Population Governance in China: An Analysis from the Household Registration System (Hukou) Perspective

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Abstract

China's population governance apparatus includes a system of household registration referred to as "hukou" that collects detailed data on individuals and their families. This information includes people's birthplace, ancestral origin, ID number, religious affiliation, military service status, blood type, height, place of residence, address changes, among other attributes. The state bureaucracy relies on hukou to classify households and individuals legally, socially, and geographically, as well as regulate their rights and duties. It also uses hukou to order family relationships and influence people's marriage decisions, geographic mobility, real estate investment, among other aspects of life. While state actors use hukou information for policymaking and policing, extra-state actors use hukou to sort people's social standing and navigate interactions in daily life. Using Michel Foucault's and Max Weber's scholarship on power, this study analyzes the hukou reforms, which are ongoing since the late 1970s.

My analysis demonstrates that today's hukou is markedly different from that of the Mao era. At that time, hukou endured primarily as a coercive institutional mechanism that divided China's population into "agricultural" and "non-agricultural" families for welfare distribution and imposed upon the people state-made choices that guided nearly all aspects of their lives. In contrast, today's hukou also includes a liberal facet.

I argue that the hukou reforms are gradually transforming hukou into a "technology of governance" that is conducive to individual autonomy, personal choice, and private interest, providing people with more freedom in guiding their lives. Nonetheless, local governments still use hukou to regulate people's lives, but they do so indirectly. They use policies relating to hukou status to condition people's choices around marriage, migration, real estate investment,

and even behavior on the Internet. Together, such policies construct an environment of opportunities and constraints that guide people's actions invisibly and under the auspices of "free choice." In this environment, the role of the state in guiding people's life becomes invisible, hidden behind a sense of individual autonomy, and thus shielded from view. Hukou's transformation indicates the emergence of a more liberal practice of population governance in China that relies on hukou data collection (i.e., surveillance) to manufacture social conformity based on voluntary compliance, as opposed to government coercion. My analysis results from extensive fieldwork in Jinan (9 months between 2015 and 2016), the capital city of Shandong Province, China. My research data consists of 250 interviews with a diverse profile of Jinan residents, ethnographic observations, and documentary information.

My thesis demonstrates that hukou plays a vital role in creating citizens that comply with a private logic of capital accumulation, and which thrives in an environment that demands individual autonomy, personal initiative, competitiveness, productivity, decision-making skills, and risk management knowledge. It also calls into question viewpoints that portray China's population governance strategies exclusively as coercive and authoritarian. Lastly, it supplements contemporary understandings of the hukou system through a new lens that focuses on its capacity to form liberal subjects, moving the hukou system beyond its traditional focus of analysis, which addresses its role in producing socioeconomic inequalities in China.

Preface

I have published two chapters of this thesis. Chapter 6 appears as "China's Hukou Platform: Windows into the Family" in the journal *Surveillance & Society,* 17 (1/2): 232–39, in 2019, while a preliminary version of Chapter 3 is available in the same journal as "The Reform of China's Household Registration System: Authoritarianism with Liberal Characteristics" in 2017 (*Surveillance & Society* 15 (3/4): 404–17).

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Chapter 1 • Introduction

Western journalists often associate "China" with authoritarianism, oppression of populations, and lack of individual freedom of thought and action. The meaning of "China" in news coverage is often unclear but related to sovereignty or sovereign power. It varies between "government," "state," "party-state," and provocative expressions like "total surveillance state." The conflation of China with sovereign power portrays Chinese people as a vulnerable, uniform, and the static subject of a draconian power that rules by fear and oppression. This image propels the misconception that power in China only involves sovereignty, offering a simplistic way to characterize this vast, populous, and economically prominent country. This "unquestionable" association of China with authoritarianism can hinder the audience's ability to inquire into the specifics of Chinese tactics of population governance.

This study confronts the widespread knowledge that represents today's "China" simply and only as an "authoritarian" government that completely disregards or opposes individual freedom of thought and action. It is by no means a defense of population governing tactics in China; doing so would be useless and pretentious. Chinese society, like any other, has its authoritarian, oppressive, and unfair facets. Ultimately, this study warns the reader that the label "authoritarian" cannot effectively describe today's Chinese society, state, and government. Not that it is wrong, but it is incomplete and misleading.

The label "authoritarian" commonly assigned to "China" hides an elaborate state apparatus that governs the behavior of individuals both in coercive and liberal ways. Within China's state apparatus, there is a system of household registration and classification that deserves special attention because of its longevity, resilience, multi-functionality, comprehensive

population monitoring capability, and capacity to guide the behavior of individuals towards specific ends in a variety of life domains. It guides people's marriage choices (i.e., family formation), decisions about moving or staying in a place (i.e., geographical mobility), choices about real estate investment, behavior on social media platforms, among other domains of life. It also sorts populations in space according to their socioeconomic status in macro and micro ways, creating material and symbolic socio-spatial arrangements within cities, districts, neighborhoods, and even within microcosmos such as apartment buildings. Referred to as the Household Registration System, or simply "hukou," this system of household registration and classification groups individuals into households, collecting and producing information on each family and its members. Through record-keeping, hukou establishes an official and permanent link between individuals, their families, their place of residence, and their place of origin. "Place of origin" includes two dimensions, people's birthplace (chushengdi) and ancestral land (jiguan), which refers to the birthplace of the hukou subject's father. Thus, hukou formally and officially regulates people's sense of belonging, providing the Chinese geo-social identity.

Materially, hukou takes several formats, depending on who is viewing it. From the citizen's perspective, hukou consists of a booklet, referred to as "Household Register" (jumin hukouben) that contains information about individuals and their families; an official family document, this booklet is usually guarded by the family head and kept in the home. From the state's perspective, hukou is also a digital file and a platform, as the State Council digitized the paper booklet in 1998. As a digital platform, hukou can be conveniently "plugged" into numerous other technologies of government and supplemented with all sorts of additional data, becoming an all-encompassing "surveillant assemblage" (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). Regardless of its format, hukou allows the state bureaucracy to count, classify, and monitor

citizens for governing purposes, configuring a system of knowledge about individuals and their families.

Hukou-derived knowledge, especially its spatial-based classifications indicating people's place of residence and place of origin, has private and public functions. The standards and classifications that hukou creates and promotes imply a series of social expectations, as they function as proxies for socioeconomic status, as well as other symbols of stigma and respect. Thus, state and extra-state actors, including individuals in one-on-one interactions, draw on hukou-based knowledge to regulate social standing in society on an individual and collective scale. As a population classification system, hukou has official status, allowing the state bureaucracy to know its populations and design policies and laws that target people of specific hukou classification in subtle and more visible ways. Using hukou data, local governments also can continually design and redesign alternative classification systems that organize and regulate populations in a variety of ways, depending on their specific needs. Governments also can and often do use hukou in policing and identification of bodies (i.e., individuals and groups). Hukou's policing capacity has improved remarkably since its digitization. Today's hukou enables law enforcement and other hukou operators to predict and regulate most aspects of life in diverse ways and on a massive scale. Such aspects include online behavior, as hukou information and Internet access are linked and mutually traceable. As discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis, hukou's capacity to monitor online behavior is especially remarkable, given that more than 730 million people in China use the Internet regularly (Woetzel et al. 2017). Enduring, but changing, hukou has been fundamental to the manufacture of social compliance in China both during the state-planned economy period (1949-1978) and today, forty years into the Economic Reform and

Opening Up Policy (1978). Rather than calling into question hukou's importance in today's China, I want to understand how it is important and what type of governance it produces.

Generally, this thesis discusses the role hukou plays in people's lives, especially how state and extra-state actors use hukou to shape and influence social interactions and life decisions, generating social conformity in today's China. Drawing on the scholarship of the French philosopher Michel Foucault on the topic of power and population governance (Foucault 2008, 1979, 1991a, 1982, 2007), I present hukou as a "technology of government" and analyze how it changed between the foundation of the People's Republic in 1949 and 2016 as a facilitator of population governance. According to Foucault, the expression "technology of government" refers to strategies that state and extra-state organizations adopt to guide (i.e., govern) the behavior of individuals to maximize their utility, securing the sustainability of governance (Foucault 2008, 1991a) as an articulation of interests (i.e., politics) and reason (Foucault 2008, 45). Technologies of government, according to Foucault, usually contribute to strengthening and maintaining society or the "republic of interests" (ibid.), and everything else that supports it, including the notions of state and political power, as well as their rationalities and reasons to exist (ibid., 43-46). Through such technologies, governments continually define and redefine themselves and the state, as well as organize society, including its populations (Foucault 1991a, 103). Also, such technologies connect the internal logic of the individual (i.e., people's interests and plans) to the logic of the state (Foucault 1991a, 93; 2008, 317-325). Finally, these technologies can obtain people's compliance in both coercive or voluntary, liberating ways.

Based on Foucault's scholarship, concrete examples of such technologies include "liberalism" and "utilitarianism." Foucault regarded these systems of political knowledge as "self-regulatory" technologies of government because they intend to limit the actions of the ruler

and the act of governing in general (Foucault 2008, 41 and 297). Another example refers to labels and categories that classify and order individuals, subjecting them to specific standards (Foucault 2008, 77; 1982), such as "the radical," "the peasant," "the migrant," and "the worker." Foucauldian scholars expanded the sample of technologies of government to include statistics and actuarial tools (Hacking 1991), insurance policies (Ewald 1991; Detert 1991), birth-planning policies (Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005), among others. Some technologies are crude and violent, dehumanizing their subjects; others are more ambiguous. For instance, the "technologies of classifying" used in South Africa during the apartheid regime to identify "black" complexion, eyes, hair, features, and bones, such as combs and skin color scales (Bowker and Star 2000, 210-211), are an example of the former. Meanwhile, systems that classify mental disorders, such as the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," illustrate a more ambiguous type of technology, as they obtain compliance from their subjects in coercive and liberating ways (Goffman 1961; Bowker and Star 2000; Star and Ruthleder 1996). On one hand, receiving a diagnosis of mental illness can be a major blow in people's lives, as it often triggers fear, anger, shame, and stigmatization. A diagnosis also represents a series of expectations compiled into a label, which forces individuals to fit into standards that never fully match their condition. On the other hand, a diagnosis also can offer some liberation to its subjects, which become able to receive treatment, obtain government subsidies, and perhaps find wellbeing. Thus, a diagnosis can be coercive and oppressive. Like the manual of mental disorders, hukou is more ambiguous technology of governance, obtaining people's compliance through coercion and liberation.

I focus on the creative, productive, liberating powers of hukou, fulfilling a gap in the literature currently available, which primarily emphasizes hukou's coercive powers, particularly

its power to produce socioeconomic inequalities. I view hukou as a technology of government that combines several functionalities, which is unusually all-encompassing. My analysis covers the historical continuities and discontinuities in the functioning of today's hukou, and the extent to which its transformation over time is part and parcel of a broader transformation in configurations of power in China. In my analysis, I emphasize the hukou reforms, which have been ongoing since 1978, as a watershed in hukou's history. The reforms, as I demonstrate in this thesis, attached hukou to numerous policies and practices that give individuals "autonomy" to make decisions about several aspects of life, including family affairs, migration, occupation, place of residence, and real estate investment. In this research, I take an instrumental approach to autonomy. I understand "autonomy" as people's ability to act on "expectations" and align means and ends. Inspired by Max Weber (Weber 1978 [1920], 24), I view those expectations as "means" that the actors use to achieve their calculated goals. Within this framework, the idea of "will," which usually appears connected to autonomy, refers to people's awareness of their ability and possibility to take autonomous actions.

The Thesis

Specifically, I argue that the power of today's hukou as a technology of government lies in its capability to support both authoritarian and liberal rationales and practices of governance, simultaneously or not, and draw compliance from its subjects as a result of both obedience to authority and personal interest. Hukou creates a hybrid form of governance regarding how the act of choosing is regulated in society. This governance entails two broad strategies to regulate choice. In the first strategy, state and extra-state actors attach hukou to policies that force people

to give up their individual autonomy and private interests, often against their will (involuntarily), in the name of respect for or fear of the "collective" (in the sense of common, collective wellbeing) and its representatives (e.g., the state, the police, the family, and the patriarch). As collective needs enjoy supremacy over individual needs in this first strategy, it tends to be felt and viewed as coercive. Also, in this strategy, governing is operationalized through social sanctioning, including clear practices of reward and punishment; it relies basically on coercive elements such as the denial of rights, fear, threat, shame, exclusion, ostracism, and corporal punishment. The second strategy, which is the primary focus of this thesis, entails using hukou knowledge to create an environment of opportunities and constraints that guides the actions of individuals and group members, invisibility leading them to make the "right" decisions. In this case, governing is operationalized by accommodating personal interests and creating opportunities for voluntary compliance with specific orders and goals. This strategy is often regarded as liberating, as it accounts for and values individual will while achieving collective needs. Two distinctive principles regarding goal achievement underpin and distinguish these strategies. The first strategy assumes that there is only one way to achieve a specific goal, while the second presupposes that a goal can be achieved in many ways. Comparatively, the second strategy incorporates human diversity and creativity more effectively, while the first tends to oppress or restrict human diversity and creativity.

With its ability to regulate choice in two distinctive ways, hukou, like no other technology of government discussed within specialized fields (e.g., Surveillance Studies and Sociology of Deviance and Conformity), reconciles power formations that reward individuality with power formations that reward collectivity. In doing so, hukou also reconciles coercive and liberating power, allowing them to coexist within the same relationship. With hukou, state and

extra-state actors can regulate people's choices toward generating a balance between involuntary and voluntary compliance. This possibility suggests that the tension between individual choice and obedience to authority (i.e., the lack of choice or a forced-choice), which has underpinned the philosophical movements that inspire Sociology, are more conceptual than concrete. Moreover, every type of classification system produces modes of governance; this is not a novelty. Also, every kind of governance includes and even depends on classification systems (Bowker and Star 2000; Jenkins 2000). However, it is rare to find a classification system (i.e., a technology of government) that can articulate these two strategies for regulating choice officially, clearly, overtly, and simultaneously. Hukou's unique capability to accomplish that results from the configuration of its classifying power.

Hukou has a specific and unique capability to classify individuals both in an "individual" and a "collective" fashion simultaneously. Within the hukou systems, hukou subjects are both independent entities, in the sense of being unique parts of their households, and representatives of their household units, which in most cases coincides with their family units. Based on hukou, state and extra-state actors view, scrutinize, and treat hukou subjects as "two-hatted" beings (plural and singular formations) formally, informally, physically, virtually, and numerically. Further, because hukou ties individuals to their families and regulates family relationships, it creates an environment where kin and kinship relations become active, continuous, stable, permanent, and thus useful sources of power to promote social conformity and appropriate behavior in society. In this environment, state and extra-state actors can use hukou-based knowledge, including its legitimacy, to create rules of social interaction and policies, thereby using hukou to regulate the choices of individuals and groups. They also can reinforce such rules and policies by tapping into hukou to leverage the relationship with family (e.g., respect, love,

obligation, commitment, fear, among other feelings), sense of socio-spatial belonging, and even position in the family hierarchy (i.e., relationship to the family head) to manufacture consent. In sum, hukou has the power to lead people to behave well (i.e., comply) either because individuals do not want to expose their families (interest) or because they fear their family (authority). Such classifying features of hukou make it a unique, versatile, and remarkable technology of governance.

Beijing (i.e., the State Council or China's central government) has been using hukou to regulate choice on a massive scale and convey specific political and economic agendas since 1958, when it was revitalized, standardized, and nationally deployed by the Communist Administration. By arranging and rearranging hukou's use as a way to regulate choice, Beijing governed the Chinese and implemented two dramatically different types of developmental models and social regimes in the country: the state-planned economy (and society) of the Mao era and the private market-oriented economy of today, which started after Mao's death.

In the Mao era, Beijing's developmental plan consisted of creating welfare by letting the state bureaucracy regulate and enforce the distribution of resources. To achieve this plan, Beijing incorporated hukou status into policymaking as a criterion to decide about resource distribution. In other words, the resources individuals received varied according to their hukou status. By conditioning resource distribution to hukou status, Beijing limited or denied (depending on the case), people's autonomy to conduct their lives and make choices according to their own needs and private interests. Instead of "influencing" people's decisions, policies from the Mao era "forced" choices, which were made by the state, upon the people. Thus, the people had no option but to suppress their private interests and comply with the choices made by the state. As the primary decision-maker, the state bureaucracy became the sole responsible for the risks inherent

to decision-making processes, enjoying full visibility in people's lives. In this environment, hukou was conducive to uniformity, certainty, stability, inflexibility, state accountability, state-mediated competition for resources, among other conditions necessary for the sustainability of a state-planned economy. Overall, hukou created a type of governance based primarily on visible state guidance and involuntary choices. However, with Mao's death, Beijing's strategy to deliver population wellbeing changed dramatically, triggering a transformation in how the state bureaucracy used hukou to regulate choice.

In the late 1970s, Beijing's developmental plan shifted to letting private markets and private logic of accumulation regulate and enforce the distribution of resources. This shift led to a redesign of the use of hukou in policymaking, which is still ongoing and is known as "hukou reforms." With the hukou reforms, the state bureaucracy started creating policies that relied on hukou to influence, not force, the distribution of resources in society. These policies govern people's behavior by offering them options and leading them to make choices voluntarily. As hukou began to convey voluntary "choices," it became conducive to diversity, variability, flexibility, private interests, individual accountability, individual responsibility, and a type of governance that draws on invisible state guidance and voluntary choice. Valuing and rewarding individual autonomy for making choices, these policies transferred the responsibility of decision-making to the individual, making the state and its hukou-based guidance somewhat invisible. By changing the use of hukou in policymaking, Beijing triggered the creation of not only capable, resourceful citizens but also a new social environment that fit the needs of a private market-oriented economy.

Today's hukou, I argue, is attached primarily to practices and policies that discipline individuals into specific conducts while giving them space to accommodate risks, uncertainties,

personal interests, and responsibilities that influence or change their actions. Practically, hukou and the policies that are attached to it let hukou subjects shape their identities as they see fit, as well as allow them to make choices about their lives that they could not make before. Such choices include decisions about schooling, marriage, reproduction, migration, occupation, health care, social security, and other essential aspects of life.

Promoting individual autonomy, personal choice, and thus diversity, today's hukou epitomizes the "China Dream," a political campaign that President Xi Jinping launched in 2013 positing that China is a site "for everyone to make his own dream come true" (Xi 2014, 179). Indeed, today's hukou governs to conciliate and accommodate everyone's individuality and circumstances. However, it has not lost its ability to guide the behavior of its subjects; on the contrary, less coercion does not imply less regulation (Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005, 326-327; Hoffman 2013). State organizations still expect citizens to comply with national, collective interests, but the discrepancies between state interest and individual interest are more easily negotiated or smoothened out. Nonetheless, this picture of hukou is in sharp contrast with the image from the state-planned economy period, when hukou was used to ensuring the supremacy of collective interests over individual autonomy.

In essence, my research demonstrates that hukou can be coupled with and conducive to different types of governance rationales, independent of political ideology, and, therefore, different and contrasting types of power. Such types refer to negative power, the power that limits or prohibits individual autonomy in social actions, and positive power, the power that stimulates individual autonomy in social actions. By being able to convey different types of power, hukou creates social environments where compliance from government subjects (i.e., citizens) to the social order can be achieved either by involuntary (coercive) or voluntary

(liberating) ways, depending on how hukou is incorporated into policymaking as a means to regulate choice. Further, depending on how state and extra-state actors use hukou to regulate choices, hukou can signify either a potential liability or an advantage to whichever actor is mobilizing it. When hukou is used to obtain coercive compliance with an end, it may bring liability upon the actor; if the goal is never achieved, causing suffering, the responsibility for such suffering is likely to fall on the shoulders of the actor mobilizing hukou.

Meanwhile, when hukou is used to obtain voluntary compliance, it always represents an advantage to the actor using hukou; if things go wrong, it is the hukou subjects who take responsibility for their "choices." From this perspective, today's hukou represents an advantage to the Communist Party. The capacity to regulate choice, which is traced to its classification nature, is not the only source from where hukou derives its governing power. As will become clear in this thesis, hukou also enjoys a deep-rooted history, dating back thousands of years, and has an ingrained legitimacy in the eyes of the Chinese people, as well as a capacity to regulate the behavior of individuals and their family members simultaneously and by proxy. Together, these features make it a rare and resilient technology of government (Foucault 1991a, 94) that can align, conciliate, and reconcile collective and private interests in useful and effective ways.

Several researchers (Jeffreys 2009) have studied the emergence of liberal rationalities in China, but no one has yet analyzed the role hukou plays in this process. Among the studies that explore liberal rationalities in China and inspire my research, two are especially relevant: Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin A. Winckler's book (2005), and Lisa Hoffman's doctoral thesis, also published as a book (2010). Greenhalgh and Winkcler's work discusses birth planning policies, which are directly related to hukou status, while Hoffman's analyzes how young professionals are being cultivated into complying with the conditions that result from the reintroduction of

private market logics into the country's economy and society. Such conditions include those values that I mentioned earlier, of which hukou is conducive, such as flexibility, private interests, individual accountability, among others. Also, both studies rely on Foucault's analytical framework.

Specifically, Greenhalgh and Winckler concluded that the history of China's birth-planning policies embodies gradual shifts in the tactics of governing from coercive Leninist methods of bureaucratism and mobilization to more liberal strategies that articulated the individual interest in the wellbeing of the child. Their study led me to contemplate hukou's capability to act as conducive to individual interest for the first time, given that birth planning policies have always been directly subordinated to and conditioned by hukou status. Between the introduction of the One-Child Policy in 1979 and the end of 2015, when it was revoked, families classified as "agricultural" hukou holders (nongye jiating) could have two children, provided that the first one was a girl. In contrast, families classified as "non-agricultural" (feinongye jiating) could have one child only. Focusing on another phase of life, "work," Hoffman demonstrated that the idea of looking for work and the notion of "job choice," which were a novelty to the Chinese in the early 2000s, had the effect of encouraging the development of autonomy and risk management skills among college graduates. Hoffman argued that Chinese citizens are learning to make choices, a faculty that results from "socialization" processes (2010, 82). To that, I add that they are also learning to deal with the "burden" that choice can represent. Complementing Hoffman's analysis, my study demonstrates that today's hukou system includes a liberal pedagogical dimension. When enabling voluntary choices, hukou functions as a strategy to teach and learn the art of decision-making regarding all those aspects of life that used to be directly decided by the state, such as migration, mating and marriage, and homeownership.

Greenhalgh and Winckler's and Hoffman's studies are grounded in the idea that China has been experimenting with a new type of governance that challenges and eludes our understanding of both neoliberalism and socialism. Both studies highlight how post-Mao Communist administrations have been transferring an ever-increasing amount of responsibility to communities, families, and individuals to obtain voluntary compliance with their governing. To produce social conformity, Communist administrations in the post-Mao era, on the one hand, have relied on formal and informal individual and collective-based incentives that guide voluntary choices and crate voluntary compliance with the social order. Nonetheless, often such incentives are embedded in or strengthened by values or rationalities that were typical of the Maoist era. On the other hand, these administrations have protected and preserved their institutional capability and legitimacy to act and intervene in every aspect of life in coercive ways, leaving the population with forced choices. Ultimately, these studies try to grasp and classify the Communist Party's "governmentality" (Foucault 1991a).

Greenhalgh and Winckler presented today China's governmentality as a blend of Leninism and neoliberalism (2005, 9). Hoffman introduces today's practices of population governing in China as "neoliberal" but also emphasizes their Leninist marks. She draws on the scholarship of Chinese scholar Li Zhang (2001) and incorporates the prefix "late-socialist" (Hoffman 2010, 9), calling such practices "late-socialist neoliberalism." I, too, view the governing practices of the post-Mao era as a blend of Leninism and neoliberalism. I base my view on the consideration that the Communist Party has been actively pursuing a model of governance that reconciles both the role of the state and the role of the market in the allocation of resources and the promotion of wellbeing. However, I believe that trying to classify governance according to political ideologies (e.g., liberalism or Leninism) may be misleading or even

irrelevant. Why? Political ideologies do not necessarily reflect actual, concrete practices on the ground. Systems of political knowledge have become an assemblage of diverse concepts and practices that reflect different and often contrasting values, becoming almost devoid of established meanings. For instance, today's China has numerous policies that are anti-neoliberal and supportive of private capitalism at the same time (Weber 2018). Alternatively, I propose classifying governance models according to the technologies they use to guide their subjects (i.e., individuals) to make certain decisions and comply with specific goals. The focus on the technology of governance gives another advantage to researchers and analysts; it allows them to observe and assess how particular technologies change the social environment (i.e., society) by guiding people's behavior towards specific ends. For instance, in the case of China, hukou provides an inside view into how Beijing operationalized the transition from a war-torn private market economy to a planned market economy, and then to a private market economy again. Technologies of government often operate similarly to chameleons, but in an inverted way. Chameleons have crystals underneath their skin that reflect the environment, making their color change to match the environment. In contrast, technologies of government change the environment to match the action-guiding they produce, blending themselves in the environment, like chameleons.

In the case of hukou, I classify the governance that it produces as "household-based hybrid compliance;" "household" refers to the source of compliance (i.e., hukou), while "hybrid" refers to the types of power it engages (i.e., coercive and voluntary). By sorting and ordering Chinese populations, including in digital ways, hukou allows the state-bureaucracy to regulate choices in different ways. It can make the act of choosing voluntary or involuntary and thus lead people to comply because they fear the authority of the decision-maker (i.e., the state) or for

personal interests, sometimes both. More importantly, today's hukou capability to invisibly convey state planning and forced-choices in ways that people perceive and experience as voluntary, autonomous, and as a matter of individual freedom, strengthens the Communist Party. This capability of hukou represents an incredible source of power revitalization and sustainability for the Communist Party. It is also the most remarkable contemporary feature of China's "Party-State" regime.

The Data

I collected the data for this study in Jinan, the provincial capital of Shandong Province, in eastern China, with a population of about 8.9 million "permanent residents" (changzhu renkou, as of 2019). Based at Shandong University, I conducted nine months of ethnographic fieldwork between mid-August 2015 and the end of May 2016. The data consists of policy documents, news articles, statistical information, archival materials, observations, and two-hundred and fifty formal open-ended interviews with a cross-section of residents. In the interviews, I explored how hukou subjects view hukou, how they respond to hukou-related policies, and how they factor hukou into their decision-making processes.

I tackled the hukou transformation from an "inductive" perspective (Blommaert and Jie 2010), meaning that I used data as the starting point of my theorizing, not the other way around. To conceptualize the data sociologically, I revised the data continually, always interacting with it

and “applying”[1] it to explanations (i.e., theories) that could potentially explain patterns of behavior, following a strategy that academics commonly regarded as “grounded theory” (Charmaz and Belgrave 2019). Such an approach also meant that my perceptions of the world, including my life experiences, directly influenced my research process and how I designed my research. In other words, how I defined the research object, elaborated the research questions, collected the data, as well as analyzed and generalized the data. For instance, my portrayal of hukou as a technology of government and the selection of Jinan as my research site resulted from a combination of my discontinued academic and non-academic experiences involving hukou, which spanned over eighteen years. These experiences, which I divide into three phases, include living, working, and taking advantage of a series of formal and informal discontinued research opportunities s in China.

The first phase started in 2002 and ended in 2006 when I moved to China and did my master's degree. Inspired by the work of the scholars Dorothy Solinger (1999) and Tianjun Cheng and Mark Selden (1994)—who connected hukou primarily to coercive fields of power and human suffering—I decided to do a master's degree at a Chinese university to research hukou. Universities in my home country Brazil did not offer graduate programs with a focus on China. I went to Shandong University intending to study how hukou produced social conformity.

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[1] Sociologist Kathy Charmaz argued that the emphasis on the “application” of concepts and theories to data is a distinctive characteristic of grounded theorists in comparison with other researchers that also assume a social constructionist approach to the material world (2008, 398). According to Charmaz, more traditional constructionists tend to emphasize analytical innovation over application (ibid.).

"How could the Chinese people continually act on and conform to hukou if it brings so much suffering upon them?" I asked myself. "The population might benefit from hukou somehow," I assumed, challenging the analyses of those scholars who sparked my initial interest for hukou, and who saw hukou strictly as coercive.

As I progressed through my master's degree program, I altered my research interests to focus on the obstacles that my cohort (mostly rural residents) and thousands of rural migrant workers faced in settling in Jinan, leaving behind my original plan. I essentially explored the exclusionary and coercive nature of hukou, following the tracks of the scholars who first inspired my academic trajectory. In my master's dissertation, I analyzed the challenges that migrants faced in trying to live and work in the city. In the process, I gained considerable knowledge of hukou, which also supported this project. More notably, this first phase in Jinan allowed me to develop an important and extensive personal network in the city, including former professors and supervisors, colleagues, and friends. This network facilitated my research, assisting me in obtaining funds for data collection, arranging interviews, gathering policy documents, and making sense of my research data through discussions and brainstorming sessions.

My experiences at Shandong University as a master's student-guided my choice of the research site, making Jinan the only place where I had the resources to undertake this project. Most hukou research happens in "megacities" or "top-tier" cities (e.g., Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing), which are not effective representatives of the hukou reforms, including the impact that such reforms have on people's lives. Top-tier cities, with their strict, almost prohibitive criteria to accept hukou transfer (i.e., migration), are outside of the scope of China's current urbanization policies. And I believe they tend to remain that way, as the State Council actively discourage megacities from accepting migrants, especially rural migrants, who

are China's primary source of urbanization. Thus, this thesis supplements the literature available with truly new insights, given that they result from research in a city (Jinan) that has low, easy to meet hukou registration transfer criteria.

Furthermore, unlike available studies, this thesis offers insights that are generalizable to China's median-sized and small-sized cities (i.e., cities with populations sized between three and 15 million people). The most recent policy documents guiding national urbanization for the period 2014-2020 encourage median and small-sized cities, like Jinan, to lower the requirements for hukou transfer, thereby encouraging urban relocation, on an official and permanent basis, of about 100 million migrants in total during the designated period. These policy documents, which also govern the hukou reforms, refer to the "National New-type Urbanization Plan (2014-2020)" (State Council 2014a) and the "Opinions on Further Promoting Reform of the Household Registration System" (State Council 2014b). With those policies, the State Council positioned hukou, the hukou reforms, and tier-two and tier-three cities in the heart of a major geo-socio economic agenda that includes elevating the proportion of Chinese living in cities from 53.7 percent in 2014 to 60 percent by the end of 2020. The ultimate goal of such policies is expanding domestic consumption and increasing the country's GDP. As a result of these policies, approximately 1.75 million migrants relocated their hukou to Jinan between 2014 and 2019 (Sina News 2020; Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015). With 8.9 million people, Jinan's population also includes about one million temporary residents, which are counted as "permanent" (changzhu renkou) but have their hukou registered elsewhere.

Marked by professional experiences, the second phase of my hukou trajectory started after I graduated from Shandong University in 2006, when I left Jinan to work as a quality supervisor on the shop floor of an aluminum factory in Shanghai, overseeing the work of rural

migrant employees. During that time, I did not produce systematic research on hukou, but I obtained valuable first-hand experience of the barriers that migrant workers faced in trying to live and work in Shanghai without a permanent household registration. I also started to see evidence of the liberating side of hukou. For instance, whenever I criticized hukou to my colleagues, many of them rural migrants, they made sure to emphasize the practical importance of hukou in keeping the population organized and safe. Often, they also emphasized aspects that provided legitimacy to hukou, including its power to make the household configuration in terms of membership and status official through data collection and registration. However, I still could not make logical sense of the evidence that I had in front of my eyes. After returning to Brazil, I kept working in jobs that regularly required me to return to China to visit the production sites of clients and suppliers, which allowed me to continue my informal hukou inquiries and observations. For instance, when traveling in China to visit suppliers, I talked to high and low ranked workers, inquiring into their hukou status and life outside their hukou jurisdiction. I also noticed that, around 2008, hukou-attached policies all over the country started to condition hukou jurisdiction transfers to real estate investment, giving migrants the option to obtain permanent residence in their chosen city. The desire to resume my hukou research more systematically never left my mind. In 2012, I landed in Canada to start my PhD program at the University of Alberta and officially resume my hukou research. Then, I also started the third phase of experiences that influenced this project, which I am concluding now with this thesis.

At the Department of Sociology of the University of Alberta, I centered my studies on the topic of power in search of concepts and theories that could help me explain the limited material evidence that I had informally gathered on the more liberating side of hukou. Once I equipped myself with preliminary concepts and theories that could potentially help me interpret some of

the scattered observations I had compiled over the years, I returned to Jinan to collect data on the hukou transformation in a more systematic fashion and write this thesis. I received academic and financial support to collect data in Jinan from two institutions: Shandong University and the Confucius Institute and Shandong University.

In this thesis, I explore the hukou reforms in four independent journal-article style papers. Thus, the reader shall expect some repetition regarding the contextualization of hukou when reading the articles as a group. The core part of my research findings, these papers address the following topics: 1) The policies and policymaking process of the hukou reforms between 1978 and 2016; 2) mate selection and family formation; 3) city-building dynamics and urban configurations, with attention to the role that hukou plays in residential real estate development; and 4) the surveillance functions of hukou after it became a digital platform in 1998. I opted to organize my findings into independent papers to facilitate knowledge mobilization and publication. The remaining three sections of this chapter introduce the hukou system and its historical functions; discuss how hukou is presented in the scholarly literature; and outline this thesis' relevance.

What Is Hukou?

I divided this section into two parts. The first introduces the data that hukou collects. The second discusses the functions that hukou played both in the Mao era and the post-Mao period. Also, to contextualize hukou, this section, especially its first part discussing the Hukou Register, was crucial for me to make sense of why most interview participants talked about hukou as essential to their identity formation, especially family membership and sense of belonging. From

examining and analyzing the Hukou Register, I realized that the data it collects and the knowledge it produces sort people in the world socially, spatially, and temporarily. The Hukou Register also orders family membership hierarchically, as it indicates the household head who is responsible for the family and for keeping the family's information updated with the local police. In other words, the family head is the main point of accountability for the entire hukou system.

The Household Register

Every household in China has a Household Register, or hukou booklet (Figure 1), a pocket-sized booklet containing cards with detailed information about you and your family. Comprehensive, the hukou booklet, or "family ID card," includes detailed information about the household and its members.

Figure 1: Hukou booklet.

The first card registers general information about the household (Figure 2): household number; household classification (either "agricultural" or "non-agricultural," depending on whether you live in the countryside or the city); the name of the family head; and the household address, which indicates the family's "hukou place" or "hukou jurisdiction" (hukou suozaidi). Hukou jurisdiction refers to the lowest administrative division in the address (e.g., village, township, county, or district in case the address is in a municipality). The household head is responsible for keeping the hukou information updated with the police station responsible for managing the family's register, which is usually the one closest to your home address.

户　别		户主姓名	
户　号		住　址	

山东省公安厅 户口专用
省级公安机关 户口专用章

济南市公安局 户口专用
户口登记机关 户口专用章

承办人签章：　98 年 6 月 22日 签发

Household classification	[Agricultural or Non-agricultural Family]	Name of the head of the household	[name and surname]	[empty]
Household number	[number]	Residential address	[address]	

Provincial Public Security Authority Hukou-Specific Stamp

Red ink stamp stating the following:
"Shandong Provincial Public Security Bureau"
"For Specific Use of Hukou"

Household Registration Authority Hukou-Specific Stamp

Red ink stamp stating the following:
"Jinan Municipal Public Security Bureau"
"For Specific Use of Hukou"
"[Name] Police Station"

Officer's signature stamp	Issued on: Year Month Day
Red ink stamp stating: "Police Officer / [name]"	

Figure 2: Household card and its translation (frontside).

The backside of the household card (Figure 3) collects migration history information on the household as a unit. Such information is comprised of address changes and respective dates, allowing the state bureaucracy to trace households over time spatially.

住址变动登记

变动后的住址	变动日期	承办人签章

Address Change Record		
Address after migration	Change Date	Officer’s signature stamp

Figure 3: Household card and its translation (backside).

The following cards in this booklet contain information about each household member (Figure 4): name; previous name; sex; date of birth; birthplace; ancestral origin; relationship to the household head; ethnicity; marital status; religious affiliation; height; blood type; ID number; education attainment; occupation; workplace; military service; and, in the case of migrant members, date of migration into the city (or county) and to the current address, as well as address of origin. Inapplicable information is left blank.

常住人口登记卡

姓名			户主或与户主关系		
曾用名			性别		
出生地			民族		
籍贯			出生日期		
本市(县)其他住址			宗教信仰		
公民身份证件编号		身高		血型	
文化程度		婚姻状况		兵役状况	
服务处所			职业		
何时由何地迁来本市（县）					
何时由何地迁来本址					

承办人签章: 登记日期: 年 月 日

Permanent Resident Registration Card					
Name		Relationship with the household head			
Previous Name		Sex			
Birthplace		Ethnicity			
Place of Origin	[it usually refers to the resident father's place of birth, also considered ancestral origin]	Date of Birth			
Secondary residential address in this city (county)				Religious Affiliation	
ID Card Number		Height		Blood Type	
Educational Attainment		Marital Status		Military Service Status	
Workplace				Occupation	
Date of migration to this city or county and address of origin					
Date of migration to this address and address of origin					
Officer's signature stamp		Registration date: Year Month Day			

Figure 4: Household member card and its translation (frontside).

The backside of the household member card (Figure 5) records changes involving any information displayed on the front side; this includes the variable (i.e., item) changed, how it was changed, and the date of the change. This kind of data traceability gives the state bureaucracy the capability to not only know each hukou subject but also track the main events in their lives, such as changes of residential address, educational attainment, marital status, and workplace, all with a single system of registration.

登记事项变更和更正记载

项目	变更、更正后	变动日期	承办人签章

Registration of Changes and Corrections			
Item	Changed • Corrected Information	Change Date	Officer's signature stamp

Figure 5: Household member card and its translation (backside).

For convenience, the hukou booklet also includes two summary cards (Figures 6 and 7), offering the state bureaucracy a quick view of all members registered within a specific household. Focused on hukou classification and migration, the first card (Figure 6) displays everyone's name, sex, birth date, hukou classification, and any specific circumstances involving their migration.

Permanent Resident Registration Card Index [常住人口登记卡索引表]					
Name and surname [姓名]	Sex [性别]	Date of Birth [出生日期]	Hukou Classification [户口性质]	Population Mobility Circumstances [人口变动情况]	Officer's signature stamp [承办人签章]

Figure 6: Summary card containing an overview of all household members.

The second card (Figure 7) focuses on ID number and social position of the household member inside the household; it lists the household member's name, sex, relationship with the household head, address, and ID number.

Resident Population ID Number Table [常住人口公民身份号码登录表]				
Address [住址]				
Family Relationship [家庭关系]	Name and surname [姓名]	Sex [性别]	ID Number [公民身份号码]	Comment [备注]
	[name and surname]			
Explanation [说明]	ID Number of New Residents that are not in the table [新报户口公民身份号码不再登录此表]			
Comment [备注]：			Officer's signature stamp[承办人签章]	

Figure 7: Summary card containing every household member's ID number.

Hukou is attached to a series of policies, regulating people's behavior in various domains of life, including the following: Geographical mobility and migration; education and employment; dwelling; homeownership and real estate investment; family affairs; and personal identity. For instance, individuals staying outside their home location (i.e., hukou jurisdiction) for more than three days must register their presence with the local police, unless they are staying at a hotel, which updates your geographical status with police-integrated software. If they stay longer than thirty days, they need to apply for a (temporary) "residence permit" (juminzheng). Life as a temporary migrant outside the hukou jurisdiction can be challenging in several ways, as hukou classification and jurisdiction shape important aspects of life, such as access to school. They also determine the cut-off grade in the college entrance examination, and eligibility to apply for certain jobs in the public sector.

