The Chinese Urban Caste System in Transition*

Wenfang Tang and Qing Yang

ABSTRACT Using data from a 2004 national survey, we examine the recent trends in the conditions of migrant workers in China. Our discussion engages the debate in the existing literature between the migrant workers as victims of China's economic growth and as a newly emerging political force with growing bargaining power. The study focuses on three dimensions of migrant workers' status: their socio-economic conditions, relations with rural and urban residents, and conflict resolution behaviour. The findings indicate that while migrant workers continue to occupy more blue-collar and service jobs than urban residents, their economic, social and political status has improved. In some areas, migrant workers show even more political activism than both rural and urban residents. Migrant workers' growing social influence is a positive development in China's political diversification.

One of the most striking structural changes in Chinese society in the past two decades of market reform has been rural-to-urban migration. Scholars, policy makers and journalists both inside and outside China have paid much attention to the socio-economic conditions of the rural migrant workers. This article uses a fresh random sample of migrant workers to examine their socio-economic status and political behaviour after more than 20 years of adapting to urban life. The more general goal is to show the social significance of migrant workers in China's future political change.

Urban Migration Policy and Consequences

The household registration system (*hukou* 户口) is the foundation of China's urban migration policy. First implemented in the 1950s under the Stalinist model of economic development, this system intended to finance urban industrial development by subsidizing urban life through government purchase of agricultural products at below market prices. As a result, urbanites enjoyed job security, guaranteed income and pensions, subsidized housing, medical care and education, and other welfare benefits. Rural residents were restricted from

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living in cities. Urban household registration could be acquired through marriage or specialized skills, similar to getting a green card in the United States.[1] The socialist system, while eliminating market-based class distinctions, created a caste system where one's status was determined at birth.[2]

China's economic take-off in the 1980s and 1990s created many new jobs as well as the need to import workers from the countryside. A 1984 State Council document was the first of a series of official documents to allow rural dwellers with stable jobs to settle in urban areas.[3] By 1993 there were 70 million rural-to-urban migrants, and in 2003 reportedly 140 million,[4] 10 per cent of China's 1.3 billion people. The emergence of the migrant population symbolized something more fundamental than its large and still growing number. It reflected the beginning of the decline and even collapse of the traditional socialist caste system where urban residency was strictly regulated and controlled.

Rural-to-urban migration threatened both the providers and receivers of the traditional urban subsidies – government officials and urban residents. They blamed the new uncertainties created by market reform on migrant workers. According to these people, although rural migration brought cheap labour, and promoted labour market efficiency and the development of the service sector, it resulted in a number of negative consequences. These included competition for jobs and public facilities (such as utilities, housing and transport), and problems with population control and rising urban crime rates.[5] One author even put the blame for the migrant workers' high injury rate on their own ignorance and lack of education.[6]

For migrant workers, the new policy of loosening household registration control and allowing migration to cities seemed to have brought more bad news than good news. It worsened the gap in the existing urban caste system so that migrant workers became urban outcasts whose basic human rights could not be guaranteed.[7] Many studies found that they lacked adequate bargaining power

1 There are at least two other ways to obtain urban household registration, through demobilization from the army and from expropriation of land.

2 William L. Parish and Martin King Whyte, *Village and Family in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Martin King Whyte and William L. Parish, *Urban Life in Contemporary China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish, *Chinese Urban Life Under Market Reform: The Changing Social Contract* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

3 Yu Hong and Ding Chengcheng, *Zhongguo nongmin gong kaocha* (*An Investigation of Rural Migrant Workers in China*) (Beijing: Kunlun Publishing House, 2004).

4 See http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2005-01/06/content_2422689.htm, 5 March 2006.

5 Wu Cangping (ed.), *Zhongguo jingji kaifaqu wailai renkou yanjiu* (*Studies on Migrant Population in Economic Development Zones in China*) (Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 1996); Wang Yanfang, "Cong nongmin gong fanzui kan nongmin gong guanli zhidu de jianli yu wanshan" ("Building and improving migrant management system in the light of migrant criminality"), *Zhongzhou xuekan* (*Zhongzhou Academic Journal*), No. 6 (2004), pp. 180–82; Yu and Ding, *An Investigation of Rural Migrant Workers*.

6 Wu Cangping, *Studies on Migrant Population*, p. 13.

7 See Anita Chan, "Labour standards and human rights: the case of Chinese workers under market socialism," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (1998), pp. 886–904; Anita Chan, *China's Workers under Assault: The Exploitation of Labor in a Globalizing Economy* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001); Dorothy J. Solinger, *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China: Peasant Migrants, the State and the Logic of the Market* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); C. K Lee, "From organized dependence

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with their employers and enjoyed little legal protection; their jobs were highly unstable with unemployment common; they worked long hours in subhuman conditions with little pay and their pay was often delayed; they had limited access to housing, medical care, pensions and labour insurance, and their children had no right to attend urban public schools; and they suffered from psychological isolation and discrimination by urban officials and residents.[8]

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to disorganized despotism: changing labour regimes in Chinese factories," *The China Quarterly*, No. 157 (1999), pp. 55–56; Zhang Dunfu, "Chengshi nongmin gong de bianyuan diwei" ("The marginal position of rural migrant workers in cities"), *Qingnian yanjiu* (*Youth Study*), No. 9 (2000), pp. 19–22; Feng Wang, Xuejin Zuo and Danching Ruan, "Rural migrants in Shanghai: living under the shadow of socialism," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2002), pp. 520–45; Li Wei, "Lun nongmin gong de jiben renquan baozhang" ("On the protection of the basic human rights of rural migrant workers"), *Renquan* (*Human Rights*) No. 5 (2004), pp. 40–42; Pang Wen, "Dushi nongmin gong de quanyi qinhai yu baohu – Wuhan shi nongmin gong quanyi xianzhuang de diaocha baogao" ("Violations and protections of rural migrant workers – an investigation of the current development of the rights of rural migrant workers in Wuhan city"), *Chengshi wenti* (*Urban Issues*) No. 3 (2003), pp. 54–58.

