Earnings Growth Patterns of Chinese Labor Immigrants in the United States*

(Preliminary Draft)

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Abstract (148 words)

This is a longitudinal study of Chinese labor immigrants' earnings in the U.S. Using a new dataset from the China International Migration Project, I examine Fujianese immigrants' earnings growth over time and seek to explain their income changes and variations by factors pertaining to assimilation, context of exit, and context of reception. I rely on both longitudinal analysis methods and in-depth interview information, and find that these immigrants experience substantial income growth over time. Such growth can be explained by their accumulation of U.S. residence, changes in jobs and occupation, and movement into non-gateway areas. The exorbitant migration cost also exerts an upward pressure on their earnings. However, adjustment of legal status does not induce higher earnings, partly due to the reception by the Chinese ethnic economy. The Chinese ethnic economy also distinguishes itself from the general economy in the economic reward system and the overall wage trend.

Introduction

Immigrants' income growth is a very important aspect of immigrant incorporation in the United States. It can also produce important fiscal impact and thus has significant policy implications. A very practical concern is whether the immigrants are able to achieve economic success within their lifetime; and if yes, then the fiscal burden imposed by immigrants can be outweighed by the taxes they pay. Thus, economists and public policy scholars tend to consider immigrants' wage growth the typical measure of assimilation.

There has already been extensive research on this subject. However, due to the lack of true panel data on immigrants' labor market performance, researchers have mainly relied on using cross-sectional data to make inferences about immigrants' earnings progress (e.g., Chiswick 1978, 1979; Borjas 1995; Myers 1998). Due to the different methodological approaches taken by researchers, there have been inconsistent findings regarding the actual growth rates of immigrant wages. More importantly, we know very little about the specific mechanism in which immigrants make economic progress over time. In most cases, researchers just turn to the umbrella concept "assimilation" to explain the outcomes yet without offering concrete interpretation of the process.

This study seeks to continue the research on immigrants' earnings growth, but using true longitudinal data in order to make more accurate assessment and better interpretation of their progress. The immigrants I choose to study are a major Chinese sub-group in the U.S., the Fujianese, which originates from China's Fujian province (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The Fujianese immigrants comprised the largest wave of emigration from China in the 1990s (Liang 2001a). They are the typical labor immigrants and prove to resemble the Mexican immigrants in several important ways (Liang et al. 2008). Extant literature has documented that the influx of Fujianese immigrants has drastically transformed the landscape of Chinatown in New York City, displacing the previously dominant Cantonese subgroup (Kwong 1997). Furthermore, these new Chinese immigrants have made inroads into most of the U.S. states, typically as restaurant owners and workers (Lee 2008). This study takes advantage of the newly available data from the China International Migration Project (CIMP) and seeks to conduct systematic analyses of these immigrants' earnings growth patterns.

This study mainly wants to address the following questions: (1) Do labor immigrants experience income growth over time and what are the basic patterns? (2) How do these immigrants expect to increase their earnings as their personal characteristics change over time, such as their U.S. experience, job characteristics, legal status, as well as demographics? (3) How are their earnings affected by time-constant individual characteristics, such as gender, education received from the sending country, and initial migration cost?

Background of the Study

Immigrant Earnings Growth

Immigrant earnings growth is a traditional research topic for assimilation scholars and

has generated extensive research. The general consensus is that immigrants tend to suffer an initial earning disadvantage after their entry into the U.S. labor market, but over time their incomes will grow considerably, and sometimes they can even outgrow the U.S.-born work force. However, there are a lot of debates about the actual growth rates of immigrant earnings and whether they can eventually achieve parity with the U.S.-born workers. Such dissent mainly stems from the incoherent methodologies researchers adopted and the lack of true panel data.

One dominant research strategy is to use decennial census data to "simulate" or project immigrants' economic progress overtime by forming a quasi panel from a single or multiple cross-sections of census data. Barry Chiswick (1978, 1979) was among the earliest to carry out this exercise. Based on the analysis of the 1970 census data alone, Chiswick predicted that immigrants' earnings would equal or even exceed that of their native-born counterparts in about 10-15 years after their immigration. But Borjas (1985) pointed out that it is inappropriate to draw inferences about immigrant assimilation based on a single snapshot, because the disparities observed across successive immigrant cohorts at one point in time actually represent the combination of permanent cohort differences and longitudinal assimilation effect. Instead, one must use more than one cross-section of census data in order to measure the true, within-cohort assimilation effect. Accordingly, Borjas (1995) proposed an age-cohort-period effect analysis framework to analyze the pooled data from the 1970, 1980 and 1990 censuses, and argued that although immigrant income growth rate remained positive in an absolute sense the growth rate had been overestimated by Chiswick. Later, Myers and Lee (1996) suggested that Borjas' statistical analysis neglected to distinguish birth cohorts from aging effects, and overestimated the career progress of the native-born workers who were used as the reference group for comparison with immigrants. Thus, Myers and Lee proposed a double cohort research design, which nests birth cohorts within immigration cohorts, so that estimation can be made on the effects of both immigration duration and aging. By applying this method to the 1980 and 1990 census data, Myers (1998) estimated the economic progress of Mexican immigrants in southern California, and found that although Mexican immigrants' earnings growth fell behind that of their native-born counterparts, the younger immigrants actually advanced faster than the older birth cohorts in wages, indicating the age-at-arrival benefits accruing to the youngest cohorts. Other researchers also conducted similar "simulation" exercises using decennial census data, but the results are quite inconsistent, with some holding a rather optimistic view about immigrant economic progress (Lalonde and Topel 1991; Yuengert 1994) while others remaining concerned, especially with the prospect for Mexican immigrants (Smith and Edmonston 1997).

Although this line of research have significantly advanced the technique of estimating immigrants' longitudinal progress using data from multiple censuses and generated valuable findings, it is also widely acknowledged that results from non-panel data can be inaccurate and misleading, because important changes could occur to the composition of the immigrant population over time, which may not be observable from the census data yet can result in biased estimates. One such example is return migration, which tends to be non-random and cause positive selection of the immigrants who stay permanently at the host society. Thus, the observed immigrants' progress could actually reflect a self-selection effect and constitutes an overestimation of immigrants' real progress (Borjas 1995; Hu 2000). Other confounding factors of this type can be changes in immigrants' legal status, employment status and occupation, as well as their geographic location.

In order to overcome such potential pitfalls in using cross-sectional data, another group of scholars choose to analyze true panel data to study immigrants' earnings growth. Duleep and her associates have conducted a series of research in this direction. Based on separate analyses of matched data from Current Population Survey (CPS) in different waves and matched data from CPS and Social Security Administration, they have confirmed that immigrant workers' income tends to grow faster than native-born workers and the growth rate is the greatest in the beginning years; in other words, immigrants' incomes grow relative to the native people, but at a decreasing rate (Duleep and Regets 1997; Duleep and Dowhan 2002). Tienda and Singer (1995) also examine the wage changes of undocumented immigrants in particular. They analyze data from the Legalized Population Survey and find that those of later cohorts tend to have greater wage growth, which is remarkable given the fact that the wage structure after the 1970s has become disadvantageous to unskilled immigrants. Although this line of research has the potential to yield the most accurate results, the available data are usually limited in the time scope and the sample size, which does not allow systematic analysis of specific immigrant groups, with the only exception of Mexicans.

Immigrant Occupational Progress

An alternative way of studying immigrants' economic progress is to assess their occupational achievement. Existing studies on immigrants' occupational mobility largely fall into two strands of research. One strand engages the concept of assimilation and has engendered a series of debates. One side of the debate is represented by Richard Alba and Victor Nee (Alba and Nee 2003; Nee and Sanders 2001), and argues for immigrants and immigrant children's inevitable outcome and benefits of crossing ethnic boundary and blending into the mainstream economy; the other side of the debate, as exemplified by Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou's work, emphasizes the presence of alternative opportunity structure for social mobility within the ethnic domain, especially in the form of ethnic entrepreneurship supported by the power of ethnic solidarity (see Zhou (2004) and Light and Gold (2000) for the most comprehensive reviews).

