

City Hukou Barriers and Hukou Inter marriages in Two Chinese Cities: Shanghai and Shenzhen¹

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Abstract

This paper explores how between-city variations in hukou barriers influence intermarriage between residents and migrants. Specifically, we compare hukou intermarriages in Shanghai and Shenzhen -- both cities have experienced significant economic growth and attracted large numbers of migrants, but Shanghai has hukou barriers for migrants than Shenzhen. Our results suggest that Shanghai has lower levels of hukou intermarriage and lower levels of hukou-education exchange than those in Shenzhen. These findings suggest that higher hukou barriers are associated with lower levels of intermarriage between residents and migrants.

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Introduction

China's recent accelerated urbanization had made migrants an important category of urban population. In 2013, 1 in 6 of Chinese population are migrants (China Floating Population Development Report 2014). In this context, the social integration of migrants has drawn both scholarly and public interests. Viewed as a maximum level of assimilation because it requires intimacy (Gordon 1964), intermarriages between migrants and residents symbolizes the social distance between the two groups and indicates the extent to which household registration (hukou) status serves as a social boundary in the marriage market (Li Yu's paper). Studies have shown that hukou status, especially urban/rural hukou distinction, is an important status valued in the marriage market (Qi and Niu 2012; Wang and He 2014; Li 2008).

Yet how another dimension of hukou status -- local/non-local hukou -- implies in the marriage market has been less studied. Since the 1990s, the hukou system has increasingly been localized. While the basic hukou policy continues to be universal, local government has gained more power to adjust benefits associated with hukou and define criterion for hukou conversion (Chan and Buckingham 2008). Hukou is an important tool used by city government to control migration flows and select labors (Zhang and Tao 2012). It is important to understand how between-city hukou variations influences the intermarriage between residents and migrants.

In this study, we compare the intermarriage between residents and migrants in two major migrant-receiving cities: Shanghai and Shenzhen. Since the economic reform in the 1980s, both cities have experience significant economic growth and attracted large numbers of migrants. However, these two cities adopt difference hukou policies for migrant inclusion. As an historically industrial city with a large number of population, Shanghai has very stringent hukou policies which exclude the large majority of migrants to obtain a local hukou and restrict the number of government-sponsored benefits eligible for non-hukou migrants (Qiu 2010). In contrast, Shenzhen is a newly developed city which to large extent welcomes migrants to work and stay (Ma 2005). In other words, the hukou barriers for migrants are much higher in Shanghai than in Shenzhen.

Hypotheses

Hukou barriers to migrants increases the perceived difference between residents and migrants and the saliency of hukou as a social boundary in the marriage market. Thus, as hukou barriers for migrants are higher in Shanghai than in Shenzhen, we expect *a lower level of hukou intermarriage (or a higher level of hukou homogamy) in Shanghai than in Shenzhen* (H1).

Hukou barriers also influence the probability of hukou as a status to be exchange with other status in the marriage market. As local hukou grants residents with privileged status compared to migrants, residents can exchange their hukou status with migrants who have better socioeconomic status (i.e. education). Here we propose two competing hypotheses about how hukou barriers are associated with the hukou-education exchange.

First, Social exchange theory suggests that the probability of exchanging a status with another depends on the value of one status in the marriage market. Higher hukou barriers increase the value of hukou to be exchanged in the market. Thus, as hukou barriers for migrants are higher in Shanghai than in Shenzhen, we expect *a higher level of hukou-education exchange in Shanghai than in Shenzhen* (H2a).

Second, as the homophily principle suggests that people tend to cross boundaries with a greater level of permeability. Hukou barriers reduce the permeability of hukou as a boundary thus reduces the likelihood to change with other status. Thus, as hukou barriers for migrants are higher in Shanghai than in Shenzhen, we expect *a lower level of hukou-education exchange in Shanghai than in Shenzhen* (H2b).

Data and Methods

To examine these hypotheses, we use the 20% sample of the 2005 mini-census. The 2005 mini-census is a 1% sample of Chinese population that recorded the population status at November 1, 2005. The survey adopts a three-stage stratified sampling procedure that sampled over 60,000 sampling units nationwide and then interviewed every member in those sampling units (about 13,000,000 respondents). For the city comparison, our analysis restricts to 102,756 respondents who were living in the city of Shanghai or Shenzhen at the time of the survey.

