

What Really Matter?

Who You Are, Where You Live, or What You Have

Qiaobing Wu, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Social Work
The Chinese University of Hong Kong





cnsphoto

Internal Migration in China

- ◆ Since the mid -1980s, China has witnessed a large scale population flow from rural to urban areas
- ◆ The largest peacetime population movement in world history (Roberts, 2002)
- ◆ Two groups of vulnerable child population as a consequence of migration:
 - ◆ Migrant children (35.8 million by 2010)
 - ◆ Left-behind children (61 million by 2010)
- ◆ Some children have had mixed experiences of migration: left-behind and/or migrant



Education and Psychological Well-being of Migrant/Left-behind Children

◆ Education

- Poorer academic performance
- Lower educational aspiration
- Lower motivation to study
- Higher possibility of dropout
- Weaker school engagement

◆ Psychological Well-being

- Lower self-esteem
- Higher stress and hostility
- More symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Feeling of loneliness, helplessness and self-humiliation
- Poorer health-related quality of life
- Less pro-social behaviors

What Really Matters?

- ◆ **Who you are?**
 - ❖ Identity (migrant, left-behind, mixed)
- ◆ **Where you live?**
 - ❖ Residence (urban vs. rural)
- ◆ **What you have?**
 - ❖ Social Capital



Current Study

- ◆ Disparities in Education and Psychological Well-being among Migrant, Left-behind, Native Urban and Native Rural Children in Mainland China: The Role of Social Capital in Multiple Contexts

(Funded by the Research Grants Council, HKSAR; Grant#: CUHK 490212)

- ◆ Study Sites
 - ◆ Three metropolitan cities where most migrants concentrate: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou
 - ◆ Three rural provinces where most migrants originate: **Guizhou**, Anhui, Jiangsu

Study Aim

- ◆ To investigate how the mixed experiences of migration (identity) contribute to the depression of children, and how these effects operate through the stocks of social capital in the children's family and neighborhood.



Identity: Different Experiences of Migration

- ❖ **PLBNMG** (previously left-behind, non-migrant): currently living with both parents but having previously been left-behind by their migrant parents and never migrated with their parents.
- ❖ **PLBRMG** (previously left-behind, returned migrant): currently living with both parents but having previously been left-behind and also had the experience of migrating to the city with parents for a certain period of time.
- ❖ **LBNMG** (left-behind, non-migrant): currently left-behind but never migrated with parents.
- ❖ **LBRMG** (left-behind, returned migrant): currently left-behind but had the experience of migrating with parents.
- ❖ **NR** (native rural): living with both parents with neither experiences of being left-behind or migrant.

Social Capital and Child Well-being

- ◆ Social resources inherent in social relationships that facilitate a social outcome (Coleman, 1990)
- ◆ Social capital can be protective for the well-being of children.
- ◆ The family and neighborhood environments are the most immediate social contexts for the child population.



