

Urbanisation, migration and social policy: Asian perspectives

Sarah Cook

WIEGO Research Conference, November 2017

- How do rapid urbanization and migration impact on social policy needs and financing for women informal workers and their families?
- What are the big conceptual and empirical issues for WIEGO?
- Asian perspectives - **China** as key reference
 - **Concepts, definition, data and interpretation**
 - **Informality largely viewed as phenomenon of migrant worker**

Migration, urbanization, informality

- Diverse patterns
- Domestic and international mobility
- Huge numbers...
- Megacities, small towns, periurban...
- Ecology and hierarchies of informality

Migrants face informality of ...

- employment / work
- housing, space
- access to public/private goods and services
- security, status, rights

In contexts of staggering inequality – wealth and power

Implications for social policy

Needs?

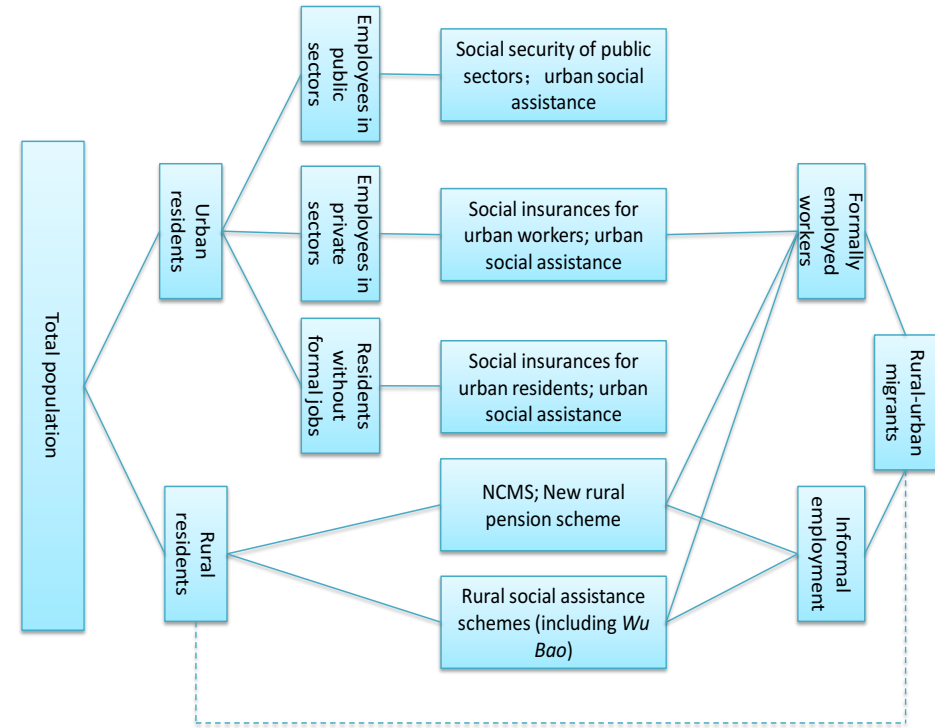
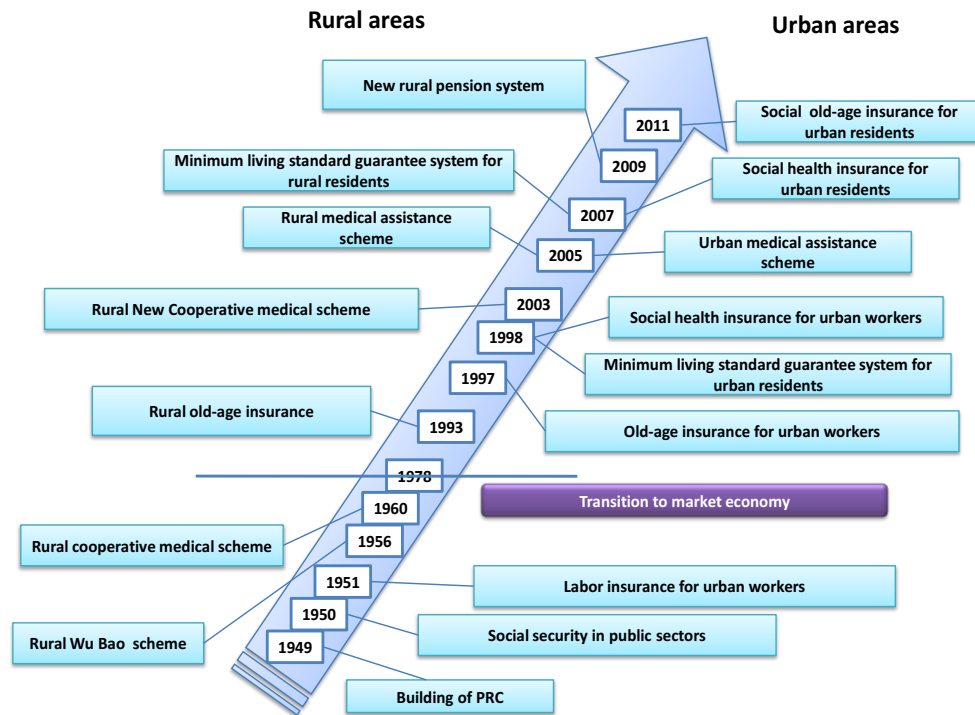
- Security – legal status and protection, **physical**
 - Access to public goods / space
 - **Reproduction, care**
 - Work, income
 - Housing, transport
 - Social services – health, education
- Informal social protection
 - Family, community and networks
 - Wide range of economic, social, other policies can provide or undermine social protection – *'functional equivalents'* and *institutional complementarities*
 - Functions of social policy: *need/protection, promotion, reproduction, distribution, cohesion*
 - Formal social protection in absence of other forms of security?