8 There is a great amount of literature on the working and living conditions of migrant workers in China. For the lack of legal protection, bad conditions and difficulties experienced by migrant workers, see Chan, *China's Workers under Assault*; Anita Chan, "Culture of survival: lives of migrant workers through the prism of private letters," in Perry Link, Richard P. Madsen, and Paul G. Pickowicz (eds.), *Popular China: Unofficial Culture in a Globalizing Society* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); Philip Pan, "Worked till they drop," *The Washington Post*, 13 May 2002, pp. A01; He Bin and Zhang Yang, "Nongmin gong laodong hetong de falü jingji fenxi: jianlun nongmin gong quanyi baohu" ("A legal and economic analysis of the labor contracts of migrant workers: on the protection of rural migrant workers' rights"), *Beijing nongye zhiye xueyuan xuebao* (*Journal of Beijing Agricultural Vocation College*), No. 6 (2004), pp. 48–51; Research Group on Legal Protection of Migrant Workers of Anhui Judicial Association, "Nongmin gong shiquan yuanyin ji weiquan ruogan yijian" ("Causes of the loss of rural migrant workers' rights and suggestions on the protection of rights"), *Faxue zazhi* (*Legal Science Magazine*), No. 3 (2005), pp. 91–93. For employment status, see Xiao Yun and Shi Yuzhen, "Qingzhuangnian nongmin gong shiye ji shehui baozhang zhuangkuang yanjiu: dui Chongqing shi 954 ming qingzhuangnian nongmin gong de diaocha yu fenxi" ("A research on unemployment and social security of young rural migrant workers: an investigation and analysis of 954 rural migrant workers in Chongqing city"), *Qingnian yanjiu* (*Youth Study*), No. 10 (2004), pp. 22–25; Xiao Yun, "Chongqing nongmin gong jiben zhuangkuang ji pingjia" ("The basic condition and assessment of rural migrant workers in Chongqing"), *Wuhan ligong daxue xuebao (Shehui kexue ban)* (*Journal of Wuhan University of Technology (Social Sciences Edition)*), No. 1 (2005), pp. 35–38; and Wang Chunguang, "Nongmin gong: yi ge zhengzai jueqi de xin gongren jieceng" ("Rural migrant workers: a rising new workers class"), *Xuexi yu tansuo* (*Study and Exploration*), No. 1 (2005), pp. 38–43. For the poor working conditions and migrant workers' wage arrears, see Qian Xuefei, "Nongcun jincheng wugong jingshang renyuan de shengcun xianzhuang ji tedian: dui Nanjing shi 578 ming wailai wugong jingshang renyuan de diaocha yu fenxi" ("The living condition and characteristics of the migrant labourers and entrepreneurs: an investigation and analysis of 578 migrant labourers and entrepreneurs in Nanjing city"), *Shichang yu renkou fenxi* (*Market and Population Analysis*), No. 2 (2004), pp. 11–18; Li Rui, Tang Liyaning, Chen Yang and Fang Dongping, "Beijing diqu jianzhu nongmin gong gongzuo he shenghuo zhuangkuang diaocha" ("An investigation of the working and living conditions of the migrant workers in the construction industry in Beijing area"), *Jianzhu jingji* (*Construction Economy*) No. 8 (2005), pp. 13–17; Kathleen E. McLaughlin, "It's Chinese New Year. Will workers get paid? As travel season begins, the payment of back wages is an economic bellwether," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1 February 2005; Tantai Sixin, "Nongmin gong shenghuo xianzhuang diaocha" ("An investigation of the living condition of rural migrant workers"), *Zhongguo nongxue tongbao* (*Chinese Agricultural Science Bulletin*), No. 9 (2005), pp. 443–55. For occupational safety and health, medical care, insurance and welfare of migrant workers, see Wang Fang, Cheng Maojin and Wang Hong, "Tansuo woguo eryuan jingji zhong nongcun liudong renkou yiliao baoxian moshi" ("Discussions on the medical insurance model of rural floating population in the dual economic system in China"), *Zhongguo weisheng jingji* (*Chinese Health Economics*), No. 7 (2002), pp. 31–33; Fan Xiaogang, "Lun chengshi nongmin gong de shehui baozhang wenti" ("On the social security of rural

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Yet migrant workers did not seem to be heading towards an uncontrollable downward spiral. Recent developments since the mid-1990s indicate migrant workers' growing social and political strength and the state's willingness to accommodate their needs. One such development is that continued rural-to-urban migration has allowed migrant workers to accumulate social capital by formulating extensive social networks in urban areas.[9] For example, Li Peilin's (李培林) study of city villages (*cheng zhong cun* 城中村) found well-organized migrant communities in cities like Guangzhou and Beijing and the dependency of migrant workers on these communities.[10] One such example is Zhejiang village (*Zhejiang cun* 浙江村) in a Beijing suburb, where about 100,000 migrants lived in the mid-1990s. The village provided extensive public services to its transient residents and a sense of community.[11] In her ethnographic study of Zhejiang village, Zhang also showed how the migrant entrepreneurs successfully mobilized the traditional social networks and developed clientelist ties with state officials to secure their economic and political positions.[12]

footnote continued

migrant workers in cities''), *Nongye jingji wenti* (*Problems of Agricultural Economy*), No. 11 (2003), pp. 14–18; Tian Xuan, ''Guanyu goujian nongmin gong shehui baozhang tixi de sikao'' (''Thoughts on building social security system for rural migrant workers''), *Renkou xuekan* (*Population Journal*), No. 4 (2004), pp. 16–20; Lan Chundi and Ren Baoping, ''Guanyu nongmin gong shehui baozhang wenti de sikao'' (''Observations on the social security of rural migrant workers''), *Shehui kexue yanjiu* (*Social Science Research*), No. 5 (2004), pp. 106–10; Li Zhen (ed.), *Gong shang zhe: nongmin gong zhiye anquan yu jiankang quanyi lunji* (*Work Injury: Essays on Vocational Safety and Health Rights of Rural Migrant Workers*) (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2005); and Ingrid Nielsen, Chris Nyland, Russel Smyth, Mingqiong Zhang and Jiuhua Zhu, ''Which rural migrants receive social insurance in Chinese cities?'' *Global Social Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2005), pp. 353–81. For the difficulty in schooling migrants' children, see David Lindorff, ''An urban underclass in the making?'' *Business Week*, 5 September 1994, p. 22A(2); Kong Xiangzhi and Gu Hongming, ''Nongcun laodongli zhuanyi zhong de zinü jiaoyu wenti yanjiu'' (''Problems in the education of migrant children during rural labour migration''), *Shanxi caijing daxue xuebao* (*Journal of Shanxi University of Trade and Finance*), No. 6 (2004), pp. 31–37; and Wu Jianhong, ''Bu bei yiwang de jiaoluo: 'liushou hai' xianxiang tanyuan (shang)'' (''The corner not forgotten: exploring the phenomenon of 'left-behind children' (Part A)''), *Fudao yuan* (*Advisor*), No. 4 (2004), pp. 20–21. For the psychological hardship of migrant workers, see Zhu Kaojin, ''Chengshi nongmin gong xinli yanjiu: dui Nanjing shi 610 ming nongmin gong de diaocha yu fenxi'' (''Research on the psychology of migrant workers: an investigation and analysis of 610 migrant workers in Nanjing city''), *Qingnian yanjiu* (*Youth Study*), No. 6 (2003), pp. 7–11; and Zhou Mingbao, ''Chengshi zhiliu qingnian nongmin gong de wenhua shiying yu shenfen rentou'' (''The cultural assimilation and self-identification of young rural migrant workers in cities''), *Shehui* (*Society*), No. 5 (2004), pp. 4–11. For the tension between urbanites and migrant workers, see Li Qiang, *Nongmin gong yu Zhongguo shehui fenceng* (*Rural Migrant Workers and Social Stratification in China*) (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2004), p. 233. Finally, for the excessive police scrutiny targeting migrant workers, see Shukai Zhao (trans. Andrew Kipnis), ''Criminality and the policing of migrant workers,'' *The China Journal*, No. 43 (2000), pp. 101–10.