The other strand of research on immigrant occupational achievement examines immigrants' advancement along the general occupational ladder, as ranked by standardized numeric scores or broad hierarchical categories (e.g., Kandell 2004; Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark 1996; Myers and Cranford 1998; Neidert and Farley 1985; Powers, Seltzer, and Shi 1998; Toussaint-Comeau 2006; Waldinger and Gilbertson 1994). The main finding from this line of research is that over time many immigrants can experience upward mobility in occupational status, and that usually results from better education, improved English proficiency, and longer residence in the U.S.; however, there are important inter-group differences in the trajectory.

By focusing on occupational mobility, however, extant research is only effective in depicting the occupational progress of skilled immigrants and immigrants who come to the U.S. at young ages, but cannot accounting for the experience of the labor migrants, who constitutes another important component of the new immigrant population (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). Having low stock of human capital and limited prospect for acculturation, these low-skill immigrants do not experience upward occupational mobility as often. Even for those who aspire

to become self-employed, only a small minority of them can eventually succeed (typically between 10% and 20% except for Iranians and Koreans). Most of these unskilled immigrants tend to be confined within peripheral sectors and have the same type of jobs over time (Piore 1979; Sassen 1988). Therefore, better measurements are needed to assess the labor immigrants' economic progress, and income growth is certainly one of them.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The key research questions of this research are whether the labor immigrants can experience earnings growth over time; and more importantly, what would explain their income mobility if there is any. As reviewed in the previous section, there has already been abundant research seeking to plot the trajectory of immigrant wage growth. But regardless of the specific wage growth rates as estimated by different researchers, we still don't know very clearly about what exactly happen to immigrants that lead to their income growth. Existing studies, especially those by economists, tend to attribute immigrant economic progress to a vague umbrella concept "assimilation" yet without offering very concrete interpretation about the mechanism. Is it about immigrants' changing socio-demographic characteristics, or about transition in jobs and occupations, or about moving into different locations, or about adjusting their legal status if they arrive without documentation, or is it simply about spending more time in the U.S.? It appears we know very little about the actual consequences of these specific incorporation processes. Clearly, the answers to these questions entail the availability of detailed individual-level longitudinal data over a sufficient time scope, which researchers usually do not have. Thus, this research intends to take advantage of the newly available data on Chinese immigrants' labor history in the U.S., and seek to gain a better understanding about the mechanism of immigrant income growth.

Effects of Job and Occupational Mobility

Among all the questions raised above, probably the most significant one is about the consequences of job and occupational mobility on immigrant earnings, because it serves to provide direct evidence regarding whether immigrants' cumulative labor market experience can lead to economic mobility in the host society. Occupational mobility, almost by definition, is expected to result in higher earnings. However, as reviewed in the previous section, the prospect of occupational mobility is quite limited for labor immigrants. For them participation in self-employment is probably the most feasible route of occupational progress. Still, for most immigrant groups, only a minority of the group members can enter self-employment, and even fewer can survive and excel in the end.

Occupational mobility is certainly not the only labor market activity that can induce higher earnings. Immigrants can also expect to boost their wages by changing employers albeit still doing the same type of work. It is known that labor immigrants are concentrated in the secondary sector of the U.S. economy, which is characterized by low wage, nonunionized, and dead-end jobs (Piore 1979; Sassen 1988). Therefore, these jobs are expected to have high turnover rates, and immigrants need to go through job transitions on a regular basis. It is known

that in the general economy workers who experience single employer changes tend to enjoy net wage gains (Loprest 1992; Topel and Ward 1992), but workers with higher cumulative mobility tend to have lower average wage trajectories (Fuller 2008). But we don't know if this is the case with immigrants, especially with unskilled immigrants. So, I hope to fill this gap in the literature.

Following the general assimilation perspective, we can assume these immigrants are individual income maximizers, who actively choose the jobs that they perceive as the most desirable and the best match for themselves. And as they gain more experience in the labor market and become better informed of the available job opportunities, they can take due action to enhance their own economic well-being (Nee, Sanders, and Sernau 1994). Accordingly, I expect these immigrants to be able to increase their income steadily as they go through regular job changes over time.

> Hypothesis 1: Immigrants' earnings will increase as they move into the "better" occupations, in particular self-employment.
>
> Hypothesis 2: Immigrants' earnings will increase as they experience more job transitions in the U.S.

Locational Effect (Wages in Non-traditional Destination Areas)

The second major question deals with the impact of the job location. Here I seek to investigate the distinction between the traditional and nontraditional destination areas for immigrants. Immigrants' settlement into the new destination areas is a new dynamic in the immigration movement in the U.S. and has become a very popular research topic among immigration scholars in recent years (Bump, Lowell, and Pettersen 2005; Donato et al. 2008; Durand, Massey, and Capoferro 2005; Massey and Capoferro 2008). Researchers tend to attribute this phenomenon to a series of reasons, among which a most important economic factor is the labor shortage in those new places that's created by industrial restructuring and withdrawal of the U.S.-born work force (Kandel and Parrado 2005). However, till this point there has been quite limited information to speak about the economic consequence of this movement on immigrants (Donato et al. 2008). Driven by the curiosity about whether this can represent a new route of economic mobility for labor immigrants, I want to examine the wage benefit of moving into nontraditional destination areas. Following the simple economist logic of supply and demand, it would be reasonable for us to expect that labor shortage should lead to a higher price of the labor. Thus, I come to the following hypothesis –

> Hypothesis 3: Immigrant wages in the nontraditional destination areas should be higher than those in the traditional places.

Effect of Legal Status in the U.S.

Given the prevalence of undocumented persons among the Fujianese immigrants in the U.S., it shall be of great interest to investigate how immigrants' labor force outcomes are affected

by their legal status. Conceptually, this can serve as a direct examination of the context of reception for illegal immigrants, which encompasses the receiving government's policy, potential discrimination in the labor market, and reception by the ethnic community (Portes and Rumbaut 1996).

The impact of legal status on immigrants' wages has already been well studied, and researchers have found evidence of systematic wage discrimination against undocumented workers (Aguilera and Massey 2003; Amuedo-Dorantes and Mundra 2007; Borjas and Tienda 1993; Massey, Durand and Malone 2002; Philips and Massey 1999; Rivera-Batiz 1999). But this finding mainly stems from studies of Mexican immigrants, especially those conducted by Massey and his associates. Little is known about the experience of other immigrant groups. So, here I want to add Chinese immigrants' experience into the picture, and I expect them to have a vastly different experience than the Mexicans due to the reception by different economic domains.

Presumably Fujianese immigrants mostly work for coethnic employers or are self-employed, thus they should regarded as participants of the "ethnic economy" (Bonacich and Modell 1980; Nee, Sanders, and Sernau 1994) or the "ethnic ownership economy" (Light and Gold, 2000). Immigrants in the ethnic economy are expected to face different opportunity structures than those in the general economy. Many of them work in the ethnic enclave, which has an "enclave protected sector" and functions somewhat independently of the structural conditions in the larger society (Zhou 1992, p. 110), and so the enclave members may be insulated from the adverse influence of such structural force as legal status-based discrimination. As to those who work for coethnic employers outside the enclave, the ethnic entrepreneurs may also turn a blind eye to their coethnic employees' legal status and treat them equally irrespective of their U.S. status. Accordingly, I make the following hypothesis.

> Hypothesis 4: Chinese labor immigrants' legal status is not likely to have an impact on their U.S. earnings.

