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Discussion of paper by Ximing Yue:

“Issues of Labour Statistics in China”

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The Plan of discussion:

- Explanation of the aim of the paper, short summary of the contents and main findings of the paper
- Several modest comments

Description of Chinese Employment Statistics System

- **Based on 2 types of statistics:**
 - 1) **Population based statistics** – national population census (10 years periodicity),
1 % population sample survey (5 years periodicity),
1 per mille population movement sample survey (since 1990 annually)
 - 2) **Enterprises based statistics** – labour statistics in urban units, administrative registration of private enterprises and self-employed, rural employment statistics = “three-in-one” statistics

Other sources of information

System of censuses with more variables -
output, value added, assets, etc.,
incl.employment

- Industrial census
- Census of tertiary industry
- Economic census – combining the first two censuses since 2004, five years periodicity
- Agricultural sector, ten years periodicity

The results of 2 types of labour statistics differ

- **Different results:** in total number of persons employed, changes over time, industrial structures, complicating analytical studies
- **Reasons:** problems of statistical coverage, the definition of employment, whole survey methodology, incl. reporting units

Main inconsistencies in employment data

- **Totals by sector** based on “three-in-one” statistics are lower than population based statistics by 10-15%
- Total population based employment data are higher **mainly in urban areas** by 40-60%, while in rural areas are quite modest (reason: urban area statistics does not cover agricultural workers and informal workers)
- Surprisingly, higher population based data concern practically **the primary sector only**, while in majority of other industries they are lower!
- **Specific problems of “three-in-one” statistics:** changes in definition, inconsistencies of industrial classification among the three components

Comments, Questions

- Problems of **structure of the paper**
- The term of “labour” statistics in fact is presented as **employment statistics** only, what about unemployment statistics for example?
- Role of the **private sector** – any data?
- Any information on **quality** of labour statistics, both as concerns population based data and enterprises data?
- Possibilities of construction of “**labour accounts**” (combination of more sources into one system) in Chinese employment statistics?
- To what extent employment statistics is satisfying the **needs of national account** – this probably better answered by national accountants?

- **I thank the author for his paper and express my appreciation of his great effort to describe the employment statistics in China.**
- **Thanks all for your attention.**

