

GEOG 337 Migration and Development in China

Often called the largest migration in human history, internal migration in China, driven by urbanization, is a crucial part of economic growth in the country. Chinese migrant workers have also been a major force in shaping the global economy in the last four decades. China has adopted an economic strategy premised on rapid industrialization based on a rural-urban dual socioeconomic system and created a gigantic army of super-exploitable labor, estimated to be about 170 million in total in 2019, about the same size of USA total laborforce. In this course, after a brief overview of China's recent history and geography, we will study the institutions and the state-created rural-urban segregation that formed the basis of that strategy. A central state tool is the household registration (*hukou*) system in regulating geographic mobility of population and access to social services. Before 1980, peasants were banned from going into cities and confined to growing food to support industrialization. Since the early 1980s, they were gradually allowed to enter the cities to work in low-paid industrial and service jobs but denied access to urban welfare and service. This huge pool of low-cost labor has enabled China to dominate the world's low-end manufacturing. It has also generated a new geography of production and social relations. A new middle class has emerged; so have large numbers of split families, with significant impacts on the life, work and opportunity structures of many Chinese, and serious implications for the world.



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Number of Credits: 5
Required Textbook: No

List of Topics to Cover:

1. Overview of China
2. Industrialization strategy and rural-urban divide
3. The *hukou* system and migration
4. Migration under Mao
5. Migrant labor and the "world's factory"
6. The geography of migration
7. Children of migrants
8. Migration and China's future

About the Course Developer and Instructor
Professor Chan is Professor of Geography at University of Washington. His main research focuses on China's cities, migration, employment, and the household registration system, and he has published extensively on those topics. He has also served as a Consultant for the United Nations, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and McKinsey & Co. on a number of policy projects related to China's migration and cities. His recent commentaries and interviews have appeared in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, The Economist, Seattle Times, South China Morning Post, BBC, China Radio International, Caixin, China Daily and other media in Asia and the USA. He received a BA and MSc (Urban Planning) from the University of Hong Kong and a PhD in Geography from University of Toronto. Visit his home page at <http://faculty.washington.edu/kwchan/>