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## Marriage chances and international migration from Fujian to the US, 1978–2000

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the effect of migration on marriage for Fujianese international migrants to the US during a period of mass China–US migration, 1978–2000. It sheds light on significant gender differences in terms of the impact of migration on marriage. Data from the Chinese International Migration Project on Chinese international migration to the US was used, with detailed information on respondents' migration and marriage history. Discrete-time event history techniques are employed allowing for correlation across migration and marriage at both the individual and household levels. Results show that migration decreased men's marriage chances, while it only temporarily disrupted those of women. The negative effect of migration on marriage for men could be due to the differing educational levels for male and female migrants, which makes assortative matching less likely at destination, especially for lower educated men. The results also show that migrants have a higher probability of marriage than nonmigrants.

### Introduction

Both labor migration and marriage decision-making tend to occur in the young-adult stage of one's life (Stark 1988). Exploring the effect of migration on marriage helps in understanding how these two vital life events interact with each other. This paper investigates the gendered effect of

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international migration on marriage and the interrelationship between these two events. The research question for this study was: how does international migration from China's Fujian province to the US affect men and women differently when it comes to the likelihood of their marrying? This paper adds a country case to the study of the gendered effect of migration on marriage in the context of Fujianese international migration to the US during the period 1978–2000.

Studies on the effect of migration on marriage have revealed different effects. Jang, Casterline and Snyder (2014) found no substantial impact of migration on marriage, while Jampaklay (2006), among others, pointed out a positive effect of migration on marriage. These seemingly contradicting conclusions suggest the need to examine the timing of marriage and migration from a life-course perspective, which may offer a comprehensive insight into the simultaneous decision-making of family formation (Kulu and Milewski 2007). Identifying the relationship between migration and marriage also requires taking into consideration various time periods when substantial changes to China's emigration policies were introduced at both the origin and destination. Theoretically, a stricter emigration policy may make migration more costly and further decrease one's marriage chances, especially for migrant men. Furthermore, existing literature studying the correlation between migration and marriage has not sufficiently accounted for common factors that influence the decision-making process for both marriage and migration. More specifically, it is very likely that there are unobservable personal characteristics that determine both events since decisions about them are made during the same period of one's life, the early twenties.

Moreover, previous scholarship on the effect of migration on marriage has tended not to consider the different effects of migration on marriage for men and women separately (for exceptions, see, e.g., Cerrutti and Massey 2001, and more recently, Mu and Yeung 2020). This gendered effect is important because men and women migrate for various reasons and face different challenges in the labor market and marriage market at the destination. From the perspective of ideational and economic factors involved in migration, three theoretical dimensions were found: (1) economic versus family reasons: men more often migrate for economic reasons while women are more likely to migrate for family reunification (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; Fan 1999) or to build up a "trousseau" in anticipation of future marriage (Hertrich and Lesclingand, 2012); (2) modern family values versus traditional culture: while the traditional marriage norm in China involves "women marrying up" ("jia ru gao men" in Chinese) or "matching doors" ("men dang hu dui" in Chinese), a metaphor for the importance of parents' socioeconomic status in shaping the choice of partner (Hu 2016), migration may expose migrants to more

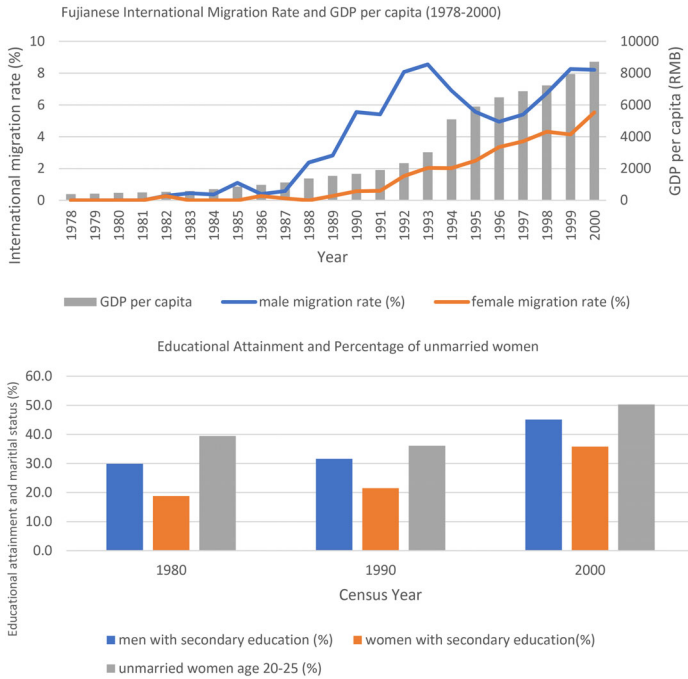
cosmopolitan and modern family ideals, including the withdrawal of parents' influence from their children's partner choice; and (3) uncertainty versus convenience: while marriage in China usually takes place only after the male has accumulated sufficient economic resources to start a family (Oppenheimer 2003), migration is a process full of economic uncertainties and difficulties, and marriage sometimes serves as a "bridge" for migrating, thus reducing the uncertainty. Both internal and international migration may facilitate marriage: a person may join their partner's household in another county or city in China to change *hukou* status, for example, from rural to urban (Fan and Huang 1998), or they may marry someone in the US and thus migrate with a spousal visa.<sup>1</sup>

This paper covers a long period of time in the history of China-US migration, from 1978 to 2000. During this period, migration-related laws at both the origin and destination have undergone substantial changes. China has tightened its emigration policy in 1992, even amending laws to punish smuggling. Even so, the flow of emigrants from Fujian province increased dramatically from 1978 to 2000, making Fujian a leading migrant-sending province in the mid-1990s (Liang 2001; see Figure 1). Some determinants of international migration from China underwent substantial change during this period. For example, while in 1990, educational level was a key selector for emigration; by 1995, a high level of education was less of a factor (Liang 2001). The migration context studied in this paper is an unique case as the population experienced significant policy changes in the fields of both out-migration (China's tightened border policy) and marriage timing (e.g., China's Marriage Law amended in 1980). Nonetheless, the results can also shed light on other migrant groups who tend to arrive at the destination at a young age, very likely undocumented and already having a network at the destination.

Results show that the effect of migration on marriage is gendered. Migration predicts a lower likelihood of marrying for men but has no significant impact on marriage chances for women. It could be that men encounter matching barriers after arriving at the destination because international male migrants are selective of lower educational attainment, while female migrants usually achieve at least a senior high school education.<sup>2</sup> Female migrants who departed China with a spousal visa are more likely to marry and to migrate during the same year. While it is not surprising that marriage comes shortly after engagement, the simultaneous occurrence of both events may be due to the legal process related to migration to the US.

## Theoretical perspectives

The neoclassical theory of factor mobility argues that individuals move because of interregional wage differentials (Cadwallader 1992), and the



**Figure 1.** Self-calculation of international migration rate (%) for males and females from Fujian province based on our data, 1978–2000. China’s GDP per capita (in RMB), the percentage of males and females with at least secondary education and percentage of unmarried females age 20–25 in China is from the National Statistics Bureau.

increased wage after migration helps to improve one’s “price” in the marriage market (Oppenheimer, Kalmijn, and Lim 1997). For example, Becker’s “competition in the marriage market” theory suggests that economic resources offer better chances of marriage (Becker 1991; Raley, Durden, and Wildsmith 2004). Empirically, Jampaklay (2006) found that internal migrants in Thailand have a higher probability of marrying compared with nonmigrants, and Landale (1994) found that Puerto Rican female migrants are more likely to form unions early and to enter informal unions than nonmigrants due to migrant selection of social origins. However, the opposite can be true, too: long-distance moves may make union formation less likely (Guzzo 2006), based on search theories in economics, which argue that the search process in the marriage market involves uncertainty. This is because migration is a stressful event that might involve separation of the couple for a considerable period (Frank and Wildsmith 2005). A risk-tolerant individual, as is the case of Fujianese international migrants to Europe (Thunø and Pieke 2005), ascribes greater value to an acceptable partner, so he or she will be less likely to find a suitable partner or succeed at a later age (Schmidt 2008).

