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Embargoed until 11:45 AM, 5 November 2010

The Work Situation and Social Attitudes of Migrant Workers in China

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Session 9, Workshop 9.1: „Rural-Urban Migrations in Mega Cities and ‚Mega-Slums“
Our Common Future, Essen, November 5th, 2010

Our Common Future, Hannover/Essen, 2-6 November 2010 (www.ourcommonfuture.de)

The Work Situation and Social Attitudes of Migrant Workers in China



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2010.11

Main Topics

**Working Conditions and Treatment of Migrant Workers
in the Background of Financial Crisis**

Hukou is a special residential administration system in past and current China

Agricultural Hukou and Non-agricultural Hukou

- employment
- social security
- social welfare
- political election



Migrant Workers: persons who has agricultural residence registration (Hukou) and be employed in secondary and tertiary industries



Labor productivity:

- Cheap labor force
- Hard-working & tolerant of hardship



The total number of migrant workers reached 230 million

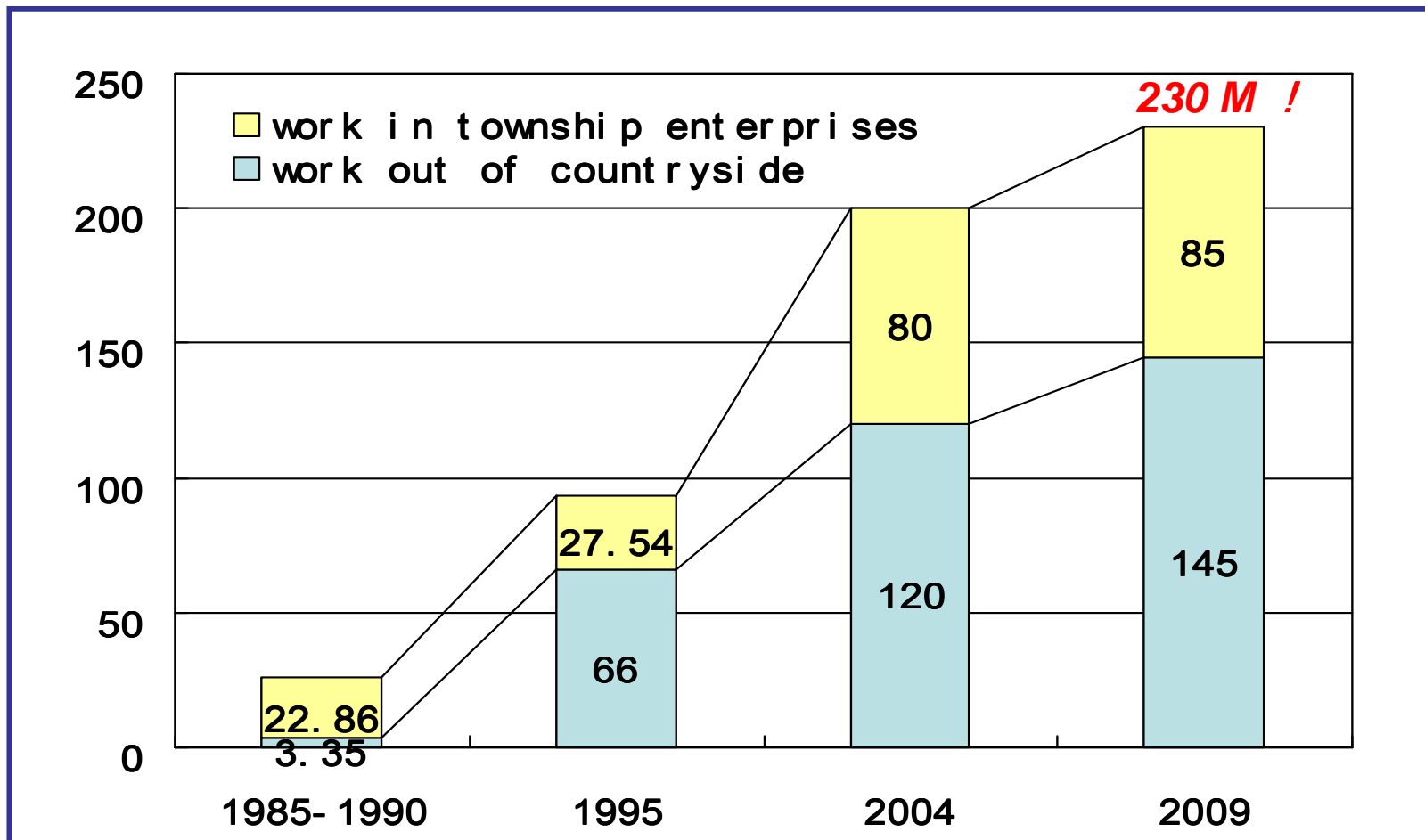
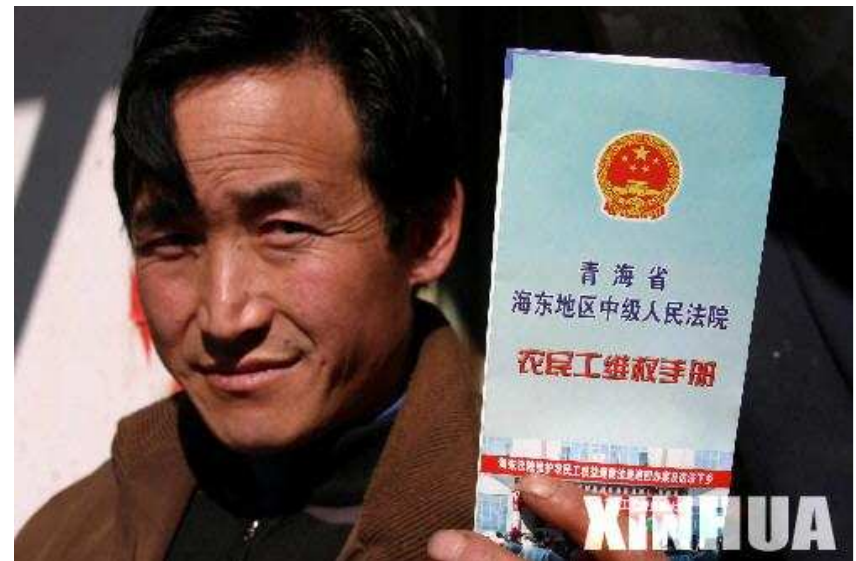


