

**MOVING TO SHANGHAI: THE MASSIVE INTERNAL MIGRATION TO THE FIRST CHINESE
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ABSTRACT

As a result of the massive rural-urban migration, Shanghai transformed from a small coastal city into the largest metropolis in China. During Nanjing Government Era (1927-1937), more than one million immigrants flocked into Shanghai and formed almost 80% of its population. Relying on the official statistics published by Nanjing Government and the historical archives and surveys, this article is one of the first attempts to quantify the population of Shanghai and the internal migration during the Republican China, and to analyze the characteristics of the immigrants to Shanghai. The study shows that the majority of the immigrants were young males from nearby rural areas. There was a high geographical concentration of the immigrants and existed the segmentation in the labour market and social status. The Great Depression had a late influence to China's economy, and after 1932 large number of rural workers lost jobs, and the rate of immigration to Shanghai reduced. The industrial development and employment opportunities brought by migrants are the most important reason to attract people to Shanghai.

Keywords: rural-urban migration, industrialization, China, Great Depression.

RESUMEN

Debido a la migración masiva interna Shanghai se convirtió de una ciudad pequeña en la metrópoli más grande en China. Durante la época del Gobierno de Nanjing (1927-1937) más de un millón de inmigrantes entraron en Shanghai, siendo casi 80 por ciento de la población de esa década. En base a las estadísticas oficiales publicadas por el Gobierno de Nanjing y los archivos históricos y encuestas, éste es uno de los primeros artículos que trata de cuantificar la población de Shanghai y la migración interna durante la República China, y analizar las características de los inmigrantes a Shanghai. El estudio muestra que la mayoría de los inmigrantes eran jóvenes masculinos que vinieron de las zonas rurales cercanas. Hubo una alta concentración geográfica de los inmigrantes y existía una evidente segmentación en el mercado laboral y su estatus social. La Gran Depresión tuvo una influencia diferente en la economía de China. La crisis llegó más tarde, y tuvo su influencia en el sector industrial, se observa que después de 1932 gran número de trabajadores rurales perdieron sus puestos de trabajo, y la tasa de inmigración a Shanghai se redujo. El desarrollo industrial y las oportunidades de empleo son las razones que atrajeron a los inmigrantes a Shanghai.

Palabras clave: Migración rural-urbana, industrialización, China, Gran Depresión.

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Moving to Shanghai: The massive internal migration to the first Chinese megacity (1927-1937)¹

Shanghai: the city of immigrants

From the late 1950s, large scale rural-to-urban migration and rapid urbanization in developing countries have drawn the attention of demographers, economists and sociologists, especially the case of China in the past 30 years, which has become the focus. The successful story of “made in China” is closely linked to the massive internal migration. Since promulgating the reform and opening up policy in the late 1970s, hundreds of millions of rural laborers have migrated to cities to work in export-oriented factories, which has provided abundant cheap labor force and become the foundation for the success of China's export industry.

This current migration in China is not a new phenomenon. More than one hundred years ago, similar cases occurred when China began to develop its early industries. A large number of rural immigrants flocked to the urban areas in search of opportunities, and some cities experienced explosive population growth. The population of the two capitals of the Republic of China (1911-1949), Beijing and Nanjing², increased more than one million separately during this period (Han, 1986, 41-43; Nanjing Local

¹ This research is part of my PhD dissertation “The dream and the reality: the rural-urban immigration in China—the case of Shanghai (1927-1937)”, to be defended in the coming months at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. I am grateful to the supervisor, Carmen Sarasúa; to Domingo Gallego, Javier Silverstre and other participants at seminars at Universidad de Zaragoza, UAB and UB, for helpful suggestions, as well as to Professors Hou Yangfang and Chen Xi of University of Fudan (China) for their help during data collection in Shanghai. A former version of this working paper was also presented at the XI International Congress of AEHE in September of 2014. I gratefully acknowledge financial support from the Research Project “Salarios, actividad de las mujeres y niveles de vida, 1750-1950” directed by prof. Carmen Sarasúa (HAR2013-47277-C1-1).

² The capital of Republic of China was established in Beijing, and in April of 1927 the central government moved the capital to Nanjing.

Chronicle, 2001, 55-58). And the case of Shanghai was even more remarkable. In a few decades it was transformed from a small coastal city with a population of less than a quarter of a million into the largest metropolis in China and one of the largest cities in the world, with more than five million people by mid-twentieth century (Wang et al., 2002, 522-523; Lu, 1999, 25-27). This population explosion was no doubt the result of migration. Due to the huge number of immigrants in the city, Shanghai was also called “immigrants’ city”. An article published in the Shanghai newspaper *Shenbao* declared that “the people of Shanghai are all sojourners, and there are no natives.” (August 10, 1900, 2).

How did Shanghai develop from a small provincial city into the largest metropolis in China in such a short time? Why did so many immigrants choose Shanghai as the final destination? It still seems a “mystery”. Few previous investigations have been done about this question due to the particularity, complexity, and especially the lack of data, even less we know about the millions of immigrants who formed more than 80% of the city’s population.

No specific studies about the immigrants to Shanghai exist in the literature, which just formed parts of other investigations. Urban and demographic history introduced the general situation of this rapid population growth in Shanghai, but there was a lack of complete and detailed analysis of the immigrants (Zou, 1980; Ge, et al., 1997; Pan and Wang, 1999; Zhang, 1989). Some scholars have studied the origin and networks of the immigrants using the archives of the associations of the immigrants, but they just selected one or two groups of the immigrants (Honig, 1992; Song, 2007; Goodman, 1995). Others studied factory workers like female laborers in the textile sector, however they just explained the origin of these workers (Honig, 1986; Song et al., 2011,); Other studies about the life and society of Shanghai also have mentioned the work and life of the immigrants during this period (Lu, 1999; Xin, 1996).

We do not even know the exact total population of China in this period, let alone the population of the major cities. Hot debates still exist among demographers and historians about the factuality and reliability of the population data during Republican China period (Hou, 2001, 159-162; Hou, 2000, 3-15; Hu, 1987, 45-47). This study will

be one of the first attempts to quantify and analyze the migration to Shanghai during Republican China, and we try to achieve the following objectives: 1) To quantify the population growth of Shanghai city from the First Opium War (1840-1842) to the end of the Republic of China (1949); 2) To quantify the immigration to Shanghai during the Nanjing Government Era (1927-1937); 3) To analyze the demographic profile and find some unique and distinct characteristics of the immigrants to Shanghai, in comparison with other big cities.