The 2005 mini-census collected information on educational attainment and hukou status for every household member. To obtain hukou and educational characteristics of both spouses, we further restrict the analysis to 61,117 currently-first-married respondents. Because the sample size does not allow us to only examine couples who got married within the last year, we limit our analysis to 9,052 respondents who got married within the past five years (i.e., between November 2000 and October 2005), in order to maximize the sample size while minimize the biases arising from changes in education or hukou after marriage and attrition due to divorce. The 20% sample is a random sub-sample of all respondents surveyed in the mini-census, so for some couples only one spouse was included in the 20% sample. In the end, our matched couple sample consists of 2,534 couples in which 1,817 couples were in Shanghai and 717 couples were in Shenzhen.

Log-linear models are used to compare educational and hukou assortative mating between Shanghai and Shenzhen (Gullickson and Torche 2014; Qian and Lichter 2007). Log-linear models allow us to examine the associations between husbands' and wives' educational attainment and hukou status while controlling for marginal distributions of these two characteristics. The log-linear model used here is constructed from five-way contingency tables of city (c), husband's hukou (i), wife's hukou (j), husband's education (k), and wife's education (l). We code Shanghai as the reference group (Shanghai = 0; Shenzhen = 1). Based on whether individuals had local hukou or not, we classify them into two categories: non-hukou migrants (0) and locals (1). Education is grouped into three levels: less than high school (1), high school (2), and some college or more (3).

Results

Descriptive results in Table 1 show hukou pairings of spouses by city. In Shanghai, about 47% of couples have two migrant spouses, while the percentage is more than 70% in Shenzhen. About 38% of couples involve two local spouses in Shanghai, whereas 14.5% of couples have two local spouses in Shenzhen. Clearly, individuals tend to marry within their hukou status group in both cities. Local-husband-migrant-wife couples are more likely to occur than migrant-husband-local-wife couples in both cities (13% versus 3% in Shanghai and 11% versus 4% in Shenzhen). The percentage of hukou homogamy is very similar in these two cities. Yet, we should interpret the results with caution, because the share of migrants is different in these two cities. The relative size of migrants and locals creates structural marital opportunities for individuals (Hou and Myles 2008). Log-linear analysis will allow us to examine the degree of hukou homogamy net of the compositional effects by controlling for marginal distributions of hukou status.

[Table 1 about here]

In Table 2, we present results based on a series of log-linear models. In model 1, we examine variation in hukou homogamy by city. Consistent with our expectation, homogamy is more pronounced in Shanghai: the odds of hukou homogamy are 5.37 and 3.97 times as high as the odds of hukou intermarriage in Shanghai and Shenzhen, respectively (Shanghai: $\beta = 1.68$, $\exp(\beta) = 5.37$, $p < 0.001$; Shenzhen: $\beta = 1.68 - 0.30 = 1.38$, $\exp(\beta) = 3.97$, $p < 0.001$). The significant interaction term between the hukou homogamy parameter and the city indicator reveals that the difference in the likelihood of homogamy between Shanghai and Shenzhen is statistically significant (dif. = 0.30, $p < 0.05$).

Model 2 examines changes in the odds of hukou intermarriage as migrant or local spouses' education changes from one level to another. The education of local spouses does not appear to be associated with their odds of hukou intermarriage, whereas when migrant spouses' education changes from high school to some college or above, the odds of hukou intermarriage increase by 148% for them ($\beta = 0.91$, $\exp(\beta) = 2.48$, $p < 0.05$). A change in education from less than high school to high school does not change the odds of hukou intermarriage for migrants.

In Model 3, we examine whether the relationship between spouse's education and hukou intermarriage differs between Shanghai and Shenzhen. Local spouses' education is not associated with their odds of hukou intermarriage and this relationship does not differ between the two cities. As migrant spouses' education changes from high school to some college or above, their odds of intermarriage increase to the same extent in Shanghai and Shenzhen. In contrast, as migrant spouses' education changes from less than high school to high school, their odds of intermarriage increase significantly only in Shenzhen ($\beta = 0.02 + 1.81 = 1.83$, $p < 0.001$) but not in Shanghai ($\beta = 0.02$, $p > 0.05$), and the difference is highly significant (dif. = 1.81, $p < 0.001$).