Chart 1 The number of migrant workers 1985-2009 unit: million

Resource: NBSC,2010

Series of social policies initiated for promoting social welfare of migrant workers

- Claiming back salaries for migrant workers
- Expanding coverage of social security
- New Rural Cooperative Medical Care
- Free for compulsory education in rural area
- Labor Contract Law



Global financial crisis in 2008 has had a profound impact on employment, working conditions of Chinese migrant workers

Unemployment:

- **In Jan. 2009, about 20 million migrant workers, or 15.3% of all the migrant workers lost their jobs due to the financial crisis .**
(Office of the Central Rural Work Leading Group CPC, Feb.2.2009)
- **In Feb.2009, about 70 million migrant workers returned home during the Spring Festival, 12 million of them were due to the factors relating to global financial crisis, such as company shutting down, layoffs, unemployment and wages shrink.**
(National Bureau of Statistics of China, Feb.2009)
- **In May 2009, 80% of the 70 million migrant workers who returned home during the Spring Festival of 2009 had returned to cities, but 11 million of them hadn't yet found employment.**
(Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security)

Global financial crisis in 2008 has had a profound impact on employment, working conditions of Chinese migrant workers

Low salary and Arrears of wages:

- Job opening-to application ratio in Shen Zhen: 1.28 in May 2008, 0.79 in Jan. 2009.

(Bureau of Labor and Social Security of Shen Zhen)

- 5.8% of 70 million migrant workers who returned home during the Spring Festival were in arrears of wages, especially 13% of those who lost job due to the company shutting down.

(National Bureau of Statistics of China, May 2009)

Cancellation of social insurance:

- By the end of Feb. 2009, the number of migrant workers who participate social insurances, such as old-age insurance, medical insurance and employment injury insurance, dropped 4%, 4.8% and 2.8%

(Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, May 2009)

Data comes from a national-wide sampling survey from March to September in 2006 and 2008

- **Target population:** 18-69 years old household residents of mainland China
- **Coverage area:** 28 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions
- **Sampling units:** 260 towns and 520 villages and neighborhood committees in 130 counties and cities
- **Sample size:** more than 7000 household residents
- **Qualified respondents:** 7,063 in 2006 and 7139 in 2008
- **Errors of survey:** less than 2%

Summary data with migrant workers, Urban worker and farmers

**Table 1 Sample distribution of urban workers, migrant workers and farmers
in 2006 and 2008 surveys unit: %**

		2006			2008		
		urban Workers	Migrant workers	farmers	urban Workers	Migrant workers	farmers
case		1152	769	2703	981	820	2514
sex	Male	60.1	66.7	48.5	62.5	57.7	48.3
	Female	39.9	33.3	51.5	37.5	42.3	51.7
age	18-24	9.6	14.6	4.2	9.5	37.7	7.5
	25-34	38.5	37.1	18.7	25.9	26.3	13.4
	35-44	29.2	29.4	29.7	34.4	21.5	28.8
	45-54	17.9	14.7	26.2	23.2	10.8	24.7
	55 and above	4.7	4.2	21.2	7.1	3.8	25.5
	educ ation	Primary school and below	8.0	38.4	72.0	4.3	15.0
Middle school		22.6	45.0	23.8	33.6	64.0	39.7
High school		33.6	13.6	4.1	31.2	18.1	3.8
College and above		35.7	3.0	0.1	30.9	2.9	0.0