Effect of Migration Cost

Immigrants' context of exit can also be consequential for their incorporation in the host society (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). Besides immigrants' resources I also consider their migration cost part of this exit context. And I want to examine the possible lagged impact of the migration cost on immigrants' labor market incorporation. The notion of migration cost mainly applies to undocumented immigrants who use paid smuggling services to enter the U.S. illegally. For the Fujianese, the smuggling fees are typically five-digit figures in U.S. dollars (Kwong 1997; Chin 1999; Liang et al. 2008; Myers 1997; Zhang 2008). Such an exceedingly high smuggling fee was typically paid for by loans from the migrants' relatives, friends, or loan sharks. Kwong (1997) and Chin (1999) have studied the adverse impacts of the steep cost and of the suffering during the smuggling trip on the migrants' post-arrival experience. Liang et al. (2008) also demonstrate that the higher migration cost can cause a delay in the reunification of family members in the U.S. Even for Mexican immigrants whose migration cost is almost negligible compared to the Fujianese level, their stay in the U.S. tends to be prolonged due to the rise in

coyote fees in recent years, because they need more time to work and save in order to pay back the coyote fees (Reyes 2004). In this study, I seek to examine the impact of migration cost on immigrants' earnings in the U.S. Presumably, higher migration cost can increase immigrants' financial liability in the destination and in turn exert an upward pressure on their expectation of earnings in the U.S.

> Hypothesis 5: Immigrants' migration cost can have a positive effect on their U.S. earnings.

Data

This research uses a recent dataset from the China International Migration Project (CIMP). The CIMP is directed by Zai Liang at the University at Albany, and its design largely follows that of the well-known Mexican Migration Project (MMP), conducting ethnosurveys both in the migrant-sending country and in the U.S. For CIMP, the survey sites in China are the major migrant-sending communities in Fujian province, altogether eight towns out of three cities/counties (also see figure 1 and figure 2). The survey in the U.S. was conducted mainly in the New York City region, with a small proportion of the questionnaires administered in Philadelphia and adjacent areas. One major difference between CIMP and MMP is that the CIMP was carried out within a limited time span. The survey in China was conducted between October 2002 and December 2003, and collected data on about 1,800 households. The U.S. site survey was conducted during June-August 2003. As a parallel of the China-site survey, the U.S. survey targeted exclusively the immigrants who were from the same migrant-sending communities in Fujian province. For each of the eight towns of origin, the U.S. survey team interviewed 40-50 people, which eventually yielded data on about 400 households in the U.S. sample (Liang et al. 2008; additional information is available at www.albany.edu/cimp).

However, unlike the China site sample, the U.S. sample is not an entirely random sample, but was to some extent built through convenience and snow-ball sampling. Furthermore, the U.S. site questionnaire is designed a bit differently than that used in the China survey sites. One difference is that the U.S. survey contains very detailed questions on these immigrants' migration history and process, especially on the smuggling experience for the undocumented immigrants. One important piece of information it collected is the immigrants' specific migration costs in the form of smuggling fees. Another important difference is that the U.S. survey seeks to learn about these immigrants' complete labor history in the U.S. labor market, so it asks questions about important time-varying characteristics associated with each of their U.S. jobs, which include the time, location, and work authorization for each job, as well as the initial and the final income reports for each of their U.S. jobs.

Given the differences between CIMP's China site survey and the U.S. survey, I choose to use the U.S. dataset for this study. Compared to the decennial census and other immigrant surveys, the main strength of this dataset is its adequate coverage of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Another advantage is that the detailed historical information on immigrants' labor market experience allows researchers to trace these immigrants' economic progress over time. In addition to the survey data, I also take advantage of the qualitative information collected from

the in-depth interviews with select immigrants in the NYC area, and use that to corroborate and supplement the results from the quantitative analysis.

Methods

This research is mainly a quantitative study, analyzing longitudinal data on immigrants' earnings. Technically longitudinal data consist of information at two levels: at level 1 are repeated observations for the same individual over time, and at level 2 are different persons. Therefore, the major analytical strategy is multilevel regression, which is also known as hierarchical linear models, individual growth models and mixed models (Singer 1998). In this method, the level 1 variation is treated as nested within level 2.

The general multilevel regression model can be expressed in the following form:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it} + \lambda Z_i + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad i = 1, 2, \ldots, n; t = 1, 2, \ldots, T$$

In the context of longitudinal analysis, the i subscript refers to different persons and the t subscript refers to repeated observations within persons but at different points in time. β_0 and $\beta_1 X_{ij}$ are usually described as fixed effects because β_0 and β_1 are fixed parameters and X_{ij} are all measured values; Z_i represents between-person variations; and ε_{ij} is a random variable representing within-person variations with a probability distribution. The term α_i represents person-specific effect, and it can be either a set of fixed parameters or a random variable with a specified probability distribution, which makes the model a fixed effects model or a random effects model respectively (Allison 2005).

Fixed effects models and random effects models both have their own advantages and disadvantages. The major attraction of the fixed effects method is the ability to completely disregard the between-person variations Z_i and α_i, measured or not, and focus only on the within-person variation X_{it}. This enables researchers to get an unbiased estimate of a longitudinal effect. However, by utilizing only the within-person variations, the fixed effects method tends to produce larger standard errors and fails to incorporation information from individuals with no across-time variations. But the biggest drawback is that it is unable to produce estimates for the time-constant personal characteristics, such as gender and race.

As to the random effects method, its major advantage is that it enables researchers to estimate the effects of time-invariant characteristics of the individuals. In addition, by utilizing variations both within and between individuals on a variable of interest, random effects method is also able to produce estimate with less standard errors or sampling variability. On the other hand, random effects methods cannot control for unmeasured, stable characteristics of the individuals, and it usually has a strong assumption that the unmeasured time-constant variables are independent of the measured variables. Therefore, the model estimates can be biased, and produce inconsistent parameter estimates in case of assumption violation (Allison 2005; Petersen 2004).

In this study I take advantage of both methods in order to maximize their benefits and gain as much information as I could about the determinants of immigrant wage growth.

The two methods deal with the same data structure, in which each record corresponds to a separate income observation for an immigrant and every immigrant can have multiple observations. Thus, the dependent variable is the immigrants' monthly income; specifically, I use the logged monthly income in the value of 2007 U.S. dollars.

The independent variables consist of various time-varying and time-constant factors. The fixed effects model only uses the time-varying independent variables, such as the immigrant's basic demographic characteristics, cumulative U.S. experience, legal status in the U.S., and various kinds of job characteristics. The values of these variables are computed for the corresponding time points when the migrants' income was registered. The random effects model incorporates all the time-varying covariates from the fixed effects model as well as time-invariant personal characteristics during immigrants' labor history, such as gender, education, religion, and their initial migration cost. The specific random effects method I choose is a random intercept multilevel model, which allows the intercept to vary randomly across people (level 2). The assumption is that there are other unmeasured personal level characteristics that affect individual wages, and those unmeasured characteristics follow a random distribution.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

This study uses the U.S. dataset of CIMP, which contains usable data on 391 Chinese households. My analysis focuses on the household heads. Among the 391 household heads, 60% are men and 40% are women. Most of them are in their prime working ages – 22% are in their 20s, 34.3 in 30s, 27.4% in 40s, and 11.5% in their 50s. As expected for labor migrants, these people's overall educational attainment is quite modest – 41.4% only had elementary school education or less, 37.9% had junior high school education, and only 19.2% went to senior high school and 1.53% went to college.

The rest of the descriptive statistics will focus on these Chinese immigrants' economic performance in the U.S. First, I tabulate their occupation and earnings characteristics at the time of the CIMP survey. Then I examine these immigrants' basic income growth pattern, and how that's affected by their cumulative U.S. experience. I also inspect these immigrants' changes in other individual characteristics that can potentially affect their earnings during their stay in the U.S.