Family Social Capital

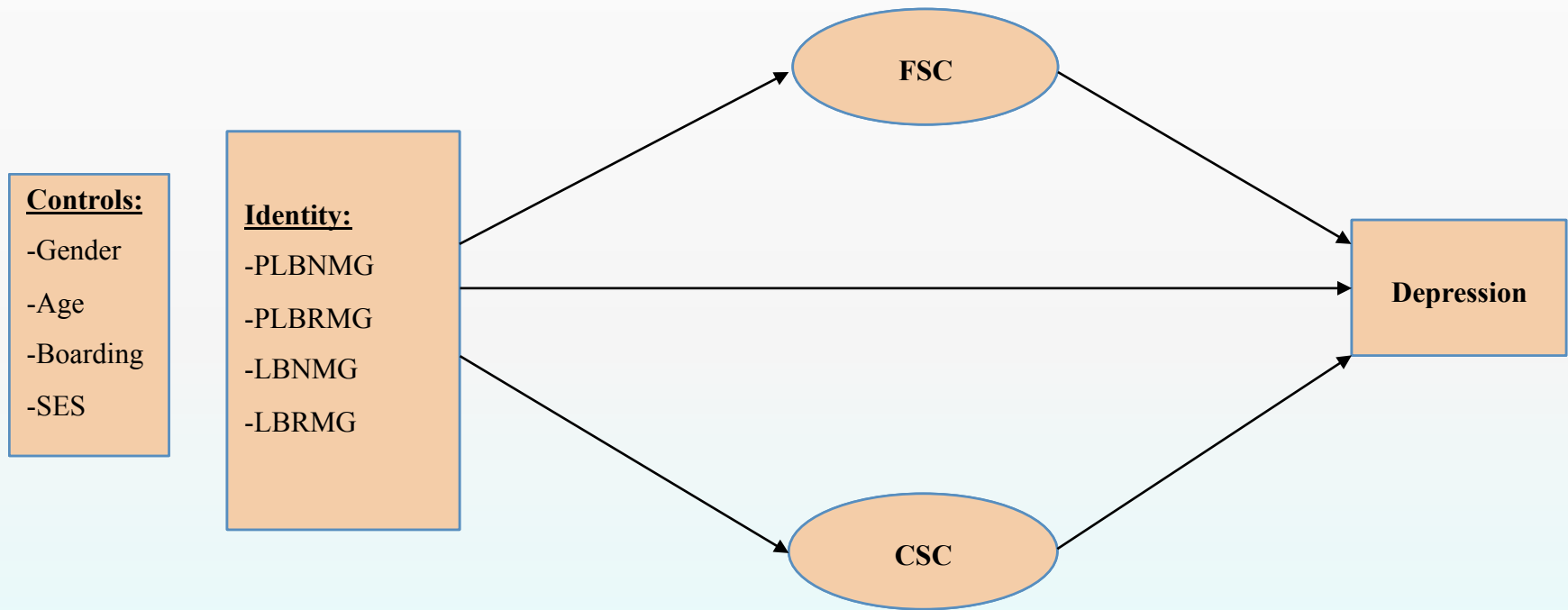
- ◆ Family social capital refers to the bonds between parents and children as a reflection of the time and attention spent by parents interacting with children and monitoring their activities (Coleman, 1990).
- ◆ Higher levels of family social capital are associated with less depressive symptoms, higher life satisfaction, and better social adjustment (Dorsey & Forehand, 2003; Dufur et al., 2008; Morgan et al., 2012; Wu et al., 2010)



Community Social Capital

- ◆ Community social capital denotes social connectedness among resident adults and children which provides a base of potential resources that people could draw upon for the benefit of both themselves and the neighborhood as a whole (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993).
 - ◆ Encompasses norms, trust, sense of belonging to the neighborhood, and civic engagement
 - ◆ Establish an extra-familial social network that provides social control and monitoring functions for children and youth
- ◆ Higher levels of community social capital are associated with children's better mental health and psychosocial adjustment (Drukker et al., 2003; Meltzer et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2011, 2014).

Conceptual Framework



Methods

- ◆ Participants: School-based multi-stage random sampling
 - ◆ Two rural counties were selected in Guizhou province
 - ◆ In each county, four elementary schools and four middle schools were randomly selected from the complete list of all elementary and secondary schools
 - ◆ 50 students from each school (4th-6th grade in elementary schools and 7th-9th grade in secondary schools) were randomly selected based on the school roster
 - ◆ Those respondents who did not live with both parents due to reasons other than parents were migrant workers elsewhere were excluded
 - ◆ Final sample: **624** students living in the rural context of Guizhou Province

Descriptive Statistics of Sample Characteristics

	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	236	39.9
Female	355	60.1
Age	Mean=12.45(SD=1.86) (years)	
Boarding Status		
Not Boarding	490	81.9
Boarding	108	18.1
Education (Father)		
Didn't attend or finish primary school	87	14.8
Primary school	138	23.5
Secondary school	283	48.3
High school	48	8.2
Technique school	13	2.2
College	11	1.9
Bachelor or higher	6	1.0
Education (Mother)		
Didn't attend or finish primary school	141	24.0
Primary school	178	30.3
Secondary school	196	33.4
Senior school	49	8.3
Technique school	10	1.7
College	10	1.7
Bachelor or higher	3	0.5