This article analyzes the internal migration and development of Shanghai during the Nanjing Government Era of Republican China. Relying on the official historical statistics published by Nanjing Government, such as *The Yearbook of Shanghai (1934-1937, 1945)* and *Labour Statistics in Shanghai (1930-1939)*, in the first part I will reconstruct the population and immigration growth in Shanghai. Although the data of the official censuses and population registers of this period have been widely criticized, the statistics of Shanghai and other coastal provinces have been acknowledged as reliable sources by most experts, because of their detailed and continual population registration (Hou, 2000, 3-10; Hou, 2001, 161-164; Hu, 1987, 45-47). Using the archives of the native-place associations (*tong xiang hui*) and the Republican period's surveys, I will then analyze the characteristics of the immigrants to Shanghai: age, sex, marital status, education, and origin. The immigrants not only changed the population composition of Shanghai, but also reflected the uniqueness of Shanghai as the destination for immigration. In contrast to other capital cities, economic factors seemed to have had more influence on the internal migration to Shanghai.

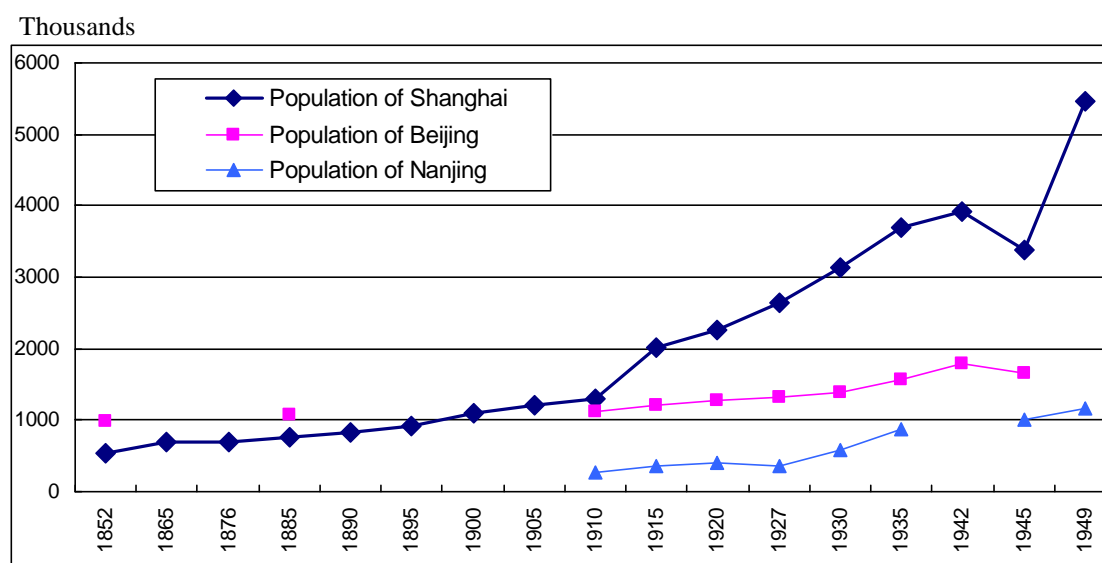
Setting and data

Shanghai has provided us one of the most suitable settings to examine the dynamic process of migration in China. About 170 years ago, Shanghai was a small city situated along the Huangpu River, with less than a quarter of a million people. Although it was known for the booming cotton trade in the Qing Dynasty, in comparison with the

principal Chinese cities like Beijing, Nanjing and Hangzhou, Shanghai was an unimportant costal settlement with a very short history. It had never served as a capital for any dynasty of Chinese Empire, and was just a third-class city under the provincial capital of Nanjing and the prefectural capital of Songjiang.

After the First Opium War (1840-1842), Shanghai became one of five British treaty ports opened on China's mainland, and from then on it experienced a rapid development. In a few decades Shanghai turned into the largest metropolis of China and one of the largest cities in the world, and the major Chinese transportation, industrial, and financial center (Wang et al., 2002, 522; Lu, 1999, 25-26). Fig.1 illustrates the explosive rise in Shanghai's population from 1850 to the end of the Republic of China (1911-1949), when it reached over five million people.

Figure 1: The population of Shanghai, Beijing and Nanjing (1852-1949)



Source: Population of Shanghai: Statistics of Shanghai 1933 and Yearbook of Shanghai 1945; Luo 1932, 20-21; and Zou 1980, 90-91; Zhang, 1989, 28. Population of Nanjing: Nanjing Local Chronicle, 2001, 55-58. Population of Beijing: Han, 1996, 120-134.

In comparison, the population of Shanghai grew at a much faster rate than that of Nanjing and Beijing, and a larger amount of immigrants had come to Shanghai for economic reasons. They came to Shanghai in search of job opportunities and dreaming of a better life (Lu, 1999, 43-44; Xin, 1996, 49-52; Zhu, 2007, 7-8), meanwhile lots of immigrants to Nanjing and Beijing for political reasons like the movement of the

central government or the wars (Han, 1986, 41-43; Nanjing Local Chronicle, 2001, 55-58).

The rapid population growth of Shanghai caused by migration is not an exception. A number of international metropolis have experienced similar process of population development, such as New York, Osaka, Buenos Aires, and Sao Paulo. However, the migration patterns of these big cities are different to those of Shanghai. Immigrants to New York and Buenos Aires were mainly international immigrants, especially Europeans, while Shanghai primarily received internal immigration. Although there were also plenty of foreign immigrants in Shanghai, they never exceed 4.5% of its total population (Zou 1980, 141). Cities like Osaka and Sao Paulo during 1950 and 1970 also received abundant internal rural immigrants during its economic development, but this process did not last so long as Shanghai and neither reached to its large scale.

This article focuses on the internal migration to Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1927, the central government moved the capital from Beijing to Nanjing and started the Nanjing Government Era (1927-1937). In the same year Shanghai City separated from Jiangsu Province and became a municipality directly under the central government. The decade of Nanjing Government Era was the most peaceful time of Republic of China, with political stability, economic growth, and few wars. And this period also coincided with the Great Depression of 1929-1933, which provides us with an ideal case to study the impact of the crisis to Chinese economy and migration. Moreover, these ten years were the only years when the government did the censuses, and published a large number of detailed statistics about the population and labour market. These historical data, together with the surveys conducted by other scholars in this period, will form the basic database of this article.