Table 1 presents the latest occupation and income characteristics of the Chinese immigrants in the CIMP U.S. sample. All the incomes are in the value of 2007 U.S. dollars. We can see that most of the information regarding Fujianese immigrants is quite consistent with findings from existing studies (Chin 1999; Kwong 1997). Fujianese migrants are mainly employed as restaurant workers, garment manufacturing workers and construction workers, and

a few have become self-employed. Most Fujianese workers are hired by co-ethnics, which confirms that these immigrants are the typical ethnic economy participants. Their job mobility is also mainly achieved through the ethnic networks or ethnic enclave institutions. Regarding the earnings, clearly the self-employed clearly have the highest monthly, representing a most promising route to economic mobility for these immigrants. On the other hand, almost all Chinese immigrants in the U.S. sample are working very long hours, Thus, consistent with existing literature (Bates 1997; Logan, Alba, and Stults 2003; Zhou and Logan 1989), most of these immigrant entrepreneurs and workers are making more money at the cost of longer working hours, especially the restaurant workers and self-employed. In all these occupations Chinese immigrants typically receive their earnings by cash rather than by checks, which is a normal practice for undocumented migrants to get paid. This is also a typical measure of the Chinese businesses for evading taxes (Kwong 1997), so this implies that these migrants can pocket the entire portion of their gross income. Besides, for Fujianese restaurant workers, their food and lodging are usually provided for free by their employers, so given the relatively scarce time for recreation, these restaurant workers can expect to put most of their income into savings or remittances.

Tables 2 and Table 3 tabulate immigrants' income changes over time along with their total number of U.S. years. Tables 2 is compiled using Chinese immigrants' initial and latest U.S. monthly incomes. For every immigrant, I calculate the percentage change between these two income records. We can see that out of the total CIMP sample the overwhelming majority (87.24%) experienced some kind of income growth over time. By looking down the last two percentage columns, we can also note that Chinese immigrants' chances of having the most remarkable income growth (> 50% compared to their initial U.S. earnings) tend to rise as they spend more time in the U.S., which is consistent with the general assimilation perspective and extant studies. However, this trend does not seem to sustain monotonously, because their income growth tends to level off at the interval of 5.1-10 years and after that the growth momentum appears to come to a stop. This is actually quite similar to Duleep and Dowhan's (2002) finding that immigrants' earning growth rate is the greatest in the beginning years and then the growth rate will gradually slow down. The positive effect of U.S. living experience can also be reflected by the correlation between immigrants' median incomes and their U.S. residence durations - their median income tends to increase consistently as they live in this country for a longer period of time. The observation from Table 2 can be further corroborated by the results from Table 3, which takes into account the immigrants' complete earnings history over their entire U.S. stay, which presumably can generate a more reliable income change trajectory.

The construction and setup of Table 4 and Table 5 is very similar to that of Tables 2 and Table 3 respectively, except that the controlling factor becomes the total number of U.S. jobs these immigrants had. We can see that the total number of U.S. jobs also has a similarly positive effect on immigrants' income - their median monthly income tends to increase consistently as they experience more jobs in the U.S.; and if we look down the last two percentage columns, we also see that the more U.S. jobs immigrants ever had the more likely they can have a sizable earning growth (50% or more). All these results demonstrate that immigrants' U.S. experience, both in residence and in the labor market, tends to produce a substantial and positive impact on their earnings.

Besides immigrants' total length of U.S. residence and the total number of U.S. jobs they had, there are other time-varying factors that can potentially affect immigrant earnings, including immigrant marital status, family composition, legal status, occupation, and job location. Therefore, I construct a series of tables to assess the extent to which these variables have changed their values over time.

In Table 6, 33 out of 392 Chinese immigrants changed their marital status from single to married; that's exactly one third of the originally single persons and about 8.4% of the total sample. In Table 7, 61 out of 391 Chinese immigrants legalized their status, about 15.9% of the total; interestingly there are also 5 immigrants who lost their legal status and became undocumented, so altogether almost 17% of the sampled Chinese immigrants changed their legal status.

When examining Chinese immigrants' geographic mobility, I group their job locations into three categories: New York City (NYC), New York State (excluding NYC)–New Jersey-Connecticut, and the other states. Figure 3 shows the distribution of Chinese immigrants' historical job locations. We can see they could find work from all over the country. And for the CIMP sample at least, these immigrants' jobs have a clear concentration around NYC, their gateway city and home community in the U.S.. And the further away a place is from NYC, the fewer immigrants were employed there. Table 8 shows that 125 out of 392 Chinese immigrants changed their tier of location between their initial and latest U.S. jobs, and the overall outcome is like a virtual equilibrium between NYC and the non-gateway places.

Table 9 tracks down the immigrants' net occupational change between their initial and latest U.S. observations, and 162 changed their occupations. The net outcome is a substantial increase in the placement in the relatively more desirable jobs and a drop in the worse jobs.

Table 10 shows the change in the immigrants' family composition in the U.S. during their stay. We can see that a sizable number of Chinese immigrants have experienced an expansion of family size in the U.S. Altogether 128 out of 392 have gained more family members in the U.S., especially 79 of these (236-157=79) came originally as the sole member of their family in the U.S. So, most of them sent for more family members to join them in the U.S.; a few got married with other immigrants and started new families in the host society.

These tables can only provide a glimpse of immigrants' longitudinal changes in select personal attributes, since they are based only on the immigrants' initial and latest U.S. observation records. It is very likely that immigrants could have experienced more complex status change in-between those two observation points. The bottom line is that there is ample amount of within-person variations on these variables so that they can be included in the fixed effects model to assess their impact on immigrant earnings.

Fixed Effects Models

Table 11 presents results from the fixed effects model utilizing only the within-person variations over time and assesses the effects of time-varying factors such as U.S. experience,

legal status, occupation, and job location on immigrant earnings. My discussion of the results focuses on Model A. First, the U.S. experience produces an overall positive effect, and such effect is twofold - one is the living experience as measured by the total length of residence in the U.S. and the other is the labor market experience as measured by the total number of jobs had by an immigrant. Basically, the immigrant's income tends to increase as s/he spends more time and works more jobs in the U.S. Each additional year of residence in the U.S. is expected to increase a Chinese immigrant's monthly income by 7.48% ($e^{0.07216}$=1.0748), and each additional U.S. job record can lead to 13.66% higher income. On the other hand, as observed in the descriptive results, the effect of U.S. experience is not uniformly linear in the multivariate analysis. The negative sign of the squared term for years of U.S. residence and number of U.S. jobs suggests that immigrants earnings tend to level off after living a period of time and changing a certain number of jobs in the U.S. Basically, an immigrant is expected to have the optimal earning power in her/his tenth year in the U.S. [0.07216/(-0.003647*2)=9.90] and when s/he have changed jobs in the U.S. six times [0.1280/(-0.0106*2)=6.04]. Please note that the effect of U.S. residence may also contain an aging effect, as for most Fujianese immigrants their years of U.S. residence and age have perfect correlation, and the age variable has to be dropped from the model. But this mixture will be disentangled in the random effects model when age is included in the regression at the same time.

Although the overall positive impact of cumulative U.S. experience is in accordance with what the immigrant assimilation literature suggests, attention should be given to these immigrants' reliance on frequent job changes for income growth, which actually diverges from the pattern in the general labor market. Studies have found that in the larger economy, although job shopping can be beneficial at one's early career, the long term cumulative job mobility tends to be detrimental to her/his wage growth trajectory (Fuller 2008; Light 2005). This divergence reflects the tenuous position these immigrants have in the U.S. economy - they are concentrated in low-status, dead-end jobs that seldom derive wage premiums from seniority and so usually have high turnover rates.

Interestingly, legalization of the immigrant status seems to reduce the monthly income by 5.93% ($1-e^{-.06113}$=1-0.9407=0.0593). This variable is only significant at .10 level. As indicated by Table 7-9 and Table 7-10, most of the within-person variation in legal status is in the direction from illegal to legal status, thus such effect means that immigrants tend to earn less after they legalize their status. This finding clearly contradicts with the knowledge from existing studies that undocumented immigrants usually suffer a significant income penalty and slower income growth compared to their documented counterparts (Borjas and Tienda 1993; Massey 1987a; Massey, Durand and Malone 2002; Philips and Massey 1999; Rivera-Batiz 1999).