Also, geographic separation due to migration impedes postmarital socialization, resulting in more reliance on the selection process and hence a postponed marriage (Oppenheimer 1988). Dávila and Mora (2001) found that Mexican immigrants in the US were less likely to marry within 5 years of migration in the 1990s than their counterparts did in the 1980s. This inconclusion partially results partly from the difficulty in disentangling whether migration affects marriage or marriage affects migration, but also due to insubstantial empirical evidence for a gendered effect of migration on marriage.

### **Men's economic motivation and women's modern family values**

We hypothesize that male migrants gain better chances of marriage due to an improvement in their socioeconomic status (Jang et al. 2014; Parrado 2004), while female migrants delay marriage because they become empowered by the migration process. In China, marriages have increasingly been associated with socioeconomic status, especially education, since the 1978 economic reform (Yu and Xie 2015; Kalmijn 1991; Choi and Mare 2012). Migrating for better marriage markets should be more applicable to Chinese men. As such, one expects to find that *men's marriage chances decrease after migration. (Hypothesis 1a: male migrants' economic motivation for migration)*. Moreover, men with lower education are even more disadvantaged in the marriage market at the destination since traditional values suggest that women should marry into to a family of similar rank or marry up (Hu 2016; *Hypothesis 1b: male migrants with lower education*).

Female migrants normally migrate for family reasons—their marriage decision-making depends on the opinions of family elders (e.g., in rural Mali as shown in Hertrich and Lesclingand 2012). However, after migration, women free themselves from the control of family elders over their marriage choice and embrace “modern family values.” The hypothesis of empowerment of youth due to migration holds for young women but not for men, since men's union formation poses less of a challenge to family elders. Women's empowerment is likely to extend the search process, ultimately leading to delayed marriage among Chinese female migrants. One expects to see that *for women, international migration leads to marriage postponement (Hypothesis 2: female migrants' modern family values)*.

### **The simultaneity of marriage and migration**

The decisions of migration and marriage may be taken simultaneously or within a very short time because migration and marriage are often linked events. Short-distance migration in particular is often undertaken for marriage-related reasons in Germany (Mulder and Wagner 1993), the

context of rural-urban migration in France (Courgeau 1989) and the UK (Flowerdew and Al-Hamad 2004). In China, the migrating-for-marriage theory finds evidence in the case of internal migration, where female migrants at marriage age migrate from inland China to the coastal provinces (Fan and Huang 1998). This is because internal migration for marriage reasons is treated as a permanent move by the state, and the migrating wife is granted urban *hukou*, that is, official registration status, which grants access to various social benefits in more developed areas, thus achieving greater social mobility<sup>3</sup> (Fan 1999). Marrying to gain urban *hukou* in rural-urban migration is parallel to obtaining legal migration status abroad through marriage for international migrants as in both cases, marriage alleviates migration frictions. Marrying in the same year as migration reflects the urgency of obtaining the marriage paperwork to be eligible for family migration. This holds for women but less so for men due to the cultural norm of women avoiding hypogamy in terms of socioeconomic status including *hukou*. In other words, we should observe that *marriage migration, that is, migrating the same year as marrying, is more likely for women than men* (Hypothesis 3: convenience theory).

### ***The disruption effect of migration on marriage***

The short-term effect of migration on marriage may be negative since new arrivals need time to adapt to the new environment and meet marriageable mates (Jang et al. 2014), according to a disruption effect or uncertainty theory. A negative disruption effect is temporary because migrants are adaptable to their new environment in the long run (Carlson 1985). In other words, the likelihood of marriage eventually recovers and catches up with that of nonmigrants once the disruption effect of migration disappears (Jang et al. 2014). Potential reasons for the temporarily negative effect of migration on marriage include that the migrant needs time to build a life, overcome social barriers, etc. Such priorities may impede a smooth process in finding a partner at the destination or bringing one from the home country. If the disruption effect holds for Chinese migrating to the US, we should find that *marriage probability decreases around the year of migration and recovers as the number of years at the destination increases* (Hypothesis 4: uncertainty theory). However, this will not be the case for marriage migration (see Hypothesis 3).

### ***The correlation between unobserved heterogeneity of marriage and migration***

Jang et al. (2014) demonstrated that there is unobserved heterogeneity among individuals affecting both migration and marriage. Failure to

include these factors in common may lead to a biased estimation of the effect of migration on marriage. This unobservable component is usually constant over one's life course, for example, value orientations that lead to either higher or lower migration and marriage probability. For instance, Jampaklay (2006) found that internal Thai migrants tend to have value orientations that translate into to higher probability of marriage compared with nonmigrants. These values could be among the following, which De Jong (2000) found to be related to migration decision-making (and may also affect marriage decision-making): a desire for obtaining a higher income, joining family members, etc. This unobserved heterogeneity is context-specific: for example, immigrants from Guangdong to Hong Kong have less occupational attainment than both stayers at the origin and natives at the destination (Zhang and Ye 2018). Fujian internal migrants were better educated than nonmigrants, while international migrants to the US did not have a significantly higher education than nonmigrants because their expected occupation in the US did not require a high level education (Liang and Miao 2013).

We know little about how long-distance (international) migration interacts with union formation, but it could be more relevant to marriage decision-making than short-distance migration, where the day-to-day space does not change a lot (Guzzo 2006). Unlike Mexicans, who could migrate to the US temporarily, Chinese migrants, who originated mainly from Guangdong and Fujian province, stayed in the US for indefinite periods of time (Portes and Zhou 2012) and those who did not return to China may consider migration and marriage as simultaneous household decision-making events. This household decision-making involved a long-term family migration strategy that led to higher likelihood of both migration and marriage for both genders. So we should observe *a component of unobserved heterogeneity that leads to a positive correlation between marriage and migration* (Hypothesis 5).

## International migration and marriage for the Chinese

Since 1978, the international migration rate increased dramatically from almost zero to 9% for men and from almost zero to over 5% for women (see Figure 1), and it became the second largest source of migrants after Guangdong, started to send migrants to North America in the early 20th century, but the migration flow accelerated in the late 1980s (Portes and Zhou 2012) despite of China's strengthening of its migration-related policies on April 1992 and March 1997, see Chin (2003) for details. The destination in our study, New York City, is unique as a major migrant-receiving city because it is highly diverse in ethnic groups and a relatively

high proportion of its migrants are Asian (Liang and Ito 1999) since the eliminating the national origins quota system (Wolgin 2015).