Changing hukou classification from "agricultural" to "non-agricultural" and hukou jurisdiction (i.e., household address) from rural to urban areas is possible, but this change implies giving up land rights, the ultimate symbol of "rural" citizenship. To do so, rural migrants must purchase a home in the targeted location and apply to have their hukou transferred to the local police station and reclassified to "non-agricultural" status, all in a single process. Alternatively, they can improve their prospects by marrying someone registered in that jurisdiction, thus securing an opportunity to transfer hukou to the preferred neighborhood or city. Migrants moving between urban areas do not undergo hukou reclassification because their urban status (i.e., "non-agricultural") remains the same. Still, they must apply to have their hukou jurisdiction transferred to the new city, which also includes the requirement to purchase a home in the new city. While rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban migration is possible upon meeting requirements, the opposite, urban-to-rural migration is not. Beijing does not allow hukou reclassification from

“non-agricultural” to “agricultural” status. People can only have their hukou classification changed from “agricultural” to “non-agricultural” and hukou jurisdiction transferred from the countryside to urban areas. Meanwhile, temporary migrants can live outside their hukou jurisdiction, but they must apply for a residence permit with the police in their intended area of residence. The use of hukou to regulate migratory movements outlines the importance of this registration system to guide behaviors, while securing the advance of China’s massive urbanization process, given that in-flows of migrants implies city expansion. In Chapter 5, I further discuss this topic, demonstrating that the use of hukou to regulate geographical mobility also accommodates individual autonomy.

Further, hukou functions as primary proof of identity and citizenship status; individuals need to provide copies of it to carry out all procedures that involve the government: birth registration; health insurance; ID card; driver’s license; school enrollment; marriage; divorce; vehicle license; passport; death certificate; bank loans and mortgages; and social benefits.

Hukou is not new. It originated about three thousand years ago, as a system that grouped households and prescribed the mutual surveillance of their members (Dutton 1992). Two ancient cultural values are ingrained in hukou and validate hukou despite its coercive nature. These values refer to family sorting according to bloodline (i.e., xueyuan) and also regionalism, including a sense of belonging to an ancestral land (i.e., diyuan) (Fei 2012). With its current format, hukou has collected data on Chinese citizens to police populations and manage socioeconomic resources for about six decades. Despite the remarkable transformation of China in the past few decades, hukou remained intact as a system of household registration, becoming one of the few government infrastructures that survived the end of Mao’s era and the adoption of

a private market economy. Hukou not only survived but showcased its flexibility to adapt as a technology of government.

The Functions of Hukou

Hukou has played a principal role in forming and shaping the Chinese population since the foundation of the People's Republic, serving as the backbone of China's population governing strategy. China's communist administrations have always used and adapted hukou to deliver their societal goals. In Mao's era (1949-1978), the main goals related to nation-building; they consisted of forming a "Chinese" population and industrializing the country. Since the Economic Reforms and Opening Up Policy (1978), the primary goal became governing; to manage a diverse range of often conflicting and ambiguous societal needs to create wellbeing among the population. This goal implies the existence of a unified and diverse societal structure formed by citizens of all backgrounds with various private interests.

Hukou in the Mao Era

The Communists ended the Liberation War (1927-1949) victorious, but to exercise their sovereignty, they had first to rebuild and delineate the population. To that end, Mao's administration started to revitalize hukou immediately after the foundation of the People's Republic on October 1, 1949; it was one of the first initiatives of the Communist Party. The hukou revitalization project started in Beijing, the capital city. Mao's administration reformed the "police system" of the previous administration to improve its data collection capability

(People's Daily 1949a). It did so by making the new system more convenient for the user. The Communist measures included cutting down the number of forms and steps to obtain the booklet, eliminating duplications in record-keeping, training officers, redesigning the information in the hukou booklet, and standardizing the register for every type of household (ibid.). To justify the need to replace the Nationalist government's "disorderly hukou" (luanhukou or the "reactionary household registration system of the Nationalist government") with the "people's hukou" (renmin hukou), Mao's administrators invoked the importance of hukou to industry, culture, education, sanitation, taxation, transportation, the economy, public order, and other "various aspects" of society (People's Daily 1949a, b). It is noteworthy that the Communists labeled the Nationalist hukou "disorderly" because it did not have a standardized data collection process. Before the foundation of the "New China" could complete its two-month anniversary, the Communists completed the hukou redesign in Beijing, celebrating it as a way to obtain the initial materials and management experience to build the city (People's Daily 1949a). I view this initiative as the first "hukou reform" (hukou gaige) of the People's Republic era and the starting point of a well-designed system of administrative surveillance and knowledge production that represents the core of population management in China.

Mao's administration did not complete rolling out the system to the entire country until 1958 when it promulgated the "Regulations on Household Registration in the People's Republic of China" (State Council 2001 [1958]), or "Hukou Law," which is still in force. By then, more specifically, in January 1958, the government had already issued a hukou booklet to every household in the country. Rural households had their household information registered in "collective hukou" books kept with the village government; they did not get an individualized

hukou booklet until the late 1990s. The hukou roll-out on a national scale dramatically improved the Mao administration's capability to police populations and to regulate the country's economy.

Mao's administration used hukou to consolidate the ideological sorting of populations between "friends" and "enemies" (Mao 1926), fulfilling Mao Zedong's approach to governing, which entailed officially organizing the population hierarchically according to social classes based on economic status. Landlords and merchants, at the top of the hierarchy, were considered the greatest enemies of the regime, while urban workers and landless peasants, at the bottom, were treated as the closest allies (ibid.). Within this framework, the state bureaucracy assigned individuals class labels that signified their personal and family socioeconomic and sociopolitical status. Representing a spectrum from the friendliest to the worst enemies of Mao's regime, the labels used were "poor peasant," "middle peasant," "rich peasant," and "landlord."[2] The hukou system per se never collected ideological or political information about its subjects, including class labels (i.e., class labels have never been included in the hukou booklet). However, ideological policing was built into the household data collection process through profiling, whistleblowing, and supplemental records.

Using Article 21 of the 1958 Regulations, Mao's administration prescribed criminal prosecution for "counterrevolutionaries" and "other criminals" uncovered in the process of household registration. An official explanation of Article 21, published in the flagship newspaper of the central government in Beijing, added "bad elements" (huaifenzi) to the list of enemies, giving the Party flexibility to profile undesirable subjects (People's Daily 1958b). Article 21's

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[2] The best account of the class label system is in Richard Curt Kraus's book "Class Conflict in Chinese Socialism" (1981).

official explanation also stated that fully implementing hukou depended on the ability of the "majority" to supervise the "minority" (People's Daily 1958a). With this idea, the Communist government encouraged and legitimized political and ideological whistleblowing. Based on archival records (Hoover Archives 1964a), "population registration forms" (renkou dengjibiao) that included "class label at birth" (xiating chusheng) (i.e., the label assigned to the family) and "personal class label" (benren chengfen) consistently supplemented the hukou information of rural families. The association of hukou and class labels confirms the importance of hukou in China's policing apparatus since the foundation of the People's Republic. Once the population became known, defined, organized, and monitored, Mao's administration expanded the use of hukou to the economy.

Mao's industrialization model was state-led and depended on the capacity of the state bureaucracy to take full control over the resources available in society, as production processes were rigorously mapped and planned according to a "master plan" (i.e., five-year plans). To translate the master plan into material reality, state planners used hukou to override the logics that characterize private market economies such as entrepreneurialism, competition, and the free circulation of workers and commodities. They assigned duties and rights to the population according to hukou jurisdiction and classification.

"Agricultural" families had no option but to live in the countryside and farm the land. In contrast "non-agricultural" families lived in urban areas and work on non-agricultural jobs. Rural and urban populations had their lives organized institutionally, by communes and work units (Bray 2005). Nationally deployed and in synch with hukou, these institutions were social, political, and economic organizational structures that managed life in the countryside and urban areas from an all-encompassing perspective. State-planners distributed resources to the

population through these institutions, conditioning the access to food, dwelling, employment, education, medical care, and retirement pension on hukou classification, hukou jurisdiction, and spatial immobility. It is noteworthy that the state bureaucracy has never prohibited mobility from the legal perspective. Still, mobility was rigorously regulated and officially discouraged through policies that recommended local governments to persuade their populations from joining the "blind flows" of migrants who attempted life in the city during the 1950s (Cheng and Selden 1994, 654-655). The Hukou Law prescribes a detailed pass control system that regulates migration; it does not prohibit migration. However, such a pass control system, when combined with policies that subjected access to food, shelter, work, and other basic needs to institutional membership, directly contributed to making life outside of a hukou jurisdiction impossible during Mao's era. With these measures, the state bureaucracy was able to determine everyone's economic activity and lifestyle for about twenty years in pursuit of a greater common good—the country's industrial development.

Mao's development model, however, was completely unbalanced regarding the allocation of resources, creating a society marked by entrenched socioeconomic inequality. In comparison with their counterparts in the countryside, urban populations greatly benefited from the state-led industrialization model. The resources allotted to urbanites included welfare programs that were unavailable to rural populations such as medical care, housing, and a retirement pension, and better quality services such as education. However, spatially segregated in rural and urban hukou jurisdictions and precluded from moving between jurisdictions, populations tended not to view the effects of hukou in society, among them, the socioeconomic inequality that a hukou-based resource allocation created among agricultural and non-agricultural families. The lack of

awareness of the intended and unintended effects of hukou associated with its cultural legitimacy, especially kinship relations and regionalism, led people to embrace it.

With the reintroduction of private markets into the country in the late 1970s, the social divide that marked the Chinese population acquired economic meanings and powers. Urbanites quickly converted their educational credentials and welfare benefits into money and prestige in the newly established private economy. Part of this “conversion” process included buying the government apartments they lived in for a symbolic price when the housing market was privatized in 1998. The privatization of the residential real estate market gave urbanites an enormous advantage over rural populations, and this advantage is gaining additional economic power as the price of real estate increases (Chapter 5). From a socioeconomic perspective, today’s population is divided into two large groups, original urbanites on one side, and populations that are originally from the countryside, including their city-born descendants, on the other. As time passes and the younger generations forget history, the ability that urbanites have to convert their institutionally-granted privileges into economic power makes hukou-related inequalities look like a matter of personal skill, not a function of their hukou.

Hukou in the Post-Mao Era

Responding to grassroots initiatives that gave farmers autonomy over their production processes, Communists in the post-Mao era started to gradually disassemble the institutions that organized life during the planned-economy period, reviving private markets and private money-making logics. To govern in a private market-led economy, China’s administrations have been continually reforming hukou since the early 1980s, in a process commonly referred to as “hukou

reforms." The hukou reforms, I will demonstrate throughout this study, have essentially readjusted the purpose of hukou to the needs related to governing in an economic context that require and reward individual autonomy, entrepreneurship, competition, profitability, and productivity; that is, a private market-led economy.

Today's hukou fosters an environment of opportunities and constraints that influence the behavior of populations according to specific needs. Such needs relate to workforce mobility, migration, education, real estate investment, urbanization, among other aspects of life. To enable such an environment, Beijing has shared its authority over hukou affairs with the grassroots level of the state bureaucracy, diffusing hukou power across society. It gave cities and towns (i.e., local governments) policymaking power to use hukou information to manage populations and guide urbanization processes, as well as meet other specific needs. The hukou reforms also empowered extra-state organizations, as they too benefited from the consequences of the hukou reforms.

To sort populations spatially and socioeconomically, local governments usually design policies that condition schooling on homeownership in the city, creating an incentive for migrants who can afford a home to transfer hukou. Most governments also facilitate the hukou transference of recent graduates, expecting them to settle in the city and contribute to improving the labor market skill and productivity. While this type of policy attracts desirable migrants (e.g., higher-income, skilled individuals), it deters undesirable ones (e.g., poor, and uneducated rural residents). Until recently, most cities, including Jinan, had size requirements for residential properties used in hukou transference, which were determined according to the migrant's original hukou classification and jurisdiction. Such a policy allowed local governments to not only select migrants but also delineate the spaces that they occupy (and not occupy) in the city

through land-use zoning and the issuance of building licenses. It also promoted the real estate market and influenced the politics of space valorization. Although most cities and towns have already dropped the home size requirement, making homes of all sizes eligible for hukou transference, this type of policy directly influenced the building of cities, including the configurations and dynamics of neighborhoods regarding the migrant presence and apartment sizes.

Flexibilized through the opportunity of migration, hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction became negotiable factors in social interactions and life courses. Sometimes, these factors represent opportunities, sometimes constraints to someone. Regardless, hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction became objects of personal decision-making and subjected to individual autonomy and personal choice. For instance, I learned during fieldwork that, before the Two-Child policy became effective in 2016, rural parents wishing to have a second child often opted for postponing migration to circumvent the One-Child policy. Their action demonstrates that people have autonomy today to create ways to embed hukou in their decision-making processes and even adjust hukou to their needs. This policy stipulated that non-agricultural couples could have only one child, while agricultural couples could have two children if the first child were a girl. Another example refers to how urban parents expect their adult children to marry individuals from families that are originally from the city, that is, non-agricultural hukou holders. They seek to secure inheritance and accumulate wealth for their offspring. Their expectation draws on the fact that urban residents born after the One-Child policy are the sole heirs, inheriting the totality of their parent's estate. Also, with regards to marriage, women living in urban areas, including migrants, tend to avoid marrying men from the countryside. They often assume that rural in-laws have no or only a limited pension, becoming a

financial “burden” (fudan) in the old age. Regarding dwelling, traditional urbanites of high socioeconomic status in Jinan often avoid purchasing apartments in residential developments containing apartments of 90 or 75 square meters, as developers catered units of those dimensions for migrants.

Despite how hukou influences people’s actions today, it continues to be an important proof of geographical and kinship identity, two important signifiers of social standing in Chinese society. Hukou helps individuals produce and display knowledge about themselves and others. Hukou organizes people, things, and ideas into somewhat consistent, mutually exclusive types, classes, categories, and segments. The knowledge that hukou produces allows its subjects to guide their behaviors and feelings towards others in intentional and unintentional ways. Depending on the circumstance, hukou confers privilege and pride or imposes suffering and shame upon their subjects. Those whose hukou identity and position converge relatively well experience the knowledge that hukou produces as a liberating process, while those whose identity and classification do not quite fit experience hukou as a form of coercion or stigma.

An interview with a woman on her early fifties who commuted daily from her village to the city illustrates how the identities and classifications that hukou produces can both liberate and oppress. Sometimes, as is the case with this interview, oppression and liberation happen in the linguistic domain. “My boss says I am ‘temping’ as a clerk in the city only because I am a rural hukou! They would never say that if I were from the city; I would be considered a ‘normal’ employee,” said Mrs. Meng. She was complaining that her boss used the word “temp” (da gong) to refer to her but not her colleagues from the city, although they all had the same type of employment contract and shared the same space, responsibilities, and job title. Once she realized that I knew the subtle distinction involving those two words, as well as the stigma that underpins

the word “temp,” she seemed relieved, saying, in a confessional tone, that the word “temp” made her feel inferior to workmates from the city. She would rather them to use the word of “work” (gongzuo) instead.

The hukou reforms, so far, have not changed the hukou system per, that is, its operating procedures. The data hukou collects, retrieves, and creates on populations have remained unaltered since 1958. Also, it continues to be the most central surveillance system in the country. Hukou’s surveillance capability increased remarkably since 1998, when it became a digital platform, allowing law enforcement to connect original hukou variables to an ever-increasing number of datasets and produce an infinite amount of information on Chinese citizens and their families. What did the hukou reforms do then? The hukou reforms completely overhauled the policies and practices that were attached to hukou throughout the Mao era, especially regarding the regulation of geographical mobility, including changes of hukou jurisdiction and hukou classification, and allocation of resources. The hukou reforms detached hukou from most policies and practices that allowed the state bureaucracy to use hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction to institutionally determine people’s living conditions and opportunities in the Mao era. In doing so, the reforms also reattached hukou to policies and practices that valorize and invite individual autonomy. The hukou reforms allowed the Chinese state bureaucracy to link, articulate, and reconcile collective interests (i.e., societal, state, common-good) and individual interests (i.e., personal interests, private interests). Finally, the reforms also unveiled hukou’s versatility as a technology of government that can be used to both oppress and promote individual autonomy and personal interests in various domains of life, as well as its strength, resilience, and importance for the Chinese social and economic order.

Hukou in the Literature

Despite hukou's importance in China's social history, there are few comprehensive, innovative, and influential scholarly studies centered on the hukou system specifically. Also, most hukou studies draw on the same analytical perspective. Thus, the field of hukou research can appear more extensive and diverse regarding the analytical approach and research findings than what it is in practice. In this section, I outline the scholarly debates about hukou. I divided the section into two parts. In the first one, I introduce and discuss how the hukou literature approaches hukou as an object of study. In the second part, I review the most influential works in the field of hukou studies.

The Traditional Approach to Hukou

Hukou researchers, with rare exceptions (Dutton 1992), portray hukou primarily as a formal, official, state-sanctioned "institutional mechanism" that yields formal power and signifies the state's authority to distribute such power. In other words, researchers portray hukou as an institutional mechanism that mostly allocates resources and prescribes rights and duties to China's population. Such a portrayal articulates power primarily as a "possession" granted by the state bureaucracy and government officials. Common in the field of China studies, especially among works that explain macro-political and economic transformations in China, analyses view power as a possession, as an "absolute value" that actors either win or lose. I identify these analyses by their research questions, which display power as a "thing" that can be held, wielded, and secured, such as the following: Who holds power after the economic reform (vis-à-vis the Communist period)? (Oi 1996; Walder 1986; Oi and Walder 1999; Whyte 2010); in whose

interest is power wielded? (Sicular 1996; Whyte 1996; Bian 1994); how is power made legitimate? (Goldstein 1996; Oi 1996; Walder 1986; Unger 1985; Nee 1985; Zweig 1985); and how is power secured? (Putterman 1996; Chan 1996; Walder 1986). Following the scholarship of the British social scientist Nicolas Rose, particularly his book "Power of Freedom" (1999), I refer to the tradition that views power as a possession as the "state authority" perspective. The state authority perspective contrasts with the articulation of power as an "action," which is how both Weber (1978 [1920]) and Foucault (Hindess 1996; Foucault 2008, 1979, 1991a) approached power. Analysis framing power as an action treat power as a "relative value" or an amorphous variable that flows between all actors, creating gains and losses for all actors involved. Such gains and losses vary according to the actors, their perspective (i.e., intended meaning), and context.

Under the state authority perspective, hukou studies focus on the exclusionary facet of the hukou system. These works are usually grounded in the empirical examination of the impact that hukou-based resource distribution policies and regimes of geographical immobility had and still have on different populations and social groups, especially regarding socioeconomic inequality between urban and rural residents. Aligned with the state perspective, hukou researchers center their inquiries around one of the two following questions: How does hukou distribute power? What are the consequences? (Cheng 1991; Cheng and Selden 1994); have the hukou reforms changed hukou's power to control people's lives? (Chan and Buckingham 2008; Lu 2008; Chan and Zhang 1999; Young 2013). These questions approach the nature of power as dichotomous and often coercive. Such an approach to power also tends to view power as a static element that does not undergo transforming while being pursued, held, wielded, distributed, and secured.

The state authority perspective is not wrong, less important, or irrelevant, but it has become incomplete as an analytical tool. Legal forms of authority certainly enhance individual and institutional legitimacy in the exercise of power over their interlocutors during interactions. Power, however, should not be analytically confined only inside of legal authority, i.e., state or government; that would mean ignoring the ever-increasing extra-state mechanisms that guide (e.g., regulate, discipline, and watch) human and non-human behavior. With specific regards to hukou studies, this "analytical confinement" makes the field turn a blind eye to the new features of hukou, as well as the new roles it plays. Hukou is still attached to policies that impose restrictions and obstacles upon individuals. Still, local governments have also been attaching hukou to policies that free individuals to "choose" and "plan" their own life stories, particularly since the reforms.

The hukou reforms offer hukou researchers an "epistemological break" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 241) to rethink hukou. Such a break represents a rupture with the beliefs that underlined hukou and which allows researchers to re-evaluate their scientific practice. It is also an opportunity for researchers to practice "radical doubt" (ibid., 235), calling into question their instruments of knowledge production, the subjective and objective structures that they internalize as members of the society they study, and the object of their science. In other words, the hukou reforms allow researchers to re-think hukou as a "scientific object." Researchers, however, have not yet used the current opportunity to do so. Instead, they tend to use the reforms to reinstate the state authority perspective and again accentuate the exclusionary nature of hukou. They do so by questioning whether hukou continues to be an important factor in structuring inequality in China and attaching importance to hukou as an object of scientific research in the production of inequality. Within the state authority perspective, hukou becomes "binary" like the

classifications it displays and is treated either as “exclusionary” or “non-exclusionary,” two conflicting and empty generalizations that reveal little about today’s hukou.

Prominent Chinese scholar Yilong Lu’s provocative research question, “does the hukou still matter?”, which he answered in a widely cited article (2008), illustrates the state of hukou research since the beginning of the hukou reforms. The field of hukou research is divided into two camps: those who argue that hukou continues to be important in reproducing inequality (Quheng and Gustafsson 2014; Zhang et al. 2014) and those who believe it is now far less important or perhaps even irrelevant in that respect (Cheng et al. 2014). The continual restatement that hukou is a state-sanctioned exclusionary mechanism forges a single “hukou story” (Ngozi Adichie 2009) that ignores or dismisses the additional powers of hukou. Such powers include its ability to convey individual interests and autonomy and reintroduce and advance private market logic into China. Most importantly, this single-story does not consider the possibility that hukou, once again, is contributing to and an example of a major transformation in the configurations and nature of power in China, as it did during the Mao era.

My evaluation of the literature’s approach to hukou must not be mistaken for a rejection of the state authority perspective; legal authority undoubtedly confers legitimacy to the exercise of power. Also, my readers shall not take my evaluation as a rejection of the knowledge produced with this perspective. These works have served and inspired my research endeavors and passion for hukou. My evaluation is a reminder of the incompleteness of the state authority perspective, which I supplemented with the concepts and ideas of Foucault and Weber.

The Core Studies in the Hukou Literature

I organize the studies that form the hukou literature into the “core” and “auxiliary.” The core studies discuss hukou per se, including its history, functioning, and related policies, wheareas the auxiliary literature assesses the impact that hukou has on specific events or situations, always with a focus on socioeconomic inequality. In this sub-section, I examine only the core studies. With one notable exception, they are the most relevant studies on hukou, those that shaped the research field by defining hukou as an object of research, prescribing a (“right”) way to approach this object, and determining the main social impact of hukou. I focus on these studies not only because they created the foundation for subsequent research, but also because they embody, with one notable exception, the assumption that I challenge with this thesis, that hukou is only or primarily a coercive source of power. The exception refers to the only analysis of the Communist version of hukou outside the state authority perspective. The core studies date from three periods, the early 1990s, early 2000s, and early 2010s, with researchers emphasizing a specific development of hukou in each period.

Studies from the Early 1990s

The research published in the early 1990s discusses hukou primarily as it existed during Mao’s era. This group consists of three research accounts involving three authors. Tianjun Cheng’s unpublished doctoral thesis, “Dialectics of Control: The Household Registration (Hukou) System in Contemporary China” (1991); an article summarizing his argument, which he co-authored with his supervisor Professor Mark Selden, the “The Origins and Social Consequences of China's *Hukou* System” (Cheng and Selden 1994); and a chapter “The emergence of the hukou” (1992, 189-245) by Michael R. Dutton, published in his book “Policing

and Punishing in China: From Patriarchy to 'the People.'" Dutton's piece is the notable exception mentioned above.

Tianjun Cheng's doctoral dissertation (1991): This study makes two important scholarly contributions. Firstly, it positions hukou as a central element to the design and functioning of the state-planned economy model. He demonstrates that the Communist Party used hukou to enable the command economy. To this end, the planners of China's economy relied on hukou to decouple two processes that happen together in any type of economy based on productivity and profitability (i.e., state- or private-led). These processes are urbanization and industrialization. Secondly, Cheng's study names and analyses in-depth, for the first time, the "exclusionary consequences" of hukou (ibid., 350-353), which have since been continually discussed and supplemented but never challenged. I summarize such consequences of hukou into the following: denial of freedom of residence and geographical mobility, including forceful urban-rural migration, and the creation of state-sponsored spatial hierarchies and inequalities around income and education. Researchers usually cite Cheng's work to support or illustrate arguments around hukou's powers to deny rights and force populations into specific patterns of behavior.

Despite its remarkable contribution to hukou studies, Cheng's analysis contains an underlying contradiction. Cheng discusses hukou as a lawful mechanism that the Communist Party used to govern the economy and the population during the state-planned economy period. However, he presents the social hierarchy that hukou produced as "illegitimate" (ibid., 367). This begs the question of how the intended consequences of a "legal" mechanism can be "illegitimate"? Laws or legal mechanisms, as well as their work and consequence, can be unfair or unreasonable for certain groups or populations, especially those that do not fit in. However, legal mechanisms and their outcome always enjoy at least one type of legitimacy, the legitimacy

that derives from the state bureaucracy. I view the contradiction in Cheng's work as an expression of the limitation of his approach, the state authority perspective. This approach offers obstacles to the articulation of the links and overlaps between formal and informal power. Also, the contradiction I point out here demonstrates that the state authority perspective is ineffective in establishing connections between the state authority to impose agendas and the interests of the individual to comply with such agendas. Cheng's thesis has another problem; it conflates hukou with the policies that were attached to it in the Mao era. This problem is also present in the article that he published with Professor Selden.

Tianjun Cheng and Mark Selden's article (1994): Summarizing Cheng's doctoral thesis, this article is one of the most cited pieces from the "China Quarterly," the flagship journal in China studies. Cheng and Selden argue that the hukou system from the early 1950s to the late 1980s had the following three consequences: It "fixed" populations "permanently" in place based on birthplace (ibid., 667); it "unequivocally prohibited" geographical mobility (ibid., 661); and it created a socio-economic and spatial hierarchy between China's urban and rural populations (ibid., 667-668). They attribute these consequences to three "interdependent" and "interrelated" hukou functions (ibid., 667). Firstly, hukou "created" a spatial hierarchy within the country, prioritizing large cities over small cities and urban over rural areas (ibid., 645). Secondly, hukou controlled people's spatial mobility (ibid.). Thirdly, it transferred decision-making about the population's work life and spatial mobility from the household to the lowest unit of collective production authority. In urban areas, the production authority referred to work units. In the countryside, the production authority referred to the people's commune (ibid.). However, the archival materials cited earlier indicate that brigades also regulated people's spatial mobility. Based on those materials, brigade leaders collected and stored hukou information and enjoyed

the authority to write “introduction letters” (jieshao xin) to peasants who had to leave their jurisdictions permanently or temporarily. I view the consequences and functions that Cheng and Selden attribute to hukou as the result of policies that were attached to hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction as criteria for distributing resources and prescribing rights and responsibilities.

The Hukou Law consists of a detailed system of pass control, but it does not “prohibit” mobility. To prohibit is different than to regulate strictly or control. Hukou establishes a link between populations, spaces, and families, but it does not “fix” people in space. Hukou also does not “create” socioeconomic inequality between populations; it is the policies that have been attached to hukou that do so. I do understand that Cheng and Selden might be expressing themselves in general terms. However, these details matter from the research point of view. The conflation of hukou as a system of household registration, with the policies that are attached to it (and detached from it) can lead to analytical errors and misinterpretations. For instance, Cheng and Selden argue (ibid., 646 and 649) that the hukou system, until the reforms, denied the Chinese people freedom of movement and residence, contradicting the 1954 Constitution and other important laws, including the “Regulations Governing the Urban Population (Ministry of Public Security 1951) that preceded the Hukou Law. I view this argument as inaccurate because the Hukou Law does not prohibit mobility; it only documents a person’s mobility. The conflation discussed here can also obfuscate the visibility that researchers have of the object, leading them to hyper emphasize one aspect, in the case of hukou, the coercive nature of the system, disregarding others.

Michael R. Dutton’s chapter (1992, 189-245): Drawing on the governmentality perspective (Foucault 1991a), Dutton’s analysis (1992) connects the emergence of the Communist hukou with the needs of the national economy. Dutton argues that Mao’s

administration used hukou to bureaucratically create the "household" as a unit of labor regulation that could serve "collective" purposes (i.e., the national economy, especially collectivist productive processes). To do so, the administration officially distinguished the institution of the family from the notion of "household," using the law to define household (Ministry of Public Security 1951), while leaving the concept of family open to interpretations, that is, not defined in the laws that regulated the household unit.

Regarding how exactly the national economy benefited from the separation between household and family, Dutton argues (1992, 190) that hukou "bridged" household interests and state interests, aligning private and public domains of life. Practically, hukou connected the family (i.e., private interests), considering that family members usually overlapped with household members, to workplaces (i.e., collective interest). This alignment facilitated the deployment of state-led agendas through the workplace (ibid., 190). Also, the category "household unit" allowed Mao's planners to translate policy formulations into practice by using the household as the primary unit of population record and budget calculation. Dutton also notes that Mao's administration kept the family as an important source of values despite its displacement as a site of government per se (ibid., 194). Mao's planners relied on a series of household-attached labor policies, rules, and campaigns at the workplace to instill the "right" values into the families. Further, Dutton argues that the official, institutional separation of household and family represented a novelty in the history of household registration systems in China. After reviewing Dutton's analysis vis-à-vis hukou policy documents, including the Hukou Law and the Household Register (Ministry of Public Security 1951; State Council 2001 [1958]), I add to his analysis that the separation between household and family shield the Communists from external threats. Why? The Communists used hukou to monitor their enemies. They used

hukou to singularize each individual inside the household, monitoring the family as an institution.

The institutional separation between the family and the household implied embracing the assumption that family and dwelling (i.e., household) do not necessarily mean the same thing. This assumption led to the need for the government to produce knowledge about the household and its members, including about their kinship relations (i.e., bloodline) and regionalisms (i.e., sense of belonging to a place), which is what hukou does. For instance, the Household Register names and orders the social relationship of each household member with the household head, making lineage and kinship relationship visible and quantifiable (see section "What is Hukou?"). Further, the Communist Party's ability to use hukou to scrutinize the household and the family, including its members (i.e., produce knowledge about these categories), gave the Communists two political advantages over the Nationalists. First, it mitigated the risks that traditional family practices and values, such as regionalism and respect for lineage-determined hierarchies, could bring to the Party-State regime. Second, it allowed the Communists to "penetrate" the village and the family and win the civil war against the Nationalists. While several scholars have presented the Communists' ability to rule village populations as an essential condition for them to take over the country's administration (Schurmann 1968), these scholars do not reveal exactly how the Communists managed to conquer the village. In sum, the assumption that family and dwelling do not necessarily overlap, when built into governance, safeguarded the Communists from external threats, in addition to ensuring the alignment of family goals with the goals of the national economy.

In reviewing Dutton's analysis, I not only supplemented it, but also disagreed with three of his ideas, namely the following: 1) Mao's administration "replaced" (Dutton 1992, 190) the

family and the individual with a “collective” subject of government—the household; 2) the family (i.e., biology, lineage, and kinship) played a limited role in the construction of the Communist hukou (ibid., 206); and 3) Hukou helped the Communists to “overcome” individualism to convey its political and economic agenda.

To support arguments one and two above, Dutton argues that hukou information on rural populations was kept as a “collective record” at the commune and brigade level during the Mao era (ibid., 206). He also adds, citing the work of Chinese scholar Qingwu Zhang (1983), that hukou in the countryside displays characteristics of a “non-family based registration system” (Dutton 1992, 206 as quoted in Qingwu Zhang, 56-58). This point is somewhat unclear in his analysis. Dutton is correct about hukou information being kept in a collective register in the countryside; until hukou was digitized, rural families did not have a hukou booklet. However, having no hukou booklet, in case of rural families, did not necessarily diminish the role played by the family in the setup of hukou in rural areas, nor did it mean that the individual and the family were replaced with the household as subjects of governance.

Furthermore, contradicting his arguments above, my research findings demonstrate that Mao’s administration never “replaced” (Dutton 1992, 190) the family and the individual with a “collective” subject of government (i.e., household). Instead, Mao’s administration used the household registration system to keep both the individual and the family alive as subjects of government. I argue that the most significant novelty of hukou under the Communists refers to its ability to regulate the individual, in addition to the household and the family. Further, the “collective” nature of hukou lies in its ability to govern families and family members (i.e., individuals) simultaneously. Within this context, it is hard to agree that the family as an institution had limited importance in the designing of the Communist hukou. Lastly, unlike what

Dutton claimed (ibid., 190), Mao's administration also never had to use hukou to "overcome" individualism to convey its political and economic agenda; instead, it used hukou to accommodate the feeling of belonging to a group while "protecting" individualism.

I base the counterarguments above on archival materials from the Steven W. Mosher collection at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, specifically the production reports and population registration forms from a village in southern China (near Guangzhou City) (Hoover Archives 1964a, b). These documents demonstrate the following: First, as I indicated earlier, hukou gathers comprehensive details on the family's structure (e.g., name of the household head and relationship of each household member to the family head) and on the family's history, including the family's ancestral geographical origin, which represents the family land where the ancestors are buried. By gathering this information, hukou reinforces the importance of the family as an institution. Secondly, government officials from communes, brigades, and production teams not only collected detailed information on the family but also linked this information to household members, that is, individuals. Reporting both on individuals and households, these documents list the following information about household members among others: Name; relationship with the family head; sex; date of birth; age; education; ancestral origin; occupation (e.g., farmer, child, and student); and marriage status (1964b). Overall, Dutton's analysis is correct about the fact that the Communist used hukou to create a bureaucratic separation between the family and the household. Historical and current evidence, however, does not support his claim about the declining role of the notion of family, in comparison to the idea of the household.

Concerning the idea that the Communists used hukou to overcome individualism, I view this as inaccurate. The great advantage of the Communist hukou was not to "overcome"

individualism but to “manage” it. By collecting data on individuals and family members, hukou allowed all levels of government to regulate consent around the Communist policies on the individual and collective levels.

Studies from the Early 2000s

Two comprehensive books dated from the early 2000 significantly contributed to the understanding of hukou, one published by Depeng Yu (2002), in the Chinese language, and another one by Fei-ling Wang (2005). Wang’s book, “Organizing Through Division and Exclusion: China’s Hukou System,” is the first of two books on hukou published in the English language; Jason Young wrote the other book, as I discuss later.

Depeng Yu’s book (2002): Yu describes hukou as the axis of the state-planned economy, framing it as a mechanism that produced spatial segregation and social inequality between rural and urban residents. Although Yu’s does not reference Cheng’s work on hukou, he reaches the same conclusions as Cheng. Unlike Cheng, however, Yu discusses the policy alterations that marked the initial phase of the hukou reforms (in the 1980s and 1990s), arguing that hukou would need further reforms to fulfill the needs of private markets.

Regarding the hukou reforms, Yu was the first researcher, and one of the few, to argue that the hukou reforms are meant solely to accommodate hukou to the reintroduction of the private market economy logic in China. Yu clarifies that the reforms never intended to abolish hukou; on the contrary, they expect to improve the system (2002, 7). Had his work became popular in the West, we probably would not have seen so many research efforts built on the

expectation that the reforms could represent the end or decline of the hukou system (Lu 2008; Chan and Buckingham 2008).

Fei-ling Wang (Wang 2005): Following the trajectory of Cheng and Yu, Fei-ling Wang also confines his analysis of hukou within its structural inequalities, framing hukou as an exclusionary mechanism despite the reforms. Grounded on institutional theory, which is a type of state authority perspective, Wang's study covers hukou from its consolidation in the early years of the Communist administration until the early 2000s, when municipal governments across the country were already revamping the policies attached to hukou. Based on material evidence, Wang's contribution involves detailing how law enforcement agencies and universities used hukou in the early 2000s to police specific populations (ibid., 107-112) and select students (ibid., 139-147). Wang's description of how law enforcement used hukou to monitor target populations revealed a facet of hukou that it still little explored because of the secrecy that surrounds it.

Drawing on a dozen classified documents issued by the Ministry of Public Security, he reports that law enforcement used hukou data to sort populations into risk categories and monitor them. These categories refer to ex-convicts; narcotic users; suspects threatening national security; and people who displayed tendencies to intensify conflicts by seeking revenge or making trouble. Despite having much material evidence about how hukou oppresses specific types of people while liberating others, Wang focuses only on hukou's capability to impose suffering and unfairness upon specific populations. Also, whenever he discusses hukou as a "social control" mechanism, he presents conformity and cohesion only as a denial of freedom. Thus, Wang's overarching argument is not a novelty; it reinforces the ideas of Cheng and Yu. Wang argues that hukou is an institution that organized, divided and excluded populations.

Studies from the Early 2010s

The research accounts from the early 2010s refer to three books on the hukou reforms published by the following authors: Qianyuan Zhang and Xiaozi Chai (2011); Jason Young (2013); and Zhenjing Li and Lishan Zhang (2014). These accounts present similar discussions and findings. Consistent with Yu's observation about the intentions of the hukou reforms discussed earlier, the researchers from the early 2010s draw on the assumption that the State Council did not unlease the hukou reforms to abolish hukou as a system of household registration per se. They view the hukou reforms as a decoupling of privileges, rights, and duties from the hukou classification "non-agricultural;" as an attempt to create a unified social structure regarding rights and duties that include all citizens, regardless of their occupation and residential address. Thus, these studies inquire whether the hukou reforms have been effective in combating the socioeconomic inequality between rural and urban residents. In practice, they analyze hukou-related policies in different cities across the country, primarily the largest and most important cities, and assess their outcome regarding the mitigation of urban-rural socioeconomic inequality and fulfillment of the private market economy's needs.

Discussing Shandong Province, where I base this thesis, **Zhang and Chai** demonstrate that the provincial government finished extending its health insurance scheme to all rural hukou holders in 2008 (2011, 230-231); in the past, health insurance schemes were a "privilege" of urban hukou holders only. Similarly to Zhang and Chai, that is, also measuring the effectiveness of the hukou reforms, **Zhenjing Li and Lishan Zhang** surveyed rural hukou holders across the country about their willingness to move to the urban perimeter of their municipalities. Their

survey revealed that approximately forty percent of the rural hukou participants were not willing to leave their villages for an urban hukou, giving up their land rights. In comparison, thirty percent were unsure about it (2014, 327-328). These percentages would be improbable a few decades earlier when transferring hukou jurisdiction to the city meant the only chance of upward social mobility. They suggest that the reforms are slowly equalizing urban and rural residency regarding the availability of resources and life opportunities.

Writing from a broader perspective, **Jason Young** notes that the hukou reforms have been adapting hukou to the needs of the private economy. Young emphasizes that local governments use hukou to regulate geographic mobility with the goals of promoting economic development and public safety (2013, 65). His study underlines that the goals attached to the hukou system have remained the same over time; the hukou reforms changed only the way that hukou is being used to deliver these goals. Grounded in the reality of Beijing, Shenzhen, and Chongqing, Young's book, "China's Hukou System: Markets, Migrants and Institutional Change," is only the second comprehensive hukou account published in the English language, after Fei-ling Wang's book; as Tianjun Cheng never published his thesis.

Finally, the studies from the early 2010s confirm that governments and hukou subjects are no longer using the binary agricultural and non-agricultural hukou classification in daily life. These classifications have become increasingly devoid of meanings with the increased rural exodus and integration of villages and towns that marked China's urbanization since the Economic Reform and Opening Up Policy, they argue. Instead, local governments distribute resources to populations according to residential status, considering every citizen within their administrative-physical boundaries a "resident," regardless of hukou classification. My fieldwork in Jinan corroborates the views and findings discussed in the hukou studies of the early 2010s.

Thesis Relevance and Structure

This thesis contributes to several fields of research, including hukou studies, surveillance studies, urban studies, and governance studies, as well as to the broader field of China studies, offering innovations in all of them. It includes the following content:

- The first in-depth account on the hukou system that expands current debates to contemplate how hukou operates as a mechanism of population governance, emphasizing the liberating powers of hukou,[3] in addition to its coercive powers;
- the only comprehensive empirical analysis of the policies that form the hukou reforms outside a major city such as Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Chongqing;
- the first known scholarly analysis on hukou that include data collected in a marriage fair in China and the sales office of residential developers, the equivalent of show homes in the West. Methodologically, these sites allowed me to watch and observe how a diverse range of people factored hukou into

[3] Michael R. Dutton's book (Dutton 1992) includes one chapter that discusses hukou as a mechanisms of governance using the governmentality perspective, but it is a brief analysis that relies primarily on secondary data.

their decisions about marriage and housing in real-time, i.e., as they were making those decisions, strengthening my analysis;

- the first analysis on how policies that use hukou information to stipulate apartment size as criteria for migration (i.e., hukou transfer) impact urban dynamics, including real estate development and urbanization;
- the first analysis on how law-enforcement use hukou as a surveillance platform to monitor the online activity of individuals and their families simultaneously;
- a complete description of the Household Register, the document that gives the hukou system a physical form. Although the hukou system is widely known and cited, researchers pay little attention to the data displayed in the Hukou Register and what it reveals;
- reflections on the importance of choice regulation in authoritarian and liberal political regimes, contributing to the literature about governance.