However, this exceptional finding on Chinese immigrants may reflect a unique situation that affects Fujianese money-making motivation under different legal status and adaptation stage in the U.S. In their early years in the U.S. while still being illegal in this country, Fujianese tend to be motivated towards maximizing their income. One probable cause is that they were under the pressure to pay back their smuggling fee debt as soon as possible; another factor can be their intention to legalize their status by resorting to the extremely expensive legal services by immigration attorneys, who typically charges 20,000 to 30,000 dollars for assisting an amnesty claim, but even that cannot guarantee the outcome of those claim cases. For example,

one CIMP respondent who was smuggled to the U.S. in 1990 told the interviewers that after he paid off the smuggling fee debt in 1993 he intended to legalize his U.S. status so that he could sponsor the immigration of his family members back in China. In 1994 he paid the immigration attorneys almost $20,000 to apply for amnesty but failed. Eventually he chose to pay $30,000 to get married fraudulently with another Chinese woman who was a U.S. citizen, and that helped him legalize his status and subsequently re-unite with his family members left back in China. Another immigrant who entered the U.S. by "jumping the ship" in the early 1970s also mentioned that even back in the 1970s the attorney fee for immigration service was as high as $6,000.

But once they have paid back their debt and legalize their status in the U.S., their financial pressure is relieved, and then they tend to take less-paying but relatively more comfortable jobs. Another implication of this finding is that within the Chinese ethnic economy, there is no systematic discrimination against undocumented immigrants in terms of wages. This view is also shared by several Fujianese association officials during the CIMP interviews that there is no legal status-based discrimination in wages.

Another possible factor accounting for the lower earnings among the legalized immigrants is that legal immigrants tend to pay income taxes while undocumented migrants do not. Given the fact that these Chinese immigrants typically receive cash payment as income, and thus for most people income should be the "net" earnings they can bring home rather than the pre-tax gross amount and should be so reported. Then it is not surprising that the reported income of legal immigrants can be lower than that of undocumented immigrants.

Another key factor is their job location. The model results indicate that the further immigrants move away from the NYC region the higher income they tend to have. Basically, a job in the NYS-NJ-CT tier of job location tends to lead to 5.13% more income compared to the NYC income level, and working in more distant places can lead to 6.70% more. Therefore, it is evident that the labor market condition in the gateway city is not very conducive to immigrants probably due to the ample labor supply and internal business competitions. So, this offers empirical support to the suggestion by Pieke et al. (2004) that Fujianese immigrants can have opportunity for higher income in the U.S. as they move into new places, which is different from the situation in U.K.

There is also a period effect on Chinese immigrants' income. It appears Chinese immigrants' income has been on a straight decline over time. Compared to the early period (pre-1992), they tend to have 9.15% less income in the period of 1993-1996, and earn 19.18% less during 1997-2001, and 29.43% less during 2002-2003. So, this provides new and systematic evidence about the overall income trend in the Chinese community. This confirms Kwong's (1997) observation that since the influx of Fujianese during the 1990s wages and working as well as living condition in the Chinese community had been exacerbated, which draws a lot of blame from the Cantonese, the previous dominant Chinese sub-group in the U.S. One CIMP respondent also expressed a similar point of view during an in-depth interview. Mr. Jiang, who came to the U.S. illegally in 1992, stated that around 1993, the prime time of Chinese smuggling, there was a smuggling ship coming into NYC almost every day, and consequently, Chinatown at that time was flooded with undocumented Fujianese who were desperately looking for work. Almost

within one day, the monthly pay for a menial laborer was reduced from $1,000 to $700. But other factors may also be at play. Another interview can shed some light on understanding the development of the pillar Chinese business in the U.S. - restaurants. Mr. Wang, a standing official of a NYC Chinese Association, mentioned that it has become increasingly difficult for the Chinese restaurants to make money nowadays. The direct reason is that over the past 10 years, the price of Chinese restaurant meals has barely risen, whereas the cost of the food supplies has more than doubled. This statement actually points out another fact about the Fujianese economy. Fujianese are concentrated in two types of restaurant businesses – buffet and take-out restaurants. These restaurants are usually at the bottom stratum of the restaurant industry with the lowest profit margin, and this means is that it is very unfeasible for them to raise the food prices unless there is a significant upgrade on their products and services. Therefore, the declining income among the Fujianese immigrants is very likely to be the result of self bidding down that's associated with an oversupply of products and labor: on the one hand, the profit margin gets increasingly lower for restaurant owners due to internal competition, and on the other, abundant labor supply exerts a downward pressure on workers' wages.

Immigrant earnings are certainly affected by the specific occupation types, as well. Once again, we can see there is a hierarchical order in the typical Fujianese jobs in terms of earnings power: the self-employed always occupy the top of this hierarchy, affirming the presence of a "self-employment bonus" (Light and Roach 1996); being the reference category, restaurant workers surpass all the other hired labor in income; construction workers and miscellaneous manual workers earn slightly less, but the difference is not statistically significant; compared to formal restaurant workers, those doing temporary and ancillary jobs, mostly also in restaurants, make 11% less money. This shows even among the restaurant employees, it makes a big difference what position a worker actually holds. In general, chef and waiter/waitress tend to make the highest income, but those merely provide ancillary services such as doing cleaning and fundamental food preparation do not make as much. At last, garment manufacturing tend to be the lowest paying jobs, making 20% less than the typical restaurant employees.

Finally, demographic factors also play a role. At the 0.10 significance level, those who got married are expected to have 9.33% higher income compared to the times when they were single. This is consistent with pattern of the general population that married people tend to earn more than their unmarried counterparts, because they live more settled lives, are healthier, and more productive at work, especially for men (Waite and Gallagher 2000). Another relevant factor is the number of family members, which seems to lower the immigrants' income – each additional family is expected to lower an immigrant's income by 2.68%. One possible reason is that more family obligation tends to reduce the immigrant work productivity; more family members can also reduce immigrant's job mobility, which in turn lowers immigrant income. As mentioned above, the age variable is not included in the model due to the perfect correlation with the immigrants' U.S residence.

Model B seeks to analyze the effect of interaction between job location and job period. According to the existing studies, the overall demographic impact on the wage level within the Chinese community is negative, but moving into new places tends to mitigate such negative impact (Kwong 1997; Pieke et al. 2004). So, I introduced an interaction term between the job

location and job period into the model[1]. To facilitate model convergence and result interpretation, I combine the second tier locations, NYS-NJ-CT, and the third tier, more distant locations, into a single category called new destinations. The results of Model A are largely replicated by Model B. In addition, Model B confirms that although the main income trend since the mid-1990s is a straight downhill, such trend is significantly attenuated for jobs in new destinations, and such attenuating effect is most strongly felt in the most recent period of 2002-2003, in which a job in new places can increase the monthly income by 18.12% compared to employment in NYC.

Random Effects Models

I also run random effects models which include both time-varying and time-constant variables. The model also includes a random intercept to represent unmeasured personal level characteristics. The time-constant personal characteristics include immigrant's gender, education, religion, and initial smuggling fee.

In Table 12, from the random effects section we can see that there are indeed person-level differences in income that are not fully explained by the measured predictors in the model, because the random intercept parameter has an estimated variance of 0.050, which is significantly different from 0, although such level of variation is quite small.

In the fixed effects section, most of the results from the prior fixed effects analysis have been confirmed. Especially note the largely unaltered effects of years in the U.S. when the age variable is also included in the model, which is unattainable in the fixed effects model due to perfect correlation with the number of years in the U.S. Given that random effects model utilizes both within-person variation and between-person variations, this means the longitudinal effects of immigrant U.S. experience, legal status, occupation, job location and family composition are largely consistent with the cross-sectional patterns. So is the interaction effect of job location and period; in fact, the results reinforces the notion about the increasingly positive impact of employment in new destinations in recent years. There is one divergence from the fixed effects model, however. In the random effects model, the effect of marital status has been vastly reduced and becomes statistically insignificant. This suggests that the marital status effect estimate based on between-person variation differs from that using the within-person variation, which could be due to biased correlation with unobserved personal characteristics in the random effects model (Allison 2005; Petersen 2004). In the same model, I also include immigrant's age, because it no longer has a perfect correlation with the immigrant's U.S. residence duration when counting both within- and between-person variations. And it turns out that age has a positive effect on immigrant income. Although such effect also tends to be curvilinear the coefficient of the squared age term is too small to be consequential.