From 1980 to 2000, the proportion of both men and women with at least secondary education increased, but the gender gap in education persisted (see Figure 1). Marriage rate and total fertility rate started to drop dramatically—the proportion of unmarried women age 20–25 increased from less than 40% in 1980 to about 50% in 2000 (see Figure 1), indicating a delay in marriage timing. The 1980 Marriage Law, revised from the 1950 Marriage Law, favored late marriage and childbirth. Even before that, the “later-longer-fewer” family planning policy enacted in the mid-1970s suggested that individuals should marry later in life, that is, 25 years old for men and 23 years old for women. Overall, from 1978 to 2000, Fujian province experienced strong economic growth (Pieke et al. 2004) and heavy international migration, which brought considerable overseas remittances, accumulated social capital, and pronounced demographic transitions, for example, delayed marriage.<sup>4</sup>

## Data and methods

The data was collected by the Chinese International Migration Project from eight villages well known for sending migrants abroad from Fujian province to the US, especially New York City (Liang 2001). The data is representative of residents in migrants-sending villages in Fujian (Liang et al. 2008), where the emigration rate climbed dramatically from 1% in the 1980s to 10% in the 2000s among the Fujianese population (see Figure 1), see Liang et al. (2008) for a review of the data source. The Chinese International Migration Project took place between October 2002 and March 2003. It collected information on around 1,800 households and 10,000 individuals. These households are normally extended households, which involves two or three generations living together. The distribution of the number of members in these households is shown in the Supplementary Appendix in Table A.3.<sup>5</sup> In this study, complete information on each variable included is available for 1,716 households and 4,891 individuals born between 1960 and 1985 who were still at their marriageable ages at the survey year and whose marriage and migration events took place during the period of economic liberalization, 1978–2003. Observation of the life history of individuals are censored at 43 and not 50, because even for the 1950s cohort, that is, people born between 1950 and 1959, there were no marriages after age 43. This is perhaps because only first-time marriages were included, and first-time marriage normally happens quite early in China.<sup>6</sup> International migration is defined as staying in the US for at least 1 year. Only the migration where the US was the destination country is included in the analysis.<sup>7</sup>

The data provides retrospective information on year of outmigration, time spent at the destination, and year of return for the first/second migration<sup>8</sup> to the US. I constructed two data files in person-year format. One data file records the first migration to the US, by following an individual from age 18 to age at migration. This file includes individuals who are at risk of migration (i.e., living in China). Observation of the first marriage is saved in a second data file which follows individuals from age 18 until their first marriage. This data file includes all unmarried people age 18 who are at risk of marriage. At the beginning of each process (age 18), all individuals in the sample are at risk of experiencing both processes. Observation of individuals' life course stop at age 43 or age at the time of the survey in both data files.

The life-course approach and event history analysis help in the examination of simultaneous decision-making (Kulu and Milewski 2007). One typically considers that some unobserved heterogeneity may influence both events. Baizán, Aassve, and Billari (2003) confirmed the existence of a strong selection effect that influences both the processes of first union formation and first birth. Unobserved values are a potential source of heterogeneity among individuals, including constant personal traits such as value orientations, attitudes toward gender roles, behavior, intention, etc. (Baizán, Aassve, and Billari 2003; Lillard 1993). To address them, a discrete-time event history model was applied with a parametric model that involves unobserved heterogeneity to capture the correlation between marriage and migration. Observations are on two levels, individual and household, and an individual may have several lines of records, each representing one person-year. Two equations are included, one for marriage conditional on migration and the other for migration conditional on marriage (e.g., see Kulu and Steele 2013). The single-process model considers international migration and marriage as independent events, while multiple processes model the two events as interdependent and consider that some characteristics might affect both processes. The two equations of international migration and marriage are modelled jointly with two different error terms,  $\varepsilon$  (Equation 1) and  $\lambda$  (Equation 2):

$$\ln \left\{ \frac{\Pr(y_i^{Mig} = 1 | X_i)}{1 - \Pr(y_i^{Mig} = 1 | X_i)} \right\} = \beta_1 x_{it} + \beta_2 w_{it} + \varepsilon_i + \varepsilon_h \quad (1)$$

$$\ln \left\{ \frac{\Pr(y_i^{Mar} = 1 | X_i)}{1 - \Pr(y_i^{Mar} = 1 | X_i)} \right\} = \beta_1 x_{it} + \beta_2 w_{it} + \lambda_i + \lambda_h \quad (2)$$

where the subscript  $i$  refers to the individual,  $h$  refers to the household, and  $t$  to each time unit, that is, 1 year.  $X_i$  denotes a vector of covariates,  $x_{it}$  denotes the marital or migration status variable, and  $w_{it}$  is a set of

control variables. The variance components are fixed at 2, shown in the main results (Tables 1 and 2), while the sensitivity tests for different variance values are presented in Table A.4 in the Appendix. The individual-level random variables  $\varepsilon$  and  $\lambda$  are assumed to have a joint bivariate normal distribution:

$$\begin{pmatrix} \varepsilon \\ \lambda \end{pmatrix} \sim N \left( \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} \sigma_{\varepsilon}^2 & \rho_{\varepsilon\lambda} \\ \rho_{\varepsilon\lambda} & \sigma_{\lambda}^2 \end{pmatrix} \right)$$

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for all the independent variables for men and women. There are two data files, one on marriage and the other on migration. In the migration data file, some of these time-varying variables, that is, China–US migration policies and marital status 1 year earlier, are shown in person-years. This is the same for the variable of migration status in the marriage data file. The paper covers both migrants and nonmigrants. The migrants sample includes both those who were already married before migration and those who married after migration. Variables of interest are marital and migration status. The analysis is based on migration status, meaning whether the individual was living in China or the US in a given year. Migration status is coded 1 if the individual is in the US that year and 0 if not. Marital status is coded in a similar way: 0 represents unmarried, and 1 married. Control variables include individual-level demographic indicators such as age, sex, birth cohort, educational attainment, and household characteristics including migration network, that is, having a household member abroad or not, and positional power, that is, having a household member as a cadre or not. All these control variables are time-varying except for sex and birth cohort.

Educational attainment is a time-varying variable that is constructed based on the Chinese education system, time-varying age, education status—that is, primary school, junior high school, and senior high school and above. The variable of positional power was coded 0 if no one in the same household has ever been a cadre in a given year and 1 if someone has. Migration-related policies were coded as 1 for years earlier than 1992, when there was very little in the way of border control, 2 for 1992–1997 when a tightening of controls was formally enacted, and 3 for post-1997, when the law was amended to include penalties for smuggling.

## Results

Figure 2 and Table 4 provide descriptive results regarding the survival function from age 18 to 50, the proportion of population who migrated and married, and the distribution of typical marriage and migration sequences for the whole Fujianese population. From the theories presented above and the descriptive statistics, we have reason to believe that

**Table 1.** Marriage probability by migration status with unobserved heterogeneity at both individual and household level for men.

|                                                              | Men single process |              | Men multiprocess |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| Equation 1—international migration                           |                    |              |                  |                |
| Constant                                                     | 0.00               | 0.00–0.01*** | 0.00             | 0.00–0.00***   |
| Age                                                          | 1.23               | 1.11–1.37*** | 3.16             | 2.69–3.71***   |
| Age squared                                                  | 1.00               | 0.99–1.00*** | 0.98             | 0.98–0.99***   |
| Birth Cohort (Ref. born 1960–1964)                           |                    |              |                  |                |
| Born 1965–1969                                               | 1.47               | 1.21–1.78*** | 3.01             | 1.96–4.62***   |
| Born 1970–1974                                               | 2.10               | 1.62–2.73*** | 8.28             | 5.02–13.63***  |
| Born 1975–1980                                               | 3.28               | 2.28–4.71*** | 16.30            | 8.94–29.69***  |
| Born 1980–1985                                               | 4.00               | 2.47–6.47*** | 18.31            | 8.36–40.09***  |
| Educational level (Ref. at most primary)                     |                    |              |                  |                |
| Junior high school                                           | 1.05               | 0.92–1.20    | 1.18             | 0.85–1.63      |
| Senior high school                                           | 0.79               | 0.66–0.95**  | 0.59             | 0.39–0.89**    |
| Have household member once being cadre                       | 1.07               | 0.92–1.24    | 1.11             | 0.82–1.51      |
| China's boarder control policy (Ref. little boarder control) |                    |              |                  |                |
| Official document on tightening controls 1992                | 1.32               | 1.03–1.69**  | 1.79             | 1.30–2.48***   |
| Law amendment on penalties for smuggling                     | 1.07               | 0.75–1.52    | 1.89             | 1.19–3.00***   |
| Marital status in the previous year (Ref. unmarried)         | 1.23               | 1.04–1.46**  | 0.68             | 0.52–0.89***   |
| Equation 2—marriage                                          |                    |              |                  |                |
| Constant                                                     | 0.00               | 0.00–0.00*** | 0.00             | 0.00–0.00***   |
| Age                                                          | 5.87               | 4.79–7.19*** | 21.42            | 15.55–29.51*** |
| Age squared                                                  | 0.97               | 0.97–0.97*** | 0.96             | 0.95–0.96***   |
| Birth Cohort (Ref. born 1960–1964)                           |                    |              |                  |                |
| Born 1965–1969                                               | 0.85               | 0.73–1.01*   | 0.85             | 0.56–1.30      |
| Born 1970–1974                                               | 0.55               | 0.47–0.65*** | 0.27             | 0.18–0.41***   |
| Born 1975–1980                                               | 0.30               | 0.25–0.37*** | 0.07             | 0.04–0.11***   |
| Born 1980–1985                                               | 0.03               | 0.01–0.09*** | 0.00             | 0.00–0.02***   |
| Educational level (Ref. at most primary)                     |                    |              |                  |                |
| Junior high school                                           | 0.96               | 0.83–1.11    | 0.90             | 0.63–1.28      |
| Senior high school                                           | 0.74               | 0.63–0.88*** | 0.43             | 0.28–0.66***   |
| Migration status (Ref. nonmigrated)                          |                    |              |                  |                |
| Year of international migration                              | 0.37               | 0.17–0.78*** | 0.19             | 0.08–0.47***   |
| (continued)                                                  |                    |              |                  |                |