This thesis contains seven chapters, including this introduction and the conclusion. Four of these chapters are independent journal-article style papers, representing the core of this thesis. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical framework that guided this study and my research methods. The core chapters, 3 thru 6, discuss four distinctive yet interdependent and interrelated facets of hukou. In Chapter 3, I discuss the policies and policymaking processes that form the hukou reforms in Jinan. Covering the hukou reforms in the city from its beginning, in 1978, until 2016, this chapter discusses how the hukou policies gradually incorporated individual agency and autonomy in the domain of family and migration.

The following two chapters, 4 and 5, explore individual decision-making processes that involve hukou; they demonstrate how hukou informs and accommodates freedom of choice and allows dealing with responsibilities in Jinan City. Grounded in interviews and other data collected at a marriage fair in Jinan, I discuss how fairgoers and marriage seekers talk of hukou and use hukou to rate potential mates and plan family and resources in Chapter 4. Although marriage has always been a subject of careful negotiation in China, the negotiation never involved having to rationally and instrumentally account for hukou as representative of an assemblage of varying possibilities and consequences, as well as risks. Hukou has always been a limiter of marriage possibilities. Further, it was never up for discussion.

In China, as well as Jinan, marriage means constituting an independent family and obtaining a Household Register, which requires a home. The bulk of residential real estate in Jinan is sold to homebuyers considering marriage. In Chapter 5, I explore how the policies that subjected hukou transference to home purchasing in Jinan until 2017 impacted urban dynamics, produced segregated spaces and spatial inequality in the city. This chapter explores how hukou continues to produce inequality despite its reforms. However, it demonstrates that such inequalities involve patterns that have become more diverse than the old urban-rural dichotomy. In this chapter, I also demonstrate how homebuyers use hukou individual choice as a tool to look natural and to reproduce themselves.

More shortly and decisively, Chapter 6 engages with the surveillance literature to explore the capability of today's hukou to monitor populations and produce subjects, returning to the vision of the Chinese citizen in today's China as a "double-jacketed subject." In this chapter, which has already been published (Siqueira Cassiano 2017), I argue that the "problem" of Chinese surveillance relies not on its sophisticated technology, as is widely-spread by news

media outlets. Instead, I demonstrate that the problem with Chinese surveillance is its capacity to trace the behavior of individuals to the behavior of their family members, treating the individual under surveillance as both a “collective” and an “individual” entity at the same time.

In Chapter 7, I return to the main findings discussed in the previous chapters and suggest that hukou is the principal “infrastructure” mediating the relationship between state and individuals in China. Hukou represents, I infer, the “attentive” surveillance that Michel Foucault referred to in the “Governmentality” essay.

Chapter 2 • Tackling the Hukou Transformation: Object, Questions, Theoretical Approach, and Methods

Introduction

In this chapter, I unveil the backstage of this project; its “how’s” and “why’s.” I essentially order the not so linear and orderly thought and material processes that resulted in this study in a logical way, attempting to create a methodological “roadmap” to explain how I approached hukou. I divided this chapter into three sections. First, I present my understanding of hukou as a research object and discuss my research questions; this discussion includes how my research questions can capture the transformation of hukou as a technique that guides behaviors (Foucault 1979, 2008, 1991c, a). Then, I discuss Michel Foucault’s governmentality” perspective (1991a) as the primary analytical approach that guided the interpretation of my research data and how I supplemented it with Weberian concepts. Such discussion includes remarks on the advantages that the governmentality perspective offered to this study and a section on the applicability of hukou to illiberal contexts. Lastly, in the third section, I describe the ethnographic strategies (Reeves et al. 2008) I used to collect the data. In addition to discussing the data and the data collection process, I briefly reflect on my role as a researcher in this section.

Research Object and Research Questions

In November 2014, when I was deciding how to analyze the hukou changes I had observed before starting my PhD program, I watched a loud young couple having a heated argument over family bills and financial responsibility at a restaurant in Beijing. This experience helped me delineate hukou as a research object and formulate the research questions for this

project. The scene also consolidated my choice of analytical approach, namely Foucault's "governmentality" (Foucault 1991a, c) perspective, which I supplemented with Weber's (1978 [1920]) concepts, and data collection strategy for this study. At some point in the argument, the woman told her husband: "What did I do to myself? I married a peasant (mongmin)!" Her comment implied that, unlike her husband, she was not a peasant, and that her marriage brought upon her some sort of personal disadvantage. "A 'peasant' who can't farm and endure hardship!" The woman shouted, stressing her husband's rural origin. "You are 'crippled' (you maobing)! That's what you are!" She added before leaving the helpless-looking man behind. Although uncomfortable with the situation, I embraced it sociologically. Accepting Peter Berger's invitation (1963), I tried to identify general patterns in the behavior of those particular individuals. In my notebook, I wrote the following thoughts while waiting for my order:

> The woman seemed to use her husband's countryside origin as a source of power, tapping into it to assert her superiority over him. Conflating rurality (formalized in the hukou classification) and social inferiority, she presented herself as socially downgraded, tainted by her husband's identity. Then, she invoked the overlap between hukou classification and occupation that marked Mao's era, which is no longer materially accurate, to imply that he lacked as a human and as a peasant because he did not farm the land, nor did he endure hardship. Her reasoning seems to draw on reminiscences of Mao's era regarding the discursive overlap between hukou classification and occupation and the association of the social category "peasant" with "hard work."

In the restaurant scene, the wife enjoyed a dominant position; she had in her favor a privileged hukou classification and the knowledge it creates. Appearing natural and embodying

legal legitimacy, this knowledge enabled her powers, which she used to liberate herself. She used collective consciousness involving the notion of "peasant" as a "chance" to guide his behavior and feelings during the interaction. For the man, it was a different story. The apparent mismatch between his identity and hukou classification seemed oppressive, if not for him, for those who watched the scene astonished, like me. The oppression resulted not from her tone or body language but from the force she released to make his biography fit hukou-related knowledge and social categories that exclude, discriminate, generalize, and degrade, all at the same time.

The enactment of hukou as a source of two types of power, liberal (for her) and coercive (for him) in such a mundane situation, like a family argument over financial affairs, led me to view it as a dynamic, volatile, and diffusive strategy to guide behaviors and feelings, empowering and disempowering actors simultaneously according to specific agendas and needs. In other words, I understood hukou as a form of power. Such an understanding led me to connect hukou with Foucault's concepts and analytical framework on power and governmentality. It also helped me narrow the research objective of studying hukou and its transformation beyond its coercive powers, which supplements the current hukou literature.

Upon reflecting on the restaurant scene and observing other mundane situations where individuals or organizations engaged hukou and its signifiers to guide people's behaviors, I narrowed my objective to investigate the transformation of the role that hukou plays in population governing into the following research questions:

1) How do hukou subjects view hukou and themselves in relation to hukou?

2) What sorts of "knowledge" does hukou attach to its subjects? "Knowledge" refers to ideas, formations, representations, understandings that are taken for granted and counted as truth; and

3) How has hukou changed as a "technology of government" over time, between 1958 and today, but especially since the beginning of the hukou reforms in the late 1970s? What changed? What remained the same? As I mentioned in the previous chapter, "technology of government" refers to power formations or power strategies that governments use to try to extract compliance (i.e., obedience) from individuals, governing individuals, guiding their behaviors (Foucault 1979, 2008, 1991c, a).

Supplementing each other, questions one and two explore how hukou subjects view themselves, use hukou categories to construct their identities, and how they are viewed and categorized by others. From a bird's eye view, these questions are meant to capture the work hukou does in classifying and ordering social interactions, populations, and broader society to accomplish governance. These questions allowed me to explore the new capabilities of hukou as an "information infrastructure," as per Star and Ruthleder's discussion (1996), and thus analyze hukou's transformation. Presenting today's technologies of government as "information infrastructures," Star and Ruthleder (ibid.) described such infrastructures as high-tech (e.g., digitized or virtual) or low-tech (e.g., documentary) knowledge systems that have the power to order, classify the world and enforce behaviors with "formal" and "informal" standards. I understand the concepts of formal and informal, referring to standards, in Weber's terms. The former means laws, policies, i.e., norms that find their legitimacy in legal-rational authority,

while the latter refers to norms that find their legitimacy in the authority of charisma or traditions (Weber 1978 [1920], 215-216). Exemplars of information infrastructure range from simple "smart" drawers with dividers that, according to Ikea, "bring order to your kitchen," to totalizing and disgraceful regimes of classification like those used in apartheid in South Africa.

With research questions one and two, I intended to give visibility to hukou, to the suffering and advantages it silences, empowers, omits, neglects, and promotes. My overarching goal was to undo the invisibility that surrounds today's hukou, which is commonly spread through the recurrent idea that hukou "is no longer important." This idea represents the most common initial reaction or response to general conversations and inquiries about hukou in Jinan, even though everyone can list hukou-regulated resources, standards, and behaviors and are thus aware of hukou's significance. The third question represents an attempt to summarize the previous questions and their findings analytically. It contextualizes the hukou information infrastructure—this classification system that orders people and the world—as a tool of power and emphasizes the powers that are inherent in the way that individuals view, call, count, label, understand, and present themselves and others. Lastly, the third question calls for a historical understanding of hukou, allowing me to analyze the contributions as a "Chinese characteristic" of China's economy. When I drafted these questions, I used the expression "behavior guiding strategy" in the place of the concept "technology of governance" in question number three, as I had not yet decided on the theoretical approach I was going to use in this project. It was when I decided that Foucault's concept matched the data that I revised the question, replacing the original expression with "technology of governance" for accuracy and cohesion.

Broad and comprehensive in their approach to power, the research questions listed above enabled my study to accomplish the following objectives:

- Address hukou simultaneously as a coercive and creative form of power;
- examine the governing powers of hukou from the perspective of the state's authority (i.e., government bureaucracy), other forms of authority embodied in formal or informal organizations, and hukou subjects —those who use hukou powers to distinguish themselves and others, form identities, convey interests, and resist unwelcome forms of domination; and
- treat hukou classification, hukou jurisdiction, and the many other social categories that rely on hukou to produce knowledge about populations, including the knowledge that individuals produce of themselves, as forms of power.

The research questions that guided this study allowed me to articulate the initial impression and limited evidence I had that hukou also "liberated" its subjects somehow. They also allowed me to collect more data, now in a more systematic way, and test my initial ideas about hukou. Lastly, those questions facilitated the examination of how hukou functions from the perspective of state and extra-state actors in any type of social interaction, involving individuals, state and extra-state organizations, and both individuals and organizations. Thus, they gave me the capability to overcome the limitations of the state authority perspective in this study, which is focused primarily on how the state used hukou as an exclusionary power. With those three research questions in mind, I began the search for a theoretical approach.

Theoretical Approach

The Governmentality Perspective

I initially planned on theoretically grounding this study in Max Weber's scholarship. I thought that Weber's analyses of power as a force that guides behaviors in social interactions (Weber 1978 [1920], 53) through violence or voluntary compliance (ibid., 943) was enough for me to explain most hukou changes I observed in daily life. However, after carefully examining Michel Foucault's writings (Foucault 2008, 1979; Hindess 1996; Foucault 1991a, b; Foucault and Gordon 1980; Foucault 1991c, 2007, 2003, 1982), I realized that both Weber and Foucault share numerous similarities, including a similar research agenda, complementing each other. Then, I decided to use the theories of both scholars, supplementing each other's ideas and concepts. Before discussing the concepts and ideas I used from each scholar, a few comments on their similarities are necessary, especially because these similarities result from my somewhat unpopular, albeit common interpretation of Weber's scholarship (Szakolczai 1998; Colliot-Thélène 2009; Bendix 1960). I start with Foucault, as his ideas are more prevalent in my analysis.

I view Foucault's research agenda as a quest to understand the different "modes" of power that subject individuals. He was interested in how cultural forms, laws, institutions, and knowledge systems (e.g., systems that sort and classify populations) oppress and liberate individuals, shaping their identities and creating their individualities (Foucault 1982, 777). Despite his interest in power, Foucault never clearly and concisely defined power as a concept (Szakolczai 1998; Colliot-Thélène 2009). He thought (Foucault 1982, 777-779) that by defining power, he would be fixing power as an "object," which he considered inappropriate because the nature and content of power are mobile, elusive, with unclear criteria and standards. Nonetheless,

Foucault offered numerous “clues” to how power operates and appears in society, especially in his lectures at the Collège de France.

Foucault’s clues suggest that power is an action (i.e., is exercised) that guides or regulates people and their behaviors somehow. For instance, in “The Birth of Biopolitics” (1978-1979), Foucault discussed the government as “a public power that has to regulate the behavior of subjects” (Foucault 2008, 7). Many pages later, discussing the legitimacy of the law, he presented power as “government,” not as an institution, but as the idea of guiding actions (ibid., 38). In the article “The Subject and Power” (1982), Foucault illustrated how power functions in society in several ways. He presented power as a force that acts on individuals, attaching them to their own identity (Foucault 1982, 780-781) and a technique that categorizes and produces knowledge about individuals, marking them with their uniqueness. In the same article, Foucault also counted the knowledge (or “truths”) that people create about themselves, as well as the antagonistic practices people experience as power (ibid.). Regarding the idea of “antagonistic” experiences, Foucault added that they attach individuals to their identities, as they fight against the imposition of specific knowledge regimes. In the same source, Foucault also presented power as a “conduct” that “leads” the conduct of others in coercive or liberating ways (ibid., 789). Additional examples of power as guidance abound throughout Foucault’s writings and lectures. Based on Foucault’s clues, the exercise of power is contextualized in social interactions. For instance, he suggested that the exercise of power—be it coercive or liberating, planned or unplanned—intends to regulate the “field of action of others,” that is, the “interaction” (ibid., 790). Nonetheless, Foucault is not completely clear on this matter, or at least not as clear as Weber, as it will become clear in a few paragraphs.

To trace power in society, Foucault searched and researched “mechanisms” or “tactics” that convey power, calling them interchangeably “technologies of power” or “technologies of government.” Examples of technologies of government vary from devices used to regulate the individual body, rendering it “docile,” as chastity belts, all the way to forms of knowledge that regulate life processes, such as reproduction, which are situated in people’s minds (Foucault 2003, 242-250). In sum, any mechanism that conveys guidance or guides behaviors is a technology of government. Technologies of government usually emerge from a series of local conditions and specific interests; they do not have a single and clear motivation, agenda, although they later can be used to accomplish clear and specific goals (Foucault and Gordon 1980, 159). Also, these technologies vary according to the type of power they convey, targeting people as individual bodies or as a collective of body, a population.

In “Discipline and Punish,” his most popular work, Foucault presented power as two distinctive types, distinguishing them by their visibility in society (Foucault 1979, 187-188). The first type, called “sovereign power,” refers to a form of power that is visible and discontinued; it acts on the human body, adjusting it to a variety of specific interests. Such interests include making itself more powerful and visible. The second type, called “disciplinary power,” refers to a form of power that is more subtle, invisible, and continuous; it acts on the body (and mind) to make it singular, unique, using processes that include quantification, classification, segmentation, and separation. It does so for the sake of governing, not necessarily to make itself stronger. In “Society Must Be Defended” (2003), a collection of Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France (1975-76), he discussed those two forms of power again, suggesting a clear distinction between the two according to their intention or meaning. In those lectures, Foucault switched his terminology, using the term “disciplinary power” to describe what he had earlier

presented as “sovereign power,” while using the expression “new non-disciplinary power” to describe “disciplinary power.” Nonetheless, Foucault added that disciplinary power could be engaged to capture and break the “multiplicity” of humans as species, transforming this multiplicity into individualities that can be effectively regulated (ibid., 241-243) through alignment, serialization, and surveillance of bodies. As I interpret Foucault’s writings, sovereign power does not account for people’s intellectual component; it is not intended at regulating people’s minds (just bodies), whereas disciplinary power is intended primarily at regulating people’s minds. Disciplinary forms of power tend to rest on voluntary compliance, while sovereign power tends to rest on coercive compliance. Historically, Foucault positioned sovereign power or “anatomo-politics” (in the sense of concern with the body structure) as typical of the eighteenth century (ibid., 243) and disciplinary power as typical of today’s society, calling it “biopolitics” (ibid.). To distinguish sovereign power from disciplinary power, Foucault seemed to have considered and analyzed the intention of power, as he presented sovereign power as intended at “man-as-living-being” and non-disciplinary power as intended at “man-as-species” (ibid., 242). In doing so, he ended up reproducing Weber’s way of analyzing power, which is also based on the interpretation of intentions (Weber 1978 [1920], 4), albeit in an unsystematic and implied way.

Furthermore, given that sovereign and disciplinary power cannot exist concretely in a pure form, as it is impossible to separate body from the mind (mind is body and body is mind), I can only assume these two forms of power are analytical constructs or “ideal types” in the Weberian sense of the word (Weber 1978 [1920], 4). Consciously or not, as well as in an unsystematic and implied way, Foucault seemed to have aligned his approach to power with Weber’s way of analyzing power, which is grounded in ideal types. However, the similarities I

outline involving Foucault's and Weber's ways to approach power, which includes the understanding of power as an action that guides behaviors (discussed below), are usually not included in the literature that compares Foucault and Weber (Wickham and Kendall 2007; O'Neill 1986; Szakolczai 1998; Colliot-Thélène 2009). I suppose scholars interested in Weber and Foucault have not explored such similarities because their interpretation of Weber's scholarship has been remarkably influenced by structural-functionalist approaches and the legacy of American Sociologist Talcott Parsons, who led the first translation of Weber's writings into the English language. In other words, they do not trained in analyzing Weber's symbolic interactionism as a theory on "soft" power. Parsons's analyses emphasized the instances where Weber drew institutional examples to illustrate power relations. Thus, Weber's ideas tend to be known and applied only to explain the power that emanates from an "institutionalized power system" (Parsons 1963), which are often coercive.

While Foucault was concerned with how power forms individuals in a broader and somewhat loose way, Weber's research agenda entailed understanding why and how individuals comply with and obey power. In contrast with Foucault, Weber grounded his intellectual efforts in encapsulating power conceptually, interpreting its meanings, and its sources of legitimacy (Weber 1978 [1920], 53-54). He defined power as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite residence, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (Weber 1978 [1920], 53). As the idea of "carrying will" entails an action, Weber viewed power as an "exercise," a "practice" that guides behaviors, similarly to Foucault but before him. In fact, Weber treated power as a "social action," that is, an action intended at others, in which actors attach overt or covert subjective meanings to their behavior and/or identity while taking into account the behavior of others (Weber 1978 [1920], 4).

Further, Weber, like Foucault (Foucault 1982, 790; Foucault and Lotringer 2007, 71), incorporated the notion of "probably" into his conception of power, which emphasizes that the practice of power requires the existence of freedom; actors and subjects must be free to act and comply (or not). Despite clearly defining power, Weber acknowledged that power, as a concept, is sociologically "amorphous."

Simply put, power is amorphous because it can take many shapes and forms because individuals have numerous qualities and experience numerous circumstances that can put them in a position to impose their will in daily life situations (Weber 1978 [1920], 53). Wishing to add precision to his analyses of power, Weber distinguished "power" from "domination." While Weber's definition of power emphasized the power attributes (i.e., power capacity) of the actor acting (i.e., carrying the action) (Véras 2014, 259), Weber's definition of domination emphasized the perspective of power subjects, that is their obedience, submission to power. Specifically, Weber defined domination as "probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (Weber 1978 [1920], 53). Furthermore, Weber complemented the concept of domination with the concept of discipline. He defined "discipline" as "habituation" to obedience (ibid.), adding that discipline refers to "uncritical" and "unresisting" "mass" obedience. Thus, he uses discipline to add a collective dimension to power. The idea of discipline in Weber corresponds to the idea of disciplinary power in Foucault, that is, a power that people comply with somewhat voluntarily.

Based on Weber's analyses of power and domination, actors comply with power for two "diametrically contrasting" reasons (Weber 1978 [1920], 943), which are essentially types of compliance. They comply "by virtue of authority" (i.e., duty to obey) and "by virtue of a constellation of interests" (i.e., self-interest) (ibid.). The boundary between these two types of

power is never clear (ibid.); people often comply for both reasons, in addition to habituation (i.e., discipline). Compliance by virtue of authority implies a belief in the legitimacy of the action/power; this legitimacy can be of three types: Rational-legal, traditional, and charismatic. In addition to classifying obedience based on legitimacy in terms of ideal types, Weber indicated that researchers trying to understand how power extracts obedience from its subjects should look for the sources that legitimize power; those sources can help explain how power operates. Although Foucault never wrote a clear recipe for researchers to identify and analyze power, he aligned with Weber on the importance of examining the sources that make power legitimate. Foucault's ideas on how power becomes legitimate is especially clear in his lectures from 1977-78, titled "Security, Territory, Population." In those lectures, Foucault discussed obedience to sovereignty, displaying raison d'état as a source of legitimacy for rational-legal forms of power (Foucault 2007, 341-358). Regardless of this additional alignment between Weber and Foucault involving power and legitimacy, Weber's theorizing of compliance can be especially useful to researchers of power because it accommodates both voluntary and coercive compliance. Also, it embraces the idea that compliance, voluntary or coercive, can become ingrained in humans. Notwithstanding their many similarities, Weber and Foucault contextualized their research in dramatically different events.

Weber was more concerned about understanding the power formations that characterized capitalism, with an emphasis on patrimonial and liberal capitalism. The power formations that interested Weber the most were bureaucracy, the market (as an institution), the city (as a form of domination), and law. Thus, although researchers can extrapolate Weber's concepts, making them applicable to broader historical contexts, Weber designed most of his concepts to specific realities that appeared or were altered with capitalism. In contrast, Foucault focused on

overarching transformations of power, which he analyzed from the perspective of specific sites (e.g., madness, sexuality, and prison reform), transcending any given form of economic organization (Foucault 1979, 1991a, 1982). Also, Foucault's analytical framework established a clear link between the governing of state and governing of individuals through the notion of "governmentality." I refer to governmentality as a "notion" because Foucault never clearly, concretely, and concisely defined this idea. Instead, he described it in a somewhat loose way throughout some of his writings and lectures (Foucault 2008, 1991a). "Governmentality" refers to the understanding that governing the state is a continuation of governing individuals (Foucault 1991a). According to this notion, to govern means using "tactics" that link the behavior of individuals to the needs of governing, maximize the utility of citizens, and facilitate the management of life according to everyone's convenience (Foucault 1991a, 95; 2008, 36; 1982, 781). Such tactics can be expressed in disciplinary and anti-disciplinary mechanisms, but they are usually reflected in anti-disciplinary mechanisms that are detached from the sovereignty and draw voluntary compliance. Foucault argued that governmentality had been slowly spreading among state and extra-state domains in Europe and elsewhere since the eighteenth century, referring to it as the "governmentalization" of the state (Foucault 1991a, 103). Such a process of governmentalization is not typical of liberal democracies, as one may think. Research inspired by Foucault (Hindess 1996) indicates that every type of political structure—i.e., socialism, fascism, liberalism, and neoliberalism—combines individualizing and totalizing tactics of government that valorize individuals and impose upon behaviors targeting the "common good."

Weber's and Foucault's analyses of power helped me to explain hukou as a form of power that happens in social interactions, governing its subjects, including the knowledge they have and produce about themselves and others. Specifically, from Weber's scholarship, I used

his conceptualization of power, domination, and discipline, not that I applied or articulated these concepts in this study. Instead, I used these concepts to better capture and distinguish the instances in which hukou was used to carry out specific wills, even against the resistance of its subjects, from those in which hukou dominated, being obeyed in a more uncritical or automatic way. Weber's ideas on power and legitimacy also incentivized to present "regionalism" and "bloodline" (Fei 2012) as important traditional sources of legitimacy for hukou. Weber was also an important reminder of hukou's "institutional" legitimacy, which derives from the state-bureaucracy, as well as to explain those interview in which participants endorsed or justified hukou a means to achieve specific population goals (e.g., "manage" [guanli] China' "large" population). Furthermore, Weber, with his theorization of social action, led me to concentrate my analytical efforts on the situations where hukou operated as social action; that is situations in which actors attached hukou to meanings that accounted for the behavior of others and were thereby oriented to others, all to increase the sociological relevance of my analysis.

Meanwhile, Foucault's analytical distinction between power and technology of government, which I explained earlier, helped me to articulate those different yet interconnected instances in which hukou represents the following: A clear tool that conveys power (i.e., a household registration system), acting on people and shaping their behavior in liberating and/or coercive ways; and a force that actors engage during interactions to carry their will. Also, Foucault's analyses of power helped me to analytically link hukou to broader governance. Governmentality offered an entry-point for the analysis of the transformation of hukou as a technology of government in a context marked by different political structures and economic organizations. In other words, flexible in its understanding of power and alert to historical changes, Foucault's approach to governing allowed me to approach today hukou's continuities

and discontinuities regarding the roles it plays in comparison with the state-planned economy period. His approach to governing, which includes viewing governing as an analytical intersection between state authority and individuation, allowed me to analyze hukou both as a formal (i.e., law) and informal form of power that is used simultaneously by the state bureaucracy and individuals.

Once I selected the analytical framework and the concepts that helped me analyze and explain my research data, I revised my research questions, adjusting their format to match with Foucault's and Weber's scholarship. I also designed four analytical categories that facilitated and improved the understanding of hukou with the selected framework. The categories were "quantification," "classification," "qualification," and "visibility." These categories functioned as potential sites or dimensions of hukou transformation. They also reflected specific preliminary modes through which hukou regulates individuals. I designed these categories based primarily on my previous knowledge of hukou, but I also used Foucault's discussions on power as a practice that categorizes populations.

Quantification reflects how hukou is used to count populations in specific spaces for government purposes. Classification refers to how individuals are formally classified and labeled according to hukou. This also includes non-judicial classifications derived hukou, such as "blind flows," "floating population," and "peasant worker," referring to migrant inflows and rural migrant populations. Qualification examines how hukou produces knowledge about individuals, knowledge of the self, and of the Other. This knowledge is used for categorization, distinction, identification, stigmatization, discrimination, and oppression (Jenkins 2000). Visibility, which includes its opposite invisibility, reveals how embedded hukou is in Chinese society, informing its powers to guide behaviors without being noticed, in a normalized and disciplinary way, in

Weber's sense. Thus, the category "visibility" informs the other categories that I used to grasp hukou. I treated these analytical categories as "points" that I had to check for while collecting the interview data (see Appendix 2 – Interview Guide) and analyzing documentary sources.

Chinese Society and the Foucauldian Analytical Framework

Although I am not the first researcher to use Foucault's analytical framework to study topics related to Chinese society, it is still somewhat unpopular among China scholars. In addition to the work of Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin A. Winckler (2005), Lisa Hoffman (2010), and Michael R. Dutton (1992), discussed in the previous chapter, there are only about a dozen prominent researchers relying on the Foucauldian perspective in the field of China Studies. Most of them have their work represented in Elaine Jefferey's edited book "China's Governmentalities—Governing change, changing government" (2009). The studies in Jefferey's book converge around the argument that the Chinese population is undergoing a process of "governmentalization" (Foucault 1991a) that involves the dispersal of power within China's social fabric.

According to Foucault, when societies become "governmentalized," the state incorporates the population's active consent and willingness to participate in their government into its governance style (Foucault 1991a). Foucault argued, in the early 1980s, that the governmentalization of society, rather than the statization of society, had become the main "problem" of society (ibid.). By "problem," he meant that the techniques driving citizens to comply with governing voluntarily had become the primary site of political struggle and contestation. Thus, researchers relying on Foucault's approach explore the governmentalization of the Chinese population in various domains of life such as migration, language, labor market,

education, the environment, community, religion, and sexual life and health (Jeffreys 2009) . Among researchers who use Foucault's analytical framework, Feng Xu, Gary Sigley, David Bray, Ann Anagnost, and Terry E. Woronov deserve attention because they discuss topics related to hukou such as migration, the understanding of governance, communities.

Xu (2009), when examining rural exodus, argued that migrants are being transformed, through various techniques, which includes alterations in hukou, from subjects of exclusion into subjects of citizenship. Based on her research, migrants are starting to be governed as subjects who are entitled to and counted in the urban space). Sigley (2006b), analyzing government documents, argued that China's new approach to governing could also be verified in language use. For instance, the Chinese word "jihua," which means planning, usually state-planning, has often been replaced for "guihua" in government documents, which also means planning but in the sense of organizing, measuring, and putting in an order. In another article, Sigley (Sigley 2006a) discussed the use of the word "governance" ("zhili"). He pointed that such a term is commonly used in official discourses about "socialist market economy" or "socialism with Chinese characteristics" to explain that China's economic opening does not imply a retreat of the state but only a new form of state regulation. With a focus on material and discursive practices around "community building," Bray (2009), inspired by Nikolas Rose's work (1999), discussed how communities and volunteerism had become a source and a target of governing, following the trend seen in Western societies and many developing countries in the Western side of the hemisphere.

Studying the Chinese idea of "human quality" ("suzhi"), Anagnost (2004) framed this as an important conduit of governing in today's China. She argued that contemporary techniques that rely on the notion of human quality to extract compliance from populations to standards of

social distinction are grounded on private interests. However, her research highlighted that today's techniques of government embody collective signifiers of the Mao era, which is the case with "human quality." In today's China, the body of the rural migrant and the body of the urban resident is still regarded as having low and high quality, but people rely on human quality as a form of distinction to achieve private goals, in contrast with collective goals, as used to be the case.

Also focused on the notion of human quality, Woronov (2009) showcased the institutional reinforcement of "education for quality" in the post-Mao era, which became an educational policy in China in 1999, also concerned with achieving and conveying private interests in the job market. Grounded in the case of a Beijing school, Woronov demonstrated that schools in China emphasize a series of rating grids on children's moral character, attitude, behavior, and willingness to act in morally acceptable ways. She argued that such rating grids represent a major educational strategy to transform bodies into flows of material inscriptions, data, and knowledge (about self and others). Woronov's research suggests that the Chinese policy on education for quality functions as a "surveillance assemblage" (Haggerty and Ericson 2000), transforming children into "data doubles" abstracted from their spatial settings and separated into a series of discrete flows.

The use of Foucault's framework to analyze Chinese social reality requires a few observations on its applicability to societies classified as "illiberal" and its unpopularity among researchers of modern China. Although most Foucauldians ground their analysis on the regulation of freedom and governance in post-war liberal democracies, the most prominent interpreters of Foucault's scholarship support the application of Foucault's analytical framework

to any type of society; they contest the theoretical segregation of liberal and illiberal forms of power.

Mitchell Dean (Dean 2002), for example, argued that non-liberal forms of governmentality coexist with and include liberal forms of governing and vice-versa. Even the most illiberal governments include actions that focus on people's welfare and rely on voluntary compliance. In the same line of argumentation, the most liberal governments occasionally promote the repression of specific social groups to safeguard the wellbeing of the majority or specific private interest (ibid.). Barry Hindess (1996), another prominent interpreter of Foucault's writings, pointed out that China, the ex-USSR, and Germany under the Nazi administration deliberately set out to prevent individual autonomy and freedom in certain aspects or situations of life, while actively promoting such values in others.

In another essay, Hindess (2001) reminded us that the "government of unfreedom" played an important role in the colonialist policies that Western European nations deployed across the world. Most of these policies protected and defended individual liberty within their primary national territories and populations, while oppressing individual liberty in colonial territories. Also, liberal and illiberal governing rationalities not only co-exist but also share several characteristics. They both approach the authority of the state as a form of calculated supervision that needs to optimize social forces and resources. They also have the goal of improving the population welfare (Jeffreys 2009, 3) . The main difference between "liberal" and "illiberal" governing rationalities lies in how such rationalities pair "individuating" and "totalizing" techniques and practices. This line of argumentation, however, does not mean that the Chinese governmentality enjoys the same level of individuation as Western

governmentalities (Sigley 1996, 2006a)—at least not yet. Thus, there is no material evidence that technically prevents researchers from using Foucault's framework to analyze Chinese society.

The main and perhaps only obstacle that researchers face in using Foucault's analytical toolkit refers to habituation and acceptance; the field of China Studies was founded around the centrality and popularity of grand theories. Topics related to China's adoption of private market logics and opening up are especially marked by institutionalist theories of power (Nee et al. 1989; Nee and Opper 2012; Nee and Mozingo 1983; Walder 1996). Thus, as of today, researchers using Foucault's scholarship still represent a small (but growing) minority. Nonetheless, Foucault's framework also offers advantages.

Foucault-inspired approaches usually refrain from including moral judgments about freedom and different forms of power in their theoretical constructs. The application of Foucault's ideas to the Chinese reality can potentially tear apart common prejudices against China's political regime, which is usually analyzed as illiberal, violent, and repressive. Furthermore, Foucault-inspired investigations can expand the notion of power, focusing not only on *what* and *how* power denies but also on *what* and *how* power creates sociability and subjectivities in the context of social interactions.

Lastly, despite adopting a Foucauldian perspective to analyze the hukou's transformation, I acknowledge that such a perspective cannot explain several aspects of such a transformation. For instance, it is not effective in analyzing and explaining the following topics: How local governments use hukou to regulate the productivity of different labor markets, including different types of surplus (i.e., absolute and relative) and labor exploitation in general; the correlation between the hukou reforms and China's huge increase in labor productivity expressed in the number of dollars produced per hour worked since the Mao era; the correlation between

China's demand for raw materials, especially coal and iron, hukou, and urbanization. To analyze such topics, I would need to rely on Marxist theories, and other institutionalist theories focused on macroeconomy and labor markets. The selection of Foucault's analytical framework also meant for me a continual intellectual provocation and opportunity to keep attentive to the aspects of hukou that Foucault's framework cannot analyze.

Fieldwork in Jinan

Data Collection Process

The data for this study come from interviews, observations, policy documents, news articles, and a series of miscellaneous sources related to hukou. Such miscellaneous sources include the following items: government propaganda; real estate advertisement; documents collected at a marriage fair; forms, posts, and instructions collected at police stations and various government agencies. To gather these data, I relied on ethnographic fieldwork (Reeves et al. 2008), which consisted of the following processes:

- Observing and documenting hukou-related social interactions, behaviors, perceptions, perspectives that occurred with individuals and groups that I met or was a member;
- Formally interviewing a wide sample of participants on hukou affairs and further pursuing topics that were relevant to them. When interviewing, I also observed the participants feelings and underlying goals regarding hukou, taking note of them (see Appendix 2 – Interview Guide);

- Holding informal conversations about hukou. When doing so, I observed whether hukou-related patterns emerging in casual conversations matched those of formal interviews, which was often the case;
- Searching and collecting documentary data that could contextualize the experiences and perspectives documented through interviews and inform about hukou in more general terms. Such data included statistical information, news articles, and policy documents; and
- Considering my thoughts and perspectives on the study topic.

In a nutshell, I worked from empirical evidence towards theory, not the other way around; I followed data from different sources over time(e.g., interview accounts, news articles, statistics, policy documents, and government documents) and observed the theoretical issues they presented. When dealing with my research data, I paid special attention to the power dynamics it revealed concerning hukou by examining the data considering the four categories outlined earlier. Then, I interpreted and generalized such cases (i.e., the data) as cases of "hukou power" by applying Foucault's governmentality perspective. Methodologically, Foucault's governmentality approach combined with ethnographic procedures helped me to "execute" a sociological analysis that articulates the study of mundane social practices (e.g., how people view hukou and how hukou influence people) with the study of formal governance mechanisms and rationalities (e.g., the Hukou Register, the Hukou Law, and the many policies that were attached to hukou) (Dean 2015).

I relied on ethnographic research to conduct this study for two main reasons. First, I received funding from the Confucius Institute to stay in China long enough to immerse myself in

Jinan, reactivating my connection with the city, its people, and my networks. Second, ethnographic data collection processes offered me the possibility to gather holistic insights into the diverse ways hukou functions as a form of power, as well as their transformations. They also gave me the geographical, temporal, and analytical flexibility (Babbie and Roberts 2018) I needed to follow hukou clues in time and space. Practically, those processes allowed me to travel within the Municipality of Jinan searching and researching different aspects of hukou in archives, libraries, marriage fairs, police stations, real estate developments, among many other sites, all under the same research project.

Interviews: Populations, Events, Sites

Using a relatively unstructured but direct, on the spot, opportunistic strategy, I formally interviewed two-hundred and fifty individuals from the following social groups: traditional Jinan residents from the urban core; villagers from the vicinities of the city, some of whom commuted to the urban core daily, while others conveniently rented a room downtown; rural and urban migrants from other municipalities, with and without a Jinan hukou and a home in the city; members of the "floating population" (liudong renkou) staying in shacks by their work site; and post-secondary students of all origins but mostly people from elsewhere in the province who want to return home upon graduating. My records also include interviews with representatives of specific organizations or activities, who I called "key informants." I chose these participants strategically (Marc-Adelard 1957, 689), expecting that they could reveal how hukou impacted certain domains of life, like policing, family formation, mortgage, dwelling, health care, social insurance, and pension, among others. Simply put, I used these sources to obtain three types of

data: definitional, objective, and judgmental (ibid., 691). The group of informants includes police officers, registrar officers (at the university), bank clerks, marriage brokers, real estate agents, hospital administrators, train station security personnel, village heads, social welfare agency staff, and public shelter staff. Interview questions for key informants explored the relationship between their professional activity and hukou, especially if and how hukou influenced the service they provided and clientele they dealt with regularly. Lastly, I informally talked about hukou with hundreds of people in a diverse range of places in the Municipality of Jinan, but I only kept consistent and detailed notes containing participant identifying information of formal interviews.

All formal interviews followed the ethics protocols approved by the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Office (ID Pro00051675), which involved clearly introducing myself, my research, and my intentions to potential participants, as well as obtaining their formal consent to contribute to my project.

Drawing on my knowledge of Chinese society, especially previous research experiences under the supervision of Shandong University professors, as well as literature on the topic (Bin and Hong 2006; Lin 2018), I opted to rely on oral consent, instead of written, to conduct this research. My experiences have been that people in China, especially older generations, can get suspicious and distrustful about signing documents and producing records about themselves that are intended for personal use. An exception applies when the signing event takes place at an institution or official situation. In China, there is a common understanding that the government is the only entity with legitimacy and authority to collect information and produce records about populations. For instance, without being notarized, documents issued by private entities have limited, if any, value. This situation is also true for audio recording. My discussions with

professors and other graduate students at Shandong University confirmed that people are increasingly comfortable about participating in research projects and facilitating records of their lives and opinions. Despite the change noticed in the past decade, people still tend to be self-conscious when discussing government-related topics, especially those viewed as potentially "sensitive," like the hukou system. In such cases, participants often omit or avoid expressing personal feelings and opinions. Thus, consent forms issued by students, who are considered economically and socially vulnerable, are usually meaningless and thus unnecessary. Upon obtaining oral consent from the participants, I carried out the interview. However, complying with ethics protocols, I kept records of how they indicated their consent to contribute to my research.

Most interviews happened on the spot and lasted about thirty minutes on average. I only booked interviews with participants who were old acquaintances of mine or who were introduced through a common friend or acquittance. The cases that involved booking lasted much longer, from one to four hours, and they often entailed some specific focus on hukou. These interviews exposed the underbelly of hukou, such as instances from the 1980s and 1990s where the police chased and beat people for not having a "temporary permit" (zanzhu zheng) to live in Jinan; or having to hide from family-planning inspectors in the wardrobe to help their parents avoid the heavy fines for breaching the One-Child policy. Interviews with key informants happened in a similar fashion. I visited their organizations and asked to talk to someone who could help me with my research and clarify questions that I had about hukou, also on the spot. In most cases, I had to return several times before I could finally get hold of the right person, which is normal and expected in China, but those trips paid off; I talked about hukou with numerous people who obtained services from those organizations.