The random effects model also reveals important effects of time-constant personal level characteristics. First, there is severe gender inequality in immigrant income. On average men make 32.11% more per month than women. Education also affects immigrants' earnings significantly, but not in a linear fashion. It appears that those with junior middle school education

[1] I also tried to test the interaction between immigrant's legal status and job period, but the results are not statistically significant, so the interaction terms are dropped from the model.

have the greatest earning power, followed closely by high-school educated immigrants. Curiously, college education does not confer any earning advantage. One possible explanation is that the number of college-educated is very small in the CIMP sample, which is unlikely to yield reliable estimate. Another possibility is that the Chinese ethnic economy is predominantly labor-intensive, which hardly offers any opportune reward for advanced education. Immigrants' earnings are also affected by their financial burden as represented by their initial smuggling fees. Clearly, those who paid less smuggling fees earn significantly less than those who paid the highest amount of smuggling fees; for example, immigrants whose smuggling fee debt is in the $20,000-$39,999 range earn 16.28% less than those who paid more than $60,000 in smuggling fees. Thus, the Chinese immigrants' migration cost continues to influence their labor market performance even after they arrive in the destination. Finally, immigrants' religion has no impact on their earnings.

Conclusion

This research studies immigrants' income growth patterns and dynamics, which is an extensively studied topic. However, this study departs from extant research in important ways. First of all, this study analyzes immigrants' income growth mainly by tracking down within-person changes over time rather than relying on cross-sectional analysis, which allows us to make unbiased assessment of immigrants' earnings progress over time. More importantly, this study is able to provide more concrete interpretation about how immigrants increase their earnings over time compared with traditional research, which generally uses a rather vague notion of "assimilation" to explain immigrants' labor market performance. Some major findings of this study can be laid out as follows.

First of all, as the typical labor immigrants, the Fujianese are overrepresented in the manual labor and service sectors, the typical peripheral sectors of the U.S. economy, and most of them tend to have meager wages. This is not surprising given their modest education and skills. However, remarkably, most Fujianese immigrants tend to experience some kind of income growth as they accumulate more experience in the U.S., which is consistent with the general assimilation perspective. Besides the effect of spending more time in the U.S., they also reap the benefits of having more labor market experience in the U.S. as indicated by the positive impact of the total number of U.S. jobs they ever had. This echoes the finding from earlier research that cumulative job mobility can help immigrants become more informed of the labor market opportunities and improve their economic well-being accordingly (Nee, Sanders and Sernau 1994). On the other hand, the reliance on frequent job or employer changes for earnings improvement also suggests these immigrants' inability to translate their job tenure or employer-specific human capital to monetary rewards, which underscores their disadvantaged position as unskilled workers in a segmented U.S. labor market.

This study also reveals other aspects of the immigrants' labor market movement that can contribute to their income growth. Continue with the discussion on job mobility, we can see that on top of experiencing more employers immigrants can certainly expect to increase their earnings by moving into the relatively "better" jobs. For these Chinese immigrants, entering self-employment is undoubtedly the best route of economic mobility. As to those who remain as

hired labor, construction appears to be the most remunerative job.

The geographic dimension of job transition is also important. There has already been a lot of research documenting the patterns and causes of immigrants' presence and movement into the nontraditional places, particularly from a labor market perspective, yet not much is known about the wage consequences of this process. A few existing studies delving into this topic usually focus on what's happening within the new destinations without making comparison to the traditional places (Grey and Woodrick's 2005; Parrado and Kandel 2008). Other studies attempting to make such comparison mainly use cross-sectional data (Donato et al. 2008). From this study at least we have some systematic evidence that job transition into new destinations can bring immigrants higher earnings. Therefore, although extant research documents a lot of uncertainties and challenges facing immigrants as they settle into new destinations, this still appears as a more promising path for immigrants' economic mobility. On a more general note, this study also adds the Chinese immigrants' experience into the literature on immigrants in new destinations, which thus far has been dominated by studies of Latino groups.

The fact that these Chinese immigrants are mainly received by the co-ethnic economy has significant implications for their earnings growth patterns in several respects. First, there is no systematic legal status-based wage discrimination among the Chinese immigrants who work in their co-ethnic domain. This is very different from the experience of other immigrant groups who work in the general economy, particularly the Mexicans. Second, the system of economic returns to human capital is quite flat in the Chinese ethnic economy, only benefiting those with middle-level education. This highlights the fact that the ethnic economy is composed mostly of low-skill, labor-intensive industries, which have no appropriate usage for higher education and thus cannot offer due rewards. Lastly, the separation of the Chinese ethnic economy from the general economy is also reflected by the trend of wages over time. The Chinese immigrants' wages are basically on a steady downhill, reflecting a particular trend of development of the ethnic businesses, while at the same time the wages in the general economy actually experienced fluctuations in all directions. However, we should note that the declining Chinese workers' wage is a totally individual level observation, which should not be confused with the growth and expansion of the Chinese immigrant economy at the aggregate level.

The final note is about the impact of migration cost on immigrants' subsequent labor market performance in the destination. This study finds that for immigrants' smuggling cost tends to exert an upward pressure on their wages in the host society. Thus, immigrants' economic performance is not just determined by their human capital and the context of reception, but is also affected by their expectation and motivation that are linked to pre-arrival factors. This provides a unique illustration of how powerful the "context of exit" can be, and empirically enriches the "mode of incorporation" theory posited by Portes and Rumbaut (1996).

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Table 1. The Latest Occupation and Income Characteristics of Employed Chinese Immigrants in the CIMP Sample

U.S. Occupation	Median Monthly Income*	Mean Weekly Working Hours	(Estimated) Median Hourly Wage*	Payment Form (Mode)	Race or Ethnicity of Employer (Mode)	How Job Was Obtained (Mode)	N
Self-employed	3945.89	62.5	11.60	Cash	----	----	17
Professional	1127.40	45.33	5.84	Cash	Fujianese	Friends	3
Sales and storage workers	1578.35	53.29	6.73	Cash	White	Friends	8
Restaurant workers	2367.53	69.96	7.66	Cash	Fujianese	Chinatown Agency	175
Garment manufacturing workers	1127.40	49.77	5.20	Cash	Fujianese	Friends	97
Construction workers	2525.37	50.52	10.82	Cash	Fujianese	Friends	21
Other skilled workers	2818.49	61.75	10.06	Cash	Fujianese	Friends	8
Other unskilled manual worker	1352.87	54.47	6.92	Cash	Fujianese	Friends	19
Unspecified menial laborers	1860.20	68.18	6.17	Cash	Fujianese	Chinatown Agency	22
Total							**370**

* Income is converted into the value of 2007 U.S. dollars.