*(continued)*

Table 1. Continued.

|                                                                                    | Men single process |              | Men multiprocess |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Internationally migrated                                                           | 0.60               | 0.47–0.76*** | 0.13             | 0.08–0.23*** |
| Junior high school * year of migration                                             | 2.39               | 1.01–5.63**  | 3.12             | 1.09–8.91**  |
| Senior high school * year of migration                                             | 1.82               | 0.59–5.59    | 2.31             | 0.57–9.39    |
| Junior high school * migrated                                                      | 0.96               | 0.71–1.29    | 0.92             | 0.49–1.75    |
| Senior high school * migrated                                                      | 1.53               | 1.05–2.23**  | 2.31             | 1.01–5.29**  |
| Standard deviations and correlation between heterogeneity components (error terms) |                    |              |                  |              |
| Standard deviation of unobserved factor on individual level, migration             |                    |              | 2                |              |
| Standard deviation of unobserved factor on individual level, marriage              |                    |              | 2                |              |
| Correlation between migration and marriage on individual level                     |                    |              | 0.46***          |              |
| Standard deviation of unobserved factor on household level, migration              |                    |              | 2                |              |
| Standard deviation of unobserved factor on household level, marriage               |                    |              | 2                |              |
| Log-likelihood                                                                     | –9.568             |              | –9.505           |              |

Note. \* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . The dependent variables of Equations 1 and 2 are the likelihood of the international migration and marriage for men. The standard deviation of the heterogeneity components for migration and marriage at both household and individual level and their correlation are presented in “Standard deviation and correlation of heterogeneity components” panel at the end of the table.

**Table 2.** Single and multiprocess discrete-time event history models predicting the odds of migration and marriage on both individual and household level for women.

|                                                              | Women single process |               | Women multiprocess |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Equation 1—international migration                           |                      |               |                    |                |
| Constant                                                     | 0.00                 | 0.00–0.00***  | 0.00               | 0.00–0.00***   |
| Age                                                          | 1.94                 | 1.65–2.29***  | 5.37               | 4.18–6.91***   |
| Age squared                                                  | 0.99                 | 0.99–0.99***  | 0.97               | 0.97–0.98***   |
| Birth Cohort (Ref. born 1960–1964)                           |                      |               |                    |                |
| Born 1965–1969                                               | 0.68                 | 0.49–0.96**   | 1.03               | 0.57–1.86      |
| Born 1970–1974                                               | 0.66                 | 0.44–1.01*    | 2.36               | 1.27–4.42***   |
| Born 1975–1980                                               | 0.89                 | 0.52–1.54     | 7.82               | 3.53–17.30***  |
| Born 1980–1985                                               | 1.18                 | 0.59–2.38     | 15.07              | 5.45–41.67***  |
| Educational level (Ref. at most primary)                     |                      |               |                    |                |
| Junior high school                                           | 1.34                 | 1.11–1.62***  | 1.84               | 1.26–2.70***   |
| Senior high school                                           | 1.09                 | 0.86–1.39     | 1.30               | 0.79–2.14      |
| Have household member once being cadre                       | 1.65                 | 1.39–1.96***  | 2.10               | 1.52–2.92***   |
| China's boarder control policy (Ref. little boarder control) |                      |               |                    |                |
| Official document on tightening controls 1992                | 7.40                 | 4.62–11.85*** | 6.21               | 3.80–10.17***  |
| Law amendment on penalties for smuggling                     | 9.64                 | 5.15–18.03*** | 10.48              | 5.30–20.73***  |
| Marital status in the previous year (Ref. unmarried)         | 0.34                 | 0.26–0.43***  | 0.14               | 0.09–0.21***   |
| Equation 2—marriage                                          |                      |               |                    |                |
| Constant                                                     | 0.00                 | 0.00–0.00***  | 0.00               | 0.00–0.00***   |
| Age                                                          | 5.40                 | 4.21–6.94***  | 30.29              | 21.20–43.27*** |
| Age squared                                                  | 0.97                 | 0.96–0.97***  | 0.95               | 0.94–0.96***   |
| Birth Cohort (Ref. born 1960–1964)                           |                      |               |                    |                |
| Born 1965–1969                                               | 0.78                 | 0.65–0.94***  | 0.56               | 0.35–0.89**    |
| Born 1970–1974                                               | 0.58                 | 0.49–0.69***  | 0.24               | 0.16–0.37***   |
| Born 1975–1980                                               | 0.39                 | 0.32–0.46***  | 0.08               | 0.05–0.12***   |
| Born 1980–1985                                               | 0.16                 | 0.11–0.22***  | 0.02               | 0.01–0.04***   |
| Educational level (Ref. at most primary)                     |                      |               |                    |                |
| Junior high school                                           | 0.74                 | 0.65–0.85***  | 0.43               | 0.31–0.60***   |
| Senior high school                                           | 0.51                 | 0.43–0.60***  | 0.16               | 0.10–0.26***   |
| (continued)                                                  |                      |               |                    |                |

*(continued)*

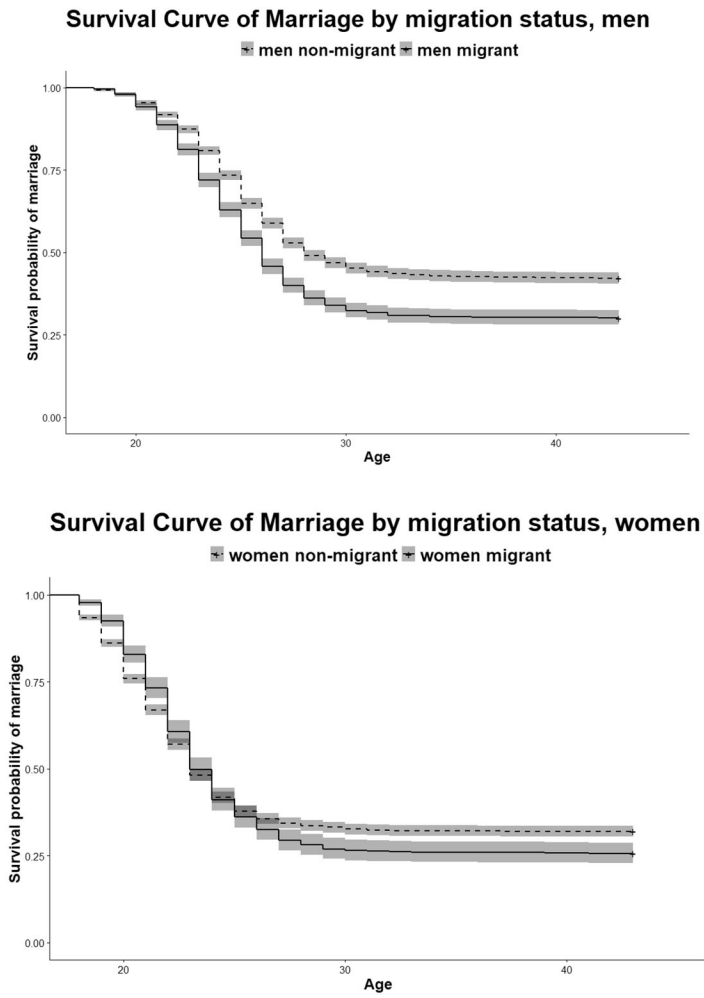
**Table 2.** Continued.

