24.82	25.27	25.06
N	**59770**	**80786**	**140556**

Table 2. Spouse characteristics by marriage timing   (percentages)

	Male	Female	Total	Marriage Before Migration			Marriage After Migration		
				Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age difference greater than 5									
Yes	16.32	16.91	16.6	14.14	15.23	14.67	18.72	19.15	18.91
No	83.68	83.09	83.4	85.86	84.77	85.33	81.28	80.85	81.09
Education									
Same or less	98.58	96.72	97.71	99.32	98.49	98.91	97.78	94.36	96.27
More	1.42	3.28	2.29	0.68	1.51	1.09	2.22	5.64	3.73
Urban *hukou*									
Yes	3.21	4.26	3.7	2.16	2.32	2.23	4.36	6.85	5.46
No	96.79	95.74	96.3	97.84	97.68	97.77	95.64	93.15	94.54
Same origin Province									
Yes	95.78	95.58	95.69	98.11	93.21	98.09	98.07	92.27	92.8
No	4.22	4.42	4.31	1.89	6.79	1.91	1.93	7.73	7.2
N	75,278	55,434	130,712	44,263	33,032	77,295	31,015	22,402	53,417

Table 3.Model Results of the effect of migration on entry into first marriage, males

	Coef.	S.E.	z	p>z
lnage1	1.957921	.0332487	58.89	0
lnage2	-.1344338	.023007	-5.84	0
_Iedu_1	.0751527	.0208531	3.6	0
_Iedu_2	-.0679243	.0261235	-2.6	0.009
_Iedu_3	-.2501228	.0435615	-5.74	0
_Iethnic_1	.1355702	.0277992	4.88	0
_Ifirstmig_1	.6866737	.0158912	43.21	0
_It_1	1.10257	.0250395	44.03	0
_It_2	2.377149	.0314257	75.64	0
_Iarea_1	.129602	.0178158	7.27	0
_Iarea_2	.0537696	.0193832	2.77	0.006
_cons	-9.823485	.1605585	-61.18	0

Table 4. Model Results of the effect of migration on entry into first marriage, females

	Coef.	S.E.	z	p>z
lnage1	1.880616	.0443924	42.36	0
lnage2	-.2913698	.0426909	-6.83	0
_Iedu_1	-.2139892	.0219	-9.77	0
_Iedu_2	-.5032899	.0309521	-16.26	0
_Iedu_3	-.7983216	.0508464	-15.7	0
_Iethnic_1	.0686012	.0316188	2.17	0.03
_Ifirstmig_1	.8099881	.0195405	41.45	0
_It_1	1.302068	.035324	36.86	0
_It_2	2.746827	.0453266	60.6	0
_Iarea_1	.1614064	.0207503	7.78	0
_Iarea_2	.1400079	.0233979	5.98	0
_cons	-8.639838	.2419209	-35.71	0