Although the data of the Republican period has been criticized, the population registers of some provinces and cities, including Shanghai, is widely accepted and recognized (Hou, 2001, 159-162; Hou, 2000, 3-15; Hu, 1987, 45-47). In the three districts of Shanghai City³, the Police Department of Chinese Districts conducted the

³ Before 1945 Shanghai city was divided into three municipalities: the Chinese Districts (also called the Greater Shanghai), the International Settlement (formed by British Concession and American

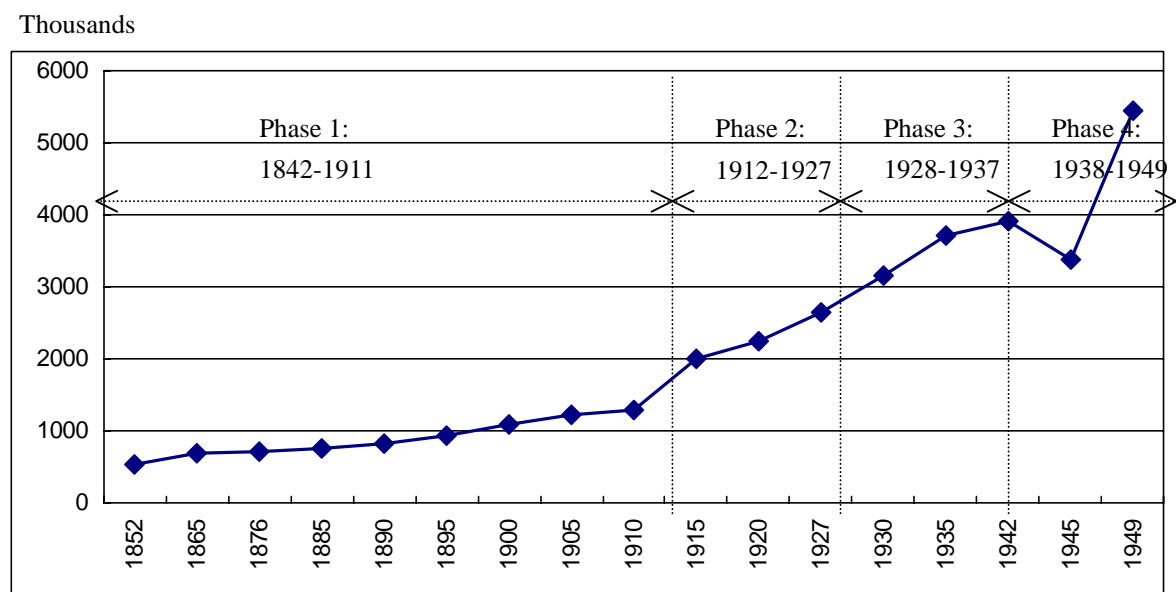
annual census between 1929 and 1936, which included not only the population data, but also the monthly figure of population mobility. The International Settlement and French Concession held the population census every five years between 1865-1937 and 1890-1936 separately. All this information was published by the local government, and we can use it to reconstruct the population and migration situation of Shanghai.

Shanghai's population explosion and the ongoing growth of immigration

In a span of a century Shanghai witnessed a tenfold growth of population, primarily due to immigration (Wang et al., 2002, 523; Lu, 1999, 43; Xin, 1996, 40-44).

Figure 2 shows the four key phases of Shanghai's population growth. Numbers have been adjusted for several years due to the following reasons:

Figure 2: The population of Shanghai, main stages (1852-1949)



Source: Statistics of Shanghai 1933 and Yearbook of Shanghai 1945; Luo 1932, 20-21; Zou 1980, 90-91; Zhang, 1989, 28; and Xin 1996, 40-41.

1) Before the foundation of Republic of China in 1911, there was a lack of population information in the Chinese District of Shanghai City. We can just find the population registration number in 1852, 1865 and 1909. For the rest of years we

Concession in 1862), and the French Concession (formed in 1849).

estimate according to the average growth rate among these years. The five years census of International Settlement and French Concession can be found in the annual reports of the district administrations; 2) In 1852 there were less than 500 people in the international settlement but their exact number is unknown, so I have used the Chinese District populations instead of the total population; 3) The registration number of the Chinese District before 1929 did not include foreigners. However, the foreign population never exceeded 2% of the total population; 4) In July of 1928 the central government published the detailed regulation for Household Survey and Statistics. For this reason the years between 1929 and 1937 are those with more complete population information, and the official statistics results are widely accepted by scholars.

Very few statistics about migration in Shanghai are available, but we can estimate the net migration rate according to the decomposition of population growth in Shanghai. As presented in Table 1, net migration accounted for almost all population growth in Shanghai from 1850s onward, especially after 1911.

Table 1: Annual population growth rate in Shanghai City

Period	Annual growth rate (‰)		
	Population growth	Natural increase	Net migration
1852-1910	15.0	0.6	14.4
1911-1926	49.0	9.8	39.2
1927-1937	38.5	2.1	36.4
1938-1949	25.2	3.6	21.6

Notes: Calculation of natural increase rate of 1927-1937 is based on data of birth and death rates in Shanghai during 1929-1936 produced by the official statistics of Shanghai Government; the natural increase rate of other years is the national average rate calculated by Zhang and Hou.

Sources: Statistics of Shanghai 1933 and Yearbook of Shanghai 1945; Zou 1980, 90-91; Zhang, 1989, 28-29; and Hou 2001, 355-357, 443.

Four phases of growth of Shanghai's population and immigration can be identified:

1) 1842-1911: The first phase stretches from the opening of the trading port in 1842 to the foundation of the Republic of China in 1911. Population increased from less than half a million to about 1.3 million, and the annual growth rate reached to 15‰, while

the national growth rate was just 0.6‰.