9 Li Hanlin, ''Guanxi qiangdu yu xuni shequ – nongmin gong yanjiu de yi zhong shijiao'' (''Strength of social network and virtual community – a perspective on research of migrant workers''), in Li Peilin (ed.), *Nongmin gong: Zhongguo jincheng nongmin gong jingji shehui fenxi* (*Rural Migrant Workers: An Economic and Social Analysis of Rural Migrant Workers in China*) (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2003), pp. 95–115.

10 Li Peilin, *Ling yizhi kan bu jian de shou: shehui jiegou zhuanxing* (*Another Invisible Hand: Transformation of Social Structure*) (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2005), pp. 283–84, 306–08.

11 Solinger, *Contesting Citizenship*.

12 Li Zhang, *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks within China's Floating Population* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

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Others found that migrant workers' informal organizations and group activities included organized migration, housing services, organized bargaining for labour contracts (*baogongdui* 包工队), service organizations (such as restaurants, barber shops, repair shops, babysitting, entertainment), crisis management (resolving conflicts between migrants and local authorities, organizing strikes and getting troubled migrants out of jail), public relations management (such as environmental clean-up) and business associations.[13] One study found that social networks played a more important role than education in increasing migrant workers' income.[14]

The shortage of urban labour provides migrant workers with a further argument to legitimize their existence in relation to urban residents, employers and the state. In recent years, many urban areas reported a labour shortage of both unskilled and skilled workers. For example, in the second quarter of 2004 there was a shortfall of 100,000 labourers in Guangdong province.[15] In Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong the labour shortage was as high as 10 per cent in 2004.[16]

Contrary to the complaint by urbanites that migrant workers are competing for urban jobs, other studies found more mutual complementation than competition between migrant workers and urban residents. In 1997, for example, the city of Nanjing laid off migrant workers in order to vacate 4,000 jobs for urban unemployed and laid-off workers. Only 1,000 of these positions were filled by urban workers and many of them quit after a few months. The city later had to rehire migrant workers.[17] As a result, most urbanites agreed that migrants made urban life more convenient and contributed to the improvement of urban living standards.[18]

Labour shortages also provided incentives for employers to increase migrant workers' pay and welfare and improve their working conditions.[19] In the past few years, migrant workers' salaries have experienced a double-digit increase nationwide.[20] One study of 1,504 migrant workers in Jinan, Shandong province

13 Horizon Research Consultancy Group, *Luoren – Beijing liumin de zuzhihua zhuangkuang yanjiu* (*The Exposed – A Research Report on the Condition of the Organization of Migrants in Beijing*) (Beijing: Horizon Research Consultancy Group, 2000), pp. 22–31; Solinger, *Contesting Citizenship*, pp. 269–73; Cai Fang, *Zhongguo liudong renkou wenti* (*The Problem of China's Floating Population*) (Henan: Henan People's Publishing House, 2000), pp. 174–84; Cai Fang (ed.), *Zhongguo renkou liudong fangshi yu tujing: 1990–1999 nian* (*Ways and Means of Population Migration in China: 1990–1999*) (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2001), pp. 243; K. Roberts, "Female labor migrants to Shanghai: temporary 'floaters' or potential settlers?" *International Migration Review*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (2002), pp. 492–519; Li Zhang, *Strangers in the City*, pp. 110–13.

14 Wang Fenyu and Zhao Yandong, "Liudong mingong de jingji diwei huode ji jueding yinsu" ("Attainment and determining factors of economic status of migrant workers"), in Li Peilin, *Rural Migrant Workers*, pp. 134–48.

15 Lin Hua, "Zhongguo 'mingong huang' de beihou" ("Behind the 'shortage of migrant workers' in China"), *Xibu da kaifa* (*Great Western Development*), No. 10 (2004), pp. 15–16.

16 Mo Rong, "Laodongli gong dayu qiu zhuangkuang xia de mingong he jigong 'duanque'" ("The shortage of migrant and technical labourers while labourers' supply exceeds demand"), in Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi and Li Peilin (eds.), *Analysis and Forecast on China's Social Development* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2005), p. 264.

17 Yu and Ding, *An Investigation of Rural Migrant Workers*, pp. 30–31.

18 Li Qiang, *Migrant Workers and Social Stratification*, pp. 108–09.

19 Mo Rong, "The shortage of migrant and technical labourers," p. 267.

20 Keith Bradsher, "Wages up in China as young workers grow scarce," *The New York Times*, 29 August 2007.

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showed a surprisingly high level of housing provision for migrant workers at 78 per cent, indicating a reasonable welfare benefit.[21] Unlike some studies that found a high unemployment rate,[22] others found that the rate of employment was higher among migrant workers than among urban permanent residents, although migrant workers' jobs were still at lower levels.[23]

The demand for migrant labour led the central and local governments to create more incentives and policy preferences for migrant workers. Chinese government websites contain numerous new regulations to protect migrant workers' rights. These include penalties for delayed pay, mandatory medical and labour insurance, a guarantee of union membership, free education for their children, a minimum wage requirement, lifting of restrictions on job categories, required improvement of work conditions, free service for job hunting, and even proposals to grant migrant workers urban household registration.[24]

It is naïve to believe that these policies will be implemented and the rights of migrant workers will be guaranteed. Nevertheless, the new regulations give migrant workers legal leverage in their "rightful resistance."[25] Indeed, as documented by Anita Chan in her study of Chinese factories, workers often use established institutional means to fight for their interests, including official trade unions, local government labour bureaus, the media and the courts.[26]

In addition to migrants' social network and the urban labour shortage, market reform and the decline of central planning also serve as a source of new freedom for migrant workers and diminishing privileges for urbanites. Traditional urban subsidies are shrinking during market reform. The new generation of urban residents, in the same way as migrant workers, have to pay for their own education, housing, medical care, pension and life insurance. The traditional urban–rural divide is becoming less clear. Slowly but hopefully, migrant workers are learning to live in the city in the same ways as urban residents in the new market environment.

In short, self-organization among migrant workers, combined with the need for economic growth, shortages in the urban labour force and diminishing public services during market reform, are likely to increase migrant workers' bargaining power with urban residents, employers and the state, and in the process improve their relative status. However, the above discussion of the existing studies shows a divergence of opinion and calls for further investigation

21 Li Peilin, *Another Invisible Hand*, p. 283.
22 Xiao Yun, "Rural migrant workers in Chongqing."
23 Yu and Ding, *An Investigation of Rural Migrant Workers*, pp. 28–29.
24 See http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/zhuanti/nmg/507801.htm, accessed 9 March 2006; Joseph Kahn, "China to drop urbanite-peasant legal differences," *The New York Times*, 3 November 2005, p. A.8; and Li Tao and Li Zhen, *Nongmin gong: liudong zai bianyuan* (*Rural Migrant Workers: Floating at the Margin of the Cities*) (Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House, 2006).
25 Kevin O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, *Rightful Resistance in Rural China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Isabelle Thireau and Linshan Hua, "New institutions in practice: migrant workers and their mobilization of the labor law," in Wenfang Tang and Burkart Holzner (eds.), *Social Change in Contemporary China: C. K. Yang and the Concept of Institutional Diffusion* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007).
26 Chan, *China's Workers under Assault*.