|                                                                                    | Women single process |           | Women multiprocess |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| <i>Migration status (Ref. nonmigrated)</i>                                         |                      |           |                    |           |
| Year of international migration                                                    | 1.24                 | 0.67–2.30 | 1.25               | 0.53–2.98 |
| Internationally migrated                                                           | 0.97                 | 0.60–1.55 | 0.99               | 0.36–2.71 |
| Junior high school * year of migration                                             | 1.00                 | 0.49–2.04 | 0.95               | 0.35–2.58 |
| Senior high school * year of migration                                             | 0.84                 | 0.33–2.13 | 0.71               | 0.19–2.60 |
| Junior high school * migrated                                                      | 1.17                 | 0.70–1.97 | 0.88               | 0.31–2.49 |
| Senior high school * migrated                                                      | 1.35                 | 0.75–2.45 | 0.79               | 0.25–2.54 |
| Standard deviations and correlation between heterogeneity components (error terms) |                      |           |                    |           |
| Standard deviation of unobserved factor on individual level, migration             |                      |           | 2.00               |           |
| Standard deviation of unobserved factor on individual level, marriage              |                      |           | 2.00               |           |
| Correlation between migration and marriage on individual level                     |                      |           | 0.19               | ***       |
| Standard deviation of unobserved factor on household level, migration              |                      |           | 2.00               |           |
| Standard deviation of unobserved factor on household level, marriage               |                      |           | 2.00               |           |
| Log-Likelihood                                                                     | –7,610               |           | –7,587             |           |

*Note.* \* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . The dependent variables of Equations 3 and 4 are the likelihood of the international migration and marriage for women. The standard deviation of the heterogeneity components for migration and marriage and their correlation are presented in “Standard deviation and correlation of heterogeneity components” panel at the end of the table.

**Table 3.** A descriptive table of independent variables in multivariate analysis.

|                                                        | Men frequency | Men proportion (%) | Women frequency | Women proportion (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Age                                                    |               |                    |                 |                      |
| 18–24                                                  | 544           | 21.40              | 474             | 20.18                |
| 25–29                                                  | 616           | 24.23              | 608             | 25.88                |
| 30–34                                                  | 610           | 24.00              | 588             | 25.03                |
| 35–39                                                  | 500           | 19.67              | 406             | 17.28                |
| 40–43                                                  | 272           | 10.70              | 273             | 11.62                |
| Birth Cohort                                           |               |                    |                 |                      |
| Born 1960–1964                                         | 349           | 13.73              | 348             | 14.81                |
| Born 1965–1969                                         | 521           | 20.50              | 422             | 17.97                |
| Born 1970–1974                                         | 629           | 24.74              | 619             | 26.35                |
| Born 1975–1979                                         | 585           | 23.01              | 564             | 24.01                |
| Born 1980–1985                                         | 458           | 18.02              | 396             | 16.86                |
| Highest education level                                |               |                    |                 |                      |
| At most primary                                        | 764           | 30.06              | 759             | 32.31                |
| Junior high school                                     | 1,311         | 51.57              | 1,153           | 49.08                |
| Senior high school                                     | 467           | 18.37              | 437             | 18.60                |
| Have household member as a cadre                       |               |                    |                 |                      |
| Yes                                                    | 658           | 25.89              | 617             | 26.27                |
| No                                                     | 1,884         | 74.11              | 1,732           | 73.73                |
| Total                                                  | 2,542         | 100.00             | 2,349           | 100.00               |
| Exposure to China–US migration policies in person year |               |                    |                 |                      |
| Little border control                                  | 8,602         | 34.63              | 8149            | 29.23                |
| Official document on tightening controls 1992          | 6,702         | 26.98              | 7763            | 27.85                |
| Law amendment on penalties for smuggling               | 9,538         | 38.39              | 11,967          | 42.92                |
| Married in the previous year                           |               |                    |                 |                      |
| Yes                                                    | 10,149        | 40.85              | 16,466          | 59.06                |
| No                                                     | 14,693        | 59.15              | 11,413          | 40.94                |
| Total                                                  | 24,842        | 100.00             | 27,879          | 100.00               |
| Total person years in the marriage file                |               |                    |                 |                      |
| Migration status (in person–year)                      |               |                    |                 |                      |
| Non–migrated                                           | 13,898        | 76.96              | 11,011          | 89.54                |
| Year of international migration                        | 776           | 4.30               | 400             | 3.25                 |
| Internationally migrated                               | 3,385         | 18.74              | 886             | 7.21                 |
| Total person years in the marriage file                | 18,059        | 100.00             | 12,297          | 100.00               |



**Figure 2.** Survival function of marriage by age, sex and migration status for Fujianese from 1978 to 2000. *Note.* This is a description of the whole sample which is representative of the marriageable population in the villages studied.

men and women follow different marriage schedules, suggesting that it is necessary to separate the presentation of results by sex: male migrants are more likely to marry than male nonmigrants, while there is a much smaller difference in the survival fraction between female migrants and nonmigrants.

Table 4 shows the distribution of marital and migration status and the relative sequence between marriage and migration for Fujianese during 1978–2000. These figures show that migration is more popular among men while women are more likely to end up married. For both male and female migrants, better marriage chances exist before migration than