From the openness after the First Opium War, relying on the quick increase of trade, Shanghai developed from a small coastal city to a big metropolis in a short time. By the late nineteenth century, Shanghai had become China's leading treaty seaport. This rapid growth can be measured by the shipping volume in and out of the seaport of Shanghai. In 1844 just 44 foreign ships with 8,584 tons of goods entered Shanghai; in 1849 this number increased to 133 ships with 52,574 tons; and in 1863 a total of 3,400 foreign ships (964,309 tons) entered, and 3,547 foreign ships (996,890 tons) departed. At this time, main import was opium and main exports were tea and silk (Lu, 1999, 26-27; Xu, 1987, 14-15). Although some scholars view the development and prosperity of modern Shanghai as a result of Western imperialism and the exploitation by the treaty port (Lu, 1999, 27), openness and trade development brought the foreign banks and the early industrial factories, and facilitated that the process of industrialization began.

Openness attracted immigrants from not only all China, but also from more than 50 other countries. In the early twentieth century, Shanghai was famous and glorified as "the Paris of Orient" (Wang et al., 2002, 522).

2) 1911-1926: Population growth again peaked during the first period of the Republic of China, from 1911 to 1926. Inhabitants of Shanghai doubled during just 16 years, from 1.3 million to 2.6 million. The annual growth rate arrived at 49‰, which even exceeded the period when the world's rapidest urbanization happened during 1950-1975, and this figure was 31‰ (Zhang, 1989, 30-32). At the same time, the population of Beijing just increased from 1.13 million to 1.32 million, with an average rate 9.8‰ (Han, 1986, 42).

The Revolution of 1911 overthrew the last feudal dynasty and started the Republic of China. This was the transformation period of Shanghai's economic development. In 1919 the opium trade with Great Britain finished, meanwhile the industry already reached to a certain scale. During this period one fourth of all Chinese factories had established in Shanghai, and five factory districts were set up in the city, including textile, shipyards, chemical plants, and flour mills (Song, 2011, 3-5). As a result,

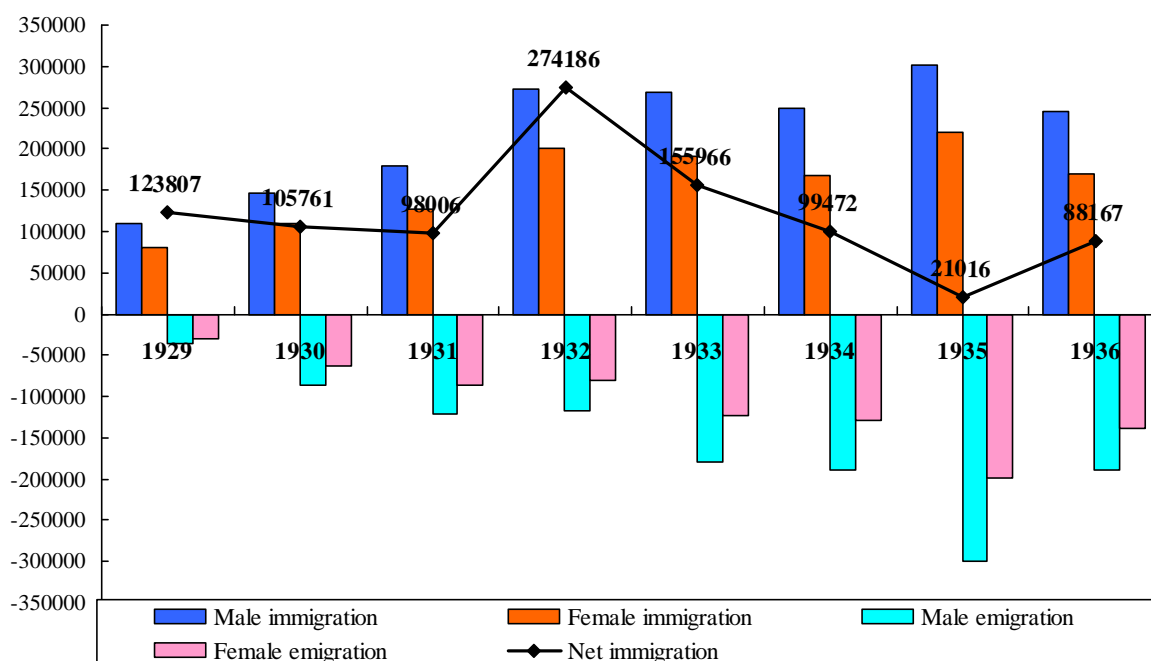
Shanghai was no longer a seaport for the export of raw materials, and began to export manufactured goods. In 1919, exports of cotton yarn and cloth from Shanghai reached to 96%, and 51% of all China's exports of these goods (Cai and Zheng, 1936, 551-561). This industrial development fueled a massive labor demand, and factories recruited workers from nearby villages of Shanghai. This is why large numbers of rural immigrants entered Shanghai city. Factory workers increased from 37 thousand in 1894 to more than 180 thousand in 1919 (Song et al, 2011, 32-34).

In this period, the Revolution of 1911 and six Northern Expeditions broke out. As a relatively safe place, Shanghai received a certain amount of war refugees from other places but we ignore their exact number (Xin, 1996: 42). As Liu argues:

“In the early republican period, many people lost their homes and became extreme poor. To survive they came to Shanghai to make a living, and these refugees were no less than 100 thousand each year. These poor people were despised by local people...Because of their poverty and helplessness, they did the hardest jobs and earned little money” (1985: 524-525).

3) 1927-1937: During the Nanjing Government (1927-1937), the population explosion in Shanghai lasted. The total population increased from 2.64 million to 3.85 million, and the annual growth rate was 38.5%. According to the natural population growth rate (average 2.1 % during this period, see Table 1), until 1937 the population of Shanghai should be about 2.8 million, so the 1 million difference was the result of immigration.

Figure 3: Immigration and emigration in Shanghai (1929-1936)



Source: Statistics and Yearbook of Shanghai (published in 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936); Archives of associations of Immigrants in Shanghai; Zou 1980, 118-121.

The statistics of migration during this period were consistent with this calculation. The years between 1929 and 1936 were the only years during the Republic of China when the government registered the population mobility in Shanghai. These official statistics show that: 1) during this period more than 3 million people had migrated to Shanghai, while 2 million moved out, the net immigration reaching 1 million (Figure 3). The annual net rate of migration was 31.2‰, one of the fastest growths in China's history (Xin, 1996, 41-42). 2) There was a big increase in the entrance of immigrants after 1931, but there was also a growth of flow out. The migration went on growing, but the rate decreased. Especially from 1932 each year more than 250 thousand of people emigrated from Shanghai after the economic crisis triggered by the 1929 Great Depression.