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into the status of Chinese migrant workers in the changing urban caste system. In this study we examine the status of migrant workers through three specific aspects: the social and economic characteristics of migrant workers; the relationship between migrant workers, urban residents and rural residents; and the difference between the three residential groups in their dispute resolution behaviour.

At the risk of oversimplification, the above-mentioned studies can be said to fall into the pessimist and optimist views. The pessimist would see a socio-economically deprived and politically docile outcast of migrant workers who have little legal protection. The optimist, on the other hand, would predict an improved socio-economic status among migrant workers who possess political and legal skills to protect their interests. The pessimist should also see a greater gap and tension than the optimist between migrant workers and urban residents.

The 2004 Survey

Most of the data in this paper are drawn from a 2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey supported by the Ford Foundation and Peking University's Research Centre for Contemporary China (*Zhongguo gongmin sixiang daode guannian zhuangkuang diaocha* 中国公民思想道德观念状况调查).[27] This survey contains a national random sample of 7,714 respondents in 200 townships and urban neighbourhoods located in 100 counties and urban districts. It includes a wide range of questions related to the respondents' social and political attitudes and behaviour, and to their legal behaviour in solving economic, civil and administrative disputes.

One of the most valuable aspects of the 2004 survey is its pioneering use of spatial sampling to include a national random sample of the migrant population, which was difficult to locate using the traditional household registration lists in previous Chinese surveys.[28] In drawing the sample, the 2004 survey divided the map of a village or urban residential neighbourhood by latitude and longitude and randomly selected small squares located between the latitude and longitude lines. All residents from 18 to 65 in each square had an equal chance to be selected, including the migrants. This method does not require a list of household registrations.[29]

With adjustment to the 2000 population census information (weighting), the sample contains 5,394 rural respondents (70 per cent), 444 migrant workers (6

27 Co-principal investigators include Mingming Shen and Ming Yang (Peking University), Yanqi Tong (University of Utah), Pierre Landry (Yale University) and Wenfang Tang (University of Pittsburgh).

28 Pierre Landry and Mingming Shen, "Reaching migrants in survey research: the use of the global positioning system to reduce coverage bias in China," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2005), pp. 1–22; Wenfang Tang, *Public Opinion and Political Change in China* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005).

29 The random sample covered 100 counties (PSU) in China's 31 provinces, autonomous regions and provincial level cities. The survey researchers used population statistics to determine the number of counties from each provincial unit. At least one county or urban district was randomly selected in less populated units, including Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Xizang, Ningxia and Hainan. Two townships or urban neighbourhoods were randomly chosen from each county/district. Two half-degree geographic squares (village or urban residential community) were selected using the GPS method. Within each half-degree square, two 80x80m squares were selected, again using the GPS method. All valid addresses were recorded and 10,089 individuals ranging from 18 to 66 were included in the final list by using the Kish Table method. The response rate was 7714/10089=76.5%. The characteristics of the sample are fairly consistent with the 2000 population census (see Appendices 1.2 and 4 for further details).

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per cent) and 1,875 urban respondents (24 per cent). In this study, we define migrant workers as rural household registration holders living at the current urban address for 30 days or longer.[30] The 444 rural-to-urban migrant workers in the sample form about 20 per cent of the urban population (444/(1,875+444)). A more comprehensive study in the future should also include urban-to-urban, rural-to-rural and urban-to-rural migrants.

The focus of this study is on the difference between urbanites, ruralites and migrants, not on the variation among migrant workers. It is necessary for future survey research to address the internal variation among migrants.

Social and Economic Status

The existing studies have well documented the relatively low socio-economic status of migrant workers. For example, migrant workers were found to be less educated, to work in lower-level jobs, to receive less income and to be younger than urban residents.[31] Most of these studies only compared migrant workers either with rural residents or with urban residents and few of them were able to compare the three groups simultaneously.

The 2004 survey includes all three groups in the same sample, together with the information on their education, age, income and occupation (Table 1A). In the 2004 sample, migrant workers on average had one year more education than rural residents but three years less education than urban residents. There were slightly more women among migrant workers than in the other two groups.[32] On average, migrant workers were three years younger than the other two groups.[33]

30 A 1996 survey on Life Histories and Social Change in Contemporary China used a slightly different method to identify migrant workers by including those who lived in cities but had held rural household registration since 1979 (see Donald Treiman (ed.), *Life Histories and Social Change in Contemporary China: Codebook* (Los Angeles: UCLA Institute for Social Science Research, 1998)). This method resulted in about 240 migrant workers in approximately 3,000 urban respondents (see Lei Guang and Lu Zheng, "Migration as the second-best option: local power and off-farm employment," *The China Quarterly*, No. 181 (2005), pp. 22–45).

31 C. Huang, "Management of migrant labor in overseas Chinese enterprises in south China," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1999), pp. 361–79; Cai Fang, T*he Problem of Floating Population*, pp. 146–47, Table 7–2; Wang Fenyu and Li Lulu, *Zhongguo chengshi laodongli liudong: congye moshi, zhiye shengya, xin yimin* (*Labour Migration in Urban China: Employment, Career, New Immigrants*) (Beijing: Beijing Publishing House, 2001), pp. 288–89; Li Qiang, *Migrant Workers and Social Stratification*, ch. 2; and Qian Xuefei, *Characteristics of the Migrant Labourers*.

32 There is a wide variation in migrant male-to-female ratios across different regions and industries. In the Pearl River delta, male-to-female ratio is around 1:2, while the figure is reversed in many other places. See Zhang Ye, "Hope for China's migrant women workers," *The China Business Review*, No. 3 (2002), p. 30; Li Peilin, *Rural Migrant Workers*, p. 12; Yu Hong and Ding Chengcheng, *An Investigation of Rural Migrant Workers*, p. 25. Women migrant workers are the major work force in industries such as catering, service sector, and some electronics or toy manufacturing, while migrant workers in construction are almost exclusively male.

33 The average age of migrant workers appears higher than some other studies have documented. For example, see Li Qiang, *Migrant Workers and Social Stratification*, p. 20; Yu and Ding, *An Investigation of Rural Migrant Workers*, p. 26. However, the 2004 survey only includes migrant workers between 18 and 66 years old, while some studies include migrant children under 18. For instance, Yu and Ding, *An Investigation of Rural Migrant Workers*, p. 26, show that while the average age of rural migrants is 33.6, children under 15 years old constitute 19.11% of all rural migrants in their sample. One indication that the 2004 survey is reliable is that it does confirm with other studies that migrant workers are younger than rural and urban respondents.