Descriptive Statistics of Sample Characteristics

	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Monthly Household Income (¥)		
0-999	54	17.7
1000-1999	87	28.5
2000-2999	68	22.3
3000-3999	48	15.7
4000-4999	20	6.6
5000 or above	28	9.2
Left-behind/Migrant Status		
PLBNMG (previously left-behind, never migrant)	76	12.2
PLBRMG (previously left-behind, returned migrant)	27	4.3
LBNMG (left-behind, never migrant)	274	43.9
LBRMG (left-behind, returned migrant)	89	14.3
NR (native rural)	158	25.3

Measurement

Construct	Items
Identity (Left-behind/ Migrant Status)	Who are you currently living together with?
	What is the reason if you are not living with your father right now?
	What is the reason if you are not living with your mother right now?
	Did you ever study or live in the place where your parent(s) work for at least 6 months?
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	Parents' educational attainment
	Monthly household income
	Household equipment

Measurement

Construct	Indicator	Measure
Psychological Well-being	Depression	The 20-item Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC), Cronbach's $\alpha=0.766$
Family Social Capital	Parent-child Interaction	The 40-item Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI), Cronbach's $\alpha=0.716$
	Parental Monitoring	An eight item self-designed scale that asked about how often the parents were involved in their children's school activities or disciplined children at home, Cronbach's $\alpha=0.762$

Measurement

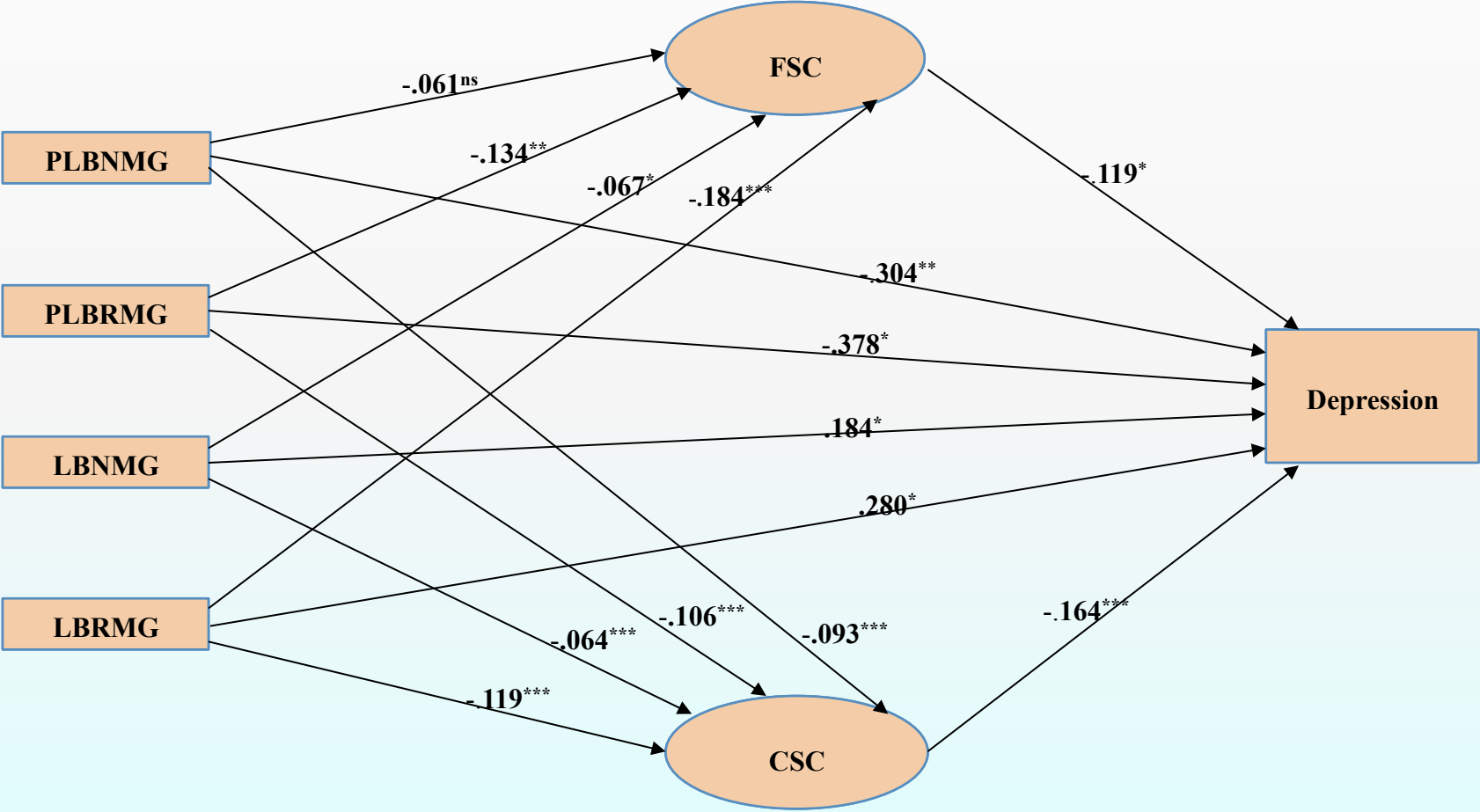
Construct	Indicator	Measure
Community Social Capital	Social cohesion and trust among neighborhood adults	A five item collective efficacy scale developed by Sampson and colleagues (1997), Cronbach's $\alpha=0.738$
	Social cohesion and trust among neighborhood children	A five item scale used particularly to assess the bonds and trust among children living in the neighborhood, Cronbach's $\alpha=0.705$
	Sense of Belonging to the neighborhood	An eight item scale which incorporates questions from previous studies, Cronbach's $\alpha=0.778$
	Informal social control	How much do the neighbors care about you; How much do the neighborhood adults pay attention to what children in this neighborhood are doing.