In 1927, due to structural changes in the Chinese government, Shanghai became a municipality directly under central government control. The Nanjing Government Era was the golden era for Shanghai's industry. Thousands of new factories opened, and the demand for laborers kept growing. The number of industrial factories and workers

reached almost half of the whole nation, and the industrial production was more than 50% of that of the entire China (Zhu et al., 1939, 1-3; Honig, 1992, 59; Song et al., 2011, 34). In 1932, there were more than 2,700 factories and 300,000 workers in Shanghai City, the majority of them from rural origin (Statistics of Shanghai, 1933, 156-161). Textiles, machinery, foods, paper and printing were the main industrial sectors, especially textiles, which attracted more than 60% of the total workers, and nearly 90% of the women workers (Statistics of Shanghai, 1933, 180). Due to the growing commercial importance of Shanghai, many foreign factories were set up in this period. In 1933, the industrial output of foreign factories in Shanghai reached more than 450 million yuan, or 42.3% of the total industrial output of Shanghai, and 61.2% of the total volume of the foreign factories in China (Statistics of Shanghai, 1933, 11-12; Liu, 1940, 334). Such economic development and volume offered large job opportunities, and the immigrants took Shanghai as the “paradise” for job seeking. “Move to Shanghai! Look for opportunities in Shanghai!” became the most famous slogan in the rural regions near Shanghai during this period (Lu, 1999, 44).

During 1929-1933, the economic crisis spread all over the world. However, China was not affected by the Great Depression at the first step of the crisis due to its silver-standard monetary. The continuous depreciation of silver relative to gold brought a unique opportunity to the development of industry and commerce, but it also spelled disaster to the agriculture with the decline of prices of agricultural products. Increasing disparities between rural and urban areas caused massive migration toward big cities like Shanghai. After 1932 the crisis reached China with the sudden fluctuations of the international price of silver, and the industry, especially the export-oriented sectors like textiles, was deeply affected and unemployment was severe among the immigrants. During 1932-1935, more than half of the cotton mills closed down, and more than 100 reeling mills, just 30 survived. Thousands of workers lost their jobs, and the unemployment rate reached to about 20% (Shanghai Bureau of Social Affairs, 1929, 6-15; Honig, 1986, 24-25). After that, the population growth in Shanghai slowed down.

4) 1938-1949: The last period of the Republic of China was a turbulent time, and

the population of Shanghai also experienced rise and fall. During the first period of the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945), Shanghai's inhabitants grew slowly from 3.85 million in 1937 to 3.91 million in 1942, and then dropped suddenly to 3.37 million for the leaving of large number of refugees. At the end of the Civil War (1945-1949), an influx of more than 2 million of people caused a new peak of Shanghai's population. These immigrants included three main groups: 1) the return of those who had left Shanghai at the outbreak of Anti-Japanese War; 2) refugees from other provinces during the Civil War; 3) peasants and other people seeking to make their living in Shanghai city.

Who were the immigrants to Shanghai?

During the 1920s and 1930s, Shanghai City drew all kinds of immigrants from all over the nation (indeed from all over the world): from multimillionaires to poor peasants, political dissidents and refugees, intellectuals and illiterates, modern women and rural girls. They all formed the Modern Shanghai, and built it into a unique international metropolis. Their demographic characteristics will be analyzed in this section.

1) Most immigrants to Shanghai.

No detailed statistics exist of the backgrounds of immigrants in this period, and neither the population census nor the registration of migrants distinguished rural and urban population, but according to most of the literature immigrants from rural areas formed the majority of Shanghai's immigrants (Song et al., 2011, 35-36; Lu, 1999, 44; Xin, 1996, 44-48; Wang, 2002, 523). A survey conducted by Shanghai Academy of Social Science (SASS) about the immigrants in the Republican period⁴ found that half of the immigrants had come directly from the countryside and 21 percent from small rural towns, and just less than 30 percent came from urban areas (Lu, 1999, 323-324). Another investigation about the occupations of immigrants before and after moving to Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s also showed that the largest group of the

⁴ The survey was conducted by Shanghai Academy of Social Science (SASS) from 1989 to 1999, and the result was published in the book of Lu, Hanchao, *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century*, University of California Press, 1999, 323-332.

immigrants was the farmers, who composed nearly 60 percent of the total number. After entered Shanghai almost all found a job, mostly in manufacturing and commerce (Lu, 1995, 137-138).

Rural immigrants came from Shanghai's suburban rural areas and mostly from lower Yangzi delta countries. They took Shanghai as a dream place to emigrate and to change their life. In places like Wuxi, more than three quarters of the emigrants chose Shanghai as their destination (Song, et al., 2011, 37). And in the Country Annals of some nearby rural areas we could find such kind of description: "Where is the market for agricultural and handicraft products? Shanghai. Where is the place for people to seek an occupation? Shanghai."⁵

During this period, the main sectors of Shanghai's economy were industry and service. According to the occupation of people in Shanghai, 30%-35% of the employees worked in the industrial sector, mainly in the textile, flour, cigarettes, paper, food, and machinery factories. And the more than 40% people worked in the service sector, mostly in business and domestic service (Xin, 1995, 66-69).

Most rural immigrants arrived at Shanghai in search of factory work. Indeed, the influx of rural migrants provided abundant low-cost labors needed by the industrial development, and built Shanghai into the nation's largest industrial center in the early twentieth century (Chesneaux, 1968, 48). Most of the 300,000 workers at Shanghai City in the 1930s were rural laborers (Statistics of Shanghai, 1933, 156-161). An investigation into the textile industry, the largest industry in modern Shanghai, found that the majority of workers had been farmers from nearby areas (Li, 1920, 89). The registration of workers of a Japanese textile factory in 1930s showed that 87.9% of them were women from rural areas near Shanghai like Subei and Jiangnan (Song, 2011, 35-36).

2) Concentration and segmentation of the immigrants.

Although immigrants in Shanghai were from more than 50 countries and nearly all provinces and cities of China, they concentrated in a few provinces of the lower

⁵ See the preface and introduction of Vol. 5, *Chuansha xianzhi* (Chuansha Country Annals). Today Chuansha is one of ten counties under the administration of the Shanghai municipal government.