Access to social protection

- Work
- Residence
- Need (targeted)
- Right / citizenship (universal)
- Contributory
- Non-contributory
- Dual/multiple exclusions for migrants in situations of informality
- Barriers to formal SP:
 - Access, identification, design,
 - Portability, finance – contributions, cost (health, pensions)
 - Administrative boundaries, jurisdictions
 - Trust in system
 - Gaps – maternity, care...

Expansion of social protection in China

(Wang Zhen 2013)



Logic of social policy expansion in China

- Social stability (inclusion)
- Developmental / productivist (E Asia)
 - State sector restructuring
 - Economic restructuring – demand/consumption
- Crisis management 2008 – migrant worker as ‘shock absorber’
- Newer trends
 - End of labour surplus – facilitate migration
 - Integration of second generation migrants
 - Social investment?
- Demographic – aging: care and reproduction?
- (Diverse forms of provision – non-state actors)

(Some) Issues and challenges...

- Double vulnerability – what does protection look like? What kind of risks need to be covered?
- Protection – legal, social, other...
- Promotion:
 - removal of obstacles – relationships with K, state (local, central, different parts of..) and other citizens... (stigma/discrimination)
 - Investments – public goods, social infrastructure, individual
- Social security systems – rethinking needs and risks for 21C economies – work, aging, health, **reproduction/demographic, environmental...**
- EA – developmental SP: land, housing, education ... failed to address demography/gender ... in context of '**national capital**'
- Struggles for inclusion

Future research

1. Links between (macro) production and social reproduction systems
 - Reconceptualise critical links between social and economic systems/policies.. Including the hh economy and system of social reproduction as central part of the economy (engage with the right economists!) – potential and pitfalls of ‘delinking’?
2. Understanding emerging Asian social welfare/security/informality regimes...
 - Learning from variations, alternative pathways / trajectories, construction, state project and role of capital, negotiated over time – creation or institutionalization of forms of inclusion/exclusion... ; New and emerging risks, constraints
 - Current problem with SP evaluation methods, programmes vs historical/institutional analysis
3. Who pays for what?
 - Social investment and (more inclusive) development...
 - Financing of public and social goods and services; reproduction
 - Contribution (tax/contribution or hidden) of informal/migrant workers to state construction, capital..