Most interviews followed a consistent pattern. They started with my interlocutors taking an interest in me and my trajectory, wanting to know more about my background and the "reason" why I speak Chinese fluently, and with a Jinan accent. After briefly outlining my personal biography, I emphasized that I was a Shandong University alumna doing my PhD in Canada and returning to Jinan to study the hukou reforms. In most cases, they started talking about hukou before I could outline the ethics protocols. In all such cases, I used the first opportunity I had to interrupt them and formalize their participation in my project. While handing them my student cards from both Shandong University and the University of Alberta and a flyer containing a summary of my research and my contact information (Appendix 1-Flyer), I requested their consent to include their information in my project, declaring that I would keep all identifying information confidential. Upon obtaining their consent, I pulled out my notebook and started taking notes of their comments, as well as asking specific questions. In those few cases that there was no reaction to my interest in hukou, I provoked one with questions about their background, including hukou. With regards specifically to key informants, I asked them the questions I wanted to know after introducing myself. None of the interviews involved payment or material reward (e.g., gifts) to the participants.

Regarding the flyer, it is noteworthy that, with few exceptions, research participants did not want to keep my flyer, returning it to me or unintentionally disposing of it. Many participants seemed to believe that checking my student cards was enough to verify my background and intention. For instance, a man in his 60s told me the following while returning my flyer: "You are a student, aren't you?! I don't need this." Another participant, a woman in her 40s, told me upon my insistence that she keep the flyer: "No need! Shandong University would never host you if you were here to do something 'harmful' to us," suggesting that my official affiliation

with Shandong University, which provided me the student card, was crucial to facilitate data collection. Some participants were critical of my ethics protocols, calling into question the legitimacy of "foreign" institutions to ensure research ethics outside their jurisdictions. A male professional in the oil refining business told me the following while laughing at my flyer: "How am I going to call a 'foreign university' if you do something wrong here? I don't speak a foreign language. If you do 'bad' things here, I will complain to Shandong University instead; they know who you are!" With different concerns in mind other than the simple need to verify my background, many other participants refused to keep the flyer to demonstrate that they trusted me and were willing to establish a connection (i.e., "guanxi"), which I confirmed at the end of the interview when they asked me for my WeChat contact. These participants seemed to believe that keeping the flyer meant keeping our relationship unfamiliar and unfriendly. I also experienced situations in which participants refused to keep the flyer to show respect for me and my research. For instance, several participants told me to keep the flyer to "save up printing money," following up with comments that acknowledged the "hardships" of student life in general and assumed that I had "eaten bitterness" (chicu nailao) (i.e., experienced difficulties) to gain the knowledge I have of Chinese society and language. These comments conflated respect and trust with care for my economic wellbeing. Others simply said: "I don't want it! I trust you." Initially, I "forced" participants to keep the flyer by refusing to take it back, which compromised the quality of the interaction and interview, making it feel mechanical and meaningless. As I advanced in my data collection, I became flexible about it, offering the flyer as an optional source of information in case they wanted to know more about my research. Also, my observations and experiences with the flyer and its ineffectiveness reinforced my choice for opting out of written consent procedures.

Drawing on the rationale that led me to work with oral consent, I did not audio record the interviews. To make the interview casual and familiar, I drew on lessons learned when I did my master's research and avoided using "Western-style," thicker, fancier notebooks. I took interview notes on the same type of notebook that Chinese students commonly use in class at Shandong University, a thin, saddle-stitched, little booklet. Upon finishing the interview, I supplemented the interview data with my comments and questions that I wanted to explore in the next interview.

About three months into fieldwork, I stopped taking notes of the interview data on the spot. I felt more knowledgeable about hukou and the patterns that were emerging from the interview data, and less afraid that I would forget important details. Instead, I audio recorded the key aspects of interview data with my own voice shortly after the interview event. Audio recording myself reporting the interview data improved my research efficiency as I could quickly reproduce the phrases, expressions, and tone used by the participant to discuss hukou. Those audio records also included my comments and observations. I typed my notes and transcribed my audio files in the evenings.

In the first two months of data collection (from mid-August to mid-October 2015), I let the physical boundary of the municipality set the criterion for the selection of interview participants; I interviewed any participant willing to contribute as long as the person was living in the municipality. The Municipality of Jinan is formed by ten districts and two counties. Most of my interviews happened in the core urban areas of Jinan. Comprised of five districts (Shizhong, Licheng, Lixia, Huaiyin, and Tianqiao), these areas constitute the original urban area of Jinan since 1950 and are still regarded as the primary urban portion of the municipality. In the beginning, my daily life in the city, which was centered in Licheng District, created opportunities

for interviews and participant observation. I used every opportunity I had to leave the Shandong University campus on Shanda South Rd., where I resided, to meet people, and conduct interviews, developing a semi-full degree "participantness" in my research and in my research role (Babbie and Roberts 2018, 270). For instance, I daily ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner out at small restaurants, street markets, or with friends at their homes. My life revolved around working on projects that are only partially related to this thesis, exploring old and new parts of the city, reconnecting with old friends and acquaintances, interacting with undergraduate and graduate students on campus, and carrying out mundane daily life activities (e.g., grocery shopping, banking, getting things fixed, picking up mail, going for medical appointments). To prevent potential ethical issues involving my identity and deception (ibid., 271), I always introduced myself as a student and researcher, letting my interlocutor know that they were talking to someone in research mode, regardless of whether I wanted or intended to obtain an interview. Interview locations included wholesales agricultural markets, grocery shops, miscellaneous small shops, restaurants, parks, night markets, taxis, post-offices, banks, even hospitals. My interview dataset reflects the diversity of the sites that I visited on a regular basis.

By the end of October 2015, the content of the interviews became repetitive, and then I started to be more selective about the participants to ensure saturation (Bernard 2000); I tried to select only those who seemed to have a hukou story that was somewhat new to me or unusual, getting enough stories of each hukou trajectory (e.g., old Jinan residents, recent migrants, older migrants, migrants who had transferred their hukou to Jinan, migrants who did not want to transfer hukou to Jinan, migrants from within the Municipality, and migrants from elsewhere in Shandong Province or in China). Also, I focused the interviews on specific topics, those that turned out to be more relevant to my research, as they were associated with more dramatic hukou

changes. These topics include migration, family affairs, real estate investment, and surveillance. To ensure saturation, I kept interviewing at multiple sites (i.e., engaged with data triangulation) (Denzin 2017), but spending most of my efforts at the university hospital (Shizhong District), by a newspaper kiosk by the southwest gate of Shandong University on Shanda South Rd. (Licheng District); and a fruit booth by the campus's north gate (Licheng District).

I interviewed at the Qilu Hospital at least three times a week between the end of October and mid-December. Suffering from tinnitus, I went to Qilu for acupuncture treatment, as is the practice in China. The treatment turned out to be ineffective, but I kept returning for a while only to meet people and talk about hukou. The waiting room was the perfect setting for interviews, as people did not have anything else to do other than talking to me or browsing the Internet. Also, my doctor, working at the acupuncture tables right behind the curtains that separate the waiting room, quickly learned about my research and started lining up people to talk with me. When the stories got repetitive, I became less talkative and less excited. Eventually, my doctor, who knew I was a lost tinnitus case anyway, dismissed me from treatment or, if you will, my "research retreat." Then, I stopped interviewing at the hospital.

With the other sites, it was a different story. I have been friends with both the owner of the kiosk and the fruit vendor since 2002. They also helped me recruit participants by introducing me and my research to regular clients. The kiosk owner called my attention to the current digital nature of hukou surveillance. He detailed for me how the government connects telephone chip and ID number, as he also sells telephone chips. He also helped me gather newsprint articles related to hukou. I spent time with him at the kiosk every day, but whenever I was busy with something else, he "WeChatted" me, telling me some hukou news. The app WeChat played an important role in connecting me to people. I used WeChat for interview

clarification and follow up, as well as to keep myself informed on the updates from the Jinan Municipality police regarding the application for hukou transference. The fruit vendor also introduced me to his clients, with whom I had informative conversations about the underbelly of hukou. His greatest contributions entailed his own stories about how he managed to have and register four children, two of them born in breach of the family-planning policies. Obviously, those stories involve illegal practices such as bribery and blackmailing government officials.

The more I developed a routine in Jinan, the easier it became to interview, as my old and new friends kept my research in mind and helped me recruit participants. Interview questions centered around the following topics: how individuals viewed and understood hukou; the importance that individuals assigned to hukou (e.g., negative, positive, coercive, liberating aspects of hukou); how hukou impacted decision-making processes regarding family affairs (e.g., marriage), education (e.g., access to school), migration, homeownership, and the use of the Internet; challenges, restrictions, difficulties, and frustrations experienced because of hukou or related to hukou; and the positive aspects of today's hukou. I also inquired into the participant's hukou status, mobility history, family information, and demographic information, especially age and marital status. I observed how interviewees viewed, talked, and felt about hukou, and further explored related meanings and ideas. In this role, I also paid attention to the range of people involved in the interview event; the activity we were part of; the actions that people were undertaking and the events that contextualized such actions; and, the goals that people were trying to accomplish with or through the interview.

Using Nvivo, I organized my interview data into a hierarchical scheme that contains one-hundred and thirty codes and sub-codes (i.e., coding units and sub-units). The sub-codes branch out of twelve broad codes. These refer to the analytical categories I discussed earlier,

"quantification," "classification," "qualification," and "visibility," in addition to the following categories: "hukou status;" "demographics;" "mobility history;" "family information;" "hukou rights" (i.e., the rights and accesses that hukou grants); "hukou duties" (i.e., responsibilities imposed by hukou); "hukou refusals" (i.e., rights and accesses that hukou restricts); "decision-making" (i.e., decisions that involve hukou as a major factor). I approached coding both in a deductive and inductive way (Babbie and Roberts 2018, 341-345). I examined the transcripts trying to identify the thoughts, ideas, and meanings that could reflect the four categories I used to operationalize my research questions, applying a deductive approach that is commonly referred to as "axial coding" (ibid., 343), as the researcher aims at the core ideas in the study. Meanwhile, I also examined the transcripts in an open way, trying to identify new, completely unpredictable, and previously unnoticed patterns in the data, applying an inductive approach that is often called "open coding" (ibid.). Coding allowed me to establish relationships not only among the interviews, but also between the interviews and the other sources in my dataset, especially policies and news articles, which I also coded, yet partially, using Nvivo and Excel. This ability to link different sources through coding improved my ability to contextualize different sources and make a better sense of how they connected to each other.

As I advanced into analyzing the interviews, I realized that hukou is especially active in guiding life on the following three domains: Access to schooling, home purchasing, and family formation (i.e., rating, dating, and marriage). To gain an in-depth analysis of hukou in those domains, I conducted interviews on sites related to these domains. I faced great difficulty trying to conduct interviews at schools and with school personnel; it seems to me that the trouble and suffering that parents experience to get their children enrolled in "good" schools, including having to depend on favors and (illegal) fees, prevented school representatives from giving me

interviews. To overcome this difficulty and explore the topic, I emphasized the relationships of hukou and education in all interviews, regardless of site.

Eventually, I realized that hukou regulates access to education through the categories of school district and homeownership, as I indicated earlier; as students can only enroll in schools within their hukou district, parents use all sorts of strategies to change or keep their hukou jurisdiction, depending on the case. A major strategy consists of buying a home within the desired district, given that having an eligible residential address is the main requirement for hukou transference. The link between hukou, the school district, and homeownership led me to pursue the education domain of hukou from the perspective of the real estate market (Chapter 5). I talked with and interviewed about twenty realtors and real estate representatives, transforming show-homes and residential developments into a research site. I also talked with numerous home buyers, including newlyweds, during my regular visits to the residential developments, which usually happened over the weekend; I visited fifteen developments on the following areas: west train station; south band of the Yellow River; and on the east side, nearby Jinan International Convention and Exhibition Center.[4]

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[4] I received permission to publish all photos in this thesis. Unless otherwise indicated, I took the photos.

Figure 8: A newly built residential development on the west side, by the train station, Jinan, May 11, 2016.

Figure 9: A residential development in construction by the Yellow River, Jinan, May 25, 2016.

Figure 10: A newly built residential development on the east side, by Shandong University Qilu Software College, Jinan, May 25, 2016.

The idea for the site where I explored hukou and family formation came from a trip to Shanghai. In December 2015, I walked by a marriage fair taking place on People's Square in Huangpu District and had the thought of using the weekend marriage fair in Jinan's Quancheng's park as another site of research, where I could explore the intersections of hukou and mate selection. I visited the fair every weekend between mid-December 2015 and mid-April 2016 and systematically interviewed fairgoers, including marriage seekers and their parents. Two of the five brokers who were at the fair regularly took an interest in my research and facilitated my participant role. I shadowed them at their booths while they matched mates and provided mate selection counseling. While waiting for new clients, we drank tea and chatted with regular fairgoers. In my participant role, I explored how people use hukou to "figure out" prospective

mates, including their families and the responsibilities that would come with marrying a specific person.

My research at the fair also included a quantitative component, as the brokers shared with me a sample of the profiles that mate seekers exhibited at the fair. With one-hundred and fourteen profiles, the sample represented about a fourth of the total profiles available in the fair on a given weekend. Each profile contains a field where mate seekers fill in a somewhat detailed set of specific about the desirable mate. I coded this information, discarding the only two pieces of information they included (i.e., full name and cell phone number), to describe how fairgoers negotiate the symbols and implications of hukou in achieving family goals. The data collected at the fair, like the data collected at residential developments, represent my most concrete illustrations of how hukou is conducive to autonomy, choice, and individual responsibility.

The opportunity to watch people making decisions on the spot and in real-time that involved hukou, dwelling, and marriage provided me a window into the numerous events and social forces that form the rationales informing people's decision-making process. In those two sites, I could see that people of different backgrounds cited and drew on similar rationales (i.e., the implication of specific decisions) when making hukou-related decisions, even if the decision per se varied according to personal interests. Most importantly, at those sites, which represented microcosmos of Jinan and numerous other second-tier cities in the country, I could observe that Beijing governs decision-making involving hukou on the ground from afar, by influencing the policies that influence the rationales that people draw on to make such decisions. Methodologically, being able to watch and participate in decision-making events was a unique and special opportunity; researchers rarely have the chance to observe and interview people as they make important life-changing decisions. Researchers usually interview participants about

their decisions and decision-making processes in retrospect. This opportunity improved my ability to interview people outside those sites when they were physically and emotionally away from the factors that influenced their decisions. Practically, when interviewing people in retrospect and outside the social-spatial context that informed their decision-making processes, I used the knowledge I gathered at those sites to improve my ability to interview and gather data. For instance, this knowledge helped me to explore the reasons that informed people's decisions involving hukou in detailed ways. Also, it improved my ability to probe, infer, and hypothesize on the reasons behind the participant's decisions.

Policy Documents and News Articles

As I noted, the data for this thesis also includes policy documents and news articles. I used these sources to supplement my analysis of the hukou policies discussed in the interviews, as well as to illustrate specific policy changes with concrete examples. Referring to national guidelines on hukou and rules about hukou in Jinan, policy documents allowed me to consider changes in how governments were using hukou. They include all hukou policies issued by the following organs: State Council; Ministry of Public Security; Shandong Province; the Municipality of Jinan, including its Public Security Bureau. News articles provided me a real-time picture of the transformation of hukou, especially from the policy perspective. They led me to observe the shift in the connotation of the word "regulate" discussed earlier, as Jinan Daily continually talked about the need to develop a system to "manage" migrant populations in the city in the early 1980s. The newspaper articles provided a slow-motion picture through which I viewed the Jinan government using hukou in different population designs; during the state-

planned economy, hukou completely "segregated" rural residents from urbanites into two worlds unknown to each other. In the 1980s and 1990s, hukou integrated city and countryside through "competition" as their populations competed against each other for resources. Lastly, in the 2000s, hukou started to "integrate" them as a single population that formally enjoy the same rights and duties. Each population building strategy had its revealing terminology. During the state-planned economy period, rural residents were referred to as "peasants" (nonmin), and migrants were considered a "blind flow" (mangliu). In the following decades, the blind flows became "peasant workers" (nongmingong) and "floating populations" (liudong renkou). Then, in the 2000s, these two categories became "outsiders" (waidide) or "residents" (Jinande or changzhu jumin), depending on the article.

Since I resumed my hukou research in 2014, I gathered approximately three thousand news articles from *People's Daily* and *Jinan Daily* on various topics related to hukou. Founded in 1946, the *People's Daily* is the most important newspaper of national circulation in China; it is also the main propaganda vehicle of China's central government. Meanwhile, *Jinan Daily*, launched in 1948, is the most traditional newspaper in the city. Policies and events discussed in those outlets represent guidelines for local governments, in the case of *People's Daily*, and important government decisions, achievements, or intentions, in the case of *Jinan Daily*.

Covering about seven decades, the articles in my database spans from 1946 to April 2016. The article section results from searches in the digital archival of both outlets that combined variations of the words "hukou" and "hukou reforms" with a variety of keywords that reflect themes related to hukou. For instance, the articles discuss ID card, "floating populations," building of social trust, residence permit, family planning, quality of the population, freedom of mobility, hukou transference, among others.

As *Jinan Daily's* digital archives excluded articles published before 2004 at the time of my fieldwork, I physically examined fifty-five years of newspaper publication between the beginning of January to the end of May 2016, photographing and cataloging every article that was related to hukou. Difficult at the beginning, this process deserves attention; it turned out to be the best surprise of fieldwork as I met an unlikely contributor, the librarian responsible for the newspaper collection. He helped me figure out the importance and meaning of the hukou digitization.

One may think that spending about three hours per day over five months skimming dusty newspapers written in a foreign language was difficult and tiring. The problem, however, was in accessing the materials in all senses of the word. The language barrier was huge, as the articles had numerous colloquial expressions that I could not read or understand. The print format made the word search and translation time-consuming, as I could not rely on the speed of online resources. The papers were out of call order in a huge, messy, dirty, smelly storage in the basement of the big clock tower on the main campus of Shandong University. The physical key to the storage location stayed with a librarian who fiercely guarded his daily routine in a quiet and spacious reading room from trouble and intrusion. At first, I could not understand why this reading room was not packed with students, like the others in the building. Later I realized that the man kept the reading room reserved for those using its materials while doing everything he could to persuade students not to research those materials.

When I told the librarian that I intended to skim through all the binders of Jinan Daily until 2004, he looked disappointed and inconvenienced by the potentially regular intruder. "It is going to take you months! And I am not even sure you will find the information you want. I think you will waste your time. You should rethink this idea with your professor," he told me, adding that the binders were probably incomplete. As I insisted, he created a few rules on the

spot to raise the level of challenge of my task, saying that I could only bring up three binders at a time. I felt completely unwelcomed about disturbing him, but I resisted and started my task.

In the two months that followed, I felt awkward and embarrassed every time I had to interrupt his routine of drinking tea and reading newspapers to ask for another trip down to the basement. As I returned daily, he seemed to develop some respect for my research efforts and started helping me out. Firstly, he lent me a cart to haul the binders; then, he started to help me find the binders inside the storage; lastly, he allowed me to haul as many binders as I could. I would bring about fifteen at a time and leave them upstairs until when I was done with the batch. As I developed a routine, he got used to me, and we started to have conversations related to the articles I selected; he offered detailed information and contextualization on many of the events and policies they covered. As we bonded, I often used his help to make sense of interview data and improve my analysis.

Figure 11: The author going over historical issues of Jinan Daily at the Jiang Zhen Library, Shandong University, March 2016.

One day I came across a small article dated March 30, 1997. It instructed Jinan citizens to visit their neighborhood police station to obtain a new hukou booklet (Jinan Daily 1997d). The article provided no further context, but the kind librarian stepped in: “That’s when the police started using computers to print the booklet. The process finished in 1998,” he told me. That day, April 22, we spent the whole afternoon brainstorming about the implications of the digitization. In the following Monday, he brought both an old and a new hukou for me to compare.

The data collection strategies that I describe were more fluid and situational than what I planned before leaving for China, especially regarding interviews; they result from the trials and errors I committed at the beginning of fieldwork. I originally planned on systematically interviewing an equal number of participants from each possible hukou classification (e.g., rural, urban, urban transferee, and temporary resident) and then use their hukou classification as a starting point to explore how hukou influence their lives. However, within my first month in Jinan, I realized that the idea of first organizing research subjects into pre-structured categories and then analyze the effects of those categories on their lives seemed incoherent and inadequate. “How can I observe the change of hukou if I force ‘pre-constructed’ subjects into their categories?” I recall asking myself. I addressed my question by changing my interview strategy.

Instead, I focused the interview on how participants, regardless of their hukou classification, relate to hukou, including their hukou classification, and how hukou is related to decisions involving the transference of register from one place to another. Two interviews dated from the first two weeks in Jinan triggered the change of interview approach. The first interview demonstrated to me that some people do not want to be put in a “hukou box,” reminding me of a lesson from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu about using research to liberate and emancipate people. According to Bourdieu, some researchers are spokespersons of their subjects

(Sayad 2004, xi-xiv See preface by Bourdieu), while others give the subjects a voice. I pursued the latter role in my research practice as the only way to undo the structures of domination that underpin the tactics of government I study. The second interview suggested that making sense of today's hukou required me first identify the forces that construct hukou as a potential object of power, governance, segregation, integration, oppression, liberation, and study and then inquire into those forces. Such an inquiry should address how subjects relate to hukou, characterize hukou, as well as when they do it and when they do not.

On September 6, a male participant in his forties told me the following when I asked his hukou classification: "I have already bought a home!" I insisted, but he kept repeating himself as if I had not listened to him for the first time. Then, I changed the question to see if I could get to the bottom of it, implying that his hukou was elsewhere: "Why haven't you moved your hukou to Jinan yet?" I asked, looking firmly in his eyes, but he repeated himself once again, indicating that for him, the residence status is related to homeownership, not hukou jurisdiction. Puzzled, I marked the repetition on his interview transcription and wrote: "weird repetition; check how people report hukou classification/let them choose their own box." I kept experiencing a similar situation with other participants in the following days. It only stopped when I stopped "imposing" their hukou classification upon them, and "force" relationships in the way that I somehow had idealized in my mind.

A week later, when I was still trying to use the participant's hukou classification as a starting point, I interviewed a male in his late twenties, and he too responded to my question by telling me that he owned a home in the city. Instead of insisting on the same question as before, I explored how hukou classification related to his home. He eventually explained that he wanted to "benefit" from his "rural" classification to have a second child before moving his registration to

Jinan, reintroducing hukou to me as an object of rational, instrumental negotiation in the pursuit of dreams, choices, and desires. I kept asking about people's hukou classification, but my underlining goal became to explore the constellation of relationships associated with hukou.

My Role as a Researcher

My research greatly benefited from the attraction that I received for being a foreigner who speaks Mandarin fluently and has comprehensive experience with Chinese society. Although people in China are used to seeing foreigners who speak Mandarin fluently, it is still rare for them to see a foreign like me, someone who has attended a local university, lived in residential compounds meant for locals, worked with locals, and accumulated substantial China-related professional experience. Individuals with whom I interacted were curious about my background, usually inquiring further into my life story to make sense of my familiarity with the Chinese cultural codes and society. As noted, their curiosity allowed me to establish a relationship of trust, facilitating data collection.

Once I realized my familiarity with local customs represented a major data collection facilitator and advantage, I started to deliberately display my knowledge of the language, including hukou terminology, and Jinan during social interactions with potential research participants, using it as a proof of status and source of legitimacy. In other words, knowledge of the language and city functioned as a testimony to the accuracy of my story, which was important to establish trust. I often emphasized my Shandong University alumna status and jokingly presented myself as a "quasi-Chinese" as a strategy to convey my familiarity and admiration for Chinese society, including its social rules and norms. Depending on the

circumstances and level of interaction, I also briefly outlined to interlocutors the emotional and professional significance that my past living experience in Jinan (four years between 2002 and 2006) and Shanghai (one year between 2006 and 2007) has had in my life. My goal at the first moments of my social interactions consisted of giving potential research participants the ability to situate myself in their world. I assumed that providing them information to sort me out could dissipate any doubt about my intentions and purposes. In most cases, the interest to which I was subjected and my openness to talk about my life paved the way for me to initiate an interview.

Having potential interview participants approaching and knowing me comprehensively (instead of the other way around) before I introduced my research had several advantages. Firstly, I was able to build a relationship of trust and familiarity with participants, making them feel comfortable before I inquired into a topic that many could have considered sensitive because of the unfairness and suffering that hukou imposed and still imposes upon specific populations. This is especially true when I compare the interviews that happened in a casual way with those with key informants, which I actively pursued, having a limited opportunity to introduce myself prior to asking questions. Whenever I had to pursue an interview, especially with key informants, I noticed the participant was somewhat suspicious of my intentions and purposes, which led me to spend more time explaining my affiliation with Shandong University, as well as the bureaucratic aspects of my presence in China. For instance, a police officer from Hongjialou police station in Licheng District asked to view my passport and Chinese visa. Later, after a long conversation, she told me she wanted to ensure that I was a “student” on a “study visa,” not a journalist. Also, key informants, in most cases, would limit their answer to my specific question, without elaborating further on the topic.

Secondly, I was able to establish the understanding that I could follow the conversation with virtually no language or cultural barriers, as well as the necessary intimacy for the participant to correct my input (e.g., follow up questions) if necessary. The participants' confidence in my ability to understand not only the language but also cultural references and hukou jargon seemed to make them move to talk freely about their hukou perspectives and experiences. My experience assisting foreign scholars who were not fluent in Chinese with fieldwork also confirmed the need for the researcher to speak the language fluently, including the non-verbal language. For instance, when assisting them, I noticed that participants often refrain from addressing specifics aspects of the study topic whenever they were unsure of the researcher's ability to follow the information being presented. In such cases, I observed, participants often avoid referring to the official names of events and policies, inadvertently misleading the researcher. Participants also tend to consciously talk in superficial terms and engage in generalizations, afraid that they will not be understood. The language barrier issues I noticed while doing this search seem to be popular in cross-cultural context research projects, as they are a commonplace in the specialized literature (Hennink 2008; Pranee 2008). However, resolving them may not be easy because researchers would need to spend long periods, probably years, in the research cultural context, which would demand a great deal with personal commitment, personal sacrifice, economic resources, and institutional opportunities. From this perspective, I know I would have never done this project without having had my life story shaped by a series of prolonged and intensive personal, educational, and professional experiences in China.

Thirdly, I was able to first "get a feeling" of the potential participant's contribution to the research, which helped me explore new aspects of hukou while saving research time. At first, I

talked to virtually everyone, not having such an advantage, but as the hukou stories, perspectives, and patterns started to get repetitive, I started to use the opportunity to establish a connection with the participant prior to the interview to explore whether or not the person had information that was potentially new, that could lead me to a pattern that I had not yet explored or with which I was not familiar. I pre-assessed the participants' potential contribution by asking questions about their life trajectory, especially migration history and family configurations, interviewing only "unusual" cases such as divorcés, lone parents, migrants who left their children in the village under the care of grandparents, among others.

Although my ability to speak Chinese and my knowledge of Chinese society were essential to this research, they also created a few problems. A small minority of potential participants were highly suspicious of my linguistic and cultural fluency, a situation that I believe is yet to be covered by the literature on cross-cultural research. They thought I was using my research as a disguise to obtain some sort of advantage. For instance, at the marriage fair, some regular fairgoers spread the rumor that I was spending my weekends at the fair to find a rich Chinese man with whom I could enjoy my time in China. The marriage brokers who had seen my Shandong University student card helped me in vain to stop this rumor. Thus, throughout data collection at the marriage fair, I had to put up with older men who would start a conversation with me only to check whether I was romantically (i.e., economically) interested in them. I often solved the problem by showing them my student card, which has never had its veracity disputed. Once they became clear on my academic intentions and purposes, many of them still checked whether I had a foreign friend who would be interested in "playing" with them (i.e., dating).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed this thesis' research object, research questions, theoretical approach, and data collection strategies (i.e., methods). I described how I understand hukou as a technology of government and outlined the theoretical approach I used to analyze my research data, which is grounded in Foucault's and Weber's scholarship. My project benefited from Foucault's notions of governmentality and technology of government, and from Weber's concept of power. I also resorted to Weber's typology about the sources that make power and domination valid and legitimate in the eyes of power subjects. As discussed in this chapter, my research data consists primarily of interviews, documentary information, and my own observations involving hukou. My data collection processes involved interviewing a diverse profile of Jinan residents, including official and non-official temporary residents, and informants who could cast light into specific hukou-attached policies. Benefiting from daily, mundane interactions that I had during a nine-month stay in Jinan, I conducted most interviews with a casual approach, although official (i.e., following ethics protocols), in a diverse range of sites, indoor and outdoor. Interviews with key informants, however, were planned and structured, as I actively pursued them to understand details of how hukou operates from specific perspectives. This thesis also benefits from the experiences that I have accumulated in China or about China since 2002. In the past seventeen years, I have lived in China for prolonged periods, about five years between 2002 and 2007 and nine months between 2015 and 2016 (specifically to collect the data for this thesis). I also have experienced the country in various capacities, including as a student, factory worker, and professional in several industrial sectors. This research would not be

possible without these experiences, as they taught me to navigate Chinese society on a deep and comprehensive level.

Chapter 3 • The Hukou Reforms in Jinan: Individual Autonomy, Personal Choice, and Responsibility

Introduction

In the late 1970s, China started to reorganize itself around private markets and private interests, slowly leaving behind about thirty years of state-led life patterns. This reorganization entailed gradually abolishing or reforming numerous institutions, policies, and government practices to accommodate new societal needs. Hukou, a core system of household registration from Mao's era, lies among the "technologies of government" (Foucault 2008, 317-325) that have been gradually reformed. Formally referred to as "Household Registration System," hukou collects data and produces information on households and their members, allowing the state authority to count, organize, and monitor populations for various governing purposes. For instance, hukou classifies the Chinese population according to birthplace and place of residence, regulating geographic mobilities (i.e., migration in general but especially long-term migration), labor market dynamics, and the availability of resources (e.g., education, pension, and medical care).

In progress since 1978, when the government in Beijing (i.e., the State Council, the executive branch of China's administration) authorized employers to hire rural migrants (Wang 2013, 215), the hukou reforms have been the object of numerous studies. Researchers usually analyze the reforms from two broad perspectives; as a set of instrumental processes that "decentralize" the authority over hukou affairs from the State Council to local governments; and as a "failed" attempt to abolish the hukou system and liberate migration in the country. Scholars

within both perspectives build their research on the assumption that migration is the main outcome of the hukou reforms, approaching migration as their analytical site.

The authors within the first perspective discuss the fiscal and budgetary impact of the hukou reforms on local governments, especially regarding their ability to collect revenue and offer social provisions (e.g., housing, education, health care, among others). Nonetheless, their specific angle of analysis varies considerably. A few authors analyze the government's ability to collect revenues with land transactions (Zhan 2017; Andreas and Zhan 2016), while others analyze the capacity of local governments to attract skilled-labor to generate economic growth (Luo and Xing 2016; Young 2013). There are also researchers who, within the topic of fiscal and budgetary issues, discuss the financial obstacles that local governments face to keep up with ever-increasing demands for social provisions (Wu 2013; Pengjun and Howden-Chapman 2010; Afridi et al. 2015). In general, these authors agree that the hukou reforms have increased China's already existing regional disparities. The authors within the second perspective also embrace the idea that the hukou reforms represent a decentralization of power. However, they approach the hukou reforms expecting that the reforms would address China's entrenched rural-urban inequality. Frustrated with the reforms, these authors (Liu 2005; Xiaogang and Treiman 2007; Chan 2009, 2010; Chan and Buckingham 2008; Pengjun and Howden-Chapman 2010) argue that the reforms have not abolished the hukou system (Chan and Buckingham 2008), that hukou continues (Xiaogang and Treiman 2007) to create inequalities on the ground. Lastly, most studies on the hukou reforms ground their arguments in broad contexts (i.e., nation-wide) (Chan and Buckingham 2008; Andreas and Zhan 2016; Wu 2013; Luo and Xing 2016; Zhang and Wang 2008) or large cities (i.e., top tier) like Beijing (Pengjun and Howden-Chapman 2010) and Shanghai (Zhang and Wang 2008). In contrast, I offer a unique perspective on the hukou

reforms, which questions the assumption that the hukou reforms represent a decentralization of power.

In this chapter, I draw primarily on the analysis of documentary information (i.e., policies and news articles) to discuss the hukou reforms. I argue that the hukou reforms represent a state-sponsored "diffusion" of power across society and the emergence of a liberal "governmentality" (Foucault 1991a), which promotes individual autonomy, personal choice, responsibility, and voluntary compliance. I present the reforms as an "interruption" with the state's imposition of pre-arranged life patterns involving geographic mobilities and people's relationship with space. Regarding the treatment of geographic mobility as the main consequence of the hukou reforms, I acknowledge that the hukou reforms triggered migration and that migration has transformed China dramatically in every possible way. Also, I use migration as a "gateway" to analyze the hukou reforms too, but I do not view migration as the main "demographic" consequence of the hukou reforms. With this chapter, I hope to show that the main consequence of the hukou reforms refers to the inauguration of population governance strategies that create citizens that can make personal choices in various domains of life, taking responsibility for them. I divided this chapter into two distinctive but complementary parts.

In the first part, I explore the policy-making processes that form the hukou reforms, demonstrating how they encouraged individuality, autonomy, diversity, and flexibility inside of the state bureaucracy. Those processes, I argue, represent an innovative "model" of hukou governing, one that breaks with the governance style of the Mao era, which gave the grassroots level of the state bureaucracy limited opportunity to act autonomously and innovate. This model consists of Beijing providing local governments "loose" guidance (i.e., a "hukou vision") on what the hukou system should look like, suggesting new roles for hukou. To enforce its hukou

vision across the country, Beijing encouraged the grassroots level of the state bureaucracy to share their "best practices" involving the management of hukou. This cooperation between different levels of government triggered a diffusion of hukou power within the structures of the state. Ultimately, this governing "from afar" (Ong and Zhang 2015), which is also present in other domains of life (i.e., work and health), empowered local governments to autonomously create specific hukou practices that met their local needs and responsibilities, yet within Beijing's vision.

In the second part, I demonstrate that the effects of the hukou reforms on governing were not limited to the state bureaucracy, the sovereign power. I demonstrate that Beijing's governing of hukou spilled over to the population in concrete ways, altering the formation of individuals as hukou subjects. Using Jinan, the capital of Shandong Province in eastern China, as a research site, I argue that the policies forming the hukou reforms transformed the power that hukou devolves to its subjects (i.e., citizens). Today's hukou fosters in its subjects the ability to make autonomous decisions and take responsibility for their personal choices regarding geographic mobility. To accomplish this transformation, hukou policies in Jinan started to rely on the help of extra-state actors, such as private employers and landlords, to manage temporary migrants. Empowered with hukou "authority," employers, landlords, and eventually the migrants themselves, began to use their hukou power to convey and secure their personal interests. In doing so, they started to develop the liberal ability to align means and ends rationally, especially around geographic mobility. In this part, I also demonstrate that as the hukou reforms advanced, the Municipality of Jinan practically eliminated the role that employers and landlords played in hukou transfers (i.e., migration), transforming geographic mobility into a site of personal choice. This change led migrants to take sole responsibility for the risks and consequences of their

decision to migrate and transfer hukou to the city. Why do the changes I outline in this chapter matter?

Firstly, the hukou reforms represent a rupture with the "top-down" policy-making style of Mao's era, as they lead the grassroots levels of the state bureaucracy to act semi-autonomously to fulfill Beijing's vision of hukou and society, instead of acting on "pre-set" policies. Secondly, the hukou reforms also represent a conciliation between state interventionism and liberalism that strengthens the state. The promotion of liberal values in the grassroots departments of the state bureaucracy improved the state's capacity to align national societal goals with the interests of individuals and local governments. It also transferred the risks of mobility, including those derived from ineffective hukou policies, to extra-state actors (i.e., employers and individuals), strengthening and protecting the state.

Thirdly, the hukou reforms also represent a statement on the continuing and evolving importance of hukou as a tool of population governing. The hukou reforms reinforced and revitalized the function of hukou in the formation of subjects, that is, the constitution of individual identity and subjectivity. If, in the Mao era, Beijing used hukou to create fixed population categories that corresponded with the needs of a state-planned economy, in the post-Mao era, the state used hukou to redesign the population to attend the needs of a private-oriented economy. In Mao's times, hukou, with its classificatory power, divided the population and ascribed individuals to two distinctive population categories, "agricultural" and "non-agricultural" household members, forcing them to live lives fully guided by the all-encompassing institutions aligned with those categories that enabled and formed the state-planned economy. Peasants and urbanites became "institutional subjects" of the state. Since Mao's death and the beginning of the private market economy era, hukou has continued to classify and organize

populations on a territorial basis, but it has continuously recreated the former peasants and urbanites as “residents” (jumin). United under the category “residents,” populations are expected to incorporate into their identities and subjectivities elements that fit the needs of a private-oriented economy. Such elements include autonomy, decision-making skills, and the capacity to deal with the risks and responsibilities that come with the power of being autonomous and making choices. The hukou reforms have essentially transformed “institutional subjects” who were used to taking orders into “private market subjects” who are learning how to take the initiative to design their future. Lastly, by allowing people to move, the hukou reforms inaugurated a regime of voluntary compliance in China grounded in choice. Although empowered with autonomy to make their own choices involving geographic mobility, hukou subjects are far from “free;” their choices are guided by local hukou policies, complying with Beijing’s vision of hukou. The act of choosing, however, even when options are limited or guided, fosters autonomy, individualism, singularity, and a sense of empowerment into individuals, as they can work towards fulfilling their desires, attend to their interests and resolve their conflicts while complying with a collective, state-led societal project.

Methods

As I indicated earlier, I ground my analysis in Jinan, a tier-two city with almost eight million people (as of 2019). Like elsewhere in China, the hukou reforms triggered a migration boom in Jinan. Jinan’s population increased by thirty-eight percent between 1978 and 2014 (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015) due to migration. The population count includes Jinan hukou holders or “hukou population” (hukou renkou) and “long-term residents” (changzhu renkou).

"Hukou population" refers to individuals with hukou registered in Jinan; they may be born in Jinan or have transferred their hukou register to Jinan. "Long-term residents" are migrants who have a "residence permit" (jumin zheng) to live in Jinan but have their hukou registered elsewhere. This population accounted for about two million people in 2014 (China Daily 2015), representing a huge increase in comparison to the two hundred thousand migrants of 1993 (Jinan Daily 1993c) when the hukou reforms were just beginning in the city. It is impossible to know exactly if these migrants come from rural or urban areas, as the Municipality of Jinan stopped publishing population counts based on hukou status, particularly classification (i.e., "agricultural" or "non-agricultural"), in 2006. As it will become clear later in this chapter, Jinan's initiative to change the way it counts populations coincided with Beijing's project to unify rural and urban populations, eliminating, at least in name, the social divide that hukou has created in Chinese society. Nonetheless, Jinan hukou holders, including those who are from originally from elsewhere, usually view long-term residents as "outsiders," calling them "waidide," which means "from outside." They also assume that most outsiders are from rural areas. Grounding this study in a tier-two city represents an important contribution to the literature on the hukou reforms. As a tier-two city, Jinan is more effective at representing the effects of the hukou reforms than top tier cities. Hukou functions in a regime of exceptionality in top tier cities, as they only accept migrants who have exceptionally high socioeconomic status in comparison to the country's population. In contrast, tier-two and tier-three cities have comparatively easy-to-meet criteria to authorize migration (i.e., hukou transfer) and are thereby better representatives of the hukou reforms.