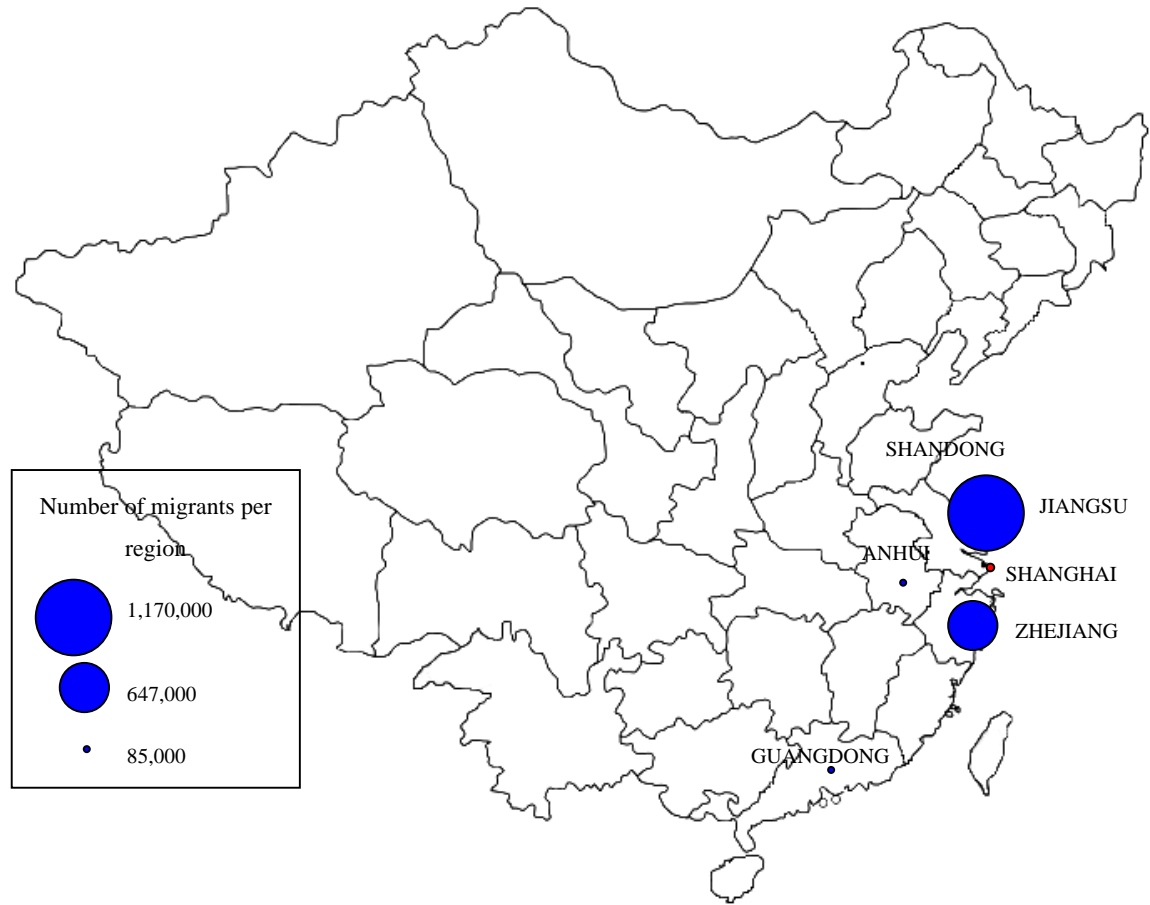
Yangzi delta and the southern China (Map 1). In the 1920s and 1930s, the five provinces from which Shanghai drew most of its immigrants were: Jiangsu (54%), Zhejiang (29.8%), Guangdong (3.9%), Anhui (2.7%) and Shandong (1.6%).⁶ The majority of them were from two provinces near Shanghai: Jiangsu and Zhejiang, which occupied more than 80 percent of the total immigrants in the International Settlement and more than 60 percent in the Greater Shanghai. During 1930s, the immigrants from Jiangsu and Zhejiang added up to more than 1.8 million, which was nearly 60 percent of the total population of Shanghai City.

However, there existed the segmentation of the immigrants in Shanghai, especially in the labour market. Immigrants were closely linked and stratified by their native place. Their social status, living places, daily life and especially job opportunities were determined by where they were from. This hierarchy of immigrants especially reflected in the labour market, where the elite was formed primarily by people from Guangdong and Jiangnan (the Ningbo/Shaoxing region of Zhejiang, and the Wuxi/Changzhou area of Jiangsu), and the migrants from Subei (the northern part of Jiangsu, between the north of Yangzi River and south of Huai River) always did the least lucrative and the least desirable jobs.

Therefore the aggregation of immigrants from different origins in different sectors was formed: the Guangdong and Jiangnan people worked more in trade, banks, machinery, electricity, metal utensils, ship building, and such skilled and well paid sectors, meanwhile the Subei people were employed more in the least skill and the lowest paid work like rickshaw pullers, dock workers, and textile factories. Even in the same factory where employed people from everywhere, Jiangnan and Guangdong people were also at the top and Subei people, at the bottom (Honig, 1992, 10; Honig, 1989, 244-245; Li, 1920, 48-49; *Shenbao*, April 26, 1915).

⁶ Calculation according to the statistics of International Settlement and Greater Shanghai of 1930. No data about immigrants' origin are available for the French Concession. In the 1920s and 1930s, the provinces of origin maintained the same position and similar percentage.

Map 1: Origin of immigrants to Shanghai (1930)



Sources: Statistics of Shanghai 1933; Zou 1980, 114-115.

3) The demographic characteristics.

The demographic characteristics like age, sex, marital status and education distinguished the migrants in Shanghai during this period, and changed the population composition of Shanghai city.

Most migrants to Shanghai were young and male. According to the SASS Survey, the average age of the immigrants at their arrival to Shanghai was 18.2 years old (Lu, 1999, 323-324). And according to our analysis of the registration of two of Shanghai's native-place associations (*tong xiang hui*)⁷ in the 1930s, male immigrants between 20 and 40 years old accounted for 54.3% in the Guangdong Association (1,009 samples) and 66.7% in Pudong Association (1,417 samples). The overrepresentation of males in

⁷ Shanghai's native-place associations (*tong xiang hui*) left about 1500 volumes of documents dated from 1912 to 1959, which are now available at the Shanghai Municipal Archives.

the migrant population was also proved in the official statistics of population mobility 1929-1936. More men flowed into Shanghai than women, and the net male immigrants were over 140,000 more than the net females (Figure 2). Female laborers were concentrated in the textile and cigarette factories. Most migrants were single when they came to Shanghai, which formed 63.2% of the informants (Lu, 1999, 325). Most married male migrants left their wives and children in the countryside for the difficulty of their lives in the city (Xin, 1996, 69).