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Table 1: **Socio-economic Characteristics of Rural, Migrant and Urban Populations (weighted)**

	Rural	Migrant	Urban
A. Entire sample			
Education (year)	6	7	10
Female (%)	49	55	48
Age (year)	41	38	41
No job (%)	5.4	25.1	27.6
Family income 2003 (yuan)	8,148	13,642	22,277
Ind. income 2003 (yuan)	941	4,900	9,876
B. 35 and younger			
Occupation (35 and younger) (%)			
Professional	1	4	17
Clerical	1	5	16
Sales / services	5	32	10
Unskilled	7	14	9
No job	5.6	11.0	25.4
Family income 2003 (yuan)	10,258	21,989	22,678
Ind. income 2003 (yuan)	1,331	8,328	7,559

Notes:

For 35 and younger, n=1580 for rural, n=170 for migrant and n=651 for urban. For entire sample, n=5,394 for rural, n=444 for migrant and n=1,875 for urban. ''No job'' includes waiting for work, household work and no job. Not shown for 35 and younger: education in year (rural=7, migrant=8 and urban=12) and female (rural=48%, migrant=52% and urban=46%).

Source:

2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

The 2004 survey also asked about the respondent's total family and total individual incomes in 2003. If urban residents' average total family income was 100 per cent, rural average family income was about 37 per cent and migrant workers' average was about 61 per cent. The gap is even wider in individual income. Using the average total urban individual income as 100, the average rural resident's and the average migrant worker's incomes were only 10 and 50.

So far the 2004 survey seemed to confirm the earlier findings about migrant workers' low status compared with urban residents. However, since most migrant workers are younger, it makes sense to compare them with rural and urban residents in a younger age category. To do this, we compared the 18–35 age group across the three residential groups.

A total of 46 per cent of migrant workers in the 18–35 age group worked in low-level jobs, such as sales, service and unskilled jobs, compared with 19 per cent of urban respondents in the same age group. In contrast, 33 per cent of urban respondents in this age group worked in professional or other white-collar jobs but only 9 per cent of migrant workers and 2 per cent of rural respondents did so. These findings again confirm the low occupational status of migrant workers found in earlier studies.

The results become very interesting when we look at unemployment and income in the 18–35 age group. First, while the unemployment rates for the migrant and urban respondents were very similar in the entire sample (migrants 27.6 per cent and urbanites 25.1 per cent), in the 18–35 age group it was much

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higher among urban respondents (25 per cent) than for migrant workers (11 per cent). This finding is consistent with Yu and Ding's work where they find a lower unemployment rate among migrant workers.[34]

Second, the three residential groups also showed a smaller gap in their 2003 family income in the 18–35 group than in the entire sample. Again, if the urban average family income was 100 in this younger group, rural and migrant families reached 45 and 97, as compared to 37 and 61 in the entire sample.

Third, the gap in the urban caste system diminished even further for individual income. If urban individual income was 100 in the 18–35 age group, rural income increased from only 10 in the entire sample to 18, and migrant workers even surpassed urban income and reached 110 from 50 in the entire sample. In other words, in this age group, migrant workers' average 2003 individual income was about 10 per cent higher than urban respondents' (Table 1B).

The findings in this section partially confirm the earlier findings about the overall socio-economic status of migrant workers, as compared with both rural and urban residents. Migrant workers are right in the middle between the other two groups. What is more interesting is the higher status of migrant workers compared with urban residents in the younger age group. Although still working in lower-level jobs, migrant workers enjoyed a higher employment rate and, on average, a higher level of individual income than urban residents. Perhaps the higher level of individual income is a "surprise" but it makes sense since the employment rate is higher among migrant workers than among urban residents.

Reasons for migrants' higher income and employment than urban young people's include the increased difficulty for many college graduates to find jobs and the discharge of tens of millions of urban state and collective workers after 1997. Although the gaps between migrants and urbanites may not show any actual improvement of migrant workers' conditions, the new employment problems among urbanites created a "relative" status change in favour of migrants.

Social Relations

This section looks at the relationships between the three residential groups. As mentioned earlier, existing studies have shown that the urban bias rooted in the traditional socialist urban caste system resulted in discriminatory policies against migrant workers and intensified the tension between urbanites and migrants.[35] According to this view, one would expect a hostile relationship between urban residents and rural migrant workers and an alliance between migrant workers and rural residents.

34 Yu and Ding, *An Investigation of Rural Migrant Workers*, p. 28.

35 For policies against migrant workers, see Shukai Zhao, "Criminality and the policing of migrant workers"; and for tensions between migrants and urbanites, see Li Qiang, *Migrant Workers and Social Stratification*.

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Table 2: **Perceived Relationship between the Three Residential Groups (weighted)**

	Rural	Migrant	Urban
A. Feeling of mutual trust (max=100)			
a. trusting urban residents	47	47	51
b. trusting rural residents	67	61	57
B. Do you agree with the following statements about migrant workers? (% strongly disagree)			
a. They do not obey the law	39	33	23
b. they brought more problems than benefit	34	29	19
c. they took jobs from urban residents	25	19	15
d. they disturbed urban people's normal life	19	11	9
e. they should not have equal rights with urbanites	47	39	32
C. Feeling of usefulness when in dispute (max=100)			
a. family and relative	70	58	70
b. people of same geographic origin	3	20	1

Notes:

Approximately, rural=5,572, migrant=326, urban=1,502, depending on the different missing values for different questions. The numbers for family/relative and for people of same geographic origin (*tongxiang*) are calculated from the total number of disputes where n=1,694 for rural, n=220 for migrant and n=556 for urban. Respondents in each group were asked to rank whether family/relatives and people from the same geographic origin were their first, second or third choice for help when in dispute. First is coded 3, second is coded 2 and third coded 1. Each of the two groups has a scale from 0 (R did not select) to 6 (R selected as first, second and third choices). Each group score is then divided by 6 and multiplied by 100, formulating a 0–100 feeling score.

Source:

2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

In the 2004 survey, we asked the respondents whether they trusted urban and rural residents. We were able to measure their answers on a feeling thermometer from 0 (no trust) to 100 (complete trust). Both rural and migrant respondents had the same lukewarm feeling (47 out of 100) about urbanites. The urban respondents had slightly warmer feeling (51) about themselves but the difference was small. When asked about trusting rural residents, all the three groups warmed up, rural respondents by 20 degrees (67), migrant respondents by 14 degrees (61) and urban respondents by 6 degrees (57). It is interesting that migrant respondents did not warm up as much as the rural respondents did about rural residents, indicating some emerging distance between the two groups (Table 2A).

The 2004 survey contains a set of questions about the respondents' assessment of migrant workers (Table 2B). Rural respondents were clearly more supportive of migrant workers than urban respondents were. Compared with urban respondents, more rural respondents disagreed with the statements that migrant workers did not obey the law, that they brought more problems than benefits, that they took jobs away from urban residents, that they disturbed the normal urban life and that they should not be given equal rights with urban residents.