The working condition and income of migrant workers are poor than urban workers

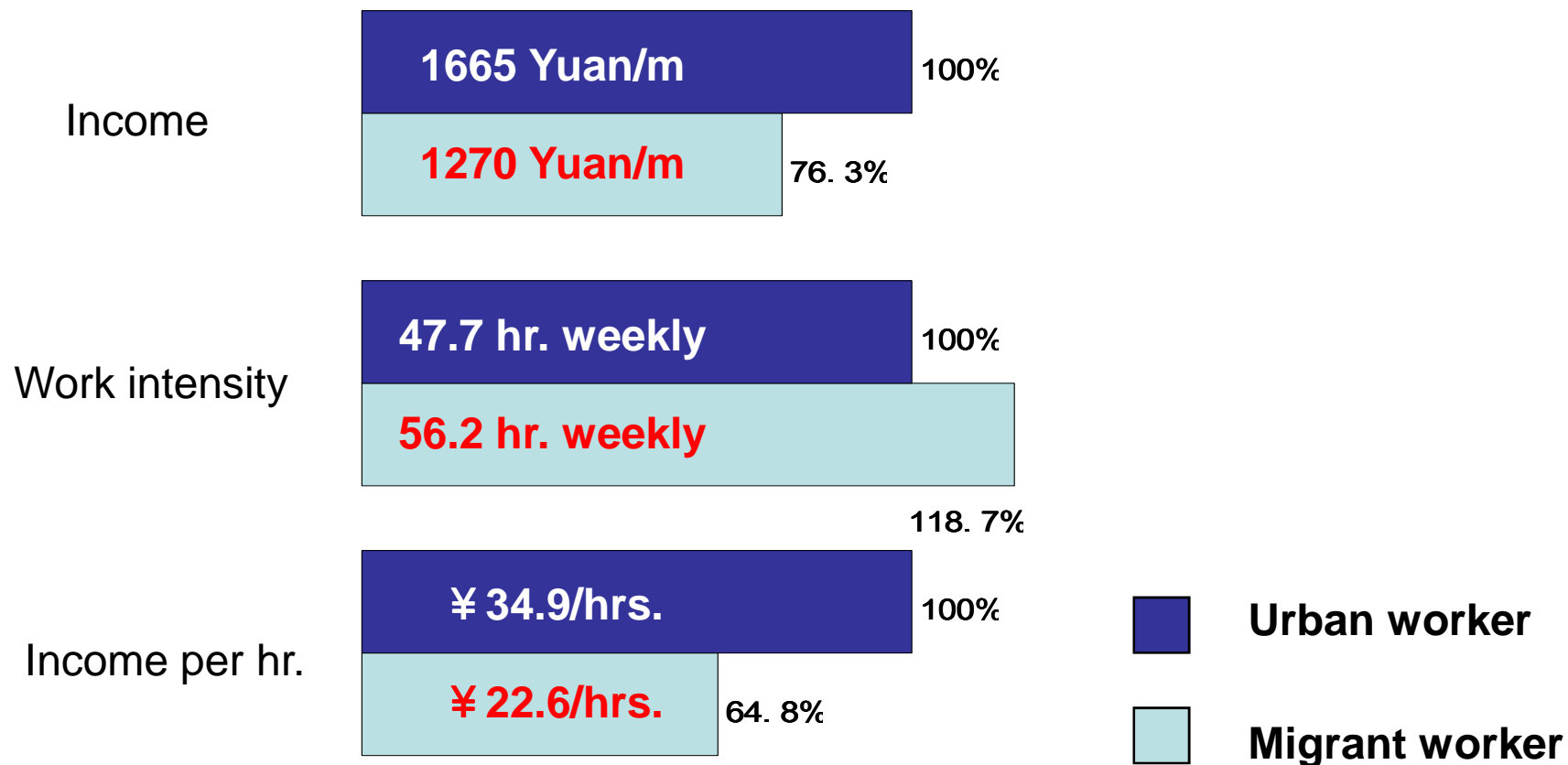


chart 1 Income gap between migrant workers and urban workers unit: %

Very small parts of migrant workers enjoyed social security

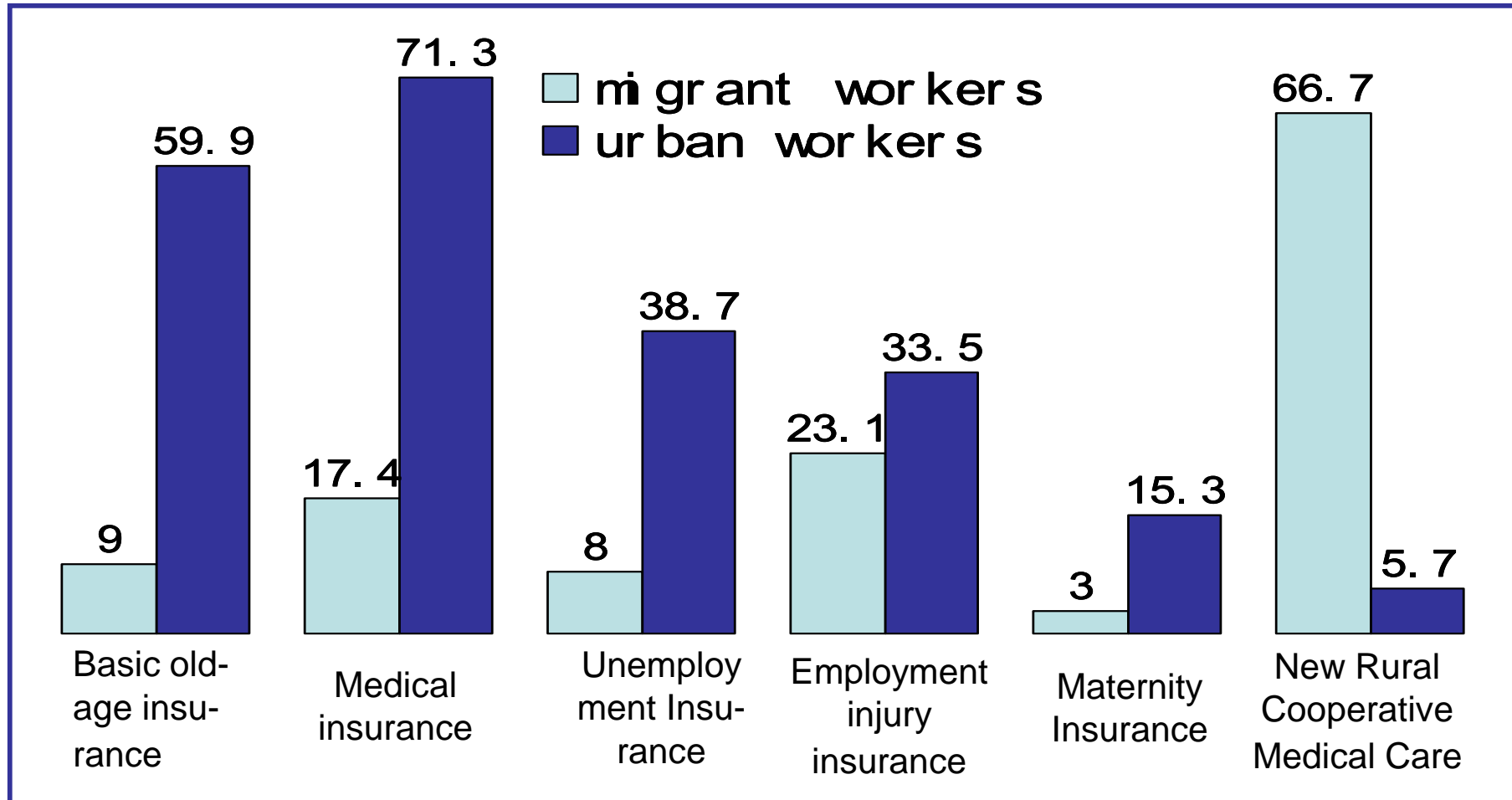


Chart 2 Social security enjoyed by migrant workers and city workers unit: %

Protection of the labor rights of migrant workers lags behind

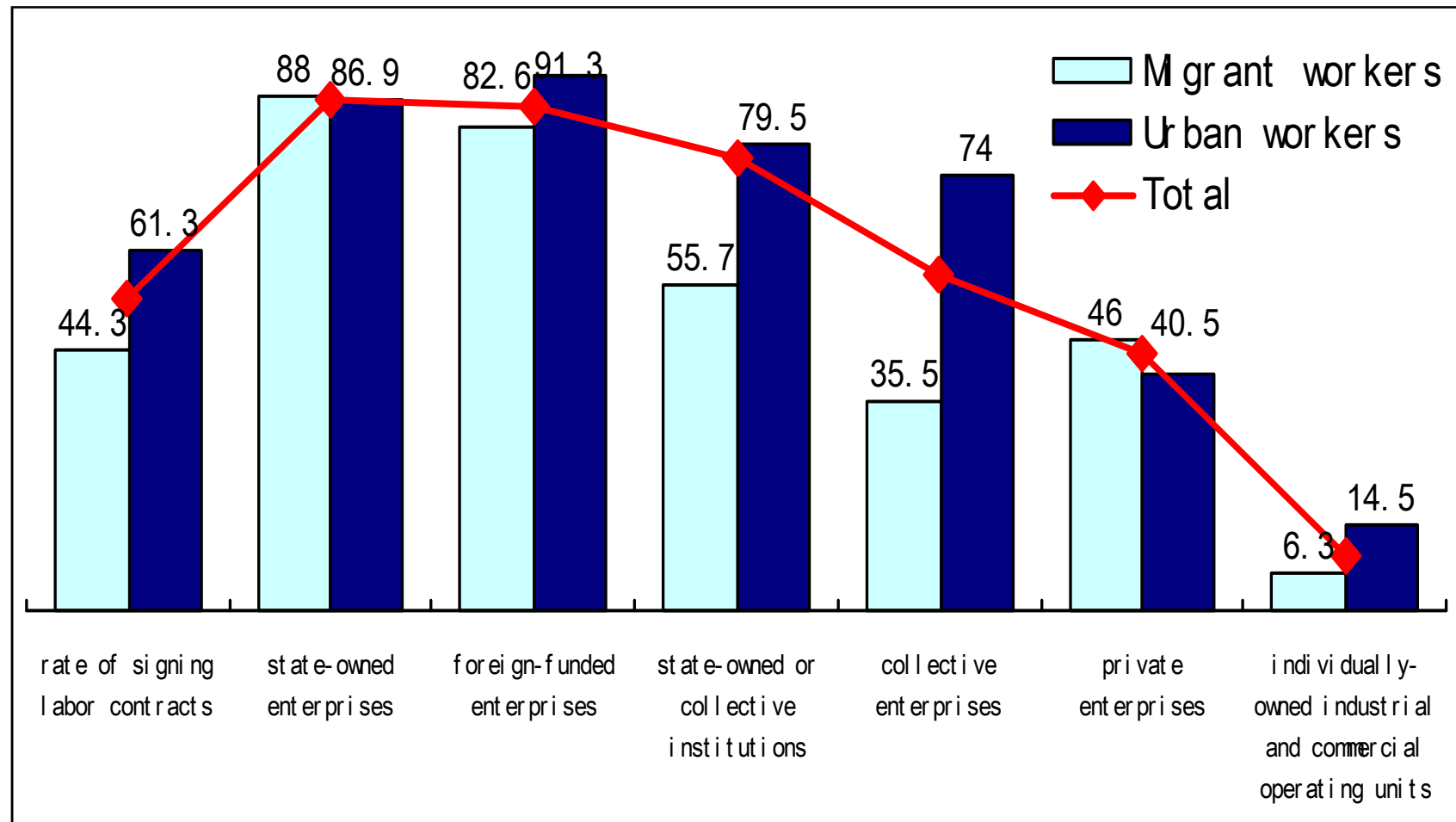


Chart 3 Rate of Signing Labor Contracts with Migrant and Urban Workers unit: %

Main Topics

Changes in the Social Attitudes of Migrant Workers

The financial crisis affected migrant workers' sense of life stress

■ Life stress in education and medical declined but employment increased

Table 2 Sense of Life Stress of Migrant Workers, Urban Workers and Farmers unit: %

Pressure in life	2006			2008		
	Urban workers	Migrant workers	Farmers	Urban workers	Migrant workers	Farmers
Housing conditions are poor, cannot afford to build / buy houses	44.2	45.4	48.0	52.8	42.2	48.6
The cost of children's education is high and unbearable	34.2	35.1	34.6	30.9	22.3	26.1
Medical expenses are high and unbearable	33.8	39.4	50.9	33.1	26.7	40.4
The burden of supporting the elderly is too heavy	21.3	25.5	24.0	18.8	20.4	20.0
Household income is low, daily life is difficult	34.3	51.6	60.8	40.3	49.2	56.4
Family members have been laid off or no have no stable income	32.2	28.0	21.5	36.2	40.2	34.5
Spending on gifts is high and unbearable	25.3	30.0	43.9	28.8	23.6	41.8
Disputes happen between family members, feel upset	6.3	9.3	12.2	7.2	12.5	11.4
General atmosphere of the society is not good, worry about being cheated and that family members may go astray	29.4	22.6	19.0	31.9	28.5	22.7
Public order is poor, often in a state of anxiety	32.2	26.7	18.9	30.8	27.8	22.2
Average	29.3	31.4	33.4	31.1	29.3	32.4