Due to the entrance of large numbers of young male laborers, the population structure of Shanghai was young and predominantly male. About 77.5 percent of the population was under 40 years old, and the age of 20 to 40 years accounted for the majority of the population (38%) (Yearbook of Shanghai, 1935). The male-ratio reached to 143.3. And this low ratio to some extent caused the low marriage rate, which was 3.2‰ (Yearbook of Shanghai, 1935).

The education level of the immigrants to Shanghai was generally low, and was distinguished by their social class.

More than 80% of the rural immigrants who came to work in the industrial factories were illiterate, in which more than 60% of the males and 90% of the females were illiterate (Xin 1996, 157). A survey conducted by Bureau of Social Affairs in 1930s about the education level of the workers' families indicated that more than 60% of the interviewees had received less than 1 year of education, and those who finished the primary education were less than 6.5% (Bureau of Social Affairs, 1934, 26, 81). "Very few people who worked in my factory could read and write. Among 3,000 female workers less than 50 could barely read, less than 20 could read newspapers, and those who had read Three-Character Classic were very rare", one immigrant worker recalled (Shanghai Year Book, 1935, 30).

Table 2: Educational levels of the immigrants to Shanghai during the Republican China

	Male (persons)	%	Female (persons)	%	Total (persons)	%
Illiterate	9	4.7	105	42.5	114	26.0
Semiliterate	14	7.3	36	14.6	50	11.4
Elementary school	92	48.2	77	31.2	169	38.6
Middle school	53	27.8	21	8.5	74	16.9
High school	17	8.9	6	2.4	23	5.3
College graduate	6	3.1	2	0.8	8	1.8
Total	191	100	247	100	438	100

Source: Survey of SASS (Lu, 1999, 326).

The middle and upper classes of the migrants had a higher education level, especially the males. As showed the investigation of SASS (Table 2) about 76 % of the male immigrants had graduated from elementary school or middle School, and 12% had high school or college education. The native-place associations' registrations, where dominated by the middle and upper classes, also showed that almost half of members received education of the old-style private schools, which was the basic education in Old China, and 5% had a college education (Archives of Association of Guangdong in 1930s).

Why Shanghai? – Shanghai's economy within China

Why did so many rural immigrants flock into Shanghai during this period? As we mentioned in the second part, the economic factor was the principal reason. Millions of immigrants came to Shanghai in search of job opportunities and dreaming of a better life. "It seems that the labor demand in Shanghai has no end," as stated in the customs report of 1920. However, could all of them find jobs in Shanghai? How did Shanghai generate such huge a demand for labor in such a short time?

Shanghai's economic development is consistent with this massive population movement.

After its openness in 1842, the commerce and trade in Shanghai developed rapidly thanks to its unique geographical advantage and it soon replaced Guangzhou to become the largest trade center in modern China. Throughout the second half of the 19th century, Shanghai had more than half of the country's total foreign trade value, sometimes even up to 65%. In the first half of the 20th century, the value of Shanghai's foreign trade still accounted for over 40% of the national total (Zhang, 1990, 153). The development of foreign trade not only promoted the development of urban commerce, but also made Shanghai China's largest gathering place for businessmen. The *Shenbao* of 1901 said: "Among over 20 provinces where businessmen and merchandise gather, Shanghai is second to none and has a key position for all the goods shipped to China." (February 13, 1901, 1) Since the 1850s, businessmen from across the country constituted the earliest Shanghai urban settlers. Businessmen from Guangdong, Ningbo and other places began to occupy an important position in foreign trade and commerce in this city.

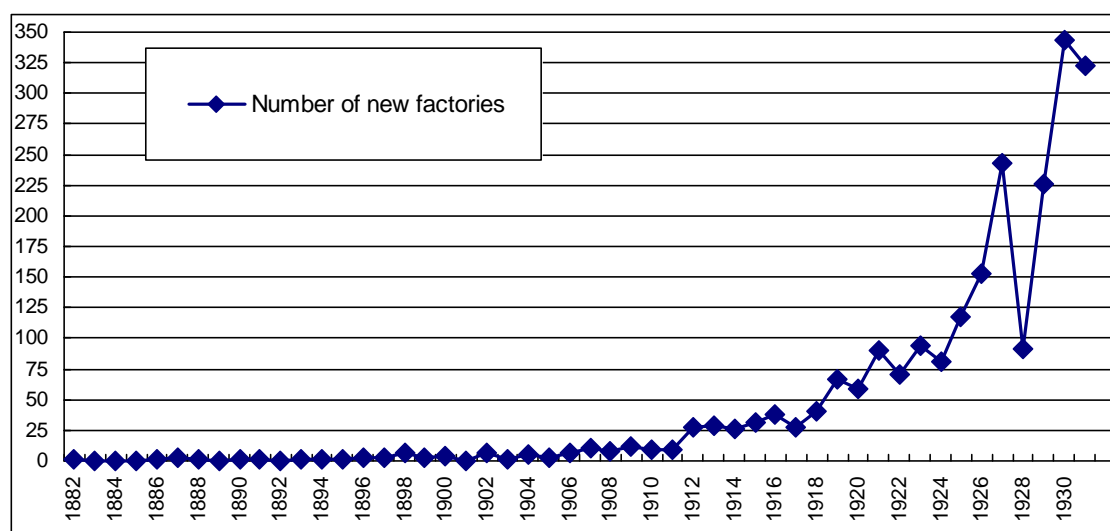
The development of commerce and trade not only attracted a lot of foreign businessmen into Shanghai, but also brought a large number of job opportunities to new migrants. In this process a tradition gradually formed that people from the same region took up the same occupation as they preferred to teach or employ people with similar experiences and customs. This is summed up with this quote: "In Shanghai, most Chinese people are outsiders, who were attracted here by a variety of employment opportunities. Office clerks, merchants and restaurant owners are mostly from Guangdong; bankers, crew, tailors, and launderers are mainly from Ningbo; maids serving foreign women and embroidery workers are from Suzhou; and those who do jade, watch business are from Nanjing". (Xu, 1985, 21)

As the commercial trade was burgeoning, the development of related industries provided a lot of demand for the migrants, such as pier shipping industry, construction industry, catering and domestic services; and these jobs attracted large numbers of people in the rural areas near Shanghai. In this regard, the *Chuansha xianzhi* (Chuansha Country Annals) writes: "Shanghai can accommodate the surplus population of Chuansha Country and it has the capacity to keep a large number of

people. And whether people do mental or physical work, as long as they are self-reliant, more than ninety percent are willing to stay in Shanghai."