To analyze the nature and content of the hukou reforms, I used policy documents and news articles to reconstruct and analyze the history of today's hukou in Jinan since the late

1970s. Produced in different spheres of the state bureaucracy, policy documents refer to documents issued by the following actors: the State Council; Ministry of Public Security; Shandong Province; and the Municipality of Jinan, including Jinan's Public Security Bureau and other administrative units within the municipality, such as district governments and local police stations. News articles include a sample of one hundred and forty-one articles centered on changes applied to the Jinan hukou since 1977, all published in *Jinan Daily*. I drew these articles from a much larger database containing 1,208 articles, all from *Jinan Daily*. I personally searched these articles and compiled such a database, which spans from 1948 (when the newspaper was founded) and April 2016. I searched the digital articles by title, selecting those which title contained the word "hukou" or the variation "huji." To obtain the articles published between 1948 and 2004, for which there were no digital archives (as of April 2016), I physically skimmed every *Jinan Daily* issue published in the period, photographing and cataloging every article that cited hukou (in text or on the title). Occasionally, when I needed to assess the impact or relevance of a specific policy, I also relied on articles published on *People's Daily*, the State Council's flagship news outlet, searching them by keyword.

Physically researching *Jinan Daily*, in a sequential manner, page by page, year by year, was beneficial to my analysis of the hukou reforms in several ways. First, it allowed me to recreate a detailed history of the hukou reforms in Jinan, which I present and analyze in this chapter. Second, it allowed me to contextualize the hukou reform in relation to other important events. These events include the launch of the ID card (the mid-1980s); the housing reform and the emergence of "home" as a private notion (late 1990s); and the promotion of students as "talented" populations that could offer an important economic and human contribution to the country's development (early 2000s). Quickly I realized that all these transformations are

directly related to hukou. The launch of the ID card was tied with calls from the Ministry of Public Security for local governments to implement an effective system to register "temporary resident populations (Ministry of Public Security 1985). It also allowed the Jinan Municipality police to monitor and register migrants; those without ID could be arrested and criminally prosecuted (Jinan Daily 1993c). Updates in the ID card system, with the issuance of new "generations" of cards, correlate with the digitization of hukou, a topic that I discuss in Chapter 6. The housing reform provided enormous public subsidies for urban hukou holders to purchase newly built "private" homes for prices that, in most cases, did not cover the cost of construction. Referred to as the "housing accumulation fund," this subsidy translated part of the institutional advantage that separated urban hukou holders from farming households during Mao's era into part of the economic advantage that urbanites enjoy today over individuals of rural origin. Lastly, the valorization of students and their skillset as a key element to unleash the country's socio-economic development led local governments to facilitate the process for high-schools and college graduates to transfer hukou to Jinan upon graduation. Lastly, by examining *Jinan Daily* in a sequential manner, I also could literally see the emerging governmentality that I try to grasp with this thesis through the news headlines. For instance, the headlines read: "You Must Rely on Yourself to Live" (Jinan Daily 1993d); "College Entrance Examination: The Choice of a Lifetime (Jinan Daily 1997c); "Choosing a Home to Buy" (Jinan Daily 1998a); "Bring Results and You Will Be Given a Hukou" (Jinan Daily 1999a); "Power is Responsibility" (Jinan Daily 1999e); "Once I Choose, I Don't Regret" (Jinan Daily 2000c);" and "To Know Yourself Is More Important than to Know the Occupation (Jinan Daily 2003b). These exemplars discuss hukou and education, occupation, and homeownership.

This chapter also draws on a dataset of two-hundred and fifty open-ended interviews with a cross-section of Jinan residents about hukou that I conducted by myself between August 2015 and June 2016. Those interviews discuss hukou, the hukou reforms, and the impact that the reforms had on people's lives. I used the themes that appeared in those interviews to guide the coding (NVivo12) and analysis of the documentary information, including newspaper articles, I cite in this chapter. Such themes include choice, autonomy, individuality, responsibility, migration, employment, and dwelling, all connected somehow with hukou.

Part 1: Hukou Reforms and the Transformation of the Grassroots Levels of the State Bureaucracy

The hukou reforms are not the linear and uniform process often represented in the specialized literature (Wu 2013; Huang 2014; Keung Wong et al. 2007). They are formed by policy-making processes that involve trials and errors and are marked by variabilities, inconsistencies, delays, incompleteness, misunderstandings, and even material and discursive contradictions with Beijing's vision for hukou. In practice, the hukou reforms are a series of hukou rules and procedures that vary within a municipality and across the country. In fact, the diversity that marks the hukou reforms is the by-product of Beijing's new model of hukou governing, which entails policy-making processes that, in addition to being convoluted, also promote autonomy and responsibility within the local government bureaucracy.

The policy-making processes underlying the hukou reforms start with Beijing providing society with guidelines for its vision for hukou. Often titled "announcements" or "opinions," such guidelines are broad and indicative, containing no details on their interpretation and

implementation. Beijing expects the local bureaucracy to provide solutions that deliver its hukou vision autonomously. Occasionally, Beijing follows up and makes suggestions on how local governments can fulfill its hukou vision by publishing explanations in a Q&A format in the media. Without detailed and concrete instructions on how to implement Beijing's hukou vision, the local state bureaucracy launches itself into the process of studying, designing, and implementing "practices" that can fulfill Beijing's vision; it often does so before creating the "rules" that regulate such practices. Monitoring such practices from afar, Beijing relies on news outlets to endorse or disapprove them. Endorsed practices tend to become popular and spread across the country, while the disapproved ones tend to be suspended. To ensure that its hukou vision is implemented in the most effective possible way, Beijing also relies on news outlets to incentivize cooperating and sharing of best practices between and within different departments of the state bureaucracy.

Once effective practices are running smoothly on the ground, local governments sometimes enact local bills (i.e., final documents) that provide an overview of the policies that guide life in concrete terms. When this is the case, such bills tend to be broad and unclear, allowing for alterations on the ground without the need for revisions. In numerous cases, practices are never regulated into bills. For instance, even the national "Hukou Law," which dates from 1958 (State Council 2001 [1958]), has never been revised and is still binding despite almost four decades of hukou reforms. Originally, the State Council expected to finish the hukou reform and consolidate the array of local bills that form the hukou reforms into a nationally-binding "Hukou Act" by the end of the twentieth century (Yin and Yu 1996, 96-98), but none of it has happened yet. Beijing avoids, as much as possible, having to set hukou practices in stone, which gives it increased flexibility to use and alter hukou according to specific needs.

In comparison with the norm in countries with common and civil law systems, the policy-making processes that form the hukou reforms can be considered “inverted” Firstly, they are kick-started and led by the executive branch of the state, not the legislative. Secondly, these law-making processes happen primarily at the grassroots level of the government bureaucracy, not at the leadership level, moving in a “bottom-up” direction. Thirdly, its “regulatory phase” (i.e., implementation and enforcement) happens usually before the “legislative phase” (i.e., discussion, reading, and publication of a final document). Practically, the lowest levels of the state bureaucracy across the country first implement “practices” that are then used to create “rules” that regulate such practices.

Essentially, Beijing’s model of hukou governing consists of what Deng Xiaoping, the architect of China’s “Economic Reform and Opening Up Policy,” described as “crossing the river by feeling the stones ” (People Net 2018). It allows the state bureaucracy and society to learn the way forward amidst uncertainty with great flexibility, as well as autonomy and responsibility. Most importantly, it allows the various levels of the state bureaucracy to articulate macro and micro goals as well as collective and private interests while generating compliance with the Communist Party’s leadership and social conformity.

To detail how the hukou reforms transformed the state bureaucracy, I divided the first part of this chapter into two sections. In the first section, I provide details on the policy-making processes that form the hukou reforms, emphasizing their diversity (i.e., variabilities, inconsistencies, unplanned uniformities, delays, incompleteness, misunderstandings, among others) and how they rely on cooperation and best practice sharing to promote autonomy and flexibility within the state bureaucracy. In other words, I demonstrate how the local bureaucracy in Jinan implements Beijing’s hukou vision while highlighting the main events of the reforms,

which coincide with the main elements of Beijing's vision. In the second section, I provide examples of how the vision is enforced through cooperation and the sharing of best practices between different departments of the local bureaucracy.

Creating a Hukou Vision

Registration of Temporary Residents

The hukou reforms effectively started in Jinan in 1985, when Beijing called for the implementation of city-wide consistent systems to register and manage "temporary resident" (zanzhu renkou) populations (Ministry of Public Security 1985). The Municipality of Jinan, however, spent over a decade of trials and errors to fulfill Beijing's 1985 Provisions. The first trials to meet Beijing's vision happened in Central District in downtown in 1993 (Jinan Daily 1993a). It entailed rewarding permanent populations for tips that led to the arrest of irregular migrants. Praised by the municipal government, this whistleblowing practice quickly and unexpectedly spread across the province (ibid.). Despite the municipality's effort, Jinan only implemented a consistent system to manage temporary residents in 1998, with the enactment of the "Temporary Resident Population Management Measures" (Jinan Daily 1998c). The 1998 Measures defined the "Temporary Resident Permit" (zanzhu zheng) as legal proof of local residence, declaring that individuals without the card were not allowed to live or work in the city (ibid.). While some of Beijing's guidelines simply experienced delays in being implemented, others were never delivered in their entirety, as is the case of "blue hukou" (lanyin hukou)

program, which I discuss below; and even in those cases, the guideline implementation process faced delay as well.

Blue Hukou Transfer Program

The blue hukou transfer program, endorsed by Beijing in 1992, was never popular in Jinan based on news records and interview accounts. Prevalent in larger cities and coastal areas, this program allowed municipalities to give entrepreneurs full local citizenship if they fulfilled certain conditions. When questioned about the lack of popularity of this hukou transfer scheme in Jinan, some interview participants said that Jinan hukou was simply not "that attractive economically" or as attractive as larger cities. Others invoked Shandong's "conservative culture" to argue that Shandong people are "rooted" in their land and less prone to migration and risky ventures. Whatever the reason, the unpopularity of blue hukou in Jinan is only further evidence of the diversity that marks the hukou reforms.

Registration of "Odd" Populations

My interviews with law-enforcement agents and residents also suggest that the police stations in Jinan, except for those in the city center, paid little attention to registering populations with unclear hukou information, referred to as "odd populations" (qi renkou), contradicting Beijing's vision. Police stations only became rigorous about registering odd residents in October 1999 (Jinan Daily 1999c), when their number reached three-hundred thousand people or about twelve percent of the locally registered population, that is, more than five years after Beijing's

call (State Council 1993); even though only police stations in downtown Jinan fulfilled such a call. The variation involving timing and implementation is not the only mark of the hukou reforms. There are also variations in the interpretation of Beijing's vision for hukou, which includes contradictions, all reflecting that local autonomy fostered by Beijing's policy-making process.

Unified Registration System for Rural and Urban Residents

Despite Beijing's 1993 Decision (State Council 1993) to integrate rural and urban populations in the municipality under a unified registration system of "residents" (jumin), an opinion piece published in *Jinan Daily* two years later suggests a contrary idea. It calls the population to be careful about "deepening" the transformation of the conception of the "urban population" (chengshi renkou) (Jinan Daily 1995b). The author argues that Jinan's migrant population increased too fast between 1982 and 1995, at a ratio of thirty thousand people per year instead of less than twenty thousand, as originally planned. His argument calls for the municipal government to control the total urban population within two million people, promoting the segregation of rural and urban hukou holders, not their unification prescribed in Beijing's 1993 Decision.

The diversity that marks the policies (and policy-making processes) of the hukou reforms in Jinan regarding format, status, timing, and other details creates inefficiencies for the population, especially for those who have fewer resources (i.e., time, knowledge, or money) to deal with hukou affairs. For instance, when I did my master's degree in Jinan in the early 2000s, I accompanied a graduate student friend of mine a dozen times to a police station in the city to

apply for a Temporary Resident Permit. Expecting to save time, she carefully prepared the application beforehand based on the experience of an acquittance, but as their residential neighborhood (i.e., hukou jurisdiction) and responsible police station were not the same, the forms and procedures were different. She not only did not save time, but she lost time. I also recall the migrants that I interviewed for my master's thesis complaining that "even" the rules around bribing police officers to get a Temporary Resident Permit, such as the "bribing fee" (zouhou men) were not the same across the city, making bureaucratic processes unpredictable for users.

Despite their inefficiencies, the policy-making processes behind the hukou reforms ironically make the local state bureaucracy more flexible and autonomous. They allow civil servants to use their discretion to adapt and prioritize government processes, including Beijing's vision for hukou, to their specific realities and needs. From this perspective, the hukou reforms in Jinan and other parts of China represent a rupture with the state-planned economy period, when civil servants implemented ready-to-use policies designed in Beijing regardless of its adequacy, timing, effectiveness, and costs. Also, the policy diversity of the hukou reforms, as well as the slowness of the entire policy-making process, are beneficial to Beijing and China; they give Beijing the time and information to reflect on and review its hukou vision, adjusting it on the go through the continual issuance of guidelines.

Using the examples above on the registration of temporary residents and odd populations, blue hukou, the unification of the hukou registration system for urban and rural populations, I tried to demonstrate that Beijing's strategy to govern the hukou reforms consists in providing guidance from afar. "Guidance" appears as a loose vision of what hukou-related practices should look like on the ground. Such a strategy empowers local governments and the grassroots levels

of the state bureaucracy with the ability to make choices and take responsibility for them, making the government process, including policy-making, more flexible and productive. It also produces policy diversity, which can lead to bureaucratic inefficiencies involving hukou services (e.g., application of temporary resident permit and transfer of hukou jurisdiction). However, on a macro level, even the disadvantages of Beijing's strategy are valuable, as they allow the country's political leadership to continually review and reevaluate its hukou vision.

Enforcing the Hukou Vision

As I outlined earlier, Beijing enforces its hukou vision by promoting cooperation (i.e., teamwork) and best practice sharing between local governments, which fosters a liberal type of governance grounded in autonomy and responsibility within the grassroots levels of the state bureaucracy. To do so, it relies on news outlets to publicity and visibility reward policies that fulfill its hukou vision. Local governments view the actions that Beijing endorses as best practices, spreading them across their administrative boundaries. These strategies help local governments to distinguish policies that deserve careful study and implementation from inappropriate ones. By encouraging cooperation and sharing of best practices, Beijing also provides local governments inspiration and examples of how to translate abstract visions into material practices in interiors, while resolving potential conflicting interests between the actors involved.

Cooperation and Best Practices on the National Level

To validate and promote practices across the country, Beijing often uses *People's Daily*. For instance, in August 2001, *People's Daily* published an article commending one city and four township governments in Shandong Province for "conditionally flexibilizing small town hukou" and giving populations the option to decide about residence affairs (People's Daily 2001). Beijing commended these governments for delivering the vision described in a guideline published a few months earlier, in March, titled "Opinions on Promoting the Reform of Household Registration Management System in Small Cities" (State Council 2001). It suggested local governments grant lawful migrants who had a fixed residence and a source of income in the city the right to transfer their hukou registration and gain local citizenship at their "own personal will" (benren yiyuan) (ibid.). *People's Daily* (2001) provided the audience with a concrete example of what a flexibilization of hukou should look like in the future. According to the news piece (ibid.), Beijing expected local governments to give permanent residence to the following three population categories: landless peasants, also referred to as "nongzhuanfei;" investors and entrepreneurs; and graduates from within the province with a specialized secondary school certificate and graduates from outside the province with a post-secondary diploma. Most importantly, in the article, *People's Daily* emphasizes three times in this three-paragraph article that all hukou transfers should be "voluntary" (benren ziyuan), respecting the applicant's "will" (benren yiyuan) highlighting autonomy and responsibility as a core feature of the 2001 Opinions. Then, the same article moves on to praise the Municipality of Jinan and its Public Security Bureau for also creating "relevant policies" within the framework of the hukou reforms regarding the cancelation of "urban expansion fees" (chengshi zengrong fei). The highlight of several state actors in Shandong Province implies that other provinces must view Shandong as an

example to be followed regarding interpreting the 2001 Opinions. In another example, Beijing focused primarily on praising adherence to the rationale behind its guidelines.

In 2012, Beijing commended Shandong's government again in the media, this time for allowing high-school graduates who completed their studies in the province to enjoy the same admission policy in the college entrance examination as local residents, despite having hukou registered elsewhere (People's Daily 2012a). In the same year, *People's Daily* (People's Daily 2012b) published a lengthy discussion detailing the efforts of Shanghe County in Shandong to preserve the rights attached to its rural hukou populations while allowing them to live in the city at the same time. While the article does not endorse any initiative by Shanghe, it praises the County's continued effort for pursuing policies that equalize the rights and duties attached to urban and rural hukou, as this kind of initiative fulfilled the vision to transform hukou transfer (i.e., migration) into a matter of individual choice.

Mimicking the policies that Beijing endorses and its governing style, the Municipality of Jinan also regulates and implements the hukou vision by promoting cooperation and best practices locally. While Beijing uses national media outlets to stimulate the sharing of good policies and provide feedback on the hukou reforms, especially *People's Daily*, local governments use long-standing local media outlets, like *Jinan Daily*.

Cooperation and Best Practices in Jinan

In Jinan, two government agencies deserve special attention regarding cooperation and sharing of best practices: Hongjialou police station in Licheng District and the Public Security Bureau of Tianqiao District. Receiving remarkable media visibility, both agencies have become

sources of best practices, influencing the hukou reforms across Shandong Province and elsewhere, as *Jinan Daily* featured their practices, and the government of Jinan named their initiative as an example to be followed across the city. In June 1997, the municipal government's leadership commended the Hongjialou police station for having an effective "computerized" system to register "temporary populations" (zanzhu renkou) (Jinan Daily 1997e), while police stations across the municipality still struggled to count temporary populations in their jurisdictions. Acknowledging the efficiency of Hongjialou, the municipal government recommended every police station in the city to follow Hongjialou, making it a symbol of best practices. Also, the government used the success of Hongjialou with the management of migrants to justify the need to deploy 3G Internet technology across the municipality, suggesting that the hukou reforms had a much broader impact on society than one could ever imagine. While Hongjialou police station innovated technologically, the Public Security Bureau of Tianqiao expanded the notion of migrant governance beyond coercive policing, which included the punishment of irregular migrants.

In a demonstration of innovation that comes only with autonomy, the Public Security Bureau of Tianqiao District developed a system to manage temporary populations focused on assisting migrants with specific needs; it used the promotion of wellbeing as a strategy to attract and register temporary populations, guiding their behavior. This happened around 1997 when most police stations in Jinan monitored markets, inns, train stations, and karaoke bars to capture and arrest unregistered temporary residents (Jinan Daily 1999b). By 1998, Tianqiao's Bureau had already stepped up its services and fully implemented a "dual" organizational structure to manage temporary populations (Jinan Daily 1998b). Unique in the city, the Tianqiao Bureau included separated and specialized departments that policed and provided services to temporary

populations. Unlike the rest of the news coverage on migrants in the late 1990s, articles about the Bureau in Tianqiao use a unique terminology to refer to "legal" (hefa) temporary residents, often calling them "personnel from elsewhere" (waidi lai Jinan renyuan) and "businesspeople" (wugong jingshang) who contribute to the city's "social and economic development" (jingji he shehui fazhan) (Jinan Daily 1998b). Respectful about the presence of migrants in Jinan, this terminology translates the Bureau's care about the wellbeing of temporary populations. A few years later, police stations in Tianqiao, under the guidance of the local Public Security Bureau, added a daycare and employment search to the services provided to temporary populations (Jinan Daily 2001a). It took the other districts in Jinan and the central government in Beijing several years to catch up with Tianqiao's approach to the management of temporary populations. Hongjialou's and Tianqiao's cases illustrate the collaborative relationship between different spheres of the local state bureaucracy throughout the hukou reforms in Jinan.

Despite being grounded in cooperation, the validation of policies through media announcement and sharing of best practices ironically promotes competition and individuality among civil servants, in addition to autonomy and responsibility. Civil servants, while learning from and cooperating with peers, compete to set a policy standard that will be followed. For example, a retired police officer told me: "I trained numerous police officers on our system to manage temporary residents, including people from Tianqiao's Public Security Bureau! We were the best law-enforcement team in the city at that time [the late 1990s]." Grounded in pride and a sense of accomplishment with the Jinan police, his comment illustrates that cooperation and sharing can be valuable tools in the development of individuality, autonomy, and competition.

My analysis of the strategies that Beijing uses to enforce its hukou vision demonstrates that cooperation and sharing of best practices within and between different departments of the

state bureaucracy also empower the state bureaucracy to act autonomously and in innovative ways. This was the case, as discussed above, of the Public Security Bureau of Tianqiao, which used its autonomy regarding hukou to expand the wellbeing of migrants when this kind of approach was still unpopular in China.

Thus far, I tried to demonstrate that Beijing's governing of the hukou reforms includes the creation of a broad, national vision for hukou. Beijing's way of governing the hukou reforms also relied on news outlets to signal good hukou practices and promote cooperation around its hukou vision throughout the state bureaucracy. Most importantly, Beijing's governing of hukou fosters a type of governance in the grassroots levels of the state bureaucracy that is marked by autonomy, creativity, flexibility, and innovation. In other words, the Communist Party, which is responsible for designing the country's governance model, uses the State Council to promote liberal governance and reconcile collective and private interests, all without diminishing or undermining the role that the state plays in defining and shaping society. Ironically, by leading the creation of a liberal form of governance in China, which in principle conflicts with state intervention, the state (and the Communist Party) continually refreshes and renews its importance.

Part 2: Hukou Reforms and the Transformation of Individuals

Beijing's governing of the hukou reforms and its flexibilization is not restricted to the grassroots level of the state bureaucracy, as I demonstrated in the previous section. The governing strategies that underpin the hukou reforms also impact individuals (e.g., citizens), making them autonomous and empowered to make choices and take responsibility for their

actions regarding geographic mobility. Autonomy and empowerment lead to the development of voluntary compliance with hukou rules. In this part, I discuss how hukou policies evolved in Jinan since the beginning of the hukou reforms from being primarily coercive to acquiring liberal characteristics. I focus on how those policies have contributed to the transformation of hukou subjects into autonomous and responsible beings that make personal choices about hukou affairs and geographic mobility and voluntarily comply with hukou rules. I also divided this part into two sections. In the first section, I demonstrated how hukou policies diffuse hukou power in society, sharing the authority over hukou affairs with extra-state actors, especially employers and landlords. I also demonstrate that the process of hukou power diffusion in Jinan was initially, until 1998, fragmented and erratic. With the creation of a city-wide system to manage migrant populations, the diffusion of hukou power across Jinan became systematic and codified, that is, anchored in legal standards and supported by the law. In the second section, I focus my analysis on the policies that require hukou subjects, particularly migrants, to make decisions, that is, the policies that treat hukou as a matter of choice, training, and embedding them in the liberal art of decision-making.

Sharing Hukou Authority with Extra-State Actors

The reforms started in Jinan, and elsewhere, with the reinforcement of coercive migratory policies that outlawed the existence of unauthorized migrants. In the early years of the reforms, when migratory policies were primarily coercive, Beijing, with the help of the grassroots levels of the state bureaucracy, regulated hukou and geographic mobility practically alone, i.e., without the help of extra-state actors. Eventually, Beijing realized that geographic mobility is a legitimate and necessary aspect of the private economy, changing its strategy to regulate migration from

"strict control" (yange kongzhi) to "management" (guanli) Then, the notion and the practice of geographic mobility management started to formally include extra-state actors (e.g., employers and landlords), a focus on the welfare of migrants, and considerations of the migrant's autonomy to make decisions on mobility affairs. Such a process has not been linear and consistent, but the shift to incorporate autonomy and responsibility is visible and clearly marked by changes in policies.

Jinan Hukou Reforms Between 1977 and 1998: Diffusing Hukou Power

Strictly controlling geographic mobility: The hukou reforms started in the late 1970s as a state reaction to restrict geographic mobility as an intended consequence of the "Household Contract Responsibility System." Appearing in 1978 as an illegal and limited grassroots practice, the Household Contract Responsibility System transferred the decision over agricultural production from the village government to the individual household, reversing the principle of collective farming (i.e., economic) for the first time since 1954 (Oi 1999). After paying the agricultural tax and selling a set amount of grain to the state (i.e., fulfilling the state quota), farmers could do as they pleased with their produce. Most of them turned to the cities, forming markets where they sold their products. Trying to block the in-flows of farmers into urban areas, Beijing firstly used hukou to reinforce the coercive nature of the migration policies that had been attached to hukou throughout Mao's era.

In January 1977, the State Council supported the Ministry of Public Security's "Regulations on Hukou Transfer" (reprinted in Wang 2013, 211-215), ordering the entire state bureaucracy to exercise "strict control" of populations, especially in larger cities like Beijing,

Shanghai, and Tianjin. The 1977 Regulations explicitly called local governments to properly "control" (kongzhi) the presence of peasants (i.e., non-local hukou holders) in urban suburbs, "state farmers" (guoying nongchang) and "vegetable squads" (shucai dui) as well as the flows of populations in and out the cities. In a nutshell, the 1977 Regulations required larger cities to monitor populations according to their hukou information and police individuals outside their hukou jurisdiction, that is, mostly peasant migrants. The Regulations also ordered civil servants to "dissuade" populations from engaging in any kind of "free movement" (ibid.). Such a task, however, was practically impossible at that time; the number of peasants moving back and forth between the city and countryside to sell their produce was skyrocketing. Also, law enforcement agents had to rely on their discretion to monitor these populations given that the Chinese, at that time, did not carry a document to prove identity; the hukou booklet was kept at home, while the personal ID card had not yet been launched. In the following year, Beijing began to slowly change its position on the role of migrants and geographic mobility, sharing the authority over migratory affairs with extra-state actors, starting with employers.

Involving employers in the management of migrants: In 1978, Beijing authorized public and private enterprises that could afford to feed and to house their employees to hire peasant workers and relocate their hukou jurisdiction, not classification, from the village to the workplace (Wang 2013, 215). A milestone in the hukou reforms, the 1978 Authorization acknowledges for the first time within the hukou framework that embracing private markets required developing a large and free labor market that included rural hukou holders; it essentially revitalizes the existence of migration as a legitimate social phenomenon. The urban population was too small, representing less than twenty percent of the country's population, in addition to being tied to work units. Although Beijing's authorization improved the availability of labor and

promoted entrepreneurship, it also created a serious unintended social problem in China, arguably the largest problem in the context of the hukou reforms. Without considering the welfare of migrant populations, it transformed millions of workers into semi-citizens, ignored both by urban and rural governments.

Attracted to urban areas after a promise of economic prosperity, millions of workers left their rural lands for a job in the city without gaining access to urban citizenship. This happened because their employers changed their hukou jurisdiction to the workplace address in the city but not their classification to non-agricultural; requirements involving the food rationing policy prevented employers from doing so. Thus, in the city, those workers were officially regarded as "rural" residents (i.e., rural hukou holders) without "urban" rights. Meanwhile, in the countryside, they were regarded as urban workers who had no right to land because their hukou jurisdiction had been transferred to the city. In limbo, those workers became landless peasants (i.e., the nongzhuanfei I mentioned earlier) or welfare-less urbanites, depending on the perspective.

As landless peasants were still counted and classed as agricultural hukou holders, Beijing paid less attention to them in comparison to "hukou transferees" throughout the hukou reform, that is, those migrants who obtained full local citizenship. The problem of landless peasants became visible as the years went by, and many of those employers shut down, leaving workers accustomed to urban life but without a place to settle their hukou registration. Trapped, workers had no money to buy a home in the city to settle their hukou. Relocating their hukou back to the village was not an option either because their land had been redistributed among the remaining residents. While they sorted their problem, their hukou registration stayed within the police

station that was closest to their former workplace. This population category totaled fifty-three million people in 1990 (Wang 2013, 106), about two decades into the hukou reforms.

I interviewed several participants who experienced life as a landless peasant. All of them had already changed their classification and become legal urbanites. Some did so through the programs that rewarded migrants with a secondary school certificate (i.e., vocational school). Others did so by purchasing a home in the city around 2005 when the municipality started to grant citizenship to homeowners. Their stories restate the historical continuities of hukou as an oppressive mechanism.

Some former landless peasants discussed how workplace managers and supervisors abused their legal ability to regulate the behavior of workers continuously, on and off duty. After losing their jobs, a few participants had problems with the police station that filed their hukou during the numerous campaigns to "rectify hukou" (qingcha zhengdun hukou) or "rectify mobile populations" (qingcha zhengdun liudong renkou) (Jinan Daily 1997b, 1993c, 1995a, 1997d, 1999b, 2000b). Having to find another place to register their hukou, they fell victim to extortion. A common practice until the mid-2000s consisted of paying business owners to be listed as an employee and registered in the firm's "collective hukou" (jiti hukou), but those business owners often exploited the migrant social and legal vulnerability. One participant told me that she changed her hukou address several times as a landless peasant in Jinan because business owners always ended up taking advantage of their position of power and her vulnerability to extort increasingly large sums of money. Although most landless peasants eventually managed to reclassify their hukou to non-agricultural, their stories, packed with trouble and suffering, often represent a continual reminder that the transformation of hukou towards a more flexible and liberal technology of government includes historical continuities. At the same time that hukou

began to empower its subjects, it still subjected them to coercion and inequality. Not every migrant had the same tragic fate, though. Many found easier pathways into Jinan.

Beijing's change of mindset to include extra-state actors in the management of migrants not only endorsed the existence of migrants as a legitimate economic necessity but also facilitated numerous hukou transfers (i.e., formal migrations). The number of hukou transferees across the country increased by eighteen million between 1978 and 1980 (Wang 2013, 219), an average of six million per year. In Jinan, it increased by eighty thousand people (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015). Concerned about the increasingly large flows of hukou transferees into the cities, Beijing called on governments once again, in 1981, to "strictly control" (yange kongzhi) the flow of "peasant workers" (nongmingong) (State Council 1981), signaling once again that historical changes are not linear and progressive. The 1981 Announcement states that all permanent hires had to receive approval of the State Council (ibid.) as a measure to curb fraudulent hukou transfers. However, unlike the 1978 Authorization, the 1981 Announcement includes a new terminology to address migratory affairs. The 1981 Announcement emphasizes the need for strengthening the "management" of migration. The word choice (e.g., "management") signals that Beijing was dropping the idea of "blocking" migration (zuzhi mengliu or yange kongzhi shi or guanche yange kongzhi shi). It also indicates that Beijing had started to shift its understanding of "control" (kongzhi) which is common in hukou documents from that time, to include the idea of "management" (guanli) a more liberal concept. The new terms are void of specific meaning, broader, and thus more flexible in their applicability; they also accommodated for individualism and subjectivity with regards to their interpretation.

Rewarding autonomy among migrants, while strengthening the role of employers: In 1984, Beijing issued an announcement (State Council 1984) that legitimizes the geographic

mobility of private entrepreneurs, as well as their contributions to the country's economic development. Referred as "self-supplied food grain hukou" (zili kouliang hukou), the 1984 Announcement (State Council 1984) authorizes "small market town" (jizhen) governments to accept temporary residents who could prove their ability to support themselves. It also orders small market towns to partner with employers to design a comprehensive registration system to collect detailed demographic information on temporary resident populations, their family members, friends, and visitors (State Council 1984). The partnership between local governments and employers in the regulation of migrants referred not only to the surveillance of temporary populations but also to the application process to transfer hukou. To apply for the self-supplied food grain hukou registration, applicants had to obtain either a business license of their own, which was difficult or approval from their employer, depending on if the applicant was an entrepreneur or an employee. Thus, the 1984 Announcement strengthened the employer's authority in hukou affairs while making no reference to the role of the landlord.

In 1985, Beijing expanded the role of employers in the management of migrant populations, giving them more autonomy and responsibility for migrant workers. It launches the principle "who hires, manages, who shelters, bears responsibility" (shei yong, shei guanli, shei zhusu, shei zeren) through the 1985 Provisions (Ministry of Public Security 1985). Due to such provisions, employers became officially responsible for managing and monitoring migrants, just like "work units" (danwei) (Shaw 1996) managed and monitored urbanites in the Mao era. Those migrants, however, did not enjoy the privileges that transformed Mao's urbanites into today's economic elite. Beijing expected employers to register migrants with the police station and report on their "permanent" movements, such as dismissal, resignation, and prolonged absence. Government authorities also expected employers to manage their employees' micro mobility

through curfew and pass control systems that kept records of their mobility. According to the 1985 Provisions (Ministry of Public Security 1985) and interview accounts, local police officers often inspected such rules and systems, as well as related records.

Involving landlords in the management of migrants: Until the privatization of the housing system in 1998 (i.e., the housing reform), the stock of places available for renting was virtually non-existent. The housing market was entirely controlled by the state bureaucracy through state-owned enterprises and the few private firms available, with virtually every migrant at the time living in employer-provided dormitories at their workplace. Therefore, the figure of the landlord was not relevant yet. However, anticipating a change of social environment, the 1985 Provisions include landlords into the scheme to "manage" (guanli) migrants.

Beijing's inclusion of landlords into the management of temporary migrants intended to support the policing of irregular migrants (i.e., migrants detached from a workplace) living in rented rooms at the private homes. The few urbanite families that were left out of Mao's collective housing system lived in private homes and enjoyed enough invisibility to evade the norms and rent out to migrants without reporting their business arrangement to law-enforcement. To curb the number of migrants renting in private homes, the 1985 Provisions required migrants detached from an employer and renting in urban areas to obtain a "certificate" (zhengming) from their former employer or organ responsible for their hukou registration attesting to their background. Upon obtaining such a certification, they had to go to the police station with the landlord to apply for the Temporary Resident Permit. Clause 3 of the 1985 Provisions states that "landlords dealing with persons of 'unclear background' [laili buming de ren] shall not grant themselves the right to rent" (ibid.). This provision, although somewhat coercive, as it ordered landlords not to rent to "suspicious" tenants, drew on the assumption that landlords had the skill

and the autonomy to contribute to governing by properly discriminating the "bad" from "good" tenants. In other words, it encouraged, yet in a subtle way, landlords to actively participate in the governance of migrants.

Backtracking to use coercion to obtain hukou compliance from employers and landlords: To regulate the behavior of landlords and ensure that only tenants of "clear background" obtained a home in the city, the Public Security Bureau of Jinan's Huaiyin District inverted its procedures, requiring tenants to clear background checks at the police station prior to signing the rental agreement. Upon clearing a background check, tenants received the "household number" plaque, which is commonly displayed at the household door, allowing them to proceed with the rental agreement (Jinan Daily 1995c). This measure limited the landlord's power to rent out to migrants irregularly in Huaiyin, but not elsewhere in the city. However, even landlords from Huaiyin tried to resist the government's attempt to prevent them from using their powers irregularly. My interview accounts suggest that it was still relatively easy to find a landlord willing to rent out to irregular migrants in Huaiyin despite the initiative, but renting from those landlords was risky. Landlords either rented in areas known for the presence of irregular migrants, which experience continual police surveillance or tried to take advantage of the migrant's vulnerability through blackmail and extortion. Aware of these irregularities, the Public Security Bureau of Jinan conducted campaigns to "rectify" the problems with the registration of temporary populations, which included landlords renting out to migrants, often irregular migrants (i.e., undocumented) without following the procedures. As the state's reliance on employers and landlords increased, fraud involving hukou transfers became more common, leading the Municipality of Jinan to move beyond public education campaigns and resort to coercive measures, such as the application of fines.

The hukou rectification campaigns threatened to fine employers and landlords that did not comply with the migrant management system of the police stations in their jurisdictions (Jinan Daily 1995a). Employers hiring irregular migrants could be fined with a maximum of one-thousand Renminbi, an astronomical amount of money at that time, or receive a "police warning" (ibid.). Meanwhile, landlords renting to migrants without following the legal procedures could be held legally liable and face prosecution. Despite their coercive nature, such campaigns still reinforced the authority of employers and landlords to regulate the life of migrant workers.

Fueling power dynamics in the city: Essentially, the 1985 Provisions subordinate migrants to the will of three parties, past, and future employers and landlords, in addition to often corrupt police officers. From another perspective, those provisions encouraged employers and landlords to contribute to the management of migrant populations. One may suppose that the migrant management system of the 1980s was primarily coercive or oppressive, but that was not the case. It also offered opportunities for building relationships. Based on interview accounts, employers, landlords, police officers, and migrants also viewed hukou affairs as an opportunity for networking and the exchange of gifts and favors. In other words, the 1985 Provisions empowered those involved in the migration process, as everyone used their power to negotiate their interests. I learned from a retired hukou officer from Hanjiazhuang, a village in Jinan's Licheng District, that until the mid-2000s, no hukou paperwork could be completed without networking and exchanges of expensive gifts in Jinan. "Everyone involved at the place of origin and destiny, from hukou officials in the villages to employers and landlords in the city, benefited from the obstacles involving hukou affairs," he told me.

My personal records of life in China abound with examples of the complexity of the power dynamics involving hukou affairs, employers, landlords, police officers, and migrants. In

June 2006, upon graduating from the master's program, I moved to the suburbs of Shanghai to work at an international aluminum factory. My employer did most of my residence paperwork and offered to find me an apartment in the city, but I insisted on doing it by myself. In addition to protecting my privacy, I wanted to live by the factory and experience life among rural migrant workers, and I knew that the firm would try to dissuade me from my plan. The human resource manager called me in, insisting for me to let the firm do it for me. She said that the process was too "inconvenient," but I dismissed her warning without understanding she was concerned about me being taken advantage of in the process; she also wanted to avoid delays and problems with my hiring process, which could hurt her reputation. Once I finally found an apartment, it took me six dinners fueled with a lot of alcohol, a dozen cartons of "Zhonghua" cigarettes, several bottles of fancy liquor, countless trips to the real estate agency, and higher rent, to seal the deal with the landlord and his agent. Once I moved in, I had to deal with the constant inquisitive gaze of neighbors; most of them had never seen a non-Chinese person. The foreign population living in Shanghai at that time was small (about 50,000 people) in comparison to today (about 215,000 in 2019), and lived in the rich areas of the city, by Gubei Rd. As my presence in "migrant" residential compounds completely broke the norm, neighbors found my "activities" suspicious and kept reporting me to the local police station, reproducing the surveillance to which they were constantly subjected to in the city. One evening two police officers finally came to check my papers, letting everyone know that I was "legal." Contradicting the norm, they appeared to have no expectation other than to clarify my background and purpose in the city, but later on, I learned from colleagues at work that the officers only left me alone because they probably knew that I was with a large firm in the district. This experience made me realize that hukou affairs involve a complex set of power relations where everything matters, including gender, place of origin, place

of destiny, hukou classification, occupation, and employer. In my case, even nationality mattered. When I moved out and returned the apartment key at the agency, the agent told me that my rent was cheaper because I was not from a rich country like America.

In another personal account involving hukou, I accompanied a Chinese friend to Bin County in Harbin City, Heilongjiang Province, to get some hukou paperwork done for her to leave the country as an international student. Like mine, her paperwork cost her a lot of money and time computed in numerous cartons of Zhonghua and countless trips to the police station. Unlike me, she never seemed annoyed about the red tape, the coming and going, and the long daily visits to the police chief, who smoked like a chimney in a totally closed room. At that time, I could not yet speak Chinese, having to continually ask her for explanations of the events and situations. She would always tell me that those meetings with the officer were part of the "negotiation." On our way back to Beijing, she explained to me that the whole process was positive because it strengthened the "connection" (i.e., relationship or guanxi) between the officer and her parents. According to my friend, her hukou paperwork created an unbreakable sense of mutual obligation between the parties involved. I heard similar reasoning from interview participants who went through stressful situations involving hukou and schooling enrolment for their children. They said that hukou affairs were costly and tiring, but they all appreciated hukou's capacity to foster relationships. In this sense, the 1985 Provisions had a direct impact on Chinese society regarding the creation and regulation of relationships involving migrants, employers, and landlords.