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Migrant workers, however, were ambivalent. They seemed to be on the rural respondents' side by disagreeing with the statements about migrant workers not obeying the law and about bringing more problems than benefits (Table 2B a, b). But migrant workers became hesitant when they were asked whether they took jobs from urban residents, disturbed urban life and whether they should have equal rights with urbanites (Table 2B c, d, e). Their answers to these questions seemed to be closer to those of urban than of rural respondents.

In order to confirm the difference between the three residential groups, we combined the five items in Table 2B, constructed an index, labelled it "urban bias," and performed an OLS regression analysis using urban bias as the dependent variable and the three residential groups as independent variables. In the meantime, we controlled for the effects of age, education, gender, individual income, ethnicity and Party membership. The OLS regression analysis (Appendix 1) indicates a statistically significant difference. Urban respondents were about 8 per cent more urban-biased than rural respondents were and migrants were also 2.5 per cent more urban-biased than rural respondents. Interestingly, while still leaning towards rural residents, migrant respondents seemed to be going through their own urbanization process and slowly moving away from their rural origin.

Finally, we also asked the respondents about the importance of family/relatives and people from the same geographic origin in helping them solve any dispute. While family and relatives remained the most important source of help for all three groups, migrant respondents showed less dependence on family and relatives than the other two groups did. Instead, their reliance on common geographic origin was much stronger, 7 times and 20 times more than that of the rural and urban respondents, indicating the unique importance of social network for migrant workers (Table 2C).[36]

In short, the findings in this section partially support the existing studies on the tension generated by migrant workers. Rural residents and migrants trusted each other more than they trusted urbanites. One interesting nuance is that migrant workers developed their own urban bias, indicating a movement away from their rural roots. One effective way for migrant workers to survive the tough urban environment was to rely on their strong social network. This finding proves the importance of migrant workers' social network discussed by other studies. In addition, it provides two pieces of new information that other studies were unable to do: the relative importance of social network among the three residential groups and the relative importance of social network compared with family and relatives.

36 Again, while we recognize the different types of social network within migrant workers, e.g. geographically based, kinship-based, industry-based, this article is more concerned with the between-group difference. Migrant workers as a group showed a much stronger group identity than both rural and urban groups.

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Conflict Resolution

This section focuses on the difference in political activism among the three residential groups. The discussion of migrant workers' discrimination and docility in the existing studies would lead one to expect them to have a low level of political activism, partly as a result of the lack of effective institutional channels and partly because of the excessive restrictions placed on them. On the other hand, as described earlier, the new regulations in favour of migrant workers create new institutional opportunities for their political action, which is further aided by their increasing bargaining power resulting from the urban labour shortage and by their social networks.[37]

One possible way to examine political activism is through an individual's conflict resolution behaviour. The 2004 survey includes information on the respondents' dispute behaviour, such as dispute occurrence, dispute type, and channels and outcome of dispute resolution. We will examine each of these items among the three residential groups.

A first look at dispute occurrence among the three groups shows migrant workers' stronger willingness to speak up. In the 2004 sample, the respondents were asked if they engaged in individual disputes. The average number of disputes in the past 20 years was one for rural respondents and two for urban respondents, but as high as seven for migrant workers. Of course, it is possible that the high level of dispute occurrence among migrant workers was a result of excessive oppression. But the fact that rural residents, who were also heavily exploited by local governments, had very low numbers of conflicts indicates that a higher level of political activism among migrant workers was at least partially responsible.[38] This high level of activism may be the result of migrant workers' effective self-organization and their easier "exit," because of their migrant status, if they lose the dispute.

The three residential groups also showed different patterns in dispute type. The 2004 survey has information on three different types of dispute: civil, economic and administrative.[39] Rural respondents had the highest percentage of civil disputes among the three groups, migrant workers had the most economic disputes and urbanites had the most administrative disputes (Figure 1). In a more detailed analysis (Appendix 2), we found rural respondents' civil disputes were mostly with their neighbours, migrant's economic disputes were mostly about debt, and urbanites' administrative disputes were mostly about housing

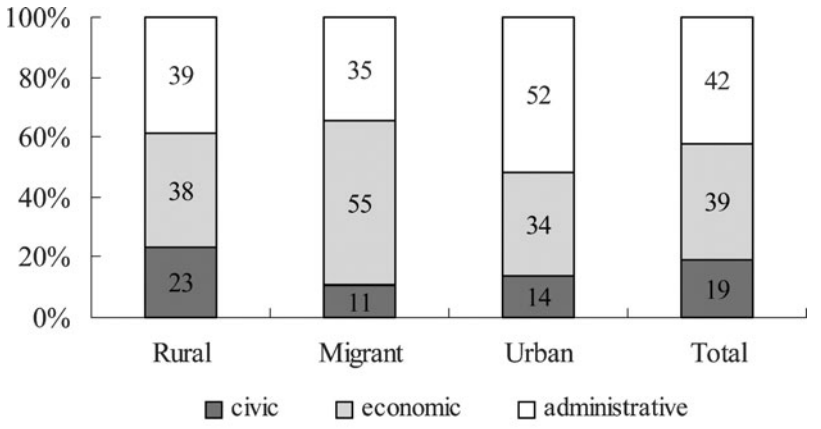
37 See O'Brien and Li, *Rightful Resistance*; Thireau and Hua, "New institutions in practice"; and Horizon Research Consultancy Group, *The Exposed*.

38 For the heavy exploitation of rural residents, see Chen Guili and Chun Tao, *Zhongguo nongmin diaocha* (*A Survey of Chinese Peasants*) (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2004); Cao Jinqing, *Huanghe bianshang de Zhongguo* (*China beside the Yellow River*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 2000).

39 The three categories are based on 15 types of dispute in the 2004 survey. Civil disputes include disputes with neighbours, divorce, old age care, domestic violence and family inheritance. Economic disputes include problems related to debt, labour, sales, real estate and medical care. Administrative disputes are related to family planning, administrative fees, housing reallocation, administrative fines and licence application.

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Figure 1: **Dispute Type by Residential Status (weighted %)**



Note:
Rural n=1,840, migrant n=235, urban n=596 and total n=2,671.
Source:
2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

reallocation and administrative fines. Thus, migrant workers' problems seem to be mostly with market forces, not with bureaucratic regulations and administrative fees and fines, as argued by some previous studies.[40]

Next, we are interested in how people go about solving their disputes. The 2004 survey provides information about the respondents' usage of the following channels of dispute resolution: traditional official channels (mediation and ombudsman); new official channels (court, media and local legislator)[41]; private channels (talking to each other privately); and fight (resorting to protest, force and violence). As shown in Table 3, compared to rural respondents, both urban and migrant respondents were less likely to go through traditional official channels, but more likely to use new official channels. Migrant workers were about 19 per cent more likely than rural respondents and 12 per cent more likely than urban respondents to use these new official channels. They also did not seem to have the patience for private negotiation but were more willing to fight for their case than the other two groups (Table 3). In short, migrant workers stood out for their willingness to fight and to use the new civic channels.

The final question is dispute outcome. The 2004 survey asked the respondents about the outcome if they had any disputes, including "no result," "mutual compromise," "win," "lose" and "other." The results in Figure 2 are surprising.