The living conditions of migrant workers have been affected against the backdrop of the financial crisis

- The percentage of thinking that living conditions have improved in Migrant workers almost not change from 2006 to 2008

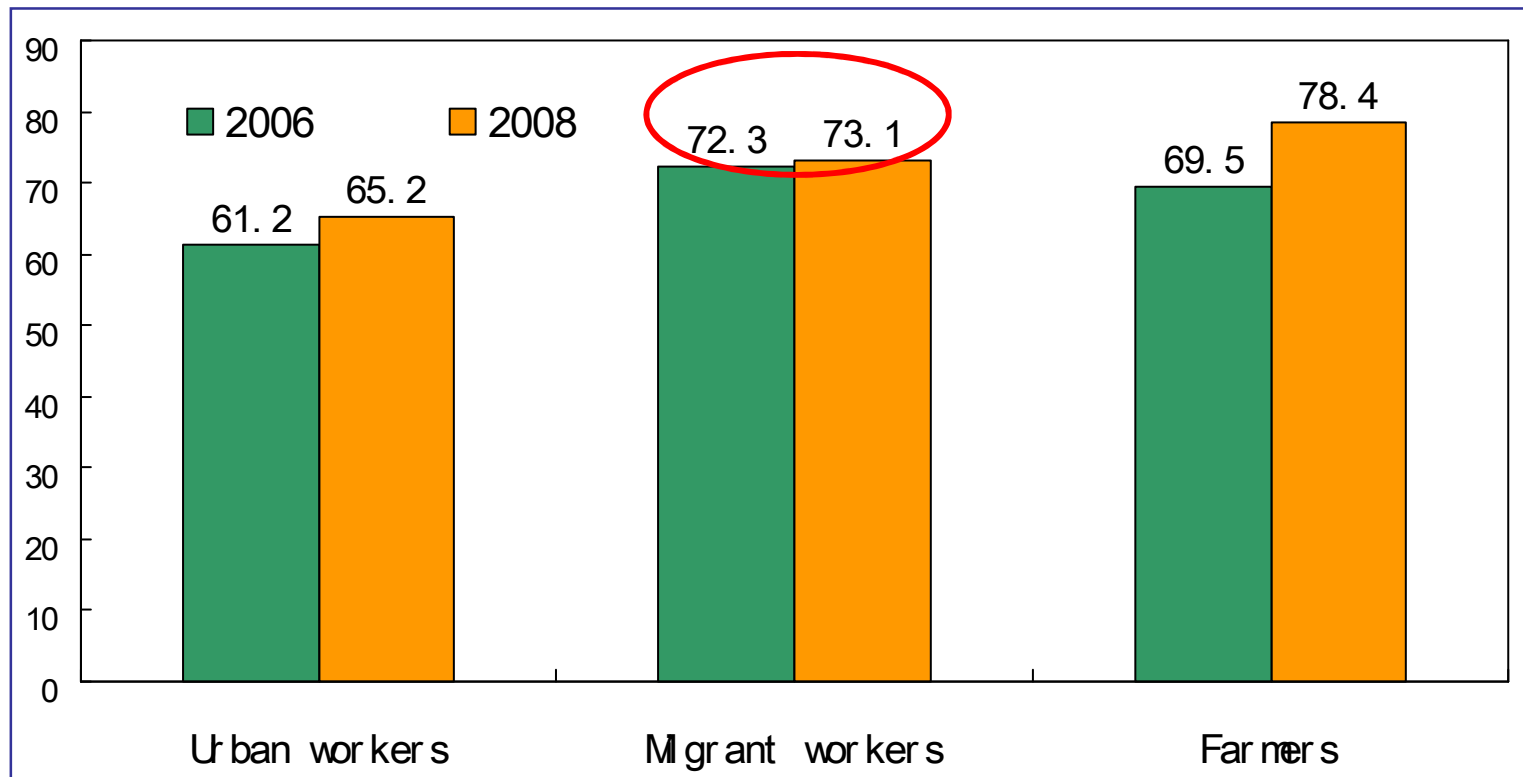


Chart 4 Percentage of Migrant Workers, Urban Workers and Farmers Who Think That Living Standards Have Improved unit: %

The average value of sense of social safety of migrant workers has dropped slightly, while the value of urban workers and farmers upward changed

- Migrant workers' sense of labor safety declined most significantly

Table 3 Sense of social safety of urban workers, migrant workers and farmers unit: %

Sense of Safety	2006			2008		
	Urban workers	Migrant workers	Farmers	Urban workers	Migrant workers	Farmers
Property safety	76.1	81.0	77.8	77.0	79.0	82.2
Personal safety	74.8	84.4	84.2	80.7	79.6	85.6
Traffic safety	59.9	62.8	67.4	58.7	60.9	67.7
Medical safety	57.0	65.8	66.4	66.6	66.5	77.8
Food safety	44.5	62.7	68.8	59.2	63.1	72.7
Working safety	75.8	75.6	81.7	76.6	69.3	82.3
Privacy safety	75.3	83.4	78.6	67.7	78.3	83.5
Average	66.2	73.7	75.0	69.5	71.0	78.8

The overall sense of social justice of migrant workers also declined, comparing to the increase of urban workers and farmers

- The sense of fairness regarding "distribution of wealth and income" and "working and employment opportunities" declined most significantly

Table 4 Sense of social justice of urban workers, migrant workers and farmers unit: %