Sharing the responsibility for the management of migrants: The government of Jinan used the hukou rectification campaigns mentioned earlier to infuse a sense of individual responsibility into urbanites, requesting them to become "self-conscious" (zijue) about the need

to support hukou and help with the surveillance of migrants (Jinan Daily 1993c, 1997a). Some campaigns promoted the idea that every resident, temporary or permanent, should develop a sense of "self-governance" (guan ziji) with regards to following hukou rules, stimulating individual responsibility not only among urbanites but also among migrants. For instance, a campaign from 2002 suggested that residents had to govern themselves according to the laws and help each other sort a variety of topics, including birth planning, unemployment, and temporary populations, instead of completely relying on the state (Jinan Daily 2002e). Population governance strategies that rely on the individual initiative to engage in mutual surveillance have always been common in China (Dutton 1992). However, unlike today, stimuli for surveillance and autonomy (i.e., individual initiative) in the past were often coupled with clear and specific guidelines or role models that people were supposed to follow. This was the case of campaigns that incentivized populations to model their lives after the selfless soldier Lei Feng and monitor everyone's behavior against his; Beijing portrayed Lei Feng as a symbol of selflessness and devolution to Communist values (e.g., equality, comradeship, and mutual help) (Chen 1968). Today incentives for personal autonomy and initiative come with fewer or no instructions or models; they are more generic and flexible, fitting several types of identities. Today's incentives expect citizens to be self-conscious of laws and rules, interpreting them in the "right way," that is, Beijing's way. Beijing extended, such incentives end up impacting the individual as a whole and affecting various domains of life, not only the political. This is the case of public campaigns that promote the following values: Prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, impartiality, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship, even though these values do not have quite the same meaning as in Western, high-income, liberal democracies. Ongoing in Chinese cities since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party in

November 2012, these campaigns encourage populations to think about these values and apply them to daily life, instead of imposing strict or limiting interpretations.

Jinan Hukou Reforms from 1998 to 2013: Building Voluntary Compliance with Hukou Power

Treating migrants (i.e., non-local hukou holders) as subjects of rights: The involvement of employers and landlords in the management of temporary populations became fully regulated across Jinan, in a standard way, in 1998, when the municipality issued the "Temporary Resident Population Management Measures" (Jinan Daily 1998c). The 1998 Measures requires temporary migrants to go through the lengthy and expensive process of applying for a "Temporary Resident Permit" (Jinan Daily 1998c), but to do so, migrants needed the help of employers or landlords, depending on the case. Based on the principle "who hires, manages, who shelters, bears responsibility" mentioned earlier, the 1998 Measures lists employment and fixed residence in the city as basic eligibility criteria to obtain a permit. Such criteria excluded numerous migrants who came to the city to sell their products or services, without a formal job and legal accommodation. The legislation merges, expands, and details the already existing duties and responsibilities of employers and landlords in the management of temporary populations. It also consolidates and standardizes the already existing punishment for infractions involving hiring and renting out to irregular migrants. Most importantly, it also introduces migrants, that is, non-local hukou holders, as subjects of legal rights for the first time ever in an official manner. The rights covered in the 1998 Measures refer to labor rights and tenant rights.

Clause 16 of the 1998 Measures announces that employers must provide migrant workers "life conditions" (shenghuo tiaojian), which refers primarily to accommodation, in addition to medical care, the right to rest, social insurance, and the agreed compensation. Meanwhile, Clause 17 stipulates that landlords must comply with fire and other safety rules. It also bans landlords who have been convicted of using the rental property in criminal activities within two years prior to the rental agreement from renting to migrants. These measures did not stop the numerous abuses that marked the bodies and souls of rural migrants in Jinan. They also did not end official discourses that associated migration with criminality in an attempt to generate compliance with hukou affairs (Jinan Daily 1995a, 1996a, 1997b, d, 2002d). However, the 1998 Measures represented important steps regarding wellbeing not only as a source of hukou governance but also as a stimulus for voluntary compliance with hukou affairs.

Improving hukou-related services to promote people's wellbeing and voluntary compliance with hukou: Drawing on the assumption that migrants are subjects of legal rights, not only duties, and intending to promote their wellbeing, the Municipality of Jinan started, in the early 1990s, to improve hukou services, making them more convenient, and easier to use. These services include Temporary Resident Permit application, hukou transfer application, hukou registration, among others.

In 1992, Jinan's Public Security Bureau announced that it had instructed police stations across the city to improve the communication within their ranks regarding hukou-related processes and applications (Jinan Daily 1992b, a), allowing officers to take messages in the absence of colleagues and voluntarily follow up on cases. It also publicized the telephone number of its branches at the district level (Jinan Daily 1992b), an unusual act of open governance at that time, when bureaucratic processes were marked by inaction and delay.

Suggesting that improving hukou services was a serious goal in Jinan, in 1996, the Public Security Bureau ordered (Jinan Daily 1996b) police stations to expedite the services to permanent residents transferring hukou within the city. The order included offering a twenty-four-hour hukou service with "computerized" kiosks to the population, a measure that has never been fully implemented according to interviews. Before police stations could expand their human-based services to twenty-four-hours, the Internet became popular in Jinan, allowing the introduction, albeit slowly, of a unified "twenty-four seven" online service for several hukou procedures (Jinan Daily 2001d).

In 1999, Jinan Daily published an article praising a police station in the municipality for having the best "customer-oriented" (bian min yi xin jucuo) hukou services in the city, pushing other stations to follow suit. Targeting workers who had to deal with hukou procedures after business hours, the police station offered quick services, which included a twenty-four-hour helpline, and "computerized" (biaozhun bianru weiji chengxu) that displayed the list of services provided and their related "standard fees" (shoufei biaozhun) (1999d). The article concludes that "although small," such improvements demonstrated that police officers were "full of enthusiasm" (manqiang reqing) for serving the people, suggesting that the quality of service mattered.

In 2001, when some of the online hukou services had already been implemented, the Municipality of Jinan celebrated the convenience of hukou procedures by saying that users had to pass through only "one-stop" (yi zhanshi) (Jinan Daily 2001c) to resolve hukou affairs, in a clear allusion to the "hukou red tape" (ban hukou nan). Interview participants confirmed that the government's effort to make hukou more convenient paid off, as supported by news reports. Overall, the initiatives I report focused on the availability and flexibility of hukou services,

breaking the secrecy that involve hukou information and procedures, and reducing or eliminating the cost of hukou procedures. This initiative presupposed that hukou subjects are diverse individuals that must be "serviced" by the state bureaucracy instead of simply a uniform mass of people who follow orders from government officials. The municipal government expected that migrants would view the improvement of hukou registration and transfer services as being conducive to their personal needs and interests. Thus, the government used the notion of "convenience" (fangbian) as an effective strategy to foster and enforce voluntary compliance with hukou affairs among migrants. However, when discussing hukou compliance over time, several interview participants focused on "how expensive" hukou procedures used to be until 2002. they experienced the high cost of hukou procedures as a burden and associated it with "unfairness," that is, the coercive dimension of the hukou system.

Aligning geographic mobility with market needs, while strengthening autonomy and individualism: In 2002, the municipal government canceled the fees charged in the application for "Temporary Resident Permit " (Jinan Daily 2002a), recognizing they represented an obstacle for low-income migrants—the majority at that time—to comply with hukou rules. Such a change brought migrants great relief. Many migrants, as I identified in my master's degree research (Siqueira Cassiano 2006), even identified it with a potential "abolishment" of hukou in Jinan, which clearly was not the case. By canceling the Temporary Resident Permit application free, the municipality did facilitate compliance with hukou, but it still left the most remarkable barrier that migrant populations faced in complying with hukou rules untouched. This barrier refers to the need to prove "employment" and "legal and permanent residence" in the city. The latter refers to an official document issued by the employer housing the migrant or an official copy of the rental

agreement. Although able to make a living in the city, numerous migrants did not have a formal job in Jinan; they worked in the informal economy. Also, many lived in shared apartments or rented rooms, being unable to provide proof of residence, such as a contract in their names. In 2005, trying to solve this problem to improve compliance with hukou, the municipality replaced those two requirements with the notion of individual skill. In other words, it replaced the requirements of "employment" (jiuye) and "legal and permanent residence" (fa suo zhi guding zhusuo) with "legal occupation" (hefa zhiye) and "legal income" (hefa shouru) (Jinan Government 2005). This change not only benefited migrants but also delivered the values of the growing private market economy, such as entrepreneurship, more effectively.

A few years later, in 2013, the Municipality of Jinan implemented more changes to the management of temporary populations. It dropped the need to prove "occupation" (zhiye) and "income" (shouru) in the city (Jinan Daily 2012), eliminating any barrier or obstacle for temporary migrants to register themselves. Such a change had a profound impact on how migrants thought of themselves and how residents viewed migrants. "It felt like we did not have to necessarily work in Jinan to be accepted here; you could live here simply because you like it here," a migrant from Shanxi Province who has been in the city since the early 1990s told me. His comment suggests that migrants no longer had to justify their presence in Jinan economically. Dropping the occupation and income requirement meant that migrants have a greater opportunity for their individuality and autonomy to flourish; they could come, go, stay, or leave according to their will or choice.

The 2013 change, however, had an even more important goal; to alter the name and scope of the Temporary Resident Permit (zanzhu zheng) system, which registered "temporary" migrants, to simply "Resident Permit" (juzhu zheng) system. The municipal government,

essentially, admitted that migrants had become an important part of the city and acknowledged that their migration was permanent. The change also addressed the stigma that migrants suffered in Jinan; it stopped enforcing the idea that migrants were "temporary" beings with no cultural and social attachment to the city. Another important consequence of the 2013 change refers to the migrant retention of rural land rights.

As the resident permit application became simple and easy, living and working in Jinan stopped being a "big deal." Migrants slowly realized that they could come and go without too many strings attached. Such flexibility contributed to their enhanced autonomy, individuality, and decision-making skills. Also, rural migrants started to realize that they no longer had to choose between land rights and urban rights, although some of the urban resources were still formally or informally unavailable to migrants who did not transfer their hukou. Every person with whom I discussed this change, including traditional Jinan residents, welcomed this initiative. Many celebrated it as an issue of convenience. I heard from practically every migrant interview participant that applying for the "Resident Permit" is "easy, fast, and free" (fangbian, kuai, mianfei). Excited about the topic, numerous participants even forgot that applicants still need to prove "some evidence" of residence in the city, saying: "All you need is the ID!" Applicants who do not own a home in the city still need to provide a copy of the landlord's ID and a copy of the rental agreement or a letter from whoever is renting to them. However, this requirement no longer seems to present a serious problem for migrants. "With the housing market reform, every local, I mean everyone who worked at a work unit during the planned-economy period, has got a spare home to rent; the market is tight, and everyone is willing to help," said a hukou transferee outlining that competition in the real estate market also plays a part in the hukou reforms, often changing power relationships (Chapter 5).

By analyzing the hukou policies in Jinan between 1977 and 2013, I hope I have demonstrated that the governing rationale of the hukou reforms in the city changed dramatically since the late 1970s; it slowly evolved from using coercion to using autonomy to obtain migrant compliance with hukou rules. At the center of this change lies state-led policies that diffuse hukou power across society, as they share the state's authority over hukou with employers and landlords. Such policies, especially between 1977 and 2002, used employers and landlords as surveillance agents to monitor migrant populations, but they also had a creative dimension. They empower the actors involved in the migration process, as everyone (i.e., migrants, employers, and landlords) can use hukou to negotiate and achieve their personal interests. Further, the participation of extra-state actors in the management of hukou in a regular and meaningful way represents a novelty in the history of the People's Republic.

The state bureaucracy has always relied on mutual surveillance in the community to manage hukou affairs, which includes extra-state agents (i.e., individuals and families) reporting individuals living irregularly outside their hukou jurisdiction (Jinan Daily 1993a; People's Daily 1949a). It has also relied on spies recruited from within the communities to report on hukou affairs (ibid.). However, the state bureaucracy, in Beijing or at grassroots levels, has never shared its authority to rule hukou with extra-state agents in a systematized, regular, official, public, and thus meaningful way until the hukou reforms.

Giving Choices to Hukou Subjects

As I outlined earlier, several hukou policies imposed upon hukou subjects the “burden” of decision-making involving geographic mobility. From the perspective of governance, these policies train individuals in the art of making choices and taking responsibility for them.

Making hukou jurisdiction and classification optional for the first time: Earlier in this chapter, I referred to the 1978 Announcement, which authorized employers to hire peasant workers, as a milestone in the history of the hukou reforms. Another milestone was the 1997 Opinions that the State Council issued on how to improve hukou in rural areas (State Council 1997). Addressing the family, the original site of hukou regulation, the 1997 Opinions (ibid.) gave parents autonomy to decide on their children’s hukou jurisdiction and classification, as I detail below, embedding choice within hukou in a universal manner for the first time ever.

With the1997 Opinions, spouses registered in different hukou jurisdictions (i.e., addresses) and with different hukou classification (i.e., agricultural and non-agricultural) gained the right to decide on which parent’s household registration they wanted to register their children. Until 1997, children of such parents were registered with their mothers, as the government expected women to have comparatively lower socioeconomic status. By forcing children to follow the mother, Beijing dissuaded marriages involving “mixed” hukou classifications and prevented incoming generations from upgrading their socioeconomic status to “urban,” which would have meant increasing the urban allocations of resources in the state budget. Beijing’s strategy addressed the needs of the state-planned resource allocation, which depended on stable, predictable population behavior. As I show in this section, the 1997 Opinions was only the first step in attaching hukou to policies that treat populations as autonomous hukou subjects that can make choices of their own.

The 1997 Opinions also had other implications involving the management of migrants and the operation of choice. The 1997 document called on village governments to improve the accuracy of the hukou system in the countryside, suggesting that Beijing wanted to ensure the traceability of migrants not only in the cities but also back home in the villages. The document recommended that governments issue each family an independent hukou booklet, improve the accuracy of hukou data collection, and reinforce the management of household number plaques, which proved hukou status. It also gave migrants living in small market towns the option to apply to transfer their hukou. To be eligible, migrants had to fulfill three criteria: live in a legal and fixed address in town; reside in town for at least two years; have a non-farming occupation, or a stable source of income (State Council 1997). In the following year, Beijing issued another document, also titled "Opinions," further expanding the availability of choice involving hukou.

In addition to reinforcing the 1997 Opinions regarding the option for parents, the 1998 Opinions (State Council 1998) allowed spouses living separately, in urban and rural hukou jurisdictions, to unite their households and settle hukou in either jurisdiction, as per their "choice." This measure, according to interviews, brought great relief to urban women who, for whatever reason, married men from the countryside and lived in the cities with their parents, away from their husbands. The story of an interview participant illustrates the importance of the 1998 Opinion for family reunification.

After watching her parents be brutally assassinated in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) because of their "bourgeoise" roots, Lily grew up practically alone, with the help of a few relatives, and in poverty; although she was an urbanite, entitled to housing, food, education, and a job, she received none of it. When she reached the marriage age, her stigma prevented her from finding a suitable husband among her acquaintances, leading her to resort to marrying a man

from the countryside. Embarrassed by her cross-cultural marriage, which used to be a taboo, she delayed pregnancy as much as she could, hoping that hukou policies would change, allowing her husband to join her in the city. She thought that raising a child alone in the city would be difficult, as her "dishonorable" story would gain visibility. Thus, despite the constant fear of aging and becoming infertile, she only got pregnant in 1998, when the rule changed, and her husband moved in with her in the city. "I couldn't believe when the rule changed, giving us a choice," she told me while staring at her husband, who sat across the room.

In addition to giving couples a choice about their own residential status, the 1998 Opinions also expanded the choice involving area of residence to retired rural couples whose children lived in urban areas. It gave such couples an option to transfer their hukou registration to the city to live with their children, especially sons, as is the custom in China. This policy helped both aging parents who needed assistance from their children and young couples, as while being cared for by their children, parents help with the education of their grandchildren. However, it also imposed a dilemma upon families.

Dealing with choices around mobility, caregiving, and resources: Benefiting from the 1998 Opinions meant choosing between giving up rights over rural land or receiving the care and love of adult children who lived in the city and living a more comfortable life; the option of migration disconnected from formal work was not available until recently, as I said earlier. Most families chose to give up rights in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Today's rural couples still move in with their adult sons in the city, but they live in Jinan as temporary migrants (i.e., Resident Permit holders), without transferring their hukou registration. I noticed during fieldwork that all my former male classmates from the countryside, who are now married and have children, brought their parents to live with them in the city. When one classmate, who now

lives in Beijing, told me that his mother lived with him, I followed up surprised: “How did you get your mom’s hukou transferred?” Beijing is famous for having nearly-impossible-to-meet hukou transfer criteria. “We don’t want her to transfer it; she wants to keep her land. She still has her chickens in the village. We keep the house there for the weekends,” he told me, outlining the benefits of being able to make choices around hukou and mobility.

Lastly, the 1998 Opinions gave entrepreneurs who proved legal and fixed residence in the city and a stable source of income the option to transfer their hukou; the provision included individuals who both lived with relatives and purchased a home. Articles from *Jinan Daily* confirmed that the 1997 and 1998 Opinions remarkably impacted life in Jinan. In 2000, one article (Jinan Daily 2000a) announced that 17,444 individuals or 10,829 households obtained a local hukou through programs that reflected the 1997 and 1998 Opinions. The article (ibid.) also highlighted that the city approved 800,000 applications to transfer hukou between districts in the city, suggesting that the housing reform, which privatized the housing market and created a stock of housing available for sales, coupled with the hukou reforms became another source of choice involving hukou. With the housing reform, urban residents became homebuyers empowered with consumer choice and started to invest in new residential developments, moving within the city and altering Jinan’s urban dynamics. In this case, however, as in most, consumer choice was guided by the state bureaucracy. The Municipality of Jinan has always guided consumer choices with building licenses and zoning bylaws that determine the type and cost of properties available in the market. Thus, hukou transfers within the city became a matter of aligning the city’s need to urbanize (i.e., public goals) with individual needs and circumstances. The same happened to education; the municipal government has been using hukou to retain or attract qualified workers and improve the productivity of the workforce since the early 2000s.

Giving students the option to stay and transfer hukou: In the early 2000s, the Municipality of Jinan extended the option to transfer hukou to higher education graduates, who were regarded as "talents" (rencai) that could contribute to the city's development. In 2002, the municipality implemented a policy referred to as "first settle hukou, then find a job" (xian luohu, hou jiuye). It gave post-secondary students the option to either transfer their hukou back home upon graduation or leave it registered at the education institution at a fee for a period of two years until they could find employment in the city (Jinan Daily 2002b). In 2003, *Jinan Daily* (Jinan Daily 2003a) announced that since its launch, the policy attracted 981 bachelor students and 31 graduate students to the city. Celebrating the beginning of the "green light" (lüse tongdao) to "bring in" (yinjin) and "stock up" (chubei) "talents" (rencai) who had "ambition" (you zhi) to settle and develop in Jinan, the outlet says that three thousand graduates were expected to choose Jinan in the upcoming year. A few years later, the municipal government consolidated the use of choice in the governing of hukou transfers in an official and more inclusive way.

Expanding the option to stay and transfer hukou to the entire population: In 2005, the Municipality of Jinan launched eleven hukou transfer programs organized under the document "Provisional Measures for Deepening the Hukou Reform in Jinan" (Jinan Government 2005). The programs listed in the 2005 Measures allowed the following population profiles to apply to transfer hukou to the city: government cadres; post-secondary graduates; talents (graduate students); family members who needed care; home investors purchasing a home of at least one-hundred square meters in size; investors; military members; retirees; employees of state-owned enterprises relocated for work; honorary citizens and model workers; and other categories designed by the authorities. Most interview participants perceived the 2005 Measures

or the “mid-2005” as the beginning of the flexibilization of hukou in Jinan. When I inquired further into the meaning of flexibilization, they used the words “will” (yiyuan), “freedom” (ziyou) and “voluntary” (benren ziyuan) or to describe that hukou transfers had become a matter of “choice” (ziji xuanzede) even though that choice was determined by sociohistorical conditions.

Aligning hukou transfer options with the needs of the real estate market: In 2008, Jinan’s municipal government (Jinan Government 2008) changed the home size requirement to transfer hukou through the home investors program, setting it according to the migrant’s original hukou jurisdiction and classification. Migrants, rural or urban, coming from outside the Municipality of Jinan (i.e., “outsiders”) had to buy a home of at least 90 square meters in size, while migrants were coming from rural areas in the municipality (i.e., “locals”) had to buy a home of at least 75 square meters. The distinction between outsiders and locals according to the home size allowed the municipality to guide the investment choice of hukou transferees within the city, as well as use home size to segregate populations according to space of origin and socioeconomic status across the urban space, all while empowering transferees to choose their specific home and address. The home size requirement of the hukou transfer policy also allowed the municipality to fulfill Beijing’s guidelines to prioritize “small-sized, ordinary commodity housing” (zhongxiao tao xing putong shangpin zhufang) instead of “villas” (bieshu) and other low-density housing (Jinan Daily 2008), aligning individual needs in Jinan to the needs of Beijing. To curb overactivity in the real estate market, which could lead to price hikes, the municipality stipulated that a home could only be used for hukou transfer once every five years. The government also ruled that migrants purchasing a “second-hand” home (ershou fang) had to wait two years before becoming eligible to transfer hukou. These two rules also guided the

choices of hukou subjects while delivering the need to regulate the real estate market; that is, keep prices under control and promote new developments simultaneously.

Experiencing hukou as a matter of personal choice: In 2017, the Municipality of Jinan eliminated the home size requirement of the homeownership program (Jinan Daily 2016), fulfilling a set of recommendations issued by Beijing in 2014, also organized under the rubric of "Opinions." The 2014 Opinions (State Council 2014b) renewed Beijing's ongoing recommendation for governments across the country to create a "unified urban and rural resident hukou registration system" (chengxiang tongyi de hukou dengji zhidu) (State Council 1992, 1993; Jinan Daily 1994; Jinan Government 2005) and ensure that such a system conveys the "will" (yiyuan) of populations regarding residence. The Municipality also allowed migrants to use rental properties to transfer hukou jurisdiction upon strict conditions, giving landlords authority over "hukou transfer" for the first time, in addition to the authority they already had over temporary populations, as I discussed earlier. The political framing of hukou as "voluntary" or as a matter of personal "will" had remarkable effects on the subjectivity of hukou subjects, making them experience hukou transfers to Jinan primarily as a choice.

Jinan residents, permanents, temporary, and transferees, all told me that hukou had been "flexibilized" (fangsong le) and that getting a "Jinan hukou" was a matter of personal choice. They usually followed up on the topic of hukou flexibilization by commenting on their situations and personal motivations, which included a wide range of external factors, outlining their decision-making process to transfer or not their hukou. Overall, migrants who live in the city as temporary, with the Residence Permit, did not want to transfer their hukou to Jinan; they preferred to keep their land rights. Those who had already transferred hukou talked about it with some regret. Several of them told me, "You can't go back! The government does not allow it;

hukou is a one-way movement, and it flows only from the countryside to the city," suggesting that the coercive side of hukou now lies on banning rural migrants from retrieving their land rights and rural lifestyle.

When I inquired remorseful hukou transferees whether they were happy about finally being able to get medical insurance and pension, the benefits that have made urban hukou highly desirable during the state-planned economy, many of them responded with contempt. "What? Are you kidding me? We all must pay for these now, regardless of hukou," a hukou transferee from a village in Qufu City, near Jinan, told me. In fact, as of 2016, the price of medical insurance and pension was higher for urban hukou holders than for rural hukou holders. In 2016, the cheapest pension and medical plans available to Jinan urban residents cost about RMB 465 and RMB 200 monthly. Meanwhile, the same plans for rural residents in Shandong cost only about RMB 100 and RMB 150. With the hukou reforms, migrants can live in Jinan while paying smaller prices for welfare.

Among the temporary residents who did not transfer hukou to Jinan city, most tended to be from nearby villages or other places in Shandong Province, not from other Provinces. Interview participants in this situation argued that "Jinan hukou" is "not worth the money" one needs to spend to purchase a home in the city to become eligible to transfer hukou. They understood that they were economically better off by keeping their rural land in the village, which is conditional to a locally registered hukou. Most interview participants keeping their hukou registered in the village rented their land out to relatives or acquaintances from the village who live off farming. They essentially treated their rural status and their rental income as an extra source of income for the family. Others kept the land for their aging parents to farm as an

extra source of income. Those keeping the land for their parents often reported that their "old folks" got used to countryside life and subsistence agriculture, refusing to move to the city.

Many of these migrants who never applied for a Jinan hukou had a home in the city, often irregularly built. Among those who owned a home in the city, some returned to the village to spend the weekend regularly, while others did it once every while, usually during the Spring Festival, to visit friends and check on their old village houses. Migrants always kept their village houses, regardless of land rights and hukou relocation.

Meanwhile, migrants from afar usually transferred hukou to the city. In fact, male migrants from afar tended to completely disconnect from their places of origin, as they usually also transferred their parents' hukou to Jinan, benefiting from the "family reunification" program; women only rarely married long-distance migrants, especially if they did not have a brother to care for their parents after they had left with their husbands. Thus, most long-distant migrant families were formed by an inter-provincial migrant, the husband, and an intra-provincial migrant, the wife. Often these families represented multigenerational households, as inter-provincial men tended to bring their parents to Jinan. Although migrants from afar tended to completely settle in Jinan and talk of themselves as "Jinanese," there were exceptions.

I interviewed a group of Heilongjiang migrants who arrived in Jinan in 2005 and immediately purchased a home in the city, but they never applied to transfer hukou despite their eligibility. They decided to keep their land expecting to eventually profit from it, which happened soon after their arrival in the city. In the early 2000s, village governments started to slowly allow rural migrants to rent or contract out their land rights while working elsewhere (Jinan Daily 2002f, c). These Heilongjiang migrants rented their land to firms who plant eucalyptus for logging in the northwest of the Province. Although their annual rental income

equated to only a month of income in Jinan, it was enough for them to give up the possibility of transferring hukou to Jinan.

Among migrants who transferred hukou to Jinan, most did it expecting to secure a spot for their children in the school system or to "give children an education," as they put it. This expression, along with "hukou is flexible now" (hukou fangsong le) and its variations, is one of the first explanations one hears when asking migrants about their move to Jinan. From this perspective, the hukou reforms draw on family needs, especially the traditional duty to care for family and reproduce the family institution, to guide people's choices regarding geographic mobility, thus reinforcing hukou, not abolishing it. However, numerous migrants regretted their choice because they ended up having to "pay" their children's way into school with networking and expensive gift-giving anyway. In addition to paying illegal fees in the form of "school selection fees" (Jinan Daily 1996c), which have been a problem even for local hukou holders for decades now, migrants who did not have a Jinan hukou were often charged "sponsorship fees," a major source of complaint among the hundreds of migrants that I talked with formally and informally.

Some migrants who transferred hukou to Jinan in the early 2000s, particularly those whose village was being claimed and urbanized by the government, also regretted not having kept their hukou "back home" for longer, so they could benefit from the compensation schemes emerging from the village demolition process (i.e., urbanization). Several interview participants who relocated hukou to Jinan told me that they recommended that their friends not do so. "With all this urbanization, the land has become a person's most important resource; it never loses value! One can use this resource to retire," a migrant who relocated from the countryside of Taishan, a neighboring city, told me. His rationale for trying to prevent his friends from starting

a hukou transfer was embedded in the protection of personal interests and rational pursuit of economic autonomy.

My interview data also includes migrants who rented in the city or lived in an irregular home; people who never transferred hukou to Jinan because they have no money to purchase a regular home in the city, where the cheapest residential space in Jinan cost about RMB 15,500 a square meter (as of 2019). While many migrants in this situation were clearly aware of the social forces behind their fate and openly critical of hukou policies, including the homeownership requirement to apply for hukou transfer, others framed their situation as a matter of personal choice. They told me that if they work hard enough, they would be able to save money to buy a home in the city.

Hukou, personal choice, and identity: The advance of the hukou reforms and the growing experience of hukou as a matter of choice contributed to change people's relationship with space, as well as the impact that such a relationship has on matters of identity, including how people talk about themselves. Individuals rarely used their hukou classification (i.e., agricultural or non-agricultural) and hukou jurisdiction (i.e., the actual place of household address) to describe themselves, as was the case in the early 2000s. The expressions "peasant worker" (nongmingong) "floating population" (liudong renkou), and "temporary populations" (zanzhu renkou), which used to be common at that time, have disappeared from the street vocabulary. People talked of themselves and others as "locals" (bendide) "outsiders" (waidide) or simply "residents" (jumin). Relational, these expressions have become incredibly flexible and loose, accommodating a diverse range of circumstances and interests.

The expression "local" usually referred to people who lived and worked anywhere within the municipality (i.e., urban or rural perimeter). Depending on the interaction and the persons

involved, “local” meant only the traditional urban elite, sometimes only local hukou holders. The expression “outsider” was usually reserved for people who came to the municipality to work on a temporary basis, including “floating populations.” However, Jinan hukou holders who lived within the core urban area sometimes used the expression “outsider” to refer to Jinan hukou holders from nearby villages to emphasize their rurality, making the expression derogatory. Regardless of how people talked of hukou holders and made sense of their interlocutors, I noticed that the hukou reforms changed the traditional notion of “regionalism,” which has structured relationships among Chinese populations around a sense of belonging for centuries (Fei and Dai 2012; Fei 2012). The sense of spatial belonging embedded in the notion of regionalism has become flexible, just like hukou. Origin and status can refer to the place of ancestral origin, hukou jurisdiction, or, simply, place of residence, that is, the place where one chooses to live.

In this section, I demonstrated that the consequences of the hukou reforms in Jinan were not limited to making the grassroots levels of the state bureaucracy autonomous; the reforms also impacted individuals, their identities, and subjectivities, encouraging them to act as “rational” subjects who can choose for themselves. Two actions triggered the impact of the hukou reforms on individuality, the diffusion of hukou power to extra-state actors, and the creation of policies that gave hukou subjects the option to transfer hukou and make decisions around geographic mobility. These actions represent both a rupture and a continuity with the hukou system of the Mao era. Today’s hukou system is attached to policies that allow hukou subjects to make their own choices about hukou affairs, breaking with the systems of the Mao era, which imposed upon its subjects a regime of geographic stasis. Meanwhile, today’s hukou system still plays a role of paramount importance in the formation of citizens. However, the citizens that hukou forms today

are not the same as those it formed in the Mao era. While hukou subjects of the Mao era were "institutional" beings, hukou subjects of today are "autonomous" beings. I outline this distinction inspired by the article "Let 'Work Unit Persons' Become 'Society Persons" (rang danweiren biancheng shehuiren) published in the Jinan Daily in 2001, which compares workers and workplaces before and after the Mao era. While workers of the Mao era had their lives coercively guided by hukou-enabled state-planned institutions, workers of today have their lives guided by a complex bundle of societal forces and personal interests.

Towards a Conclusion: Choice as a Tactic of Governing

In this article, I argued that the hukou reforms consist of broad processes that diffuse the state's authority over hukou affairs across Chinese society. These processes start within the state, with Beijing sharing its hukou authority with the lower levels of the state bureaucracy. To do so, Beijing triggers bottom-up hukou policy-making processes that entailed the following steps: providing society guidelines containing a vision for hukou; incentivizing the grassroots levels of the state bureaucracy to autonomously search for solutions that can deliver such a vision and share best practices across the state's bureaucracy; and using news outlets to signal and endorse good practices, discouraging the bad ones. The diffusion of hukou power beyond the state impacts all types of extra-state actors, from organizations to individuals. The hukou reforms attached hukou to policies that take individual autonomy for granted, giving the local state bureaucracy and populations the power to make decisions about geographic mobility and take responsibility for such decisions.

The diffusion of hukou power embedded in the hukou reforms represent, I argue, the emergence of a new, more liberal tactics of population governing or "governmentality" (Foucault 1991a) and thus a new strategy to manufacture social conformity in China. Social conformity refers to social compliance with laws, norms, and customs, Unlike the governmentality that marked the Mao era, which imposed upon the Chinese population choices made by the state, the governmentality that is starting to become prevalent and increasingly visible in China today guides people towards specific goals by fostering in them the ability to make their own choices, and to take responsibility for their lives and their future. From this perspective, the state is using hukou to empower its citizens, to make them feel free and independent, even though the options available and decision-making processes are determined, influenced, or informed by policies. In empowering individuals, this emerging governmentality invites and promotes voluntary compliance with hukou affairs, as it gives people the flexibility to use hukou to align their private interests to collective interests, including the interests of the Communist Party. Also, the governmentality that emerges today is more effective to protect the state (and the Party) from risks resulting from policies that most people can find unfair or ineffective, as it transfers the risks of living in society, obeying the laws, and making choices to the individual (i.e., away from the state and its bureaucrats).

To be more specific, the main difference between a type of governmentality that regulates people by imposing upon them choices, like the one that marked the Mao era, and a type of governmentality that regulates people by leading them to choose for themselves lies in the risks that each governmentality offers to the governing authority. A liberal type of governmentality is more effective at safeguarding the ability of the governing authority to reproduce itself as a legitimate authority. Why? When the governing authority governs by imposing choices upon

populations, it bears, in the eyes of the populations, the greater responsibility for the outcome of those choices. If the outcome turns out to increase people's wellbeing, the citizenry is more likely to support the governing authority. Whereas, if the outcome turns out to compromise people's wellbeing, the citizenry is more likely to blame the authority as responsible for their misfortune, challenging its legal, traditional or charismatic legitimacy and triggering a revolutionary process. Thus, governments that rule with coercion and imposition face greater and more serious risks to their own sustainability. Meanwhile, the authority that governs by leading the citizens towards autonomy, which includes creating conditions for them to choose for themselves, transfer the responsibility of the choice outcome to the citizenry. Also, choice-based governmentality is comparatively more flexible in the sense that, when or if necessary, it can rely on coercive measures to achieve specific goals, while making subjects of government experience such measures as a "lack of option." Ultimately, a type of governmentality that uses "freedom" of choice to rule is more effective at safeguarding the governing authority.

In China's case, the shift towards a type of governmentality that values individuality and autonomy renews and revitalizes the powers of the Communist Party as the governing authority. By allowing the Communist Party to regulate the choices and behaviors of populations involving geographic mobility in ways that are direct and invisible. This emerging governmentality, which I refer to "household-based hybrid compliance" (see Chapter 1) leads the individual to experience, simultaneously, total hukou regulation and a sense of freedom. However, the most striking "characteristic" of this emerging governmentality lies beyond the Communist Party's capacity to reproduce its governing authority regulating people's choices. Instead, it lies in the renewal and continuity of hukou as a vital technology of population governance, as well as its resilience and flexibility.

For about six decades now, hukou has continued to mediate collective and individual interests within government and in society, facilitate transformations in governmentality regardless of political ideology, and connected the order of the state to the order of the individual. Of all the achievements of the hukou reforms, it demonstrated that hukou is a fundamental technology of governance in China. Ironically, the hukou reforms have led many to believe that hukou is being abolished, that it no longer matters, giving this system of household registration the invisibility that it has never had and thus making it even more powerful.

Chapter 4 • Jinan Hukou and Its Impact on Family Formation: Observations from the Quancheng Park Marriage Fair

Introduction

Under the hazy sky of Jinan, we sat silently in a several-kilometers long traffic jam. It was early November, and the freezing temperatures had not arrived yet, but Mr. Li already had the heater on, as if announcing the Winter of 2016. Drowsy from the heat, I tried to distract myself, yet in vain, with the Lucky Cat figurine on his BMW's dashboard. Swinging back and forth, the figurine's left paw worked like a pocket watch, setting me into a dormant state. To avoid falling asleep and being rude to Mr. Li, I started a conversation China's Household Registration System; referred simply as "hukou" ("household" or "family" in the Chinese language) this system sorts citizens according to the place where their household is registered and regulates migration in the country. I expected to hear more of the same, either that the hukou reforms made hukou irrelevant, or that hukou is now only important because it regulates people's access to education according to their place of residence. To my surprise, our chat revealed that today's hukou impacts and regulates family formation—the topic of this article.

Hukou classifies every citizen in China as a member of either an "agricultural" or a "non-agricultural" family. This classification varies based on the status of the place where their household is registered, i.e., rural or urban areas. Essentially, a person's hukou status comprises of two elements, the family classification, which is also referred to as "hukou classification," and the place of household registration, which is referred to as "hukou place" or "hukou jurisdiction" (hukou suozaidi) In this chapter, I discuss how today's hukou status impacts mate selection

decision-making processes. I am especially interested in how families and individuals of different hukou status view and negotiate hukou.

In China, family formation, from rating to mating, concerns the entire family and is practically mandatory for everyone, as marriage is the primary way to carry on the lineage. No other account better demonstrates the importance of forming a family in Chinese society than the philosopher Mencius's popular maxim "There are many unfilial acts, but the worst is not to bear a son," that is, to continue the patriarchal family bloodline. When in China collecting data for this research, friends, acquittances, and even strangers asked me the following question after learning that I had no children: "Who is going to take care of you when you get old? Who is going to burn incense and honor your ancestors after your death?" associating family continuation with caring for ancestors in the afterlife. Often, my interlocutors also reminded me that marriage and procreation are not personal choices, but family businesses officially planned and negotiated by parents.

Marriage negotiations have always been instrumental for the spiritual and material "stability" (wending) of the family, including its sustainability. Families use marriage as a means to achieve their needs and goals, which are usually grounded in a desire to upgrade socioeconomically. In other words, families use marriage to protect, reproduce, or improve their social status. To ensure their stability, families lead their members to marry mates who are equal in resources (e.g., wealth, social networks, and skills). Marriages between people of different socioeconomic statuses are considered impractical and problematic because they involve duties and responsibilities that are unbearable and expectations that are unattainable. The popular Chinese maxim "if the door is equivalent, the family is the right one" (men dang hu dui), illustrates the importance of finding a mate who shares the same socioeconomic status that is the

same “door” (men). People tend to view marriages that contradict this maxim as potentially involving continued “loss of face” (mei mianzi), considering them a taboo. The question then became how to identify a “door” that is equivalent.

To identify and select their equals, individuals and their families negotiated marriage as a zero-sum game, in which each party’s gains and losses are balanced by the losses and gains of the other party. Until the beginning of the hukou reforms in the late 1970s, marriage negotiations did not include hukou status. At that time, hukou was not negotiable. Families and individuals had no autonomy over their hukou classification and jurisdiction. Hukou status was fixed, nearly impossible to change, and determined by the government. The state bureaucracy completely controlled the criteria for migration and the conditions to meet such criteria, particularly employment and housing. Also, although the state never prohibited inter-hukou status marriages, it overtly discouraged them; the state forced inter-hukou couples to live separately. Thus, individuals usually married mates of the same hukou status, taking hukou for granted in mate selection. How about today, after about 40 years of ongoing hukou reforms? The hukou reforms led most Chinese cities to facilitate and encourage migration, giving migrants autonomy over demographic mobility and hukou transfer (Chapter 3). How did that autonomy over hukou affairs impact marriage formation? My conversation with Mr. Lin led me to realize and further explore the idea that hukou became a variable, a negotiable factor in mate selection, as well as gather the data supporting this chapter.

In this chapter, I argue that since the hukou reforms, hukou status has become an “exchange currency” in marriage negotiations. People, regardless of their hukou status, engage hukou as an indicator of a multiplicity of meanings, expectations, and statuses, all to maximize their opportunities to achieve personal goals. Hukou represents one more “value” to be factored

in or out of marriage negotiations; hukou is no longer a “given” element that people take for granted, put up with, or make fit like it was before the beginning of the hukou reforms. I also argue that, in incorporating variability, flexibility, and individual autonomy, the hukou system became a “technology of governance” (Foucault 1991a) that invites careful decision-making and responsibility-taking when it comes to choosing a mate. I ground these arguments in data collected at a “marriage fair” of Jinan, the capital city of Shandong Province in eastern China, between the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. The data includes 80 open-ended interviews with fairgoers, “marriage brokers” (xiangqin daili), and fair exhibitors.

I structured this article in five sections, where I discuss the following topics: My conversation with Mr. Li, which played a significant role in how I approached the topic of hukou and family, including how I formulated my interview questions; the literature on hukou and family formation; the method I used to collect the data and the sources I used; my findings on how fair participants use hukou to rate their mates regarding sameness, as well as negotiate hukou status; and my conclusion, indicating that hukou, including its coercive nature, has become increasingly invisible, hidden behind the hukou holder’s autonomy to negotiate hukou in the context of mate selection.

Conversating with Mr. Li

The idea to investigate the impact of hukou on family formation emerged from my conversation with Mr. Li. It outlined the main topics that I explored at the fair in relation to hukou, such as how fair participants used hukou to negotiate marriage prerequisites (e.g., real estate property) and the socioeconomic hierarchies of marriage (e.g., marriage between people of

different hukou status). It also indicated that families and individuals often used proxies to identify and sort their mate's hukou status, leading me to watch out for hukou signifiers. Given Mr. Li's importance for my analysis, I reproduce the highlights of our conversation and my thoughts on them below. I hope to use such highlights to introduce and contextualize the norms on the formation of the family that impacted the discussion in this article.