**Table 4.** Descriptive statistics of marital and migration status and sequence for the whole sample.

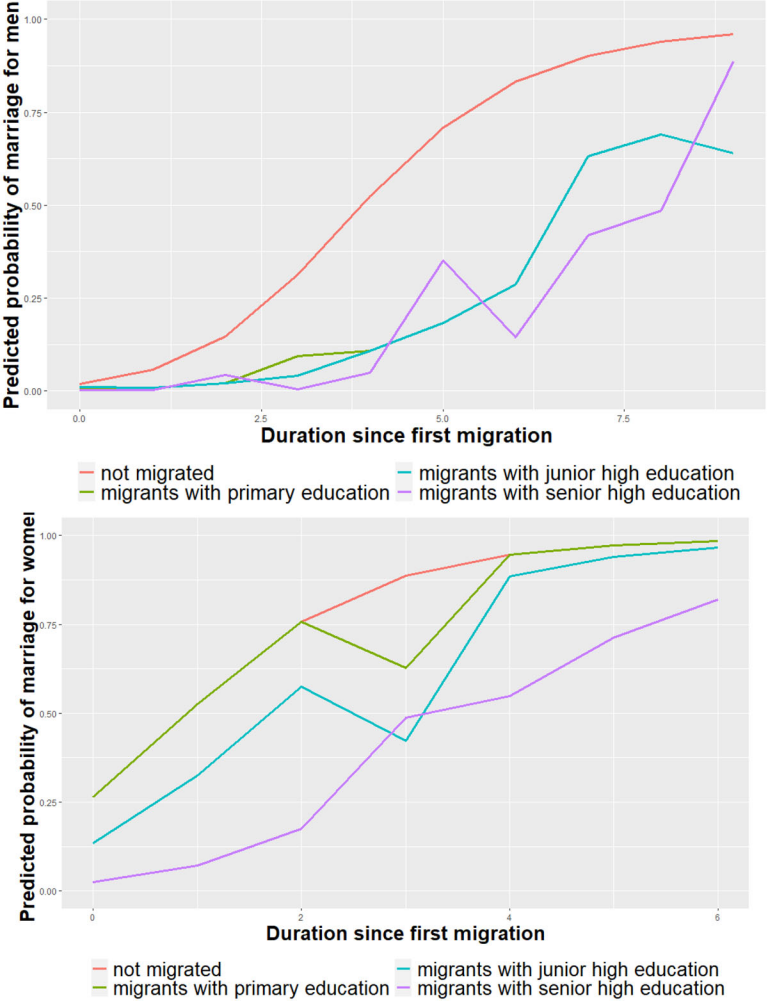
|                                  | Males       | Females     |                                           |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Marital status                   |             |             |                                           |
| unmarried                        | 1,868 (37%) | 1,319 (30%) | $X^2 = 49.195$<br>$p\text{-Value} < 0.05$ |
| married                          | 3,129 (63%) | 3,012 (70%) |                                           |
| Migration status                 |             |             |                                           |
| nonmigrated                      | 3,398 (68%) | 3,507 (81%) | $X^2 = 202.42$<br>$p\text{-Value} < 0.05$ |
| migrated once                    | 1,553 (31%) | 809 (19%)   |                                           |
| migrated twice                   | 46 (0.9%)   | 15 (0.3%)   |                                           |
| Marriage and Migration sequence  |             |             |                                           |
| Married before migration         | 802 (16%)   | 404 (9.3%)  | $X^2 = 92.517$<br>$p\text{-Value} < 0.05$ |
| Married at the year of migration | 44 (0.8%)   | 72 (1.7%)   |                                           |
| Married after migration          | 353 (7%)    | 176 (4%)    |                                           |
| unmarried or nonmigrated         | 3,792 (76%) | 3,679 (85%) |                                           |
| Total                            | 4,997       | 4331        |                                           |

after it. Furthermore, there is a gender difference in the probability of migration and marriage in Table A.1 in the Appendix: women are less likely to migrate internationally but more likely to marry. From now on, the gender-specific effects of migration on marriage will be discussed.

### *The effect of migration status on marriage for men*

Table 1 shows the likelihood of marriage by migration status for men, with (multi-process model) and without (single-process model) considering the correlated unobserved heterogeneity components between international migration and marriage on the individual level. Marriage chances declined after migration for men. In other words, migrating abroad predicts a lower probability of marrying or of delayed marriage for men. Regarding the simultaneity of marriage and migration, marriage is 63% less likely to happen in the same year of migration than if the person stays in China. This odds ratio gets even lower if correlation between marriage and migration is considered. Both Chinese migration to the US (Liang et al., 2008) and Chinese weddings are costly, especially for the groom's family. Perhaps men are not likely to make the two events happen simultaneously due to financial constraints.

The single-process model shows that for men, migrating abroad brings down to 60% the likelihood of marrying after migration. Male migrants are only 13% as likely to marry after migration as their counterparts in China once the correlation between these two events has been accounted for. This means that not taking into account the correlation between marriage and migration leads to an underestimation of the negative effect of migration on marriage. It is essential to differentiate between probability and timing effect (Bernardi, 2001). The survival fraction of marriage for nonmigrant men and migrant men are 39% and 49%, until age 43, respectively. This means that coefficients in the discrete-time model point



**Figure 3.** Predicted conditional probability of marriage for a simulated male (upper panel) and female (lower panel) who migrated at 21, born during 1965–1969 by education level since first migration versus marriage probability in the person years not migrated. *Note.* Logits not statistically significant (at significance level 90% or above) are adjusted to 0. Specification as in the multi-process model in Table 3 and 4.

to a lower possibility of marriage rather than a delayed marriage for a male migrant.

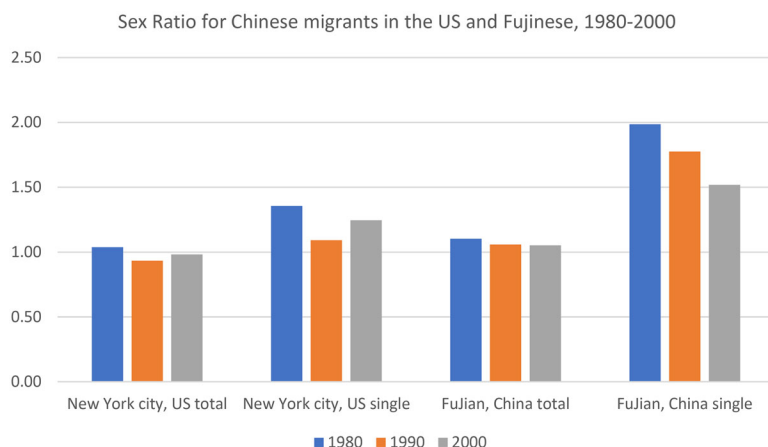
Figure 3 shows the predicted conditional probability of marriage for a simulated man and woman who migrated at age 21, born between 1965 and 1969,<sup>9</sup> after 9 years since the first migration by education level. Each year was treated as a dummy.<sup>10</sup> The estimated marriage likelihood is specified as the “Male multi-process” model in Table 1. For male migrants, those with at least senior high school education are more likely

to marry after 5 years and 9 years from the first migration than others with lower education. As shown in Table 1, male migrants with a junior high school education are more likely to marry the same year as migration, with these moderately educated male migrants perhaps migrating to the US to set up a small family business in which the wife provides additional labor. Moreover, male migrants with a higher education are more likely to marry overall, which implies that socioeconomic resources are crucial in the marriage market for a Chinese man even at the destination country.

Is this lower marriage probability due to an unbalanced sex ratio—or a male surplus—at the destination? Figure 4 shows that this is not plausible based on author's self-calculation from the IPUMS-USA 1980, 1990, and 2000 census data and China 1982, 1990, and 2000 census data (Manson, et al. 2017): the sex ratio of first-generation Chinese migrants ages 18–50 in New York City is on average 0.93 in general and 1.23 for singles, while the sex ratio of Fujianese natives is higher: 1.07 in general and 1.76 for singles ages 18–50.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Mexican migrants in the US, among whom there is a surplus of single men (Choi and Mare 2012), Chinese migrants in New York City have a more balanced sex ratio. This implies that the mating barrier for male migrants might stem from the difficulty of finding a woman who accepts his socioeconomic status rather than from a surplus of men.

A skewed sex ratio results in cross-regional marriage (Mukherjee 2013) and intercaste marriage (Mishra 2013). But even though the sex ratio at the destination is relatively balanced, there could still not be enough marriageable women if Chinese women intermarry more than Chinese men (Liang and Ito 1999)—which is the case for the 1990–2000 period in New York City (see Figure 4). In the US, Asian men are 15% less likely than Asian women to marry Whites, according to the 1990 census data (Qian, Blair, and Ruf 2001). A similar gender difference in the intermarriage rate was also found in the Mexico–US migration context (Dávila and Mora 2001).