Data Analysis

- ◆ Structural Equation Modeling via Mplus 5.0



Standardized Solutions for the Structural Model of Identity, Social Capital and Children's Depression



* p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001; ns = not significant

Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Major Predictor Variables on Children's Depression

Major Predictor Variables	Child Mental Health		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
Family social capital	-.119*	-	-.119
Community social capital	-.164***	-	-.164
PLBNMG	-.304**	.065*	-.239
PLBRMG	-.378*	.225**	-.153
LBNMG	.184*	.078*	.262
LBRMG	.280*	.157*	.437
Gender	.193*	.182*	.375
Age	.133*	-.354*	-.221
Boarding school	.061	.280*	.341
SES	.040	-.112*	-.072

*p<0.05;**p<0.01;***p<0.001

Summary of Findings

- ◆ The mixed experiences of migration have differing effects on children's depression
 - Compared to the native rural children without any history of being left-behind or migrant, children currently left-behind by their migrating parents exhibit significantly more depressive symptoms, no matter whether they have any previous experience of migrating with parents to the city or not.
 - However, children who used to be left-behind but currently live with both parents appear to have lower levels of depression than those native rural children without any left-behind/migrant experiences.
 - The left-behind return migrant children are the most vulnerable

Summary of Findings

- ◆ The various left-behind and/or migrant statuses also influence children's depression through the mediating effects of family and community social capital.
 - All these various status variables (except PLBNMG) are associated with lower levels of family social capital, which, in turn, predicts more depressive symptoms
 - All the left-behind/migrant statuses are associated with lower levels of community social capital, thus leading to more depressive symptoms as well
- ◆ There exist inconsistent findings between the direct and indirect effects of the previously left-behind status.
- ◆ Being female is associated with lower levels of family and community social capital, which leads to higher depression.

Implications

- ◆ Advances our understanding of the effects of migration experiences on child well-being
- ◆ Informs the design of intervention and prevention services to focus on fostering the development of social capital through various strategies
- ◆ Special attention must be paid to left-behind children, especially those returned migrant children who become left-behind afterwards
- ◆ Girls should be one focus of mental health services promoting the overall health and well-being of the rural child population

Limitations

- ◆ Cross-sectional design
- ◆ Constraint of the sample
- ◆ Deficiency in certain measurements



Any Question?

THANK YOU!