Prerequisites to Marry

"Mr. Li, is your son married?" I asked, in my sleepy state.

After a brief pause, he looked at me from head to toes and asked back: "How old are you?"

"No, no! It's not for me! I'm here in Jinan doing research about the hukou reforms. I meant to ask you if hukou is still an important factor in people's lives," I replied, completely awoken and somewhat embarrassed. When I wondered whether I should explain myself further, he broke his long pause:

> Hukou is of imperative importance for the family! See my son; he is a well-accomplished professor at Shandong University. We gave him one apartment, and he bought another one with his own money. Preparing to get married, he also bought this brand-new vehicle. He is thirty-one now, but we still haven't found him an appropriate lady yet. Do you know someone?

Mr. Li's comments implied that his son was a top-ranking husband-candidate because he had two homes. Later in the conversation, I asked Mr. Li whether he expected his future daughter-in-law also to have a home. "No!" he answered emphatically. "In China, men are supposed to provide an apartment. The bride's family only provides a "marriage vehicle"

(hünche), which is the family vehicle. But, as my son has a vehicle too, it is not a prerequisite for us," he told me, suggesting that homeownership was a prerequisite for marriage and that prerequisites varied by gender. His comments also implied that prerequisites, including hukou status, were potentially negotiable, an overarching theme in this analysis.

In Jinan and elsewhere in China, men, to be eligible for marriage, must own a "marriage home" (hunfang), which refers to a privately-owned residential property, usually an apartment. This property has material and symbolic functions. Materially, it allows the newly married couple to bureaucratically detach themselves from the parental household, in a process referred to as "household separation" (fenhu). They then start their own household by registering a new household unit with the local police department. Couples are not allowed to use a rental property for "household registration" (dengji hukou), as the Ministry of Public Security conditions the registration of household to property ownership. Upon registering a household, couples receive a hukou booklet (i.e., "Household Register) containing their household information, which must be updated every time there is an alteration in the couple's personal or family information or circumstances (e.g., births, deaths, and migration). This booklet also includes their hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction, which is tied to the household address. The marriage home also provides shelter to the new family. In sum, the marriage home materially allows married couples to exist as a family unit officially. Symbolically, because residential property ownership implies marriage, it signifies maturity. People in China often use the expression "becoming a person" (chengren)to indicate when a person gets married.

As outlined by Mr. Lin, in Jinan, there is an expectation that the bride's family will provide the "family vehicle," but the vehicle holds weight in comparison with the marriage home. I have never heard of a marriage that was stopped because the bride's family could not

provide the vehicle. However, I have seen several women, including research participants and personal friends, breaking their engagement because they suspected that their fiancés were lying about having the money for a marriage home or being the owning one.

Given that rental properties are not eligible for household registration, and that most couples perceive the idea of living in a rental property and staying "tied" to the parental household "shameful" (mei mianzide) or as a "loss of face" (diu mianzi), men who cannot afford a "marriage home" have a hard time finding a bride. Those who cannot provide a home as part of the marriage negotiation must compromise and socially "downgrade" by marrying a woman of comparatively lower status.

Mr. Li's comments about the marriage home made me aware of the importance of homeownership for marital relationships and family formation. They also led me to realize that rules around hukou registration directly impact mate selection.

The Socioeconomic Hierarchies of Marriage

"What kind of woman are you looking for?" I asked enthusiastically, continuing his conversation about his son.

"Well, it must be a 'local girl' [bendide nühaizi]; that's for sure!" He continued.

"A local girl?!" I repeated, expecting him to clarify the idea.

"We also would like her to be from Jinan, so I mean, a 'local Jinan hukou,' urban hukou. Someone younger than him, on her mid-twenties," he continued clarifying that he wanted a woman classified as "non-agricultural" with hukou jurisdiction in the urban perimeter of the Municipality of Jinan—a Jinan urbanite.

"I get it! So, you want someone from Jinan! Would that include a place like Cold Water Ditch[5] village?". This village is only 15 kilometers from here and has now become an urban district of Jinan.

"Absolutely not! Although Cold Water Ditch is now officially part of Jinan city, it is still 'countryside' when it comes to interpersonal relationships," he said, disappointed at me for thinking that his son could possibly marry a member of an agricultural family.

"What if she is from Cold Water Ditch but lives in downtown Jinan?" I asked, aiming for the meanings behind his idea of the countryside. He answered:

> No, no! If she is from the countryside, she would still have rural mannerisms. And too many relatives. For example, imagine that one of her relatives needs to visit Jinan for medical treatment. She would have to host and care for this person. That would be very complicated! For us, a marriage between a person from the city and a person from the countryside is like a marriage between people from different countries! Do you understand?

Reflecting on the importance that people in Jinan give to marrying their equal and on how the notion of sameness involves numerous factors (e.g., mannerisms, family configurations, and patterns of geographical mobility), I said nothing, waiting to see if Mr. Li would add anything else to his analogy that compared urban and rural residents to people from different countries.

[5] Lengshuigou village in the Chinese language.

Examining my blank expression, he followed: “Too much cultural difference! Our “suzhi” is not the same!” “Suzhi,” a commonly used expression in China, designates a person’s overall worth. Translated as “quality,” the Chinese use the term suzhi to describe or compare the social and physical conditions of individuals; someone’s suzhi is measured in appearance, behavior, personal background, educational attainment, among others. Considered an innate concept transmitted by family belonging, suzhi equates to western notions of “breeding” or “personal refinement.” A person can have “high” or “low” suzhi. The Chinese also use the expression with the adjectives “good” or “bad.” Either way, “high suzhi” or “good suzhi” refers to someone of good breeding, well-educated, polite, whereas “low suzhi” or “bad suzhi” refers to the opposite. The expression is relational, varying according to how different social groups (e.g., rural residents and urbanites) think of each other and themselves. For instance, viewing “city people” as “too individualistic” and even “selfish,” rural residents often say that urbanites have “bad” suzhi. Meanwhile, urbanites usually refer to rural residents as people of “low suzhi,” referring to their comparatively lower educational attainment and mannerisms. Also, individuals also refer to suzhi to describe people that they appreciate or dislike. Ultimately, Mr. Li’s comment on suzhi implied that people from the countryside have lower quality than urbanites, which is a common idea among wealthy urban families, especially those who have always had an “urban hukou” (i.e., a “non-agricultural” hukou classification).

Mr. Li’s expectations for his future daughter-in-law led me to contemplate the hierarchies of marriage and how they are expressed linguistically, as well as if and how families and individuals tried to navigate these hierarchies in the pursuit of their mates. His comments on suzhi led me to pay special attention to urban-rural marriage and inquire into the “rigidness” of the urban-rural hierarchy in marriage affairs. Meanwhile, his comments, particularly the terms

(i.e., “local girl” and “local Jinan hukou”) he used to refer to an agricultural hukou holder registered in the urban perimeter of the municipality, made me mindful of the terminology that people were using to define their mates from the hukou perspective.

Hukou Proxies

“We also want our son to marry an only child! That’s another important condition!” He added.

“An only-child?! Why?” I asked, surprised.

“Those who are an only-child are the sole heir of their parents, just like my son. It’s better this way, so they can have it a bit easier than we did when we were younger,” he said, referring to the life struggles he and his wife had to endure. Mr. Li’s point indicated that, when rating their adult children’s mate, parents potentially correlated hukou and inheritance via family configuration (e.g., only-child or child with siblings), using it as an intermediate variable or proxy for hukou status. This use of family configuration was possible because China’s birth-planning rules have always been connected to hukou status. The One-Child policy (1976-2015) restricted the number of children to rural and urban families respectively to two children (if the first one was a female) and one child. Thus, among the people who are the marriage age today, urbanites are usually only-children, while rural residents tend to have a sibling. I later learned that the advantage of using family configuration as a proxy for hukou status lies in quickly identifying and avoiding mates who are “hukou transferees” from the countryside, that is, migrants who transferred hukou to Jinan’s urban perimeter. By determining family configurations, one can sort “genuine” urbanites from city residents who migrated and

transferred hukou to Jinan, as the former do not have siblings. Essentially, the use of family configuration as a proxy for hukou to "overcome" difficulties related to sorting people out, as hukou status has become increasingly invisible and flexible with the hukou reforms.

After outlining the topic of inheritance, Mr. Li engaged in a line of reasoning that introduced "family responsibility" as another proxy for hukou, which is intertwined with family configuration and thus the One-Child policy. "Also, an only-child will come free of family issues involving siblings and close relatives," he added. Suspecting that the "family issues" part did not make sense to me, he clarified: "For example, she won't have to lend money to family members, siblings or relatives. She will be free of trouble!" Looking at me carefully, Mr. Li frowned and continued carefully: "It is about 'guanxi,' we must account for 'guanxi' and the responsibilities that come with it." A central idea in Chinese society, "guanxi" refers to the relationships and networks of mutual dependence that individuals cultivate with other individuals. It includes the way family members connect and the moral obligation to maintain relationships through the exchange of favors. Mr. Li's observations implied that networks in rural and urban settings operate differently in terms of duties, rights, and responsibilities. It also implied that networks in rural settings are more burdensome, a widespread belief. Also, his observations suggested that urban parents can use hukou, via family configuration, to sort the family responsibilities that potential mates bring to the marriage, preventing their children from marring rural residents.

Trying to understand the downsides of the One-Child policy for family life and test the discourse that only-child women are expected to care emotionally and financially for their parents, I asked Mr. Li: "If your son's mate is an only child, she will have to care for her aging parents, won't she? That can become a burden, can't it?"

> Not if her parents are "local hukou," I mean "urban Jinan hukou"! If they are urban hukou holders, they are more likely to have a retirement pension and an apartment unit provided by their former work unit. Of course, she will have to check on them regularly, but that shouldn't be an issue if they live in Jinan. But, if her parents are not locals, then things get too complicated; her work and family responsibilities are likely to impede her from caring from her parents if they live outside the city.

His response outlined another proxy of hukou: retirement pension. Retirement pension highly correlated with hukou, particularly among those who lived as adults during the Mao era, as rural residents had no right to retirement pension then. His points suggested that urban families mitigated the legacy of the One-Child policy and the burden it created regarding the responsibility for family members in old age by leading their adult children to use pension as a proxy for hukou. Like family configuration, retirement pension also can help urbanites separate "real" urbanites from hukou transferees.

Although representing a single perspective (that of a father talking as a member of a high-income family), Mr. Li's comments on hukou and family not only led me to study the topic but also provided me important analytical insights. Those comments guided me to explore if and how families and individuals of different hukou status negotiated the prerequisites and hierarchies of marriage, as well as if they too relied on hukou proxies to produce knowledge about mates and rate their overall worth. The researcher questioned that these themes emerged was what led me to the impact hukou has on family formation, and how people of different hukou status in the context of mate selection.

Based on my conversation with Mr. Li, I started to assume that families and individuals instrumentally attach hukou to an array of options and opportunities, carefully aligning hukou to their personal goals through an individualized multi-factor decision-making process.

The Literature on Hukou and Family

Today's mainstream scholarly literature on hukou and the family (Lui 2016, 2017; Wei and Zhang 2016) usually focus on marriages involving populations of different hukou status. In doing so, the literature intends to assess the effectiveness of the hukou reforms in eliminating the socioeconomic inequalities that divided urban and rural populations in the Mao era. The research projects that support the literature available hypothesize that increased inter-hukou marriage rates (i.e., marriage between rural and urban residents) indicate that the hukou reforms are eliminating socioeconomic inequalities between rural and urban residents. Their findings, however, demonstrate that inter-hukou marriage rates have not increased significantly since the beginning of the hukou reforms, suggesting that the hukou reforms have not altered the impact of hukou on the family formation or done much to eliminate hukou inequalities through marriage.

Scholars who are more skeptical of the hukou reforms argue that today's hukou still "invidiously" segments the population into "urbanites" and "rural people," with the former group being the "worthy citizens" and the latter the "underclass" (Wei and Zhang 2016, 659). Those who are more accepting of the reforms argue that today's hukou policies have shown "some initial promise" in "reducing" the social gap between urban and rural hukou holders (Lui 2016, 2017). Regardless of their stance on the reforms, these scholars share the conclusion that the

hukou reforms have been unsuccessful so far, regarding changes in patterns of family formation, because they are not causing the rural-urban gap to close through inter-hukou marriage.

Scholars studying hukou and family usually assume that increased inter-hukou marriage rates indicate increased equality between urban and rural populations because inter-hukou marriage potentially signifies that rural and urban residents are mingling on the most intimate and private level, which is the family. Inter-hukou marriages are relevant because urban and rural residents represent two strata of Chinese society that have been divided for decades. On this matter, scholar Lake Lui argues that preferences around hukou in mate-selection can reveal whether and how inter-strata "boundaries" are changing; if they are becoming "weakened" (Lui 2016, 641), "strengthened" (657) or "blurred" (644). Upon reflecting on the literature and collecting the data that support this article, I realized that inter-hukou marriage rates are not a reliable measurement of the rural-urban gap. There is at least one problem with the popular idea of using inter-hukou marriage as a "ruler" to evaluate the state of China's "social stratification" pyramid and the boundaries between populations of different hukou status.

Today's "boundaries" between urban and rural populations are increasingly diverse, variable, circumstantial, and unclear. Such boundaries can no longer be summarized through only a few factors, like hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction (i.e., hukou status), as was the case in the Mao era. Also, the factors used as "boundaries," such as hukou status, no longer represent "patterned" lifestyles and living conditions, as these are longer fixed, rigid, and clearly and directly delineated by state institutions and policies, as it was the case in the Mao era.

In the case of the Household Registration System more specifically, hukou status functions as a sort of socioeconomic index that offers clues—only clues, not full disclosure—as to the socioeconomic status and social biography of individuals, but it no longer can effectively

determine the socioeconomic boundaries that separate population groups in China. Hukou status is slowly becoming detached from economic duties and rights, meaning that hukou is no longer a direct expression of low or high economic status and thus an easy determinant of economic stratum. Socioeconomically, hukou is marked by status inconsistency; there are urban hukou holders who struggle economically and rural migrants who do well in the city. Therefore, inter-hukou marriages no longer necessarily mean a socioeconomic upgrade for the rural spouse and downgrade for the urban spouse. Thus, the assumption that inter-hukou marriage signifies decreased socioeconomic inequality is outdated, being empirically and theoretically grounded in the state-planned economy period when Chinese society was organized into two rigid socio-spatial hierarchies: the city and the countryside.

Overall, the literature on hukou and family is embedded in another highly questionable assumption. Scholars (Lui 2016, 2017; Wei and Zhang 2016) assume that the hukou reforms intend to eliminate the hukou system and its inequalities. Unlike them, I do not expect the hukou reforms to promote equality of socioeconomic status between rural and urban populations, as that has not been the goal of the Hukou reforms (or their most important consequences) in my view. The hukou reforms aim to integrate the administration of the rural and urban populations and promote people's decision-making autonomy in the most basic domains of life, such as geographical mobility, place of residence, family formation, education, and work.

Despite having a critical view of the contemporary literature on hukou and family, my research data also show that inter-hukou marriages are still not popular. Nonetheless, measuring inter-hukou marriage rates and discussing their significance in relation to the hukou reforms have never been my research objective. The research I report in this article bears no resemblance to the research currently available on hukou and marriage. However, the literature cited here

influenced my approach to the study topic. It led me to call into question the premise that today's hukou status still represents a clear socioeconomic boundary between individuals, especially rural and urban residents.

Methods

To explore how hukou holders view hukou and decide on their mate's hukou status, I collected qualitative and quantitative data at a marriage fair in Jinan's Quancheng Park on the weekends between mid-December 2015 and end of April 2016. As I describe below, my dataset includes interviews, quantitative information on registered fair participants (i.e., fair exhibitor information), and participant observations.

I conducted 80 open-ended interviews with fairgoers, marriage brokers, and fair exhibitors. "Fairgoers" were those who strolled around the fair looking for a mate for themselves or others; this category also includes people who were at the fair only to socialize with friends, as it happened in a public park and charged no admission fee. "Exhibitors" are those who owned and displayed a profile with their personal information and traits of their desirable mates at the fair. And "brokers" were the matchmakers responsible for the event. With a few exceptions, I avoided audio recording the interviews because I noticed that most participants were not comfortable with it. Instead, I took notes of the interview data discreetly on the spot simultaneously, as I talked with and listened to participants. Using Nvivo, I coded these interviews into a coding scheme with the following seven main categories related to interview participants: 1) Demographics, including hukou status (i.e., classification and jurisdiction); 2) participant's migratory history; 3) goal in the fair; 4) preferred hukou in a mate; 5) decision-

making on the mate's hukou (i.e., trade-offs); 6) meanings of family, homeownership, regionalism (i.e., sense of belonging), and inheritance; and 7) general views on hukou. Each one of these categories has between five and ten coding subcategories.

Fair exhibitor information came from a randomly collected sample of 114 "exhibitor profiles." Printed in A4 paper, exhibitor profiles looked like survey questionnaires divided into two sections. The top section contained quantitative information on the exhibitor. This information usually included the exhibitor's name; gender; year of birth or age; height; Chinese horoscope sign; hukou status; marital status; ethnicity; health status; education background; monthly income; occupation; and workplace (e.g., State-Owned Enterprise, Private Company, Individually Owned Company, Wholly Foreign Owned, and Joint Venture). Meanwhile, the bottom section contained a description of what the exhibitor expected to find in a mate. Meanwhile, titled "special requirements," "mate requirements," "remarks," or "other," the bottom section of the profile had qualitative information on the exhibitor, more especially, a brief description outlining what they expected in a mate. This description usually contained the mate's performed hukou status, type of work (i.e., whether it is stable), and homeownership. Many exhibitors also described the personality traits they expected in a mate. The bottom section of the profiles was of special interest for my analysis, as it revealed how individuals negotiated the hukou in exchange for specific needs, aligned it to their life goals.

Marriage Firm: Diamond Marriage					
Name:	[Redacted]	**Year of birth:**	85/30	**Gender:**	Female
Horoscope Sign:	Bull	**Marital History:**	Never married	**Hukou:**	Jinan
Ethnicity:	Han	**Height:**	1.62	**Health status:**	Healthy
Education background:	College Certificate	**Vehicle/Home:**	[Blank]	**QQ [chat app]:**	[Blank]
Employer:	Railway	**Contact number:**			
Monthly income:	2600+	**Type of Employer:**	[Blank]	**Occupation:**	[Blank]
Interests and hobbies	[Blank]				
Special requirements:	Aged 30 to 35 • >1.70 m • hukou from this city • outsider who is excellent is acceptable • stable work • homeowner or with potential to buy a home • responsible • take things seriously • other aspects are irrelevant.				

Figure 12: Exhibitor profile, including translation.

To make the profiles visible, brokers hang them in lines that crossed the yard where the fair was located, securing them with clothes' pins, just like clothes hung to dry. The profiles of men and women could be identified by their color; female exhibitors filled their information in a pink profile, while male exhibitors did it in a blue or green profile. Also, the formatting of the profiles varied slightly, as they were designed by two wedding planning firms and three independent brokers. A small number of profiles also had fields informing whether the exhibitors owned a marriage home had a retirement pension and siblings. Such profiles also included information on the exhibitor's parents, whether they were alive, and had a retirement pension.

Brokers authorized me to sample the profiles at the end of April, in one of my last visits to the fair. The 114-profile sample accounted for 25 percent of the 456 forms available on that day. To collect the sample, I picked a random profile as a starting point and photographed every fourth profile until I covered the entire fair (i.e., systematic sampling). I coded the quantitative and qualitative information on the profiles using SPSS. While coding, I transformed the description on the bottom section of the profile into categorical variables, grouping them into the following labels: age, height, hukou status, hukou remark, personality trait, job, homeownership, retirement pension, family configuration remarks, and others. I used profile information solely to provide a quantitative face to the patterns and stories that I heard at the fair.

In my participant role, I observed the following: how fairgoers, brokers, and exhibitors talked about hukou; how hukou informed mate selection; and how people engage hukou as a proxy of social-economic status, cultural background, income and wealth, inheritance matters, retirement pension, and caregiving needs in mate selection. My project was part of a larger study on the transformation of hukou as a "technology of governance" (Foucault 1991a) that guides people's behaviors and interactions. Thus I supplemented the analysis in this article with the

knowledge I gained from 170 interviews that I conducted between September 2015 to May 2016, with a large sample of Jinan residents on the role that today's hukou play on their lives.

In the remaining parts of this section, I provide more details about the fair, the research population, and the research sources.

The Quancheng Park Marriage Fair

Nobody knew exactly when the Quancheng Park Marriage Fair appeared for the first time. Some brokers said that it started in the mid-1990s as a place for migrants to meet migrants, given that they had no networks in the city that could introduce them to a potential mate. Others told me that it appeared in the mid-2000s as a place where locals and migrants converged in search of a mate. Despite its historical background, people have always come to the fair expecting to improve their chances of finding a suitable mate.

Most people at the fair lived and worked in Jinan city. About three-quarters of fair participants (regardless of their role in the fair) were local hukou holders, that is, non-agricultural hukou holders registered in Jinan's urban perimeter, but that included hukou transferees. Also, fair participants usually had passed the "normal" marriage age. Most of them aged between 27 and 36, when the usual marriage age in Jinan ranges between 25 or 26 years. I heard several times from people in Jinan that marriage fairs are places for "single dogs" (danshen gou) and "bare branches" (guanggun er) (in the case of unmarried men) and "leftover women" (shengnü) (in the case of women).

The Quancheng Park Marriage Fair worked like an online dating service (e.g., Tinder, Match, OKCupid, and eHarmony), but it was on-site, not online, and had human matchmakers

instead of algorithms. According to interview accounts, marriage fairs like the Quancheng happen across the country and have not yet been replaced by the Apps and other Internet platforms because of "trust."

Parents and the older individuals involved in mate selection and marriage negotiation do not trust the Internet. "The Internet is full of scams," a group of parents told me. A marriage broker participating in the conversation added: "Who can guarantee that those profiles are not fake? From people trying to play tricks?" The same group of parents also told me that they do not know how to use computers, suggesting that their lack of trust might also have to do with a lack of computer skills and information on how the Internet works. Their adult children, however, reported to trust the Internet and even use WeChat to rate and have conversations with people that they were romantically interested in, but, according to them, nothing serious or materially concrete happened through the Internet. Several of them told me that they use the Internet only to "play and have fun" (wan er), i.e., somewhat romantic interactions that exclude sexual contact. The trust issues that prevent people from substituting the Quancheng fair with a virtual platform may be generational and perhaps disappear over time. Nonetheless, the lack of trust that involves mate selection may also get transformed into a sort of habituation, which would perpetuate the existence of marriage fairs.

Fairgoers

Most fairgoers were parents, accompanied or not, by their adult children. As marriage meant the continuation of the family, parents had stakes in mate selection, enjoying a leading role in the entire process. Also, parents wanted to participate and opinion on the selection

process of the person (i.e., the adult children's mate) who would help their children care for them in the old age. The number of women among fairgoers outweighed the number of men. For every ten fairgoers, about six were women on average.

According to interview accounts with fairgoers and brokers and my observations, more than two-thirds of fairgoers were local hukou holders, including transferees, while the rest was "outsiders" (waidide). "Outsiders" referred to migrants living in Jinan on a temporary permit (jumin zheng), with hukou registered in the place of origin. This population included agricultural and non-agricultural hukou holders registered outside Jinan's urban perimeter, including other municipalities in the province or outside of Shandong.

Brokers

Either representative of wedding planning firms or self-employed working independently at the fair, marriage brokers were responsible for promoting the fair and managing exhibitor profiles. Their responsibility also included keeping and managing extra-official information from exhibitors, especially shameful or inappropriate information that could not be written down. This information included details on broken marriages, child custody disputes, and visible or invisible mental and physical disabilities. Brokers collected a fee of RMB 5 to cover the cost of printing profiles, which exhibitors filled in on the spot. In cases of successful matchmaking, brokers also received gifts from the exhibitors and mates. Brokers connected to a wedding planning firm received a commission in case the firm planned the wedding.

The number of brokers varied from weekend to weekend. There were six or seven sometimes, but five of them were regulars—there every time I visited. The regulars represented the companies "Diamond Marriage" and "Made in Heaven." Responsible for about 40 percent of

all profiles, Diamond Marriage had the largest market share, while Made in Heaven held only 20 percent of the business. The three independent brokers held the remaining 40 percent of the market share. All brokers were women in their fifties, except for Fanfan, who was in her thirties and became an essential source to his project.

Exhibitors

Based on my sample of exhibitor profiles, most fair "exhibitors" (zhao xiangqinren) were highly educated single men and women above the usual marriage age, with a job and a local Jinan hukou.

Consistent with China's gender imbalance (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2018, 2), the percent of male exhibitors (53 percent) surpassed that of women by three percentage points. On average, men and women aged 36 and 34 years. Although most exhibitors had never married, there were also divorcée and widows.

About a third of men and two-tenths of women were divorced. The divorce rate in the fair population was much higher than in Jinan's general population. Brokers divided divorcees into two groups, "shortly married" and "divorced." Brokers did not have a specific standard defining "short" and "long" marriages, but short marriages usually excluded offspring, while long marriage often included the offspring. Shortly married men were considered "like singles," and it was easier for them to find a mate without compromising their demands. Meanwhile, shortly married women enjoyed lower value in marriage negotiations. People at the fair, particularly men and their parents, thought that women with a history of marriage were tainted by "spoiled" marital relationships as if the female body had become marked by past relationships and memories that could negatively influence the new family somehow. They also tended to view

such women as more “defiant” (taidu buhao) and less willing to put up with “things” (shi), which I understood to refer to unfairness, marital issues, and abuse inside the family. The children of divorced women represented a financial and or social burden for the new husband, an “extra mouth to feed” (duo yikou), as a few male exhibitors told me. Divorcée women with children were the least desirable of all profiles in the fair.

Although small, the percentage of widows (less than a tenth for men and women) using the fair surprised me. The idea of remarriage for widows used to be shameful and distasteful in Jinan in the early 2000s when I lived there for four consecutive years; according to traditional norms, parents should stop having intimate relationships as soon as their adult children get married. Today, however, most people think that widows should seek a life companion, remarry, and even have intimate relationships. This transformation in the mindset about widowhood and remarriage is happening within patriarchal values. Interview data showed that men at the fair usually remarried to get caregiving services, including cooking, cleaning, and laundry. While females remarried to get help with household tasks that involve heavy lifting and to feel safe and secure at home. This transformation also upholds the traditional norms about responsibility for family reproduction and continuity; old age widows who remarry are not supposed to produce offspring.

Exhibitors were usually well-educated people with good jobs and incomes above average. About two-thirds of men and more than three-quarters of women had post-secondary education. Most people at the fair worked in the public sector and large firms in the private sector, with the remaining working in small firms or being self-employed. About half of the exhibitors worked in the public sector, particularly government agencies and state-owned enterprises. Fair participants considered jobs in the public sector as the most desirable type of job, a symbol of

professionalism, income, and life stability. Jobs in the public sector usually offer permanent positions, regular working hours, and fringe benefits, although they do not pay well. Fair participants commonly referred to jobs in the public sector as "stable" (wending) Meanwhile, fair participants viewed jobs in the private sector as "risky" (you fengxian) and "unstable" (bu wending) associating them with burnout, precarious employment relationships, and abrupt layoffs. On average, exhibitors had higher monthly income than the general urban hukou population of the Municipality of Jinan, which accounted for RMB 3,230 (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015, 13). The average monthly income among exhibitors was at RMB 4,600 for men and RMB 3,500 for women (as of 2015).

Hukou status-wise, most exhibitors, more than three quarters (about 80 percent), were locals, with the rest being outsiders. According to brokers, about two-tenths of locals were migrants who transferred hukou to Jinan city. Exhibitor profile information on homeownership suggested that the brokers were right about the percent of hukou transferees. About 17 percent of local males did not have a home in Jinan nor had money to purchase one, meaning that they were not "real" locals.

Comprising of about two-tenths of exhibitors, outsiders usually filled the hukou field in the profile with the name of their municipality of origin, allowing me to code them as "intra-provincial" or "interprovincial" outsiders. About three-thirds of outsiders came from another city in Shandong Province, being intra-provincial. The data did not allow me to determine whether they were originally from rural or urban areas. Still, I believe that practically all intra-provincial outsiders were from rural areas, as they had no home in Jinan nor money to buy one according to their profile information. Meanwhile, inter-provincial outsiders (a tenth of outsiders) tended to be from urban areas outside of Shandong Province. Also, inter-provincial outsiders were older than

locals and intra-provincial outsiders and usually divorced. They were in Jinan accompanying their adult children, and they came to the fair to find a "companion" who was settled in the city, preferably a local hukou holder.

In general, locals enjoyed higher socioeconomic status than outsiders, while intra-provincial outsiders enjoyed more elevated status than extra-provincial outsiders. In comparison with intra-provincial outsiders, locals enjoyed higher percentages with a postsecondary qualification and a job in the public sector. Also, locals were much more likely to own a home in Jinan than intra-provincial outsiders. Among men, over three-quarters of locals had a marital home in the city in contrast with two-tenths of outsiders. Among women, only locals had a home in town, over a third of them. Locals also had slightly higher average monthly income than outsiders, RMB 4,164 versus RMB 4,041. Overall, locals enjoyed higher socioeconomic status than outsiders, being more desirable in the marriage market. However, brokers and fairgoers viewed outsiders who came to Jinan to go to the university as good enough to compete with locals. Even though these outsiders were yet to transfer hukou to Jinan, the brokers valued the fact that they had managed to overcome hukou restrictions involving access to education and migration.

Hukou in Action at the Quancheng Park Marriage Fair

Brokers, exhibitors, and fairgoers at the Quancheng Park Marriage Fair viewed marriage and the related continuation of the family as a fundamental means to sustain life and a life goal. "Without a family of your own," a group of brokers and fairgoers told me, "life becomes unpredictable, risky, and without purpose." After hearing me say that marriage rates are slowly

declining in Canada, broker Meihua, a woman in her sixties, asked me: “How do they have a stable life without marriage?” Before I could answer, broker Fanfan stepped in: “Their ‘population welfare’ is not like ours; they have more options. If necessary, the government helps them. There are programs in place to help the poor, the disabled, and the elderly,” she answered in a single breath outlining a romanticized view of Canada. “You know, here in China is not like that! If you don’t have a family, nobody cares about you! You have no ‘stability’ whatsoever,” said Meihua, staring at me. Regardless of how Fanfan pictured Canada, her point suggested that people at the marriage fair view marriage as a source of security, as a sort of safety net and overall life stability, confirming my understanding of marriage.

For fair participants, “stability” (wendingxing) meant securing and reproducing resources inside the family to reproduce the family, as I outlined at the beginning of this article. To illustrate their concern about the future of their family, several participants resorted to the linguistic expressions I cited earlier, namely “there are many unfilial acts, but the worst is not to bear a son” and “if the door is equivalent, the family is the right one.” These popular expressions often justified the participants’ decision-processes involving the mate’s economic status. Nonetheless, fair participants indicated that the meanings of sameness and the standards used to identify and measure one’s socioeconomic status changed dramatically since the end of the Mao era. To clarify how the notion of sameness changed, I first outline how fair participants thought of sameness in the Mao era and then discuss how they thought of it during data collection.

Hukou and Individual Autonomy Over the Experience of Socio-Spatial Belonging

Sameness in the Mao Era

In the Mao era, hukou status (i.e., hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction) was an essential and visible proxy for sameness; it signified one's socioeconomic status, being a standard or measurement of equality (i.e., sameness) and inequality (i.e., otherness). Hukou has always been grounded and made legitimate in the eyes of its subjects for regulating two important cultural elements in Chinese society, i.e., "regionalism" and "consanguinity," and that has not changed yet. Chinese Social Scientist Fei Xiaotong best explained these cultural elements (Fei 2012). Regionalism refers to the feelings and social experience of belonging to a place, a land, and a specific culture. Consanguinity refers to kinship and bloodline; that is the sense of belonging to a family and clan. These two notions have been intertwined and embedded in Chinese cultures since time immemorial, as most population groups that form today's China have lived most of their know history off the land, "grounded" in the same villages for centuries. Embedded in those two notions, hukou still collects, registers, and products socio-spatial data on households and their members, that is, the family. Such data include people's birthplace, place of ancestral origin (i.e., usually their father's birthplace), and migration history (i.e., place of origin/birth, place of destiny, and the related migration dates). Hukou data also reflect people's family tree, that is, hukou names the person responsible for the household (i.e., the "household head," which is usually the father), and defines the blood relationship of every household member to the household head. In doing so, hukou determines and regulates people's origin, citizenship, sense of belonging to a place and a family, and overall identity.

The state used hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction (place of hukou registration) to regulate access to resources. Hukou, as the mechanism regulating the distribution of and the access to resources (e.g., food, schooling, housing, medical care, employment, retirement

pension, among others), dictated the socioeconomic boundaries that categorize people into social groups. In doing so, hukou also regulated the notions of sameness and otherness in the context of marriage (i.e., belonging or not belonging to a group), directly influencing, informing, and limiting people's mate choices. Also, hukou-attached rules dissuaded people from pursuing inter-hukou marriages until the late 1990s. For instance, children from inter-hukou marriages had to be registered in their mothers' hukou jurisdiction, which was considered "culturally inappropriate" in a society where the primary purpose of marriage is to continue the father's bloodline (State Council 1997). Also, inter-hukou couples had to live separately (State Council 1998). Fair participants considered such rules coercive, albeit legitimate. My first interaction at the fair, however, made me realize that hukou status no longer represented a fixed, firm socio-spatial boundary between rural and urban populations, as it was the case in the Mao era and a signifier of sameness.

Sameness in the Post-Mao Era

From afar, I saw a woman in her sixties sitting at a little booth. After staring at the pink and blue flying papers hanging in lines crossing over the top of our heads, I circled and approached the woman, whom I later learned was called "broker" Mrs. Lin. Before I could ask permission to sit on the stool across the desk, she asked: "For whom are you looking for? Yourself, or someone else?" Intimidated, I introduced myself and my purposes: "I am here trying to understand how hukou shapes people's decisions around marriage." Surprised, Mrs. Lin looked at me with great curiosity, as if she needed to understand how a Chinese speaking foreigner could be aware of hukou and the local customs, including the marriage fair. Before she

could say anything, I handed her my Shandong University student card and restated the motivations behind the visit.

Figure 13: An early morning view of the marriage fair in Quancheng Park, Jinan, December 19, 2015.

Figure 14: The author interviewing an exhibitor and her mother at the marriage fair in Quancheng Park, Jinan, December 26, 2015. A fairgoer took this photo.

Figure 15: An exhibitor, a broker, and the author (left to right) at the marriage fair in Quancheng Park, Jinan, April 23, 2016. A fairgoer took this photo.

Figure 16: The author (middle) and two interview participants at the fair in Quancheng Park, Jinan, April 24, 2016. A fairgoer took this photo.

"Ask me questions, and I will answer them," she said somewhat uncomfortable about my presence and motivations. Feeling awkward about these uncharted territories and Mrs. Lin's assumption that I was there to find a mate for myself, I looked around to see if I was being observed and sat down. Luckily it was still early for fairgoers; there was only a handful of people in the courtyard checking out those "flying" exhibitor profiles. The brokers were setting up their booths. Feeling less intimidated, I proceeded with no further delay, trying to persuade her into a comparative historical analysis about the importance of hukou in mate selection:

"People used to be really sensitive about hukou classification before. An urban man would never marry a rural woman. How important is hukou today?" I asked her.

"When did you say that you lived in Jinan?" she followed, seeming to care not about my question.

"Between 2002 and 2006," I replied somewhat frustrated.

"You have to understand that China changed. Hukou now is 'flexible,' 'free'! It's not like before," she told me, seeming slightly annoyed for having her time "wasted" with someone who was not at the fair for marriage business.

"So, hukou is no longer important?" I provoked.

"That's not what I said. It is important! But, in a different way!" she followed.

"What do you mean?" I asked, eager for examples. Mrs. Lin restated her comment but giving me no examples. Puzzled by what she meant with "a different way," I shifted the focus to the fair and the exhibitor profiles, trying to make our communication more concrete. I imagined that I would be more successful in my search if I could use a palpable hukou-related object or information as my starting point, and I was not wrong.

"Do fair exhibitors include their hukou status in the profiles they advertise?" I inquired.

"Yes," she replied, pointing at a field titled "hukou" on a stack of blank profiles.

"So, it's important then, isn't it," I kept pushing her.

"Yes, 'local' people usually prefer 'local' people she replied before continuing:

> "But, it's not important in the same way it used to be. Now we must factor other variables in, such as the candidate's ability to find a 'stable job' and 'settle hukou' in Jinan [transfer hukou to Jinan], as well as the economic and health condition of his or her parents. These variables can override hukou.

"But aren't those variables, like education, retirement pension, and employment, related to hukou?" I said, trying to remind her of the privileges that urbanites had over rural residents in the Mao era.

"Yes, but, today, these factors also have to do with other things, like people's capacity."

Noticing that her answer displaced hukou from its traditional role as a clear-cut population divider, I kept pushing for the meanings of hukou and asked her: "Do people still prefer to marry within the same hukou status?"

"Yes, 'locals' prefer 'locals,' but it can vary too," she added, eluding the official hukou terminology once again.

"No, I am not talking about 'locals,'" I said, somewhat unclear about what she meant by "locals." Trying to make her articulate her ideas within the official hukou terminology, I added: "I am talking about 'non-agricultural' hukou holders and 'agricultural' hukou holders."

"Locals are 'Jinan city hukou holders,' she told me, indifferent to the official terminology. "But it sometimes includes people from nearby villages," she added, implying that the category "local" had more than one standard. I listened to her with great interest, as people were rigorous about the hukou terminology in the early 2000s when I lived in Jinan for the first time (2002-2006). In the early 2000s, when people in Jinan talked about hukou status, they usually used the official terminology, generally referring to themselves and others as "agricultural" or a "non-agricultural" resident, in an apparent reference to the official "family classification" in the hukou booklet. For instance, when asked about their spatial identity (e.g., "Where are you from?"), people emphasized their family classification and named their birthplace. Alternatively, people answered: "I am from the countryside" or "I am from Jinan city," which automatically revealed their hukou status, especially hukou classification, and

position in society. As people talked about socio-spatial identity in terms that made one's official hukou status visible, hukou played a decisive role in defining, signifying, and ordering group membership.

I continued the interview trying to make sense of the terms: "People who are not 'locals' are what?" I asked, attempting to grasp the notion of local through its "theoretical opposite."

"Outsiders!" she replied, adding that outsiders often lived in Jinan but were not from Jinan.

"How about 'people from nearby villages'? I asked before adding: "Are those 'outsiders' too?"

"Yes, in most cases, but it really depends on how people think of them," she told me. Feeling hopeless, I changed the subject to another matter.

As my data collection advanced at the fair, I realized that the new terminology has characteristics that make the official hukou status and the identities that have been attached to it in the Mao era vary according to circumstances, despite being influenced by the official understanding of hukou. The new terminology represents a classification system that operates as a proxy or indicator of hukou and follows a relational logic, as I describe below.

Firstly, "local" (bendide) and "outsider" (waidide) are broad classifications with unclear and flexible geographical and bureaucratic standards. These classifications mean "from this place" (which is alternatively phrased as "from this city/municipality") and "from outside this place." However, these classifications per se, alone, do not reveal or indicate the place location. Thus, people in a conversation cannot precisely tell the interlocutor's hukou jurisdiction. Hukou status is still a significant standard used to define who is local and outsider. For instance, one usually assumes that locals and outsiders are people whose households are registered locally and

elsewhere, respectively, but the exact meanings of “locally” and “elsewhere” are unclear. In the case of Jinan, “locally” may refer to the entire municipality or a specific area of the municipality. In contrast, “elsewhere” may refer to “far away” from where the interaction takes place but a place that is still in the municipality. Alternatively, “elsewhere” may refer to another municipality. Regardless of their meaning, the new terminology detaches itself from the official hukou status, while functioning as a proxy for hukou. Making the boundary between locals and outsiders flexible, brokers often counted people who had a home in Jinan but were not officially registered in the city as “locals.” Homeownership in Jinan is the most basic condition for migrants to transfer hukou registration to the municipality. Such flexibility in defining locals and outsiders suggest that research participants were open to using factors that impact or are impacted by hukou status as standards that separate locals from outsiders.