Moreover, a different selectivity of education for men and women might be relevant in explaining the negative effect of migration on men's marriage chances. More specifically, male and female migrants are selective for different educational levels: male migrants are negatively selected for education while female migrants are positively selected for education (see Tables 1 and 2). This gender difference in the selectivity of education also holds for Mexican migrants in the US (Cerrutti and Massey 2001). Perhaps for males, migration and higher educational attainment are competing choices (Kandel and Kao 2000). In our sample, about 32% of male migrants have only primary school education, and only 16% of them have a senior high school diploma; these figures for the women are 25%

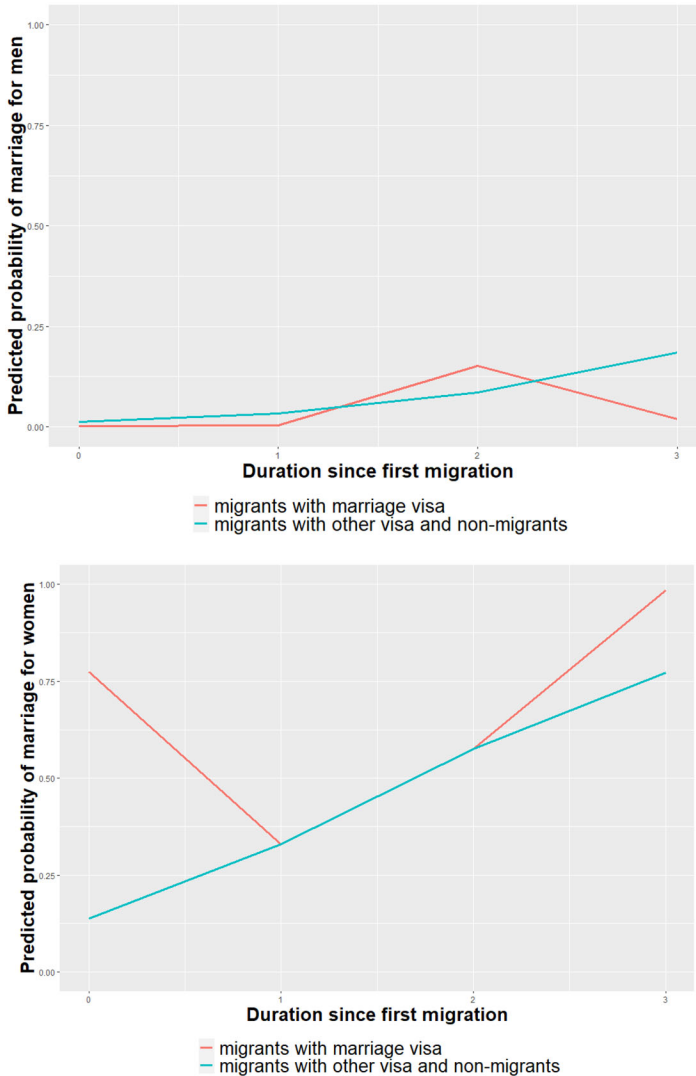


**Figure 4.** Sex Ratio for first-generation Chinese migrants (total/singles) ages 18–50 in New York City and Chinese natives ages 18–50 who were living in Fujian, 1980–2000. *Note.* Sex ratio for Chinese migrants ages 20–30 in New York City and Chinese natives ages 20–30 in Fujian is not qualitatively different from the descriptive statistics for age group 18–50 shown here.

and 20%, respectively. For out-marriage among Asian Americans who have US citizenship, educational attainment is more important: the inter-marriage rate with Whites among well-educated Asian Americans was very high by 2000 (Qian and Lichter 2007). In the context of Mainland China-Hong Kong migration, migrants usually marry to those with less education, which seems like exchanging education for the Hong Kong permanent residency (Zhou 2016).

A different selection for education for male and female migrants, and thus for potential candidates in the marriage market at destination, may result in more interracial marriages for Chinese women and prevent intracultural assortative mating from happening. This effect can be stronger if the marriage market in the US is racially segregated, as is especially the case for Chinese-born male migrants. The different selection for education for men and women might neutralize the effect of a more balanced sex ratio of coethnics at the destination on marriage chances (see Figure 4). It would affect men with lower education more than others due to the norm of women “marrying up” in the Chinese tradition. Socioeconomic status is crucial for marriage: male migrants with at least a senior high school diploma—that is, those with more social capital—are 2.31 times more likely to marry after migration than do other migrants with lower educational attainment (see Table 1).

Table 1 shows that for men, the younger birth cohort has a greater likelihood of migrating abroad or hastening migration. It is possible that younger birth cohort members have a more extensive migration network, through which they are provided with information and resources that



**Figure 5.** Predicted conditional probability of marrying from 0 to 3 years and more since first migration for migrants with marriage visa versus others including migrants with other visa and nonmigrants, the upper figure for men and lower one for women. Due to data limitation, the predicted probability of marriage chances at more than 3 years is combined with that of the third year.

reduce the cost of migration. The period effect is represented by that of China–US migration policy, which shows that international migration has been more frequent in more recent years despite tightened border policies after 1992. On the other hand, men from younger birth cohorts were more likely to be single or to delay marriage.

### ***The effect of migration status on marriage for women***

Table 2 shows that the marriage opportunities for women are not substantially affected by their international migration status. Female migrants' marriage chances in the year of migration or after migration do not substantially differ from that of others who stayed in China. Regression based on the sample of internal migrants<sup>12</sup> shows that internal female migrants are more likely to migrate and marry in the same year (see Table A.2 in Appendix<sup>13</sup>). For internal migration, women move to the husband's household at the year of marriage because of traditional values whereby the wife joins the male's household as a source of labor. However, female international migrants are not likely to migrate and marry in the same year except for those women who arrive with a spousal visa.

Among the migrants who moved to the US with a spousal visa, 75% of them are females. As shown in Figure 5, female international migrants who travelled with a spousal visa were more likely to marry in the same year as migration than others with other types of visas, such as a work visa or green card, and then female nonmigrants. This signifies the urgency of obtaining the marriage paperwork for migration among those who traveled with a spousal visa. This finding is consistent with Charsley et al. (2012), who found that Chinese women migrants usually marry a settled partner in the UK. On the contrary, we did not observe the simultaneity of marriage and migration for male migrants with a spousal visa.

The effect of migration on marriage for women is mainly a timing effect: the survival fraction of marriage at age 50 is very similar for female nonmigrants (79%) and female migrants (78%). This is consistent with Jang et al. (2014) who argued that migration might be driven by life events other than marriage. Chinese women's marriage opportunities are attributable to demographic fundamentals like age, birth cohort, and educational attainment. Contrary to men, female migrants are selective for higher education, which signifies that more social capital is required in women's migration process. Meanwhile, the highly educated women are more likely to delay marriage. Regarding the period and cohort component of migration effects, which is slightly different from men, women of different birth cohorts presented a similar likelihood of international migration, except for the youngest birth cohort, which has significantly higher chances of migration. The likelihood of migration for women increased dramatically over time: they were nine times more likely to migrate after 1997 compared with the period before 1992.

The single-process model in Table 2 shows that women with a senior high school diploma are almost half as likely to marry than others with only primary school education. The survival fraction of marriage for

those with at least senior high school education at age 43 is 30%, while for those with primary education the fraction is only 8%. This means that the effect of education on women's marriage chances is mainly on the dimension of probability rather than timing. Furthermore, unlike for male migrants, higher education does not predict a better chance of marriage or an earlier marriage for women after migration (see Figure 3, lower panel). In the marriage market at the destination, a man having at least a senior high school diploma is considered as an advantage. However, this does not hold for women migrants, whose marriage probability decreases when she achieves higher education. This means that a matching barrier—for example, difficulties related to assortative mating and an unbalanced sex ratio—exists after migration for women with higher education.

### ***Unobserved heterogeneity between marriage and migration***

Tables 1 and 2 show that there is an unobserved positive component that leads to higher risks of both marriage and migration. Moreover, individuals of the same household could share unobserved characteristics and have correlated behaviors like migration and marriage. Not modelling the common component between migration and marriage at both the individual and household levels, like in the single-process models shown in Tables 1 and 2, would lead to upward biased estimation of both the effect of marriage on migration and the effect of migration on marriage. This unobserved heterogeneity is at the individual level. It could be a livelihood strategy, for example, that of running a small family business abroad, which brings together the decision-making for marriage and migration. In Table A.3, I showed the sensitivity test of correlation between migration and marriage with different values of standard deviation of migration and marriage at the two levels.