Sense of social Justice	2006			2008		
	Urban workers	Migrant workers	Farmers	Urban workers	Migrant workers	Farmers
Distribution of wealth and income	31.5	42.2	44.9	21.5	27.4	35.2
Working and employment opportunities	39.5	51.4	50.8	36.8	45.6	45.9
College entrance examination	75.9	73.8	68.6	81	71.6	71.4
Promoting of cadres	30.1	33.0	39.5	42.9	47.3	54.8
Public health	49.7	52.5	52.1	63.8	60.8	71.8
Compulsory education	75.8	76.8	77.4	84	87.6	86.9
Political rights	61.9	66.5	61.2	64.2	61.8	67.3
Judiciary and administrative justice	57.3	54.6	53.3	51.9	50.7	56.6
Difference in treatment between different regions and industries	28.3	36.8	37.4	33.2	35.3	40.4
Difference in treatment between urban and rural areas	27.9	28.7	28.6	41	37.9	38.6
Social security	45.2	37.9	33.5	61.2	50.5	47.3
General situation of social justice	55.9	61.8	67.2	67.4	58.7	74.3

Migrant workers' satisfaction with local government had ups and downs in different areas

- Migrant workers praise the government's achievements in promoting social security and worry about economic recession at a time of financial crisis

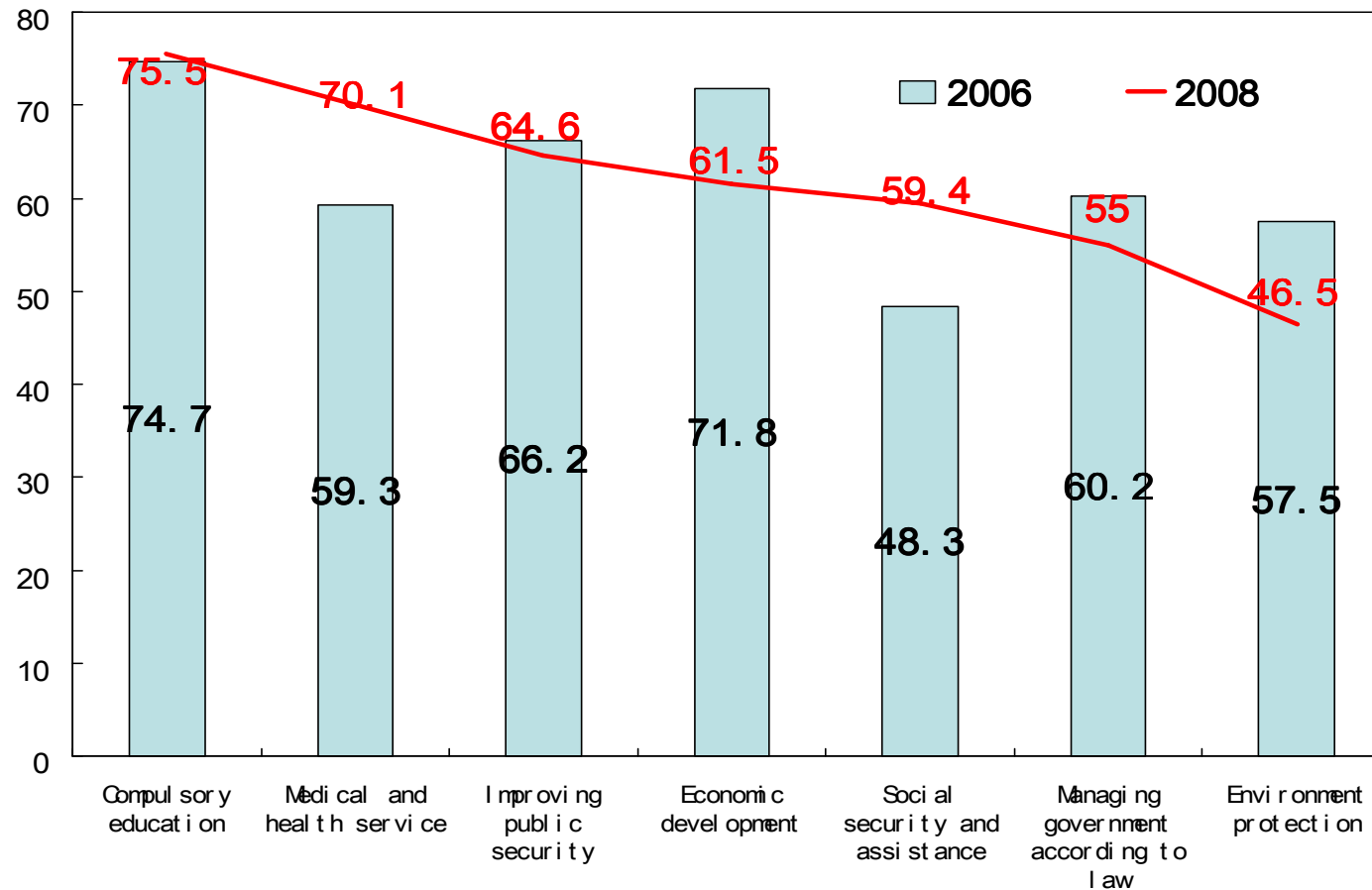


Chart 5 Comparison of Years (2006 and 2008) in Terms of Migrant Workers' Satisfaction with Local Governments unit: %

Migrant workers' sense of conflict of interest between social groups also has somewhat increased

- The percentage of migrant workers who think there is a conflict of interest between social groups had been increasing, while the percentage of urban workers and farmers who think so has been decreasing