40 Li Nanling, Jiang Wei, Zhou Xiaomei, Yang Dan, Li Junde, Li Daixiang and Huang Hai, "Zaoyu shuangchong bu pingdeng daiyu" ("Encountering the double unequal treatment"), *Outlook Weekly*, No. 9 (25 February 2002), pp. 10–14.

41 These new official channels are the results of the Communist Party's effort in the past two decades to increase its legitimacy, transparency, responsiveness and representativeness, while maintaining the Party's political dominance.

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Table 3: **Channels of Dispute Resolution by Residential Status (OLS coefficients, analytic weights)**

	Official channels	New official channels	Talk	Fight
Migrant workers	−.065***	.187***	−.091***	.050***
	(.019)	(.026)	(.026)	(.010)
Urban residents	−.065***	.063***	.033*	.001
	(.011)	(.016)	(.015)	(.006)
Constant	.175***	.351***	.298***	.038***
	(.031)	(.042)	(.042)	(.015)
Adjusted R^2	.011	.023	.004	.008
N	6517	6517	6517	6517

Notes:
1. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001;
2. All coefficients compare to rural respondents.
3. All dependent variables have a minimum value of 0 and a maximum value of 1. The difference in coefficients can be interpreted as the percentage change on the dependent variable. For example, both urban and migrant respondents were about 6% less likely to use official channels than rural respondents.
4. Age, sex, education, individual income, ethnicity, Party membership are controlled but not shown.
5. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Source:
2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

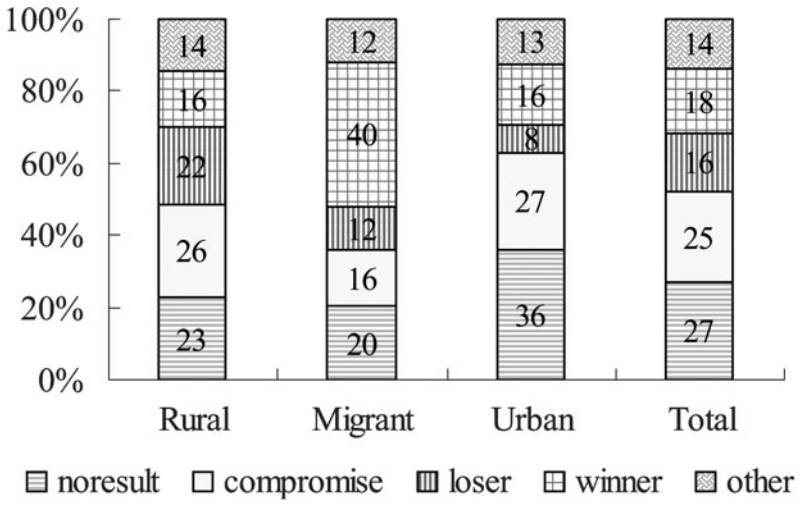
Disputes involving migrant workers were less likely to generate no result, mutual compromise or lose, but much more likely to win. A surprising 40 per cent of the migrant respondents won their disputes, while only 16 per cent did so among rural and urban respondents. A multivariate regression analysis controlling for dispute type, age, gender, education, individual income, ethnicity and Party membership found a continuously strong and statistically significant impact of migrant workers in winning their disputes, while both urban and migrant respondents were less likely to lose than rural respondents (Appendix 3).

In another multivariate analysis controlling for age, gender, education, individual income, ethnicity and Party membership (Appendix 4), reliance on people from the same geographic origin among migrant workers played the single most important role in winning their disputes but did not have any significant impact on winning in the other two groups. Rural respondents, on the other hand, relied more on family and relatives than both urban and migrant respondents. Thus, a strong social network was the key to migrant workers' success in conflict resolution.

In summary, migrant workers surprised us by showing their willingness to fight and their political effectiveness. They were not afraid of creating a much higher number of disputes. Their approach to conflict resolution was non-traditional, either through the newly emerging civic channels or simply through aggression. These non-traditional strategies, combined with their highly effective social network, made them much more successful in getting what they wanted.

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Figure 2: **Dispute Outcome by Residential Status (weighted %)**



Note:
Rural n=1,840, migrant n=235, urban n=596 and total n=2,671.
Source:
2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

A More Diverse Society?

The findings in this study show that migrant workers as a social group carry their own distinctive identity and influence. At the societal level, in return for supplying the desperately needed work force for urban construction, manufacturing and the service sector, they receive some policy protection from the government. The new policies, while by no means implemented effectively by employers and local bureaucratic agencies, may reduce the tension between migrant workers and the state. As a result, we found that, unlike the urban residents whose conflict was mostly with the state, migrant workers' disputes were mostly created by the market.

The state itself, as Anita Chan points out, is not monolithic. Various government agencies pursue diverse self-interests, and some are in favour of migrant workers while others are not.[42] It is not helpful to label the state as good or evil. Rather, differentiating bureaucratic interests and examining their impact on migrant workers will generate more understanding of the bargaining mechanisms that migrant workers use to improve their status. This is a topic worth further study.

As a group, Chinese migrant workers enjoyed relatively high employment and income, sometimes higher than the average urban employment rate and income.

42 Chan, *China's Workers under Assault*.

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They demonstrated their ability to cope with the initially unfriendly urban environment by their social networks. While previous studies stopped at describing such social networks, we found empirical evidence through our survey data that these networks helped migrant workers solve their problems. Further research is called for to show how effective they are in solving different kinds of problems for migrant workers.

We are particularly impressed with migrant workers' conflict resolution strategies. They would not hesitate to engage in conflict and to use extra-system means such as protest against pay delay and even physical fights. Yet they were more than a group of troublemakers who would not play the game by the rules. They were also interested in the rules – but the new rules. These new rules were the court, the media and the legislature, which were pushing China in the direction of a civil society. These strategies, combined with their social networks, led migrant workers to achieve a much higher rate of success in winning their disputes and in protecting their interests.

Migrant workers are a distinctive but also integrated group in Chinese society. They are ''becoming modern'' as they distance themselves from their traditional rural roots and share a certain level of urban bias with urban residents. The strength of their social organization and their success in conflict resolution, among other things, make them very different from their bottom position in the traditional socialist urban caste before the 1980s. Li Qiang (李强) showed that China has shifted from the traditional rural–urban bi-polar society to a rural–migrant–urban tri-polar society and that this tri-polar structure is likely to continue for some time.[43]

More than 20 years ago, migrant workers financed China's economic transformation. Today, they are financing China's political transformation into a more diverse society.