### **Conclusion**

This paper is among the first to explore the effects of international migration on marriage for Chinese men and women separately. It confirms the importance of socioeconomic status as mediator between migration and marriage for men (Hypothesis 1a), the importance of modern family values held by female migrants leading to delayed marriage among them (Hypothesis 2), the role of marriage as a tool of “convenience” facilitating immediate migration for females (Hypothesis 3), the initial uncertainties faced by migrants leading to temporarily interrupted marriage around the time of migration (Hypothesis 4), and the positive correlation between the two life events being driven by unobserved factors (Hypothesis 5).

All of these hypotheses are supported in our empirical evidence. In this section, let's return to the three dimensions presented in the introduction and discuss how our results speak to these theoretical perspectives.

First, in terms of the “economic versus family” dimension, our results imply that migrant men's marriage chances heavily rely on socioeconomic status (the “economic” element). There are substantial gender differences in the effect of migration on marriage. Male international migrants are less likely to marry after migration. Hypothesis 1a is supported. Many of the Fujianese immigrants arriving during the 1980s and 1990s were undocumented, thus male Fujianese immigrants might appear less attractive for another female immigrant than others with legal status or permanent residence,<sup>14</sup> considering the particular “women marrying up” logic in the Chinese culture. Males' poor chances of getting married after migration may also be related to a differing selection of educational attainment for male and female migrants and Chinese women's higher likelihood of intermarriage. The traditional values of “marrying families of equal rank” and “women marrying up”<sup>15</sup> suggest that women should marry men with at least equal, or if possible, higher socioeconomic status, for example, with higher educational attainment. Differing levels of educational attainment between female and male migrants could dampen men's chances of marriage, especially those with lower education. Hypothesis 1b is supported. On the other hand, men with higher educational attainment have better chances in the marriage market at the destination (Courgeau 1989; see Table 1). This finding is consistent with empirical work on foreign-born single young adults in Australia (Carlson 1985) and on Chinese internal migrants from rural to urban areas (Mu and Yeung 2020).

Regarding the “modern versus traditional family values” dimension, the results showed that in contrast to that of men, the likelihood of marriage for women is not subject to their migration status except for a postponement of marriage. Delayed marriage may be due to the time they spend searching for a partner with sufficient economic resources (Parrado 2004), the lower sex ratio of Chinese coethnics at the destination country (White et al. 2005), or women's empowerment (Hypothesis 2). Women's marriage probability is mainly determined by demographic characteristics—age, birth cohort, and educational attainment, among others—rather than migration status.

Third, our results showed that both uncertainties and convenience exist in the relationship between migration and marriage. Migrant males' chances of marrying dropped substantially in the same year as their migrating to the US, implying a disruption effect (Hypothesis 4). Moreover, migration has a differing effect on marriage for women according to their departure documents: while the marriage likelihood of those migrating with a spousal visa increased sharply in the same year as

migration (Hypothesis 3), this does not hold for female migrants with other kinds of departure documents. This means that marriage serves as a tool of convenience facilitating migration for females.

There is unobserved heterogeneity that leads to both a higher risk of moving abroad and of marrying, for both men and women. Hypothesis 5 is supported. This unobserved heterogeneity might be in terms of personal traits, such as strong motivation and good health, that lead to a certain level of individual income and occupational mobility (Choi and Mare 2012). A typical marriage-migration story for Chinese in Europe is that, after serving in a Chinese restaurant/shop, the young man wishes to establish his own family-run restaurant/shop; one option to achieve this is by marrying a young Chinese woman at the destination. Furthermore, the positive correlation between international migration and marriage may suggest a tendency toward formal family formation, that is, marriage, rather than cohabitation. For women, values or preferences, such as a family reunification strategy or the desire to build a family abroad with better chances for the next generation, may drive women to be more likely both to migrate and to marry.

Regarding the effect of marriage on migration, in the single-process model for men, marrying promotes migrating abroad. However, the coefficient is no longer significant when unobservable components are taken into account. This is consistent with Chiang, Hannum, and Kao (2015) which found no overall difference in the propensity of migration from rural China. The negative effect of marriage on migration is stronger for women than for men (Courgeau 1989). Women's migration likelihood decreased by 86% if they were married in the previous year, but men's migration likelihood was only slightly disrupted by marriage.

This study has several limitations that are worth addressing. First, the data collection was implemented only in Fujian province. Migrants from other regions of China to other cities in the US may have different cultural preferences regarding migration and family decision-making and different socioeconomic characteristics. The second limitation relates to the available data in terms of the complete history of socioeconomic indicators. This information is not commonly available in other censuses and surveys due to the high cost of collecting more detailed data. In this paper, occupation and income are treated as unobserved heterogeneity. The third limitation involves the low migration rate which makes it difficult to identify heterogeneous migration and family trajectories, especially when a finer migration status is defined, a larger set of controls are added, and correlations between events are considered.

Future research should emphasize the different relationship between migration and marriage for men and women and incorporate, where the data is available, information on whether the migrant was already

involved in a long-term relationship upon migration, which matters for differentiating between those looking for a potential partner at the destination and those with a fiancée back in China, and information on whether the migrants intend to stay temporarily or settle down in the destination country. Moreover, the landscape of migration is changing rapidly given substantial improvement in the socioeconomic profile and “culture of remittances” (Liang and Song 2018) of Chinese migrants and the effect of migration on children’s development, for example, see the special issue of *Chinese Sociological Review* (2020), volume 52, issue 4 and Liang and Li (2021) for a review.

## Notes

1. Charsley et al. (2012) explained that the legal process for a spousal visa involves a would-be spouse for someone who has settled at the destination (e.g., has permanent residence) entering the UK as the (potential) spouse. The US spousal visa process shares similar logic.
2. In the data, 20% of male nonmigrants have an educational level higher than senior high school, while this is the case for only 15% of male migrants. Among female nonmigrants, about 17% have at least a senior high school diploma, while the figure is almost 20% for female migrants.
3. Fan (1999) explained that an agricultural hukou only grants the right to farm, while a nonagricultural hukou also grants welfare benefits.
4. The “later-longer-fewer” policy, though without legal enforcement, was implemented through social welfare programs, e.g., the pension.
5. It is not necessary that the members live together: people who have migrated overseas are reported by the household head at the village, thus treated as members of the household.
6. Complete marital history of the household head showed a low divorce rate and a low rate of remarriage. Unfortunately, cohabitation history is not available.
7. The individual does not need to have migrated directly to the US to be included in the sample; migrants who first migrated to other regions, came back to China, and then went to the US were also included.
8. Complete migration information, e.g., year of migration and return, is only available for the first and last migration, however, only 0.5% of migrants migrated more than three times.
9. Age 21 and the birth cohort of 1965–1969 are both the median statistics for men under study.
10. The predicted probability of marriage chances at more than 9 years is combined with those of the ninth and sixth year since migration.
11. The world’s average sex ratio is around 1.02 for people ages 18–50. The sex ratio of the rural Fujianese population covered by the data is normally higher than the region’s average.
12. The Chinese International Migration Project makes it possible to explore marriage and migration dynamics for internal migrants.
13. Table A.1 in the [Supplementary Appendix](#) shows the result of joint estimation of internal migration, international migration, and marriage, with two standard deviation of the error terms, one shared by international and

internal migration and the other for marriage. The main result is not qualitatively different from that shown in Tables 1 and 2.

14. Undocumented immigrants might have disadvantages in the marriage market than, for example, other immigrants with green card, as marrying to the latter would allow the spouse to live and work anywhere in the US, according to the US immigration law on marriage-based green card.
15. “Matching doors” means marrying someone whose family shares a similar social status and economic means, according to the seventh edition of *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*.

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