Table 2. Distribution of Chinese Immigrants' Monthly Income by Length of Residence in the U.S. Based on Immigrants' Most Recent Monthly Income Observations

Length of U.S. Residence (R)	Income Growth Relative to Immigrants' Initial U.S. Income (G)					Median Income ($)	N
	G ≤ 0%	0 < G ≤ 25%	25% < G ≤ 50%	50% < G ≤ 100%	G > 100%		
R ≤ 1 year	38.10%	28.57%	4.76%	19.05%	9.52%	1465.614	21
1 year < R ≤ 5 years	11.64%	18.49%	23.97%	23.29%	22.60%	2029.312	146
5 years < R ≤ 10 years	5.65%	10.48%	16.94%	27.42%	39.52%	2198.422	124
R > 10 years	17.82%	8.91%	18.81%	16.83%	37.62%	2254.791	101
Total	**12.76%**	**14.03%**	**19.39%**	**22.70%**	**31.12%**	**2032.468**	**392**

Table 3. Distribution of Chinese Immigrants' Monthly Income by Length of Residence in the U.S. Based on Immigrants' All Available Monthly Income Observations

Length of U.S. Residence (R)	Income Growth Relative to Immigrants' Initial U.S. Income (G)					Median Income ($)	N
	G ≤ 0%	0 < G ≤ 25%	25% < G ≤ 50%	50% < G ≤ 100%	G > 100%		
R ≤ 1 year	54.49%	18.83%	10.96%	7.97%	7.75%	1526.718	903
1 year < R ≤ 5 years	9.16%	15.12%	20.46%	25.27%	29.98%	2166.065	1124
5 years < R ≤ 10 years	8.39%	11.79%	11.61%	29.82%	38.39%	2304.147	560
R > 10 years	24.35%	9.33%	18.65%	18.13%	29.53%	2254.791	193
Total	**24.78%**	**15.25%**	**15.47%**	**20.07%**	**24.42%**	**1958.042**	**2780**

Table 4. Distribution of Chinese Immigrants' Monthly Income by Number of Jobs Ever Had in the U.S. Based on Immigrants' Latest Monthly Income Observations

Number of Jobs Ever Had in the U.S.	Income Growth Relative to Immigrants' Initial U.S. Income (G)					Median Income ($)	N
	$G \leq 0\%$	$0 < G \leq 25\%$	$25\% < G \leq 50\%$	$50\% < G \leq 100\%$	$G > 100\%$		
1	24.59%	13.11%	19.67%	16.39%	26.23%	1240.135	61
2	13.51%	18.92%	16.22%	24.32%	27.03%	1803.833	74
3	8.64%	16.05%	18.52%	27.16%	29.63%	2142.052	81
4	7.58%	21.21%	21.21%	21.21%	28.79%	2254.791	66
5	7.84%	7.84%	29.41%	21.57%	33.33%	2254.791	51
6+	15.25%	3.39%	13.56%	23.73%	44.07%	2419.355	59
Total	**12.76%**	**14.03%**	**19.39%**	**22.70%**	**31.12%**	**2032.468**	**392**

Table 5. Distribution of Chinese Immigrants' Monthly Income by Number of Jobs Ever Had in the U.S. Based on Immigrants' All Available Monthly Income Observations

Number of Jobs Ever Had in the U.S.	Income Growth Relative to Immigrants' Initial U.S. Income (G)					Median Income ($)	N
	$G \leq 0\%$	$0 < G \leq 25\%$	$25\% < G \leq 50\%$	$50\% < G \leq 100\%$	$G > 100\%$		
1	64.86%	12.36%	7.34%	6.31%	9.14%	1401.051	777
2	10.50%	23.74%	21.46%	20.09%	24.20%	1873.536	657
3	7.44%	15.85%	20.35%	27.01%	29.35%	2196.382	511
4	7.14%	14.86%	16.29%	30.00%	31.71%	2304.147	350
5	8.22%	9.13%	17.81%	28.31%	36.53%	2304.147	219
6+	13.16%	7.14%	12.03%	27.07%	40.60%	2419.355	266
Total	**24.78%**	**15.25%**	**15.47%**	**20.07%**	**24.42%**	**1958.042**	**2780**

Table 6. Chinese Immigrants' Marital Status at the Time of the Initial and the Latest U.S. Income Observations

Initial Marital Status	Latest Marital Status		
	Single	Ever Married	Total
Single	99	33	132
Ever Married	0	260	260
Total	**99**	**293**	**392**

Table 7. Chinese Immigrants' U.S. Legal Status at the Time of the Initial and the Latest U.S. Income Observations

Initial Legal Status	Latest Legal Status		
	Illegal	Legal	Total
Illegal	233	61	294
Legal	5	92	97
Total	**238**	**153**	**391**

Table 8. Location of Chinese Immigrants at the Time of Their Initial and Latest U.S. Income Observations

Initial U.S. Location	Latest U.S. Location			
	NYC	NY, NJ, CT	Other States	Total
NYC	208	17	29	254
NY, NJ, CT	23	30	9	62
Other States	24	23	29	76
Total	**255**	**70**	**67**	**392**

Table 9. Chinese Immigrants' Occupations at the Time of Their Initial and Latest U.S. Income Observations

Initial U.S. Occupation	**Latest U.S. Occupation**									
	Self-employed	Professional	Clerical, sales	Restaurant Workers	Garment Workers	Construction workers	Other Skilled Workers	Other Unskilled Manual Workers	Unspecified Menial Laborers	Total
Self-employed	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
Professional	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Clerical, sales	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Restaurant workers	5	0	1	102	8	5	2	5	4	132
Garment workers	3	0	2	15	88	2	0	8	2	120
Construction workers	3	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	10
Other skilled workers	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	5
Other unskilled manual workers	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	9	1	14
Unspecified menial laborers	8	0	0	65	3	5	3	1	17	102
Total	**23**	**2**	**7**	**184**	**102**	**20**	**6**	**24**	**24**	**392**

Table 10. Number of Other Family Members for the Chinese Immigrants at the Time of Their Initial and Latest U.S. Income Observations

Initial Number of Other Family Members in the U.S.	**Latest Number of Other Family Members in the U.S.**					
	0	1	2	3	4+	Total
0	157	28	12	27	12	236
1	0	39	19	7	8	73
2	0	0	17	4	7	28
3	0	0	0	24	4	28
4+	0	0	0	0	27	27
Total	**157**	**67**	**48**	**62**	**58**	**392**

Table 11. Fixed Effects Model Predicting Logged Monthly Income of Chinese Immigrants with Time-Varying Predictors

	Model A		Model B	
Independent Variables	***B***	**S.E.**	***B***	**S.E.**
Ever married	0.0892 †	0.0470	0.0844 †	0.0470
No. of other family members in the U.S.	-0.0271 *	0.0130	-0.0272 *	0.0130
Number of years in the U.S.	0.0721 **	0.0063	0.0720 **	0.0063
Number of years in the U.S. squared	-0.0036 **	0.0003	-0.0036 **	0.0003
Number of prior U.S. jobs	0.1280 **	0.0125	0.1279 **	0.0124
Number of prior U.S. jobs squared	-0.0106 **	0.0012	-0.0108 **	0.0012
Legal status in the U.S.	-0.0611 †	0.0320	-0.0639 *	0.0320
Occupation				
Self-employed	0.2773 **	0.0521	0.2725 **	0.0520
White collar worker	-0.1875 *	0.0836	-0.1916 *	0.0838
Garment worker	-0.2232 **	0.0379	-0.2258 **	0.0379
Construction worker	-0.0707	0.0599	-0.0663	0.0598
Other manual worker	-0.0438	0.0462	-0.0419	0.0461
Unspecified menial laborer	-0.1164 **	0.0253	-0.1151 **	0.0254
Restaurant worker (reference)	----	----	----	----
Job location				
New York City (reference)	----	----		
NY-NJ-CT	0.0500 *	0.0244		
Other places	0.0648 **	0.0220		
Job location				
New York City (reference)			----	----
Non-gateway areas			-0.0637	0.0498
Period				
Before 1993 (reference)	----	----	----	----
1993-1996	-0.0960 **	0.0329	-0.1508 **	0.0387
1997-2001	-0.2132 **	0.0426	-0.2563 **	0.0470
2002-2003	-0.3487 **	0.0562	-0.4107 **	0.0633

Period × Non-gateway areas (NGA)			
Before 1993 × NGA (reference)		----	----
1993-1996 × NGA		0.1552 **	0.0570
1997-2001 × NGA		0.1283 *	0.0539
2002-2003 × NGA		0.1665 *	0.0694
Corrected total sum of squares	774.6547	774.6547	
Mean squared error	0.1045	0.1042	
Type I sum of squares	430.9358	430.9358	
R-Square	0.6810	0.6821	
df	408	410	
Number of observations	2774	2774	