43 Li Qiang, *Migrant Workers and Social Stratification*.

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Appendix 1: **Urban Bias by Selected Factors (OLS, weighted)**

	Urban bias
Urban residents	*.081*
Migrant residents	*.025*
(Compared to rural residents)	
Female	*.018*
Party member	*−.038*
Han Chinese	*.048*
Age × 10	.002
Educ year	.000
Ind inc. yuan × 10k	.001
_cons	*.191*
Adj R^2	.067
N	4,659

Note:
Italic: p<.05.
Source:
2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

Appendix 2: **All Types of Disputes by Residential Status (weighted %)**

Type	**Rural**	**Migrant**	**Urban**	**Total**
Civil disputes				
Divorce	2.01	1.58	5.31	2.99
Heritage	0.96	0.75	0.80	0.89
Domestic violence	1.53	0.66	1.17	1.34
Old care	1.79	0.33	1.47	1.55
Medicare	0.99	2.43	0.40	0.94
Labour	7.90	6.02	3.72	6.44
Neighbour	*14.23*	*5.86*	*3.83*	10.25
Other	2.81	1.56	1.21	2.20
Economic disputes				
Sales	4.49	3.95	5.21	4.66
Debt	*18.67*	*38.16*	*21.68*	21.40
Real estate	3.48	2.82	2.76	3.19
Other	2.58	1.29	0.68	1.87
Administrative disputes				
Family planning	15.06	9.76	3.68	11.06
Land	1.40	1.10	22.67	7.93
Fees	2.01	18.85	5.06	10.48
Licence	0.96	2.44	3.69	2.25
Admin fine	*1.53*	*0.59*	*14.29*	7.16
Other	1.79	1.85	2.37	3.39
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N	1,600	246	823	2,671

Source:
2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

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Appendix 3: **Winning and Losing Dispute by Selected Characteristics (OLS, all disputants, weighted)**

	Winning	Losing
Migrant	*.032*	−.017
Urban	.005	*−.066*
Dispute: civil	*.074*	*−.074*
Dispute: econ	*.305*	*.297*
Dispute: admin	.009	.002
Age × 10	−.004	*−.007*
Female	*−.029*	.007
Education (imp)	.001	.000
Ind inc. yuan × 10k	*−.011*	*−.012*
Han Chinese	*−.046*	−.009
Party member	*−.035*	*−.050*
_cons	*.121*	*.150*
Adj R^2	.064	.052
N	2,462	2,462

Notes:

Italic: p<.05. Both migrant and urban compare to rural. We imputed the missing values of education by the respondent's age and income.

Source:

2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

Appendix 4: **Winning Dispute by Selected Characteristics within Each Residential Group (OLS, weighted)**

	Rural	Migrant	Urban
Soc network	−0.035	*0.573*	−0.177
Fam/relative	*0.046*	0.046	−0.023
Age × 10	0.006	*−0.028*	*−0.010*
Female	*−0.036*	*−0.167*	0.012
Educ year	*0.004*	0.005	−0.004
Ind inc. yuan ×10k	0.000	*0.025*	0.000
Han Chinese	*−0.051*	0.026	*−0.098*
Party member	−0.024	−0.152	−0.001
_cons	0.022	0.167	*0.268*
Adj R^2	0.129	0.315	0.128
N	1,278	125	466

Notes:

Italic: p<=.05. Dispute types are controlled but not shown.

Source:

2004 Institutionalization of Legal Reform Survey.

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Appendix 5.1: **Variables in Appendix 1**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
urbanbias	6163	.2726302	.1549606	0	1
urban	7714	.2071558	.4052944	0	1
migrant	7714	.044335	.2058516	0	1
rural	7714	.7485092	.4338981	0	1
female	7714	.5002593	.5000323	0	1
CCP	7714	.0693544	.2540723	0	1
Han	7714	.9312938	.2529703	0	1
age10	7714	4.100104	1.182189	1.8	6.6
educyr	6055	8.825268	2.797928	4	22

Appendix 5.2: **Variables in Table 3**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
official	9020	.1560976	.3629679	0	1
newofficial	9020	.3405765	.4739294	0	1
talk	9020	.3414634	.4742268	0	1
fight	9020	.025388	.1573093	0	1
migrant	9020	.0532151	.2244745	0	1
urban	9020	.2136364	.4098957	0	1
rural	9020	.7331486	.4423386	0	1
age10	9020	4.126918	1.187876	1.8	6.6
female	9020	.475388	.4994216	0	1
educyr	7155	8.848498	2.785947	4	22
indinc10k	8282	.2555351	1.141847	0	68.5
Han	9020	.9301552	.2548994	0	1
CCP	9020	.0672949	.2505459	0	1

Appendix 5.3: **Variables in Appendix 3 (weighted)**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
win	2671	.0738321	.1493356	0	1
lose	2671	.0852262	.1967609	0	1
migrant	2671	.0923149	.2895242	0	1
urban	2671	.3083893	.4619147	0	1
rural	2671	.5992958	.4901329	0	1
dispute:civl	2671	.0868081	.178206	0	1
dispute:econ	2671	.0521324	.1690616	0	1
dispute:adm	2671	.1010865	.2494248	0	1
age10	2671	4.35659	1.267983	1.8	6.6
female	2671	.4146575	.4927551	0	1
educimp	2671	7.085157	3.988577	0	20
indinc10k	2462	.3443815	.9888484	0	40
Han	2671	.9377225	.2417041	0	1
CCP	2671	.0649465	.2464775	0	1

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Appendix 5.4: **Variables in Appendix 4 (weighted)**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
rural					
win	1840	.069052	.1490183	0	1
soc network	1694	.0272026	.1232416	0	1
fam/relative	1694	.7025124	.1949898	0	.83
dispute:civl	1840	.1062945	.1962351	0	1
dispute:econ	1840	.0323409	.094733	0	1
dispute:adm	1840	.0326149	.0645339	0	.3
age10	1840	4.219636	1.15565	1.8	6.6
female	1840	.427297	.4948205	0	1
educ year	1452	8.008183	2.132679	4	12
ind inc yuan	1750	1022.183	4017.137	0	50000
Han Chinese	1840	.9300586	.2551176	0	1
Party member	1840	.0509319	.2199185	0	1
migrant					
win	235	.1446721	.1775087	0	.6666667
soc network	220	.2093108	.297353	0	.67
fam/relative	220	.5804579	.1856165	0	.83
dispute:civl	235	.0625359	.1278419	0	.5
dispute:econ	235	.2691353	.4377976	0	1
dispute:adm	235	.0674184	.1750969	0	.67
age10	235	4.508583	1.363287	1.9	6.4
female	235	.241603	.4289686	0	1
educ year	205	9.018854	1.868133	4	14
ind inc yuan	159	10129.55	21777.77	0	100000
Han Chinese	235	.9850416	.1216455	0	1
Party member	235	.003023	.0550155	0	1
urban					
win	596	.0619156	.134562	0	.67
soc network	556	.0083891	.0556764	0	.67
fam/relative	556	.7012283	.2015449	0	.83
dispute:civl	596	.0562057	.1464946	0	1
dispute:econ	596	.0256346	.0503	0	.2
dispute:adm	596	.2442262	.3933853	0	1
age10	596	4.577236	1.405303	1.8	6.5
female	596	.4418981	.4970298	0	1
educ year	541	11.12475	2.863368	4	19
ind inc yuan	553	6880.4	12370.68	0	400000
Han Chinese	596	.9384512	.2405362	0	1
Party member	596	.1107176	.3140457	0	1

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