If the commercial development before 1895 was not fast enough to make Shanghai's population grow dramatically, then the industrial development after the Sino-Japanese war had revolutionized the economic mode and had given the migrants good reasons to seek jobs in Shanghai. The "Treaty of Shimonoseki" makes foreign investment in Shanghai factories legal, so a lot of foreign capital began coming in: "Shanghai's manufacturing industry becomes extraordinarily active, and everywhere experienced a boom." In addition, the military factories ran by Chinese people and other government-run enterprises made Shanghai to "become a major manufacturing center" (Xu, 1985, 46). By 1911, a quarter of all of the country's modern enterprises were in Shanghai. By 1933, this proportion rose to nearly half. In the 1920s and 1930s, Shanghai became China's most important industrial center. Figure 4 shows the rapid growth of industry in Shanghai during this period.

Figure 4: Opening of factories in Shanghai (1882-1932)



Source: Yearbook of Shanghai 1936, 271; Luo 1932, 63.

At this time the trade in Shanghai was no longer the early British imports, and opium has been replaced by tea, silk and other raw materials. With the development of industry, trade was gradually changing into a labor-intensive industrial products export

trade. The manufactured goods exported from Shanghai accounted for more than half of the national total amount; some products even reached 90%. (Table 3)

Table 3: Share of Shanghai's industrial exports in all China's export

Products	1919		1927		1931	
	Amount (liang*)	% of China	Amount (liang)	% of China	Amount (liang)	% of China
Cotton cloth	2,515,776	50.7	14,922,686	92.7	11,147,992	91.2
Cotton yarn	2,566,016	96.2	15,758,076	79.7	25,135,599	73.4
Paper product	82,547	2.1	373,919	6.5	332,858	8.4
Machine and accessories	23,552	39.5	314,773	88.1	610,256	63.0
Metal products	57,394	4.3	1,225,502	40.6	1,362,117	34.7
Tobacco	9,124,538	67.1	17,883,033	74.0	5,747,992	57.3
Chemical products	1,492,792	13.7	2,919,171	30.9	3,049,131	23.6

* Liang is a unit of weight and monetary in old China. 1 liang = 50 grams of silver. Before 1935 China used the silver-standard monetary.

Sources: Cai and Zheng (1936), *Trade Statistics of treaty ports in China*, 481-607.

Compared with commerce, industry can obviously provide more job opportunities. Business itself had limited capacity of labor force, even for large-scale stores, such as Shanghai's famous Xianshi department store opened in 1917. It had four floors, with over 100,000 kinds of goods ranging from daily necessities such as clothes, jewelry and furniture, but employed only 300 staff members. While the industrial sector required more labor force: "Especially in Shanghai, most industries are small-scale, labor-intensive ones with inadequate investment. A larger labor force is needed to maintain the development of this industry" (Murphey, 1953, 24). In the textile industry, for example, in 1897, the 27 spinning and silk reeling factories in Shanghai employed 2.5-3 thousands workers, with an average workforce of 1,000 per plant, which is incomparable by business.

It was because of the development of industrialization and huge demand that migrants entered into Shanghai in large quantities. After the Republic of China was founded in 1911, more than 100,000 people swarmed into Shanghai each year and worked in the industrial sector. In rural areas near Shanghai, the most obvious changes

caused by industrial development was that people gave up their work in agriculture and the family handicraft industries to find jobs in Shanghai. “Five to ten years ago people’s lives were confined to agriculture but now, most young people go to work in Shanghai.” With the industrial development, the source of workers in Shanghai began to expand into the surrounding rural areas of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui provinces and even into half of China.

In addition to industrial workers, Shanghai industry also drove the growth of other related industries and services, which provided a greater demand. Take the rickshaw industry as an example, according to statistics, in 1933, there were nearly 25,000 rickshaws, and over 80,000 rickshaw pullers in Shanghai, most of whom were peasants coming to Shanghai to make a living. As they said, “We are poor in the rural areas, so we come to Shanghai to make a living, but we have no money to do business, and no relationship to find a job, we have no choice but to pull the rickshaws, which is a hard and earns very little money” (Shenbao, April 22, 1934, 3).

The development of industrial enterprises and urban economy driven by the migrants provided increasing employment opportunities. Thereby, it attracted more people to Shanghai. Therefore, we can say, the industrial development and employment opportunities brought by migrants are the most important reason to attract people to Shanghai.

Conclusions

The explosive population growth of Shanghai at the beginning of the twentieth century was the result of massive immigration, in which the rural-urban migration formed the main part. Like the internal migration in other countries and periods, most rural migrants to Shanghai were young male laborers with low education seeking jobs in the industrial sector. This population movement to Shanghai is not a unique case, but a typical phenomenon in developing countries.

However in comparison to other large Chinese cities like Beijing and Nanjing, the internal migration to Shanghai had unique characteristics: 1) Such an amount of

immigrants and such a massive population growth rate were unusual in history. In less than a century the population had grown tenfold, and in some years the growth rate was more than 40%, and Shanghai developed from a small town to one of the biggest cities in the world. 2) A high geographical concentration and segmentation existed among immigrants to Shanghai. The social status, living places, daily life and especially job opportunities of these immigrants were closely linked and stratified by their native place. 3) The Great Depression had a different influence to China's economy than other countries, and also to the migration to Shanghai. The crisis came later, but also influenced the industrial sector, reducing the immigration to Shanghai. 4) Different to the capital cities Beijing and Nanjing, there was almost no political influence or control to the migration to Shanghai. It was purely economic reasons that attracted so many migrants. Like China's economic model in the last 30 years, the industrial development, especially the labor-intensive manufacturing industry, produced a massive demand for workers that was the main reason for the massive immigration to Shanghai.

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