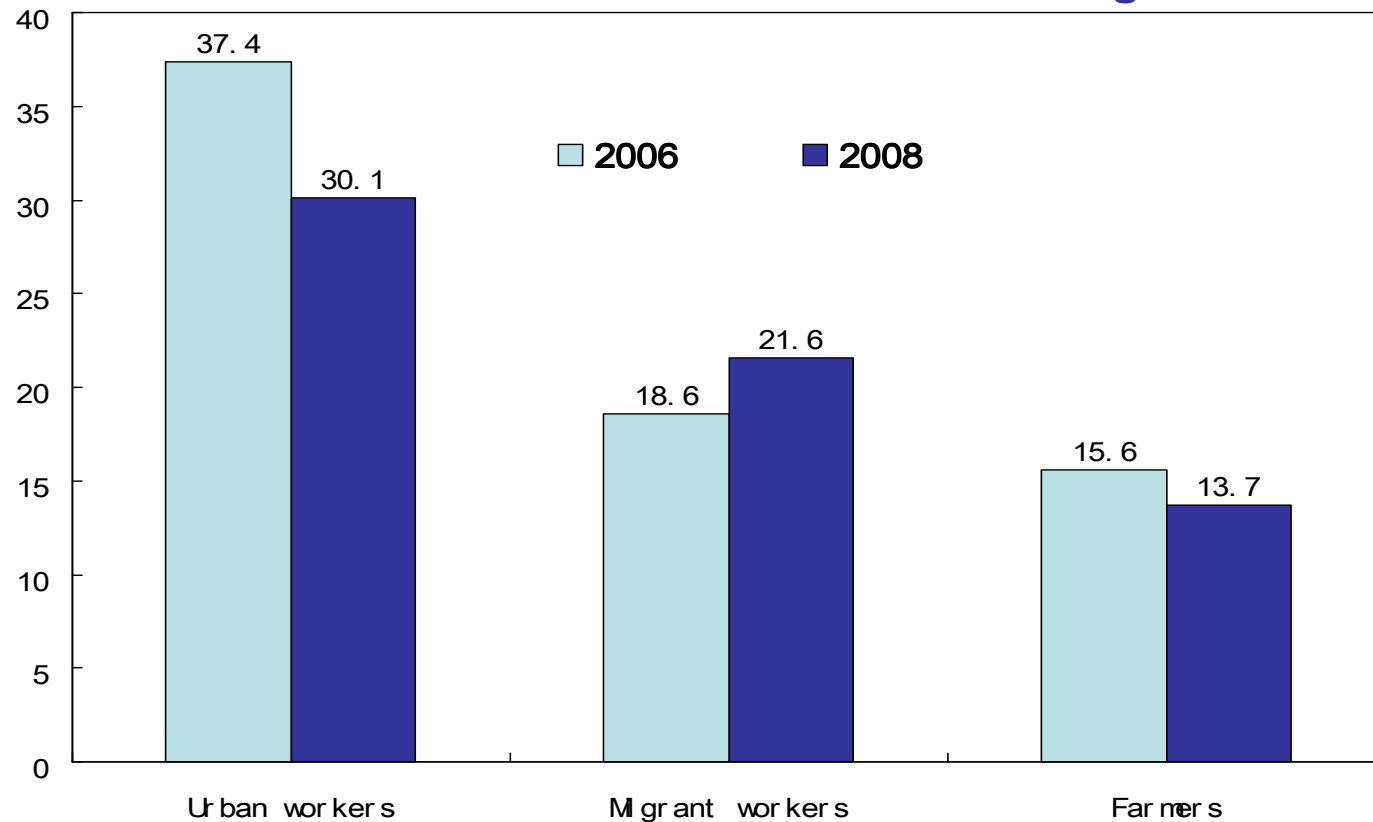


Chart 6 Percentage of Migrant Workers, Urban Workers and Farmers Who Think There Is a Conflict of Interest Between Social Groups unit: %

Migrant workers' judgment of the possibility of future intensification of conflict of interest between social groups also has increased

- The percentage of migrant workers who think that conflict of interest between social groups may intensify has increased, while the percentage of the same answer in the two other groups has declined