In Model 4, we examine the dyadic exchange which measures how the joint educational characteristics of two spouses condition the likelihood of inter- hukou marriage. Consistent with our expectation: we find an incentive to local-spouse-hypergamy and

suggestive evidence of a disincentive to local-spouse-hypogamy. Local spouses are 70% more likely to marry a more-educated spouse within inter- hukou marriages than within intra- hukou marriages ($\beta = 0.53$, $\exp(\beta) = 1.70$, $p < 0.01$). Despite being nonsignificant, the direction of the coefficient for local-spouse-hypogamy is negative as we expect: local spouses are 21% less likely to marry a less-educated spouse within inter-Hukou marriages than within intra-Hukou marriages ($\beta = -0.23$, $\exp(\beta) = 0.79$, $p > 0.05$).

To examine variation in the dyadic exchange by city, we add interaction terms between local-spouse-hypergamy and local-spouse-hypogamy, respectively, and the city indicator. We find that the disincentive to local-spouse-hypogamy is more pronounced in Shenzhen than in Shanghai. Specifically, the local-spouse-hypogamy parameter is not significant in Shanghai ($\beta = -0.03$, $p > 0.05$), whereas in Shenzhen, local spouses are 56% less likely to marry a less-educated spouse within inter- hukou marriages than within intra- hukou marriages ($\beta = -0.56$, $\exp(\beta) = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, similar to the difference in the market exchange between Shanghai and Shenzhen, the dyadic exchange appears to be more pronounced in Shenzhen than in Shanghai.

[Table 2 about here]

Summary

Hukou influences the spouse selection in important ways on Chinese marriage market. We compare hukou intermarriage in Shanghai and Shenzhen, two major migrant-receiving cities in China. Due to different city history and development strategies, Shanghai has stricter hukou policies than Shenzhen to limit and exclude migrants. Our findings suggest, in both cities, hukou is a status barrier in marriage markets. The stricter hukou policies in Shanghai than in Shenzhen are also associated with lower levels of hukou intermarriage as well as lower levels of hukou-education exchange in the former than the latter.

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Table 1. Percentage Distributions of Husbands’ and Wives’ Hukou, by City

Husbands’ Hukou	Shanghai			Shenzhen		
	Wives’ Hukou			Wives’ Hukou		
	Migrants	Locals	Total	Migrants	Locals	Total
Migrants	46.56	3.14	49.70	70.43	4.32	74.76
Locals	12.49	37.81	50.30	10.74	14.50	25.24
Total	59.05	40.95	100.00	81.17	18.83	100.00
			(N = 1,817)			(N = 717)

Table 2. Select Parameters from Log-linear Models

Parameters	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Hukou homogamy	1.68*** (0.08)				
Shenzhen * Hukou homogamy	-0.30* (0.14)				
Migrants: high school vs. less than high school		0.33 (0.17)	0.02 (0.19)		
Migrants: some college or above vs. high school		0.91* (0.18)	0.95** (0.23)		
Locals: high school vs. less than high school		0.16 (0.19)	0.30 (0.19)		
Locals: some college or above vs. high school		0.08 (0.16)	0.00 (0.19)		
Shenzhen * (Migrants: high school vs. less than high school)			1.81** (0.50)		
Shenzhen * (Migrants: some college or above vs. high school)			-0.21 (0.34)		
Shenzhen * (Locals: high school vs. less than high school)			-0.72 (0.48)		
Shenzhen * (Locals: some college or above vs. high school)			0.29 (0.34)		
Local-spouse-hypergamy				0.53** (0.18)	0.54* (0.21)
Local-spouse-hypogamy				-0.23 (0.14)	-0.03 (0.16)
Shenzhen * Local-spouse-hypergamy					-0.05 (0.36)
Shenzhen * Local-spouse-hypogamy					-0.78* (0.31)

Note: Full models are available upon request.