Note: † P < 0.10, * P < 0.05, ** P < 0.01

Table 12. Random Effects Model Predicting Logged Monthly Income of Chinese Immigrants with Time-Varying and Time-Invariant Predictors

	Model A		Model B	
Independent Variables	***B***	**S.E.**	***B***	**S.E.**
Random Effects				
Variance of intercept between persons	0.0505 **	0.0054	0.0501 **	0.0053
Variance of residual	0.1052 **	0.0031	0.1049 **	0.0031
Fixed Effects				
Intercept	6.8591 **	0.1453	6.8968 **	0.1455
Male	0.2785 **	0.0351	0.2727 **	0.0351
Age	0.0225 **	0.0071	0.0224 **	0.0070
Age squared	-0.0004 **	0.0001	-0.0004 **	0.0001
Ever married	0.0014	0.0347	0.0004	0.0346
Education				
No formal education (reference)	----	----	----	----
Elementary school or less	0.0852	0.0763	0.0886	0.0761
Junior middle school	0.1796 *	0.0772	0.1827 *	0.0770
Senior or vocational high school	0.1664 *	0.0807	0.1667 *	0.0804
College or above	0.0367	0.1373	0.0367	0.1369
Religious affiliation				
Christianity	-0.0179	0.0403	-0.0179	0.0402
Other religions	0.0042	0.0373	0.0025	0.0372
None (reference)	----	----	----	----
No. of other family members in the U.S.	-0.0223 *	0.0097	-0.0219 *	0.0097
Number of years in the U.S.	0.0725 **	0.0060	0.0719 **	0.0060
Number of years in the U.S. squared	-0.0033 **	0.0003	-0.0033 **	0.0003

Number of prior U.S. jobs	0.1152	**	0.0113	0.1153	**	0.0112
Number of prior U.S. jobs squared	-0.0104	**	0.0012	-0.0106	**	0.0012
Legal status in the U.S.	-0.0399		0.0265	-0.0411		0.0265
Smuggling fee						
$0~$19,999	-0.1461	**	0.0502	-0.1470	**	0.0500
$20,000~$39,999	-0.1849	**	0.0545	-0.1810	**	0.0544
$40,000~$59,999	-0.1037	**	0.0362	-0.1005	**	0.0361
$60,000+ (reference)	----		----	----		----
Occupation						
Self-employed	0.2699	**	0.0476	0.2660	**	0.0475
White collar worker	-0.1617	*	0.0713	-0.1679	*	0.0712
Garment worker	-0.3042	**	0.0315	-0.3086	**	0.0314
Construction worker	-0.0012		0.0496	0.0015		0.0495
Other manual worker	-0.0418		0.0408	-0.0408		0.0407
Unspecified menial laborer	-0.1271	**	0.0236	-0.1251	**	0.0236
Restaurant worker (reference)	----		----	----		----
Job location						
New York City (reference)	----		----			
NY-NJ-CT	0.0504	*	0.0225			
Other places	0.0564	**	0.0204			
Job location						
New York City (reference)				----		----
Non-gateway areas				-0.0826	†	0.0472
Period						
Before 1993 (reference)	----		----	----		----
1993-1996	-0.1020	**	0.0280	-0.1480	**	0.0332
1997-2001	-0.1894	**	0.0318	-0.2330	**	0.0354
2002-2003	-0.3026	**	0.0407	-0.3556	**	0.0471
Period × Non-gatetway areas (NGA)						
Before 1993 × NGA (reference)				----		----
1993-1996 × NGA				0.1501	**	0.0546
1997-2001 × NGA				0.1505	**	0.0508
2002-2003 × NGA				0.1723	**	0.0631
-2 Log Likelihood	2335.0			2332.6		

AIC	2339.0	2336.6
BIC	2347.0	2344.6
Number of observations	2774	2774

Note: † P < 0.10, * P < 0.05, ** P < 0.01

Figure 1. Location of Fujian Province in China

Figure 2. Major Immigrant-sending Areas in Fujian Province, China

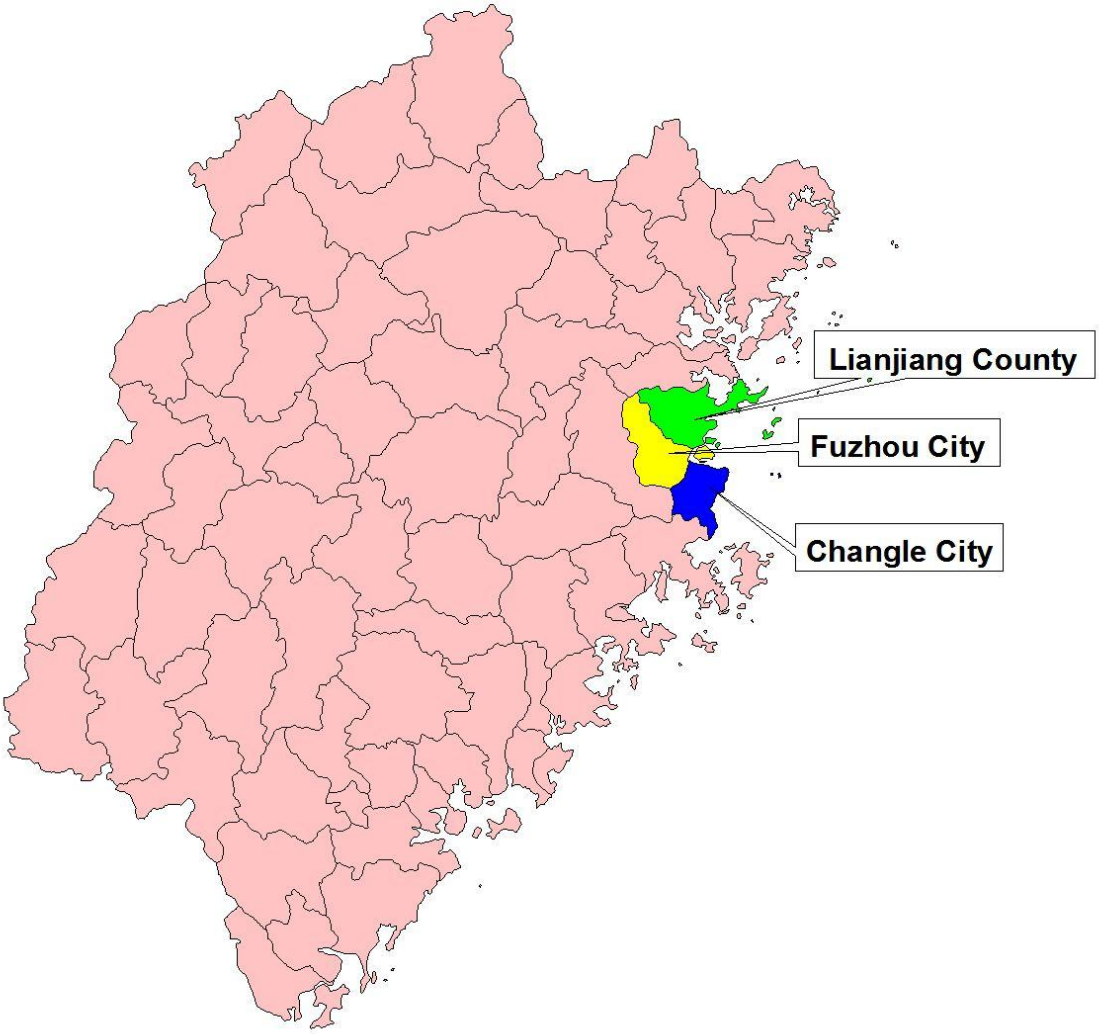

Figure 3. Geographic Distribution of Chinese Immigrants' Prior U.S. Jobs
- Based on CIMP Household Heads' Complete U.S. Job Histories