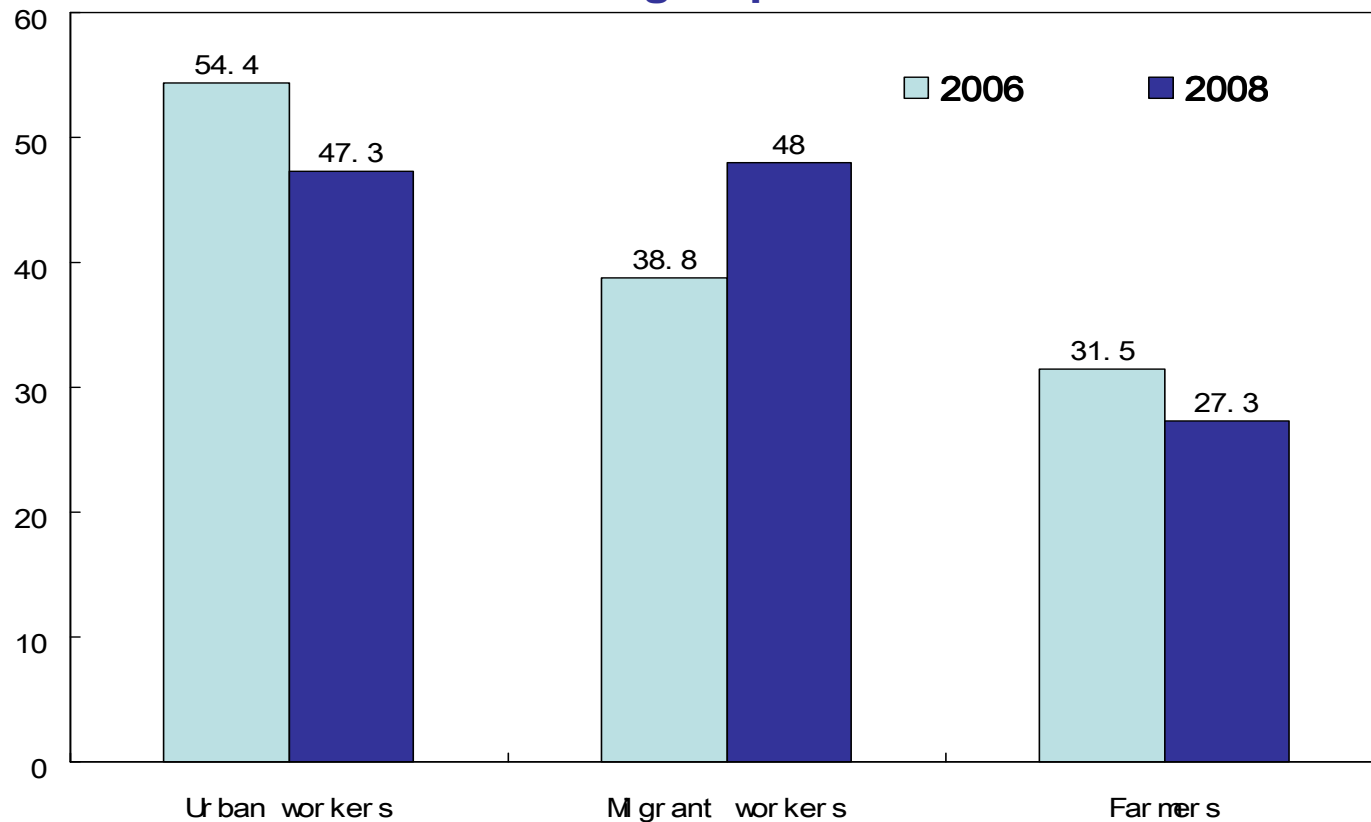


Chart 7 Percentage of Migrant Workers, Urban Workers and Farmers Who Think That Conflict of Interest Between Social Groups Will Intensify unit: %

The pressure to survive faced by migrant workers in the backdrop of the financial crisis will have a negative effect on the sense of living standard and spread to the social level

Table 5 Analysis of Correlation between the Life Stress and Various Aspects of Social Attitudes of Migrant Workers

	Sense of improvement in living standards	Sense of safety	Sense of justice	Satisfaction	Sense of conflict of interest between social groups
Life stress	-0.0222**	-0.309**	-0.415**	-0.260**	0.198**
Sense of improvement in living standards		0.085*	0.244**	0.306**	-0.161**
Sense of safety			0.559**	0.520**	-0.166**
Sense of justice				0.678**	-0.202**
Satisfaction					-0.270**

Note: *** P<0.0001 ; ** P<0.01 ; * P<0.05 ;

Table 6 Multiple Regression Analysis of Factors Affecting Migrant Workers' Social Attitudes

Independent variable	Model 1: Dep. Var. stress in life		Model 2: Dep. Var. sense of security		Model 3: Dep. Var. sense of justices		Model 4: Dep. Var. satisfaction	
	Reg. coeff.	Std. Reg. coeff.	Reg. coeff.	Std. Reg. coeff.	Reg. coeff.	Std. Reg. coeff.	Reg. coeff.	Std. Reg. coeff.
Constant	8.007***		20.502***		29.702***		23.438***	
Pers. factors								
Age	.043***	.161	.016	.054	.013	.026	.080***	.136
Male (ref. group: female)	-.298	-.050	.552**	.081	.223	.019	-1.044*	-.078
Years of education	.008	.006	-.168***	-.109	-.464***	-.181	-.397***	-.134
Econo. Factors								
Weekly income	-.034**	-.083	-.029	-.061	.020	.023	-.047	-.053
Old-age insurance	-.176	-.022	-.178	-.020	.652	.043	.623	.036
Medical insurance	-.408	-.052	1.657***	.189	2.227***	.151	2.306**	.141
Unemployment insurance	.878*	.082	-.726	-.059	.645	.031	-.906	-.042
Employment injury insurance	-.196	-.028	.821*	.104	-.035	-.003	.870	.058
New rural cooperative medical care	-.188	-.030	.969***	.136	1.325***	.109	1.400*	.103
Improvement in living standards	-.443***	-.135	-.050	-.013	.890	.137	2.058***	.282
Social and economic status	-1.224***	-.351	.476***	.121	1.047***	.155	.463	.061
Stress in life	—		-.301***	-.271	-.641***	-.334	-.496***	-.216
N	766		686		521		526	
Adjustment R²	0.201		0.187		0.276		0.226	

Note: *** P<0.0001 ; ** P<0.01 ; * P<0.05 ;

Summary of the characteristics of factors that affect migrant workers' social attitudes

- Life stress has a significant negative effect in all the 3 models of the sense of social safety, sense of social justice and satisfaction with the government, indicating that for migrant workers, increase in stress of life is the main factors reducing their past positive attitudes.
- Social security factors play a significant role in prompting migrant workers' positive social attitudes.
- Of the personal factors affecting migrant workers' social attitudes, education plays the most prominent role. Education is the most important human capital, but it also broadens people's horizons and increases psychological expectations.

Main Topics

Discussion and Implication of Policy

Some conclusions on social policies:

- **Migrant workers' educational level and technical skills remain generally low, and this has a decisive impact on migrant workers' income level. So extensive vocational education and training is necessary.**
- **Migrant workers have more positive and progressive social attitudes in general. The stress in life generated by the international financial crisis has had a negative impact on their social attitudes, and life stress mainly comes from threat to employment rather than income level. Therefore, we must put the issue of migrant workers' employment security high on agenda.**
- **of the various types of social security, medical insurance and New Rural Cooperative Medical Care have the most significant effect on improving migrant workers' living conditions and social attitudes. Therefore, we should make improving migrant workers' medical security a starting point for making a breakthrough in promoting the level of social security for migrant workers.**

Thanks

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