Secondly, functioning as proxies for hukou status, the classifications “local” and “outsider” made people’s history invisible, including migration patterns and hukou status. In other words, the new classification conceals one’s official socio-spatial identity. One cannot distinguish immediately if a “local” person is a hukou transferee (i.e., migrant) who moved to the city permanently or a traditional urbanite who has been living in town since the Mao era. Such concealment benefits those who struggle with (i.e., do not fit) or are stigmatized because of their official socio-spatial identity. However, it also hides the work that hukou status has done in Chinese society, especially regarding the creation of entrenched socio-economic inequalities; it makes differences and inequalities that result from state policy and government ideology seem natural.

Lastly, the classifications “local” and “outsider” are relational, varying according to the identity of the person classifying (including socio-spatial feelings), spatial context, and the

interests at stake during the interaction (i.e., the message being transmitted). For instance, when in the city and next to someone whose hukou was registered in Jinan's urban perimeter, individuals from Jinan's rural perimeter often referred to themselves as "outsiders." But, when next to someone from another municipality or province, the same individuals referred to themselves as "locals." Also, the use of these classifications was often subjected to how people felt about themselves and the city. I have heard numerous people from nearby villages (Jinan's rural perimeter) referring to themselves as "locals." Flexible and loose, the classifications "local" and "outsider" accommodate a diverse range of personal circumstances and interests. They also give people autonomy to use hukou and its proxies to order and organize their relationships with people and places. In doing so, the new terms give hukou subjects autonomy to choose and define the standards that form their understandings of belonging or not belonging, that is, of sameness and otherness.

I initially viewed the ambiguity surrounding hukou status, as well as the expressions "local" and "outsider" as an obstacle to my analysis. "How am I going to differentiate traditional urbanites, rural migrants, migrants from other cities, and rural residents from each other?" I asked myself numerous times on my way back from the fair. Even though everyone at the fair (and elsewhere in Jinan) only referred to hukou in terms of "locals" and "outsiders," I did not fully embrace the new hukou terminology and its ambivalences until several weeks into my data collection at the fair. I could not see it as evidence of a new mindset involving hukou in the era of the hukou reforms, as well as a significant research finding. One day, Mrs. Lin told me while we chatted about the hukou booklet and drank tea in her booth:

> True! The hukou booklet still has the household classification, but it doesn't matter much anymore. The hukou reforms have abolished the limits that used to separate urban and

rural people. Now rural people can do things that were available only to urban people. Hukou is 'free' now.

"What do you mean by 'free'?" I followed.

People have a choice! Before the hukou reforms, rural people had to stay in the countryside and farm the land. They didn't have another option! They couldn't leave their villages and come to the cities, live here, have a life here. Now they can make this choice!

Following this interaction with Mrs. Lin, I started to relate the new hukou terminology to the hukou reforms systematically.

Ongoing since the late 1970s and grounded in the adoption of private market logic to distribute resources, the hukou reforms facilitated migration and hukou transfers, transforming geographical mobility into a matter of personal interest, in addition to state interest. The reforms also removed hukou status as a criterion to distribute and access most resources in society. In doing so, the reforms are gradually rearranging and flexibilizing the work that hukou did in the Mao era, pushing it into invisibility. I refer to the work of organizing populations according to a binary socioeconomic-spatial status and into a social pyramid grounded in institutionally segregated lifestyles, in which urbanites at the top and rural residents at the bottom. Today, hukou embodies status inconsistencies, signifying an infinitely diverse portfolio of life stories and possibilities. For instance, in today's China, someone from the countryside, with an "agricultural" hukou, does not necessarily live off the land and struggle economically. For instance, many Chinese international students studying abroad are "agricultural" hukou holders, according to my observations as a Lecturer of Sociology in Canadian universities. Today's hukou no longer provides clear and visible information on someone's socioeconomic status,

according to the fair participants. Fair participants reported that, with the hukou reforms, they started to view hukou as “only” an “indicator” of socioeconomic status and life story.

In this section, I demonstrate that the lack of precision surrounding today’s hukou terminology reveals a remarkable change in the way people think of hukou and talk about their spatial ties and identity, including sameness and otherness. With several meanings, hukou alone now fails to reveal a person’s position in society. Also, these terms suggest that people in Jinan, and at the marriage fair sort individuals and order their social interactions according to new hierarchies that include: people’s individuality (how they feel about themselves and the environment they live in) and people’s autonomy (where they choose to live, regardless of hukou registration).

In a nutshell, hukou status—as a boundary that organizes people of different socioeconomic status—has become increasingly subjected to other factors and, therefore, flexible with the hukou reforms. Some of those factors are proxies for hukou status, that is, factors that are not hukou itself but directly or indirectly related to it (e.g., marrying someone who was an only-child often means marrying an urbanite). Other factors organizing people’s identity, however, communicated with hukou solely in a distant way; such factors related to people’s specific interests and were flexible, variable, and diverse.

Essentially, with the hukou reforms, hukou stopped being the leading standard regulating social status and the notions of sameness and otherness in Jinan and other second-tier cities with similar migration rules and hukou transfer policies. Fair participants considered that hukou no longer acts to limit mate choices, or as a coercive mechanism that forces individuals into specific marriage patterns. Instead, hukou status became only one more element that fair participants factor in, choose, and negotiate according to their needs and interests when selecting a mate to

secure stability. The fact hukou is flexible and negotiable transformed hukou into a “medium” to sameness and thus stability, instead of being only a “representative of sameness” and stability. From this perspective, hukou, although more invisible, became more dynamic and active in regulating people’s choices and lives.

Autonomy and leverage to use hukou as a currency in marriage negotiations lead individuals to develop a series of skills that were discouraged or restricted to people in specific positions during the Mao era, such as planning, risk assessment, and coordination of means and ends. Also, the understanding of hukou as a “variable” promotes values that used to be discouraged in the Mao era, such as individualism and personal interest. Lastly, while the hukou reforms have not impacted the idea that marriage means stability, they included the notion of personal choice and individualism in opinions of sameness and stability.

Hukou, Mate Choices and Trade-Offs

As people started to have the autonomy to decide about hukou status as a signifier of sameness and otherness in the context of family formation, they began to use hukou to achieve personal goals. Such use of hukou consisted of individuals exercising autonomy and instrumental reasoning (e.g., alignment of means and ends) to make choices about their own and their potential mate’s hukou status and hukou proxies, all to achieve their personal goals. To make choices about hukou means to place or remove the restriction on the desirable mate’s hukou and/or negotiate hukou by finding elements, including hukou proxies, that work as compensation for not choosing a mate with the expected hukou status. Hukou proxies refer to circumstances and events that are directly or indirectly related to hukou or that signify hukou status, including the capacity to change hukou status. Hukou proxies include the following circumstances or

events: homeownership in Jinan; family configurations (e.g., only-child), employment stability (i.e., a job in the public sector); and retirement pension.

Individuals have always considered hukou status in the context of family formation, but until the hukou reforms, people had no agency over hukou, having to take it for granted. Today, instead, they have power over it.

The typical exhibitor's wish list contained information about the desirable mate's age, height, marital status, hukou, homeownership, and job type. Demands and expectations around age, height, and marital status followed a fixed and predictable pattern. Women expected men to be taller and slightly older, while men expected women to be shorter and slightly younger. Most men and women wanted to find someone of equal marital status. Meanwhile, demands around hukou, homeownership, and job type varied according to the exhibitor's hukou status and other personal circumstances and therefore were subjected to changes.

My most surprising and revealing finding referred to the number of exhibitors and fairgoers who viewed hukou status, including place of registration and classification, either as irrelevant (about 36 percent of exhibitors) or negotiable (approximately 33 percent of exhibitors). The percent of people who considered hukou irrelevant and negotiable accounted for about 70 percent of exhibitors, in comparison to only a third (about 31 percent) who firmly wished to find a local person. The high percent of fair participants who were open to engage hukou as a flexible currency represents a rupture with the mind of the Mao era when hukou fully dictated the distribution and access of resources, leaving a limited opportunity for negotiations.

When comparing locals and outsiders, outsiders tended to be less concerned about their mate's hukou status. Outsiders either had no preference regarding hukou—which was the case of all inter-provincial migrants—or were open to negotiating it. Among intra-provincial

migrants, about two-thirds had no hukou preference, while the rest were open to negotiating it. Among locals, those who were open to negotiating hukou or considered it irrelevant totaled to a little over two thirds, while those who had firm demands on hukou comprised of about a third.

In this section, I discuss the groups that considered hukou irrelevant, negotiable, and non-negotiable separately, as their profiles and circumstances varied considerably.

Hukou as "Irrelevant"

About 40 percent of exhibitors declared hukou to be irrelevant in their mate selection process. Exhibitors indicated that the mate's hukou was irrelevant by writing "no restrictions on hukou" in their profiles. When explaining their standpoint to me, they often used the expressions "hukou does not matter" or "hukou is not important." Fairgoers that indicated no restrictions on hukou tended to express themselves about hukou in the same fashion. As I discuss later in this section, these expressions did not mean that hukou status and its proxies were truly not important or "disconnected" from a strategy to find a mate who represented a "win-win" marriage for all parties involved. Instead, these expressions resulted from a carefully crafted decision-making process that involved self-knowledge and self-rating that happened before starting the mate selection process. Ultimately, people who declared hukou irrelevant took responsibility for their future stability into their own hands. Before providing more details into this aspect, I provide details on the fair participants who declared hukou irrelevant.

Based on interview accounts and exhibitor profiles, outsiders, especially single intra-provincial migrants, were more likely to consider hukou status irrelevant. Their rationale was

usually grounded in one or more of the following reasons, which were interconnected in their narratives.

Firstly, outsiders were familiar with navigating life in Jinan as a temporary resident; for them, migration was not a "big deal." They also thought that if they managed to overcome the challenge of living in a large city where they originally had no familiar networks and even succeed economically, their partners also could make it in Jinan. Thus, knowledge of migration contributed to for them to be open for any mate, regardless of hukou.

Secondly, despite viewing similarities in hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction (i.e., place of hukou registration) as proxies for cultural affinity and closeness, outsiders considered that they were already in a "strange" place (i.e., Jinan) and dealing with a "foreign" culture anyway. Thus, marrying someone who did not quite fit into their habits was not too big of a deal.

The third reason is gendered and grounded in traditional cultural norms. Migrant women usually did not mind marrying migrant men because, according to traditional cultural norms, the woman leaves her family and place of residence to move in with her husbands and care for his aging parents anyway. Traditionally, the separation was so dramatic that married women used to return to their parental home only once a year. Although many women reported taking on family responsibilities that used to be predominantly masculine, especially those who were an only child or had no brother, they still did not think of marrying someone who was an outsider and leaving their villages problematic. When discussing this matter, several exhibitors and fairgoers told me that they could rely on China's "increasingly convenient" transportation infrastructure to return home in case they need to care for their parents.

Inter-provincial outsiders, the group least concerned about hukou, had a more carefree perspective on marriage and mate selection. Usually older and divorced or widowed, these

outsiders lived in the city with their adult children who cared for them, even though they often had a pension from their jobs in the Mao era. They simply wanted a companion or, in the case of men, a woman to care for them. Although inter-provincial men tended to want a "younger lady," their adult children tried to avoid this scenario.

Although inter-provincial exhibitors themselves did not mind hukou, their adult children did so. I witnessed several times adult children of inter-provincial exhibitors coming to the fair to discuss their parents' requests with the broker. They feared that their parents, especially fathers, could try to break the rule about marrying an equal. They requested brokers to try to find a mate like their parents in status, regardless of their parents' profile information. Essentially, the parents of inter-provincial migrants wanted their parents' mates to be divorced or widowed, preferably widowed, and have a retirement pension. The requirement of a retirement pension practically eliminated rural migrants from the pool of options, as rural hukou holders had no access to a pension in the Mao era. With such restrictions, the adult children wanted to prevent the following situations: pregnancy (in the case of older men marrying younger women) and inheritance issues; marriage for economic reasons or advantages; and extra family responsibilities, which included the possibility of having to frequently host and care for the relatives of their parent's mate, in case such relatives were not self-sufficient economically and had to spend time in the city for some reason.

Meanwhile, most locals with no restrictions on hukou were able to secure their "urbanity" and geographical stability in Jinan, as they had either a home in the city or the means to get one, such as money saved, parental help, or a job eligible for a mortgage application. Also, most of them had grown up in the city. While some were raised in Jinan as a temporary resident, with hukou registered elsewhere, the majority were actual permanent residents of the city. In fact,

about a third of exhibitors tended to be the adult children, including women, of traditional urban residents with a home in the city. Profile data confirmed that over three-thirds of local men with no hukou preference were homeowners. Also, the group of locals with no hukou preference presented the highest percentage of women homeowners among exhibitors (about a third). According to brokers, homeownership in Jinan gave locals more autonomy to disregard hukou when selecting a mate. Exhibitors that owned a home in the city could easily get their mate's hukou transferred to Jinan upon marriage.

When I asked exhibitors and fairgoers about the meanings that hukou had for them more broadly, they usually dismissed my questions, saying simply that hukou "did not matter" for them. It was the brokers who indicated to me that "actively" and "consciously" considering hukou unimportant signified the opposite, that is, that hukou was important. Fair participants with no hukou restrictions were the most aware and knowledgeable of their "demerits" and/or "specific goals" in the marriage market.

I learned from brokers that most participants considering hukou irrelevant usually had passed the normal marriage age and were in a hurry to get married because of parental pressure. Broker Meihua told me that it is quite common to find fair participants, especially locals, who initially regarded hukou as unnegotiable shifting their position. "It's about their parents! Their parents cannot deal anymore with the shame of having no grandchild!" she told me. "They see their friends and neighbors taking care of their grandchildren every day! So, they also want a grandchild, even if they must let their children marry an outsider," she added outlining how people engage hukou to achieve personal goals, even when they are related to collective norms around family values (i.e., the continuation of the family) and division of labor (i.e., the grandparent role). According to Meihua, local families only support their adult children to look

for an outsider mate as a last resort actively; this is the worst-case scenario. Also, to be eligible for marriage, the mate must be willing to settle in Jinan. Parents of only-children were even more specific about making sure that their children stay in Jinan after marriage. They usually refuse to let their only child, especially an only daughter, leave the city to accompany the husband because they have nobody else to count on. In case they have a son, they do not want to be cared for by a daughter-in-law who has different habits and customs.

Exhibitor profile data confirmed the information that most participants placing no restrictions on hukou were older. For instance, locals with no hukou preference had higher median and mode values for age (31 and 36) than locals who sought locals or were open to negotiating hukou. Also, participants with physical or cognitive disabilities, who experience consistent stigma in Jinan, tended to eliminate hukou from the marriage equation. The same was true for divorced participants, especially women who have had children from the first marriage. Regardless of their circumstances, all these participants assumed that it would be easier for them to find a mate if they had fewer requirements and, therefore, a larger pool to choose from, which is reasonable. One broker summarized the topic of hukou irrelevance by telling me, "you can't be picky when you have a demerit or when you have a goal." Despite the broker's comment, I noticed that people declaring hukou irrelevant tried to compensate for their lack of hukou requirement with job requirements.

Interviews and profile information revealed that local exhibitors giving up hukou often demanded that their mates have a stable job in Jinan. Approximately three-quarters of local male and female exhibitors with no hukou preference required a mate with a "stable job" (gongzuo wending) in the city; the same was true among outsiders. Considering that employment stability is a proxy for hukou status in Jinan (i.e., hukou transfer to the city), this finding suggests this

subset of exhibitors had clear hukou plans. Exhibitors downplayed hukou status and resorted to a hukou proxy as a strategy to secure hukou status in the city. Such a strategy confirmed that fair participants with no hukou restrictions were aware of how hukou impacted their lives. It also suggests that hukou has become a site of scrutiny and strategic decision-making for numerous individuals.

Hukou as "Negotiable"

About a third of exhibitors were open to establishing relationships with outsiders in exchange for evidence that they could settle in the city. Essentially, they negotiated the mate's hukou status, exchanging it for hukou proxies. These exhibitors usually identified their willingness to negotiate hukou status by writing in their profiles "outsider who is excellent is acceptable" or "outsider with ability is acceptable." Implicit references to the eligibility criteria to transfer hukou to Jinan, these expressions meant that they were willing to accept someone who had the "potential" to "settle" in the city (you nengli zai Jinan luohu). "Excellence" (youxiu) and "ability" (nengli) (i.e., capacity and skill) signified money to buy a home in the city or a job that was "good enough" (hai keyi de) to qualify for a mortgage. Exhibitors tended to mimic each other when outlining those tradeoffs, so the words and phrases they used to outline their expectations were similar or the same across the profiles.

About a third of all locals, those who were open to negotiating the mate's hukou status distinguished themselves for their educational attainment and sector of employment; these locals usually had a bachelor's degree and a "good job" (wending gongzuo), that is, a stable job in the public sector or with a large firm in the private sector. In fact, from the employment perspective,

this subset tended to be overrepresented in large private firms. Educational attainment and employment experience in environments that reward skill and ability partially explain their flexibility regarding hukou status. “What you can get means more than what you have now. You can’t exclude people because they don’t own a house, this, or that. You must see their potential, if they can make it,” a female exhibitor on her late twenties told me when I asked her about to explain what she meant by “outsider with ability is acceptable” (waidi you nengli keyi)

Meanwhile, outsiders that were open to negotiating hukou also distinguished themselves among their peers. They tended to be more educated, holding at least a bachelor’s degree. This subset included people with master’s degrees and doctorates. Most came to Jinan as a student and were willing to settle in the city. Further, they also viewed migration and hukou transfer as a matter of skill.

Despite using the terms “excellence” and “ability” to describe the ideal mate, both locals and outsiders also indicated the trade-off they were willing to accept in exchange for hukou (see figure 12), all in the open-ended section of their profiles. Among locals, all men preferred a woman with a stable job in the city. Some (about a third), also wanted a woman with a home in the city. All such considerations were to ensure that they were not losing status because of marriage, that is, that marriage was giving them stability. “If I am going to compromise hukou, I want her to have what hukou means, that is a home. Then, she will be like me,” a male exhibitor told me while seeking the approval of his mother, who stood next to the profile.

In contrast, all local women considered job stability irrelevant in their mate choice. Instead, they focused only on income and wealth, a more direct proxy for hukou; about three-quarters of local women willing to negotiate hukou required a mate who was a homeowner. Also, of all women in the fair, local women open to negotiating hukou were the most likely to

want a male who is a homeowner. To compensate for their hukou flexibility, local women open to negotiating hukou reinforce gendered norms about the provision of resources to the family. From a broader perspective, these women also reinforce the hukou system's significance, as homeownership is a primary condition for hukou transfer.

Unlike locals, outsiders, especially those who were well-educated, traded hukou status in Jinan primarily for job stability. They wanted their mates to have a good job in the city and thus be eligible for a mortgage. Hence, for outsiders, "excellence" and "ability" also mean higher educational attainment, given that job stability is strongly correlated with educational attainment. According to brokers, outsiders, unless they were wealthy, knew that requiring their mates to be homeowners would restrict "way too much" their choices, limiting them to a pool of locals who had to lower their standards because of too many "demerits."

By associating spatial mobility and settlement in Jinan with excellence and ability, exhibitors treated hukou transfer to Jinan as a matter of individual will. In doing so, they disregard the government's ability to determine and limit one's possibility to fulfill the criteria for hukou transfer. They also diminished the role that hukou still plays in shaping and constraining personal choices regarding educational attainment and skill development. Diminishing the role that hukou plays in creating patterns of interpersonal relationships and predictable social outcomes has several consequences. It makes the social and moral order created by hukou invisible and, therefore, more potent; this includes the superiority of urban spaces over rural spaces, including their residents, on the discursive level. It also naturalizes and individualizes the injustices that hukou still creates, especially regarding access to education. It fuels discourses supporting the idea that hukou lost its importance. Lastly, it makes hukou as a subject of research more elusive and difficult to grasp and understand.

Hukou as "Unnegotiable"

About a third of exhibitors sought a local mate, considering hukou unnegotiable. Exhibitors and fairgoers requiring local hukou holder mates were locals themselves. Their socio-economic and demographic characteristics included all the main signifiers of "urbanity;" that is the signifiers of a non-agricultural hukou. In addition to having a post-secondary education, this group usually had a home in Jinan and a job in the public sector. Also, their parents usually had a retirement pension, which is an important advantage in the marriage market, especially for women. Husbands of women whose parents have a retirement pension are free from the need to economically care for their in-laws, raising the value of such women in the marriage market. Lastly, those who considered hukou unnegotiable were usually an only-child, another signifier of urbanity. These characteristics combined made this group the most desirable profile at the marriage fair; everyone would prefer them, but few qualified to marry them.

Representatives of Jinan's long-established urban elite, these locals viewed hukou status as a symbol of socioeconomic prestige, a major regulator of sameness (i.e., belonging), a primary tool to reproduce stability. For them, marrying an outsider meant downgrading socioeconomically. The interview account with Mr. Li at the beginning of this chapter illustrates the concerns and visions of this group.

Essentially, locals considering hukou unnegotiable justified their hukou requirement with stereotypes concerning outsiders. They viewed rural migrants as "people of inferior quality" and "inferior culture," ideas that were intertwined in their perspective. For them, marrying an agricultural hukou holder represented the greatest taboo in the domain of family formation. While such locals understood and respected the rural migrant's need to move to the city, they

were suspicious about the figure of the urban migrant. Locals assumed that socioeconomic success resulted from a reliable social network grounded in dependency, familiarity, trust, and mutual help. This assumption led them to inquire into whether urban migrants had the ability to succeed economically outside their cities of origin. Suspicious of the urban migrant's presence in the city, especially if those migrants had not arrived as students, locals also inquired into the "true" reasons behind their migratory process. They often feared that urban migrants had "something" to hide, assuming that "real" urbanites would not leave their place of origin unless there were "issues" happening. For those locals, migration contradicted the notion of economic success, as it embodies the condition of being displaced from original socio-spatial networks. Quite often, they would even challenge the "urbanity" of migrants coming from other cities. Several locals at the fair referred to urban migrants as "potentially rural migrants" who wanted to disguise their rural origin, once again treating "rurality" as a demerit. In sum, these locals were closed to a relationship with outsiders and locals who could not provide evidence of their "urban pedigree." The only way for people to prove that they were "real" urbanites was to exhibit a characteristic that traced their "urban lineage" to the Mao era. Such a characteristic referred to one of the following situations: being an only child, especially if born after 1976, when the One-Child policy did not allow urban couples to have more than one child; having postsecondary educational credentials; being a homeowner and owning more than one property; having a well-paid job in the public sector; and having parents with a retirement pension. Most importantly, for this subset, intra-hukou status marriage meant essentially protecting their cultural and economic stability, as I discuss below.

Cultural stability concerned the in-laws primarily and included two aspects that were gendered. Parents of male urbanites did not want their son to marry an outsider woman because

that meant they would be cared for: "in the old age by a daughter-in-law from another "culture;" someone who did not share the same customs and background with them. Parents considered that "otherness" could become a source of conflict inside the family. Meanwhile, the second aspect involves the One-Child policy. As noted, the One-Child policy changed family dynamics in China. It led only-child women to take on the responsibility of caring for their parents. The One-Child policy also led only-child women, typically urbanites, to wish to stay in town upon getting married, restricting their mate selection from the geographical perspective. Thus, because of the policy, parents of female urbanites did not want their daughters to marry an outsider because they did not want to be left alone in Jinan. They also did not want to "burden" their adult daughters with the "extra" responsibility of having to travel back and forth to Jinan; this was viewed as a potential source of family conflict too.

> From an economic perspective, parents of local daughters and local sons wanted their children to marry other locals whose parents were also locals. Those parents had three different reasons in mind, which aimed at giving the family a "comfortable economic conditions" (keyi de tiaojian, bijiao shufude). Firstly, local couples with local parents enjoy more economic autonomy, as they do not have the responsibility to care for their parents economically. Local parents, who are usually traditional urbanites, rely on retirement pension from the Mao era. Secondly, local couples with local parents tend to inherit more properties from their parents. Local parents converted their state subsidies into real estate properties during the privatization of the housing market in the late 1990s. Many urbanites used legal and "not so legal schemes" to purchase several properties with their "housing accumulation fund." From the perspective of inheritance, the One-Child policy worked to help the traditional urban elite to accumulate comparatively more

wealth than the general population. Adult children of local parents presumably had no siblings with whom they would have to share their parents' properties.

The three reasons above find support in the idea that economic resources can secure the continuation of the family. Numerous fairgoers, especially parents of locals, linked economic resources to the economic sustainability of their grandchildren, particularly pertaining to education. From a broader perspective, local urbanites used the autonomy that the hukou reforms gave them to negotiate hukou status not to negotiate hukou. They viewed hukou and their autonomy to make decisions over it as a tool to secure and reproduce the privileges that hukou gave to urbanites in the Mao era. They essentially used hukou to perpetuate the distinctions and inequalities created by hukou in the first place. Thus, the accumulation of assets happening through intra-hukou marriages reinforces the old socioeconomic divide between urban and rural populations created by hukou during the state-planned economy period.

Further, intra-hukou marriages involving locals reinforced and altered, simultaneously, the notion of regionalism, which is one of the two pillars (i.e., regionalism and bloodline/kinship) providing legitimacy to the hukou system. For locals who seek locals exclusively, hukou was still a major standard that expresses the experience of belonging to a specific socio-spatial category (i.e., sameness). By wanting mates who were their equals in hukou status, locals (and their parents) assumed that space and culture overlap, erroneously assuming that all locals in Jinan share the same "culture" (wenhua) (i.e., habits and customs) and enjoyed the same types of social networks; Jinan has become a large metropolitan area in Shandong with a population that is diverse from all perspectives. Although wrong, this assumption reinforced regionalism and thus the hukou system. Meanwhile, because their "filter" of hukou involved not only hukou but also economic proxies of hukou, they included property ownership and the desire for capital

accumulation into the notion of regionalism, giving it an economic face. In other words, property ownership and the desire for capital accumulation through inheritance became elements that drive attachment to space.

Conclusion

My findings revealed that everyone at the fair actively engaged hukou in mate selection to achieve personal goals. The way that people engaged hukou varied considerably:

About 40 percent of participants engaged hukou by not imposing restrictions on the potential mate's hukou; they considered hukou "irrelevant" (bu zhongyao or hukou meishi) This group was comprised primarily of outsiders (i.e., migrants) and locals (i.e., permanent residents of Jinan), with more outsiders (about three out of five people). Having no hukou restrictions did not imply that such participants cared little about hukou. Instead, it means that, after being able to evaluate the demerits and advantages they represented in the marriage market, they consciously used hukou to maximize their chances to get the best possible mate.

About 30 percent of participants engaged hukou by indicating that they would give up restricting hukou in exchange for mates that were "good enough" to obtain a local hukou registration. Their hukou trades-offs or exchanges always involved a proxy of hukou, that is, a condition that signified the ability to transfer hukou to Jinan city. This group was comprised of a balanced mix of outsiders and locals.

The remaining 30 percent of participants engaged hukou in a more traditional way; they refused inter-hukou marriages, wishing for a local mate—this group comprised primarily of locals with hukou registered in Jinan city.

Disregarding, negotiating, or not negotiating, fair participants used hukou as part of a strategy to successfully align means and goals in the context of family formation. In fact, in this strategy, hukou became a means for fair participants to achieve personal goals. Fairgoers used as a matter of choice and a medium to safeguard risks, create opportunities, and maximize their chances of achieving economic and cultural stability in marriage. People in China have always acknowledged hukou when rating a mate; however, until the hukou reforms, they never had the autonomy to make choices involving hukou or to use hukou as a flexible resource. Until the reforms, several laws discouraged inter-hukou marriages, preventing populations from engaging hukou to pursue personal interests.

The ability to experience hukou as a variable element in mate-selection processes, instead of a fixed pattern, as used to be the case until its reform, represents a major shift in the relationship between spaces and individuals in Jinan. Before the hukou reform, state policies relied on the hukou system to treat life opportunities as an effect of institutionally created and coercive attachment to space, which was traditionally determined by birthplace and kinship. Birthplace used to fully and officially determine a person's social roles, social statuses, and life opportunities; connection to a specific space, as established by birth, is still an important ascribed status and indicator of social position in Jinan today. But, the hukou reform transformed connection to space into a status that can also be achieved through individual autonomy, strategizing, and self-governance.

More importantly, the hukou reform allowed individuals to reproduce themselves as autonomous individuals inside the family and through the family formation. Individuals now have limited autonomy not only to choose their mates in ways that promote their private goals but also to take responsibility for their family choices.

My data collection at the fair also allowed me to observe that hukou still can be used as a tool to create distinction and inequality. I also noticed that today's hukou makes people socially and economically unequal by creating new inequalities and or reproducing old ones. However, the novelty of the reformed hukou refers to the increasing role that individuals, as opposed to the state, play in reproducing and perpetuating hukou-inequalities that were created with the state-planned economy in Mao's era through autonomous decision-making processes in the various domains of daily life, including mate selection. Such a facet of today's hukou is still ignored by the literature on hukou and family, as I discussed before in this chapter.

Lastly, my research findings challenged the idea that the hukou reforms made hukou "unimportant" or "less important." Since the beginning of the hukou reforms, hukou has become somewhat invisible. Hukou hides behind the autonomy of its subjects to make choices around geographical mobility and hukou transfer. Fairgoers and people in Jinan in general often talked about such autonomy as "flexibility." They say: "Hukou has been 'flexibilized' [fangsong le]!" or "Hukou is 'free' now!", suggesting that it no longer matters. However, I tread carefully around this kind of discourse. Flexibility and autonomy do not necessarily indicate unimportance. Flexibility and autonomy are excellent ways to hide technologies that govern people's lives, especially the all-encompassing ones. In the case of hukou, the more autonomy and flexibility hukou subjects have over the household registration system, the more they reinforce hukou's invisibility and thus its power to guide people's behaviors and potentially create human suffering without being held accountable.

Chapter 5 • Hukou and Urban Dynamics in Jinan City

Introduction

Urbanization rates in China have increased from about 20 percent to almost 60 percent in the past four decades, with about 640 million people leaving rural for urban areas. Like in most parts of the world, migration represents an important factor influencing urban dynamics in China. However, in China, the state bureaucracy uses a system that registers and classifies households and their members to rigorously govern migration and, thus, by proxy, urbanization, and urban dynamics in coercive and liberating ways. Urban dynamics refer to the overall demand for residential properties, including type, size, and location, the socio-economic configuration of neighborhoods, and the resident's connectedness to the city and its spaces.

Referred to as the "Household Registration System," or simply hukou, this system allows local governments to align the collective needs of the city with the private interests of individuals and their families. In this chapter, I discuss how Jinan, the capital city of Shandong Province in eastern China, has used hukou to regulate urban dynamics between 1978 until 2016, that is, since the beginning of the hukou reforms, which aimed at to adjust hukou to the needs of the private economy. I am especially interested in understanding how the Municipality of Jinan combined hukou, migration, and homeownership to organize migrants and local hukou holders across the city according to migration history, including place of origin, and socioeconomic status.

Hukou[6] sorts citizens according to the place where their household is registered, i.e., rural or urban areas. A person's household registration status (i.e., hukou status) comprises of two elements, the family classification, which is also referred to as "hukou classification," and the place of household registration, that is, "hukou place" or "hukou jurisdiction." Hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction are linked to each other; the state classifies individuals born in families registered in the rural perimeter as "agricultural" hukou holders. Meanwhile, individuals from urban families are classified as "non-agricultural" hukou holders. Thus, the hukou jurisdiction of agricultural and non-agricultural hukou holders are rural and urban areas, more specifically, the lowest administrative division related to their place of residence. The Ministry of Public Security manages hukou, responsible for updating everyone's hukou status and information. Practically, the closest police station to a given household is responsible for its hukou registration. The state bureaucracy uses the "Household Register" to record a person's hukou information. A booklet, this document contains detailed descriptions of the household and each one of its members, including hukou status, demographics, and geographical mobility history (i.e., date of migration and places of origin and destiny). Migrants can apply for temporary permits and live outside their hukou jurisdiction but, to officially "settle" (luohu) in a new place, they must transfer hukou to this place and thus be reclassified.

Many migrants transfer hukou to their actual city of residence to secure schooling for their children. However, many cannot afford to do it because homeownership in the desired city is a basic criterion to apply for hukou transfer. Also, until recently, the criteria for hukou transfer usually included a minimum size for homes used in the hukou transfer, limiting even further the

[6] "Hukou" means household in the Chinese language.

number of people who could afford official migration. Further, the government in Beijing does not allow individuals to transfer hukou from urban to rural areas, so migratory movements in China follows the rural-urban direction. There is also migration between urban areas, but a smaller scale.

Jinan, like other municipalities in China, experienced a dramatic urbanization process since 1978, when Chinese society started to reform the Household Registration System, readapting the policies attached to it to the needs of an economy more oriented to private profitability. These needs include workforce mobility and competition for jobs. Jinan's urbanization rate jumped from about 23 percent (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015) to 57 percent in 2015, and it is expected to reach 63 percent by 2020 (Jinan Government 2018). Between 1978 and 2015, more than 2.5 million people "officially' migrated to Jinan, transferring their hukou to the city (Jinan Government 2018; Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015). In 2018, Jinan had about 7.5 million people, of which 6.5 million were registered in the municipality (urban or rural perimeter) and 900,000 elsewhere, in another municipality, or living in Jinan on a temporary residence permit.

Based on interviews, documentary, and participant observation data, my research findings revealed that, in the study period, the Municipality of Jinan changed the nature of the migratory policies that were attached to hukou, using the hukou system to govern urban dynamics in increasingly flexible and liberal ways. At the beginning of the hukou reforms, hukou-related policies were coercive, limiting migration pathways to Jinan. Between 1978 and 1998, to officially settle in Jinan, aspiring hukou transferees had to find a job with tenure housing in the city, which was nearly impossible. Without options, migrants moved to the city either as a captive, temporary workers, or unauthorized workers. They lived either confined in their

workplaces or continually on the run, trying to escape police surveillance, in a situation similar to that of criminalized black youth in the US (Goffman 2014).

In 1998, the municipality adopted the national plan of housing privatization and began to trade apartments in the private market. Although this initiative slowly decoupled migration from employment with housing tenure, it was still difficult for migrants to transfer hukou, as most had no resources to purchase a home in the city. Further, in the years following the privatization of housing (1998-2005), Jinan's east side, where most large and prestigious enterprises of the Mao era were located, became the city's most expensive per square meter. As I demonstrate, the privatization of housing reorganized Jinan's hierarchies of institutional privileges involving populations and spaces, which were grounded in hukou status, into the price of real estate and spatial divisions. Nonetheless, this initiative paved the way for the municipality to inaugurate different migration programs in the city in 2005 and 2008 that conditioned hukou transfer to purchase homes (usually an apartment) of specific sizes in the city; in 2008, the municipality conditioned home size to migrant's hukou jurisdiction.

, Jinan's migration programs, which aimed at hukou transfer and with selective criteria grounded in hukou status, gave the municipality the capacity to sort desirable from undesirable migrants and to organize the desirable in the city socio-spatially, keeping them at the bottom of the urban hierarchy. However, the most important aspect of the hukou transfer programs from 2005 and 2008 refers to the association of migration, for the first time ever since the Communists took power in 1949, with the individual capacity to purchase a home in the city, which included complying with the social norms of a private market economy. By engaging individual agency and personal interest in the processes of hukou transfer, the municipality gave aspiring migrants

choice and autonomy over their migration process, while guiding their choices of migration and residence in order to redesign the city's population and redesign its spaces.

Practically, the municipality gave migrants autonomy to choose among options that were given through programs and criteria, making state intervention invisible. In doing so, it created a hukou transfer regulatory environment that obtained voluntary compliance from populations to state intervention in urban planning, while disguising state intervention under private market forces and individual choices. Further, such a regulatory environment made the coercive dimensions of hukou, especially the inequality it still created among populations invisible, hidden behind "freedom of choice," as well as natural. Essentially, this chapter tells the story of how the municipality attached hukou transfer to criteria, conditions, circumstances, opportunities, and barriers that incorporated individual agency and personal interest in order to produce urban dynamics that delivered collective needs.

Broadly, my analysis casts light on the importance of hukou in the production of spaces in Jinan city. It also provides insights into the importance of hukou in guiding the expansion of China's residential real estate market, which is responsible for about 70 percent of the entire real estate market. Residential construction represented 13 percent of China's GDP in 2017, amounting to $1.6 trillion.

In addition to the literature review and method sections, this chapter has two core sections, where I discuss my findings and conclusion. I organized the core sections chronologically regarding hukou transfer policies and their impact on the city. The first section covers from the beginning of the hukou reforms from 1978 to 2005 when migrants had limited agency over migration because their ability to meet the criteria to transfer hukou was fully regulated by the municipality through its state institutions (i.e., public firms or work units) or

private employers. Covering from 2005 to 2016, the second section address how the municipality attached hukou transfer to the migrant's ability to purchase a home in Jinan, incorporate individual agency and person interests into migration policies. I concluded this chapter by emphasizing the importance of the hukou system for urban governance in contemporary China.

Literature Review on Hukou and Urban Dynamics

Several studies have addressed the impact of hukou on urban dynamics. Most of them focused either on the living conditions of migrant populations in the city or on the factors that influence the decision of rural migrants to transfer hukou to the city, especially land rights in rural areas and the ability to purchase a home. Usually drawing on deductive methodologies and large survey data, most studies offer a broad view of migration and urban dynamics grounded either in variables that aggregate numerous cities (including megacities like Beijing) or a partial view that explores only one or two specific aspects of the interactions between hukou, migration, and urban dynamics. Among such studies, I highlight the most recent ones.

Relying on data from China's 2012 Labor Force Dynamics Survey, Yi Zhang (2017) compared the living conditions of urbanites, hukou transferees, and migrants living in Chinese cities on temporary permits across the country. The study found that rural migrants living in the city on temporary permits had the worst living conditions. They usually lived in a dwelling with no tap water, improper cooking facilities, and insufficient hygiene, air quality, and lightning; these accommodations also tended to be away from transit hubs. Although this chapter does not address such a topic, my research also supports Zhang's findings. In Jinan, I found that the living

conditions of migrants living in the city on temporary permits were similar to that of unauthorized migrants in the 1980s and 1990s.

Exploring the migrant's decision to settle in the city, Wang and Toshio Otsuki (2015) conducted a survey to analyze housing choices among recent graduates in Beijing. They found that marital status represented the most important factor in guiding people's decision to buy a home, which is also the reality in Jinan. Drawing on a widespread cultural norm, they explain their data by arguing that marriage triggers house tenure as the Chinese view the establishment of an independent household as a marker of maturity. Corroborating their findings, I add that residential property represents a sine qua non condition for hukou registration; without a home, couples cannot leave the parental household registration and acquire their own Household Register, the hukou booklet.

Analyzing the impact of rural land rights on hukou transfers to urban areas, Lili Wu and Wei Zhang (2018) found that rural migrants with land right in the village tend to opt for not transferring hukou; they prefer to live in urban areas as temporary residents than giving up land rights. My research in Jinan also supports this finding. As I discussed (Chapter 3), there is an increasing number of migrants who refuse to give up their rural hukou status. They argue that "hukou transfer is no longer worth the money" (zhuan hukou bu zhi qian), meaning that they no longer view urban citizenship as associated with institutional privileges and benefits. Instead, migrants identify rural land and the agricultural hukou as economic resources, "saving" their hukou status for potential gains in the future. Expecting that their land will eventually be expropriated due to urban expansion, rural migrants want to keep their land to receive monetary compensation in the future. In their rationale, they usually account for the fact that the price of

land in China has been increasing consistently in the past decades, thinking that the longer they manage to keep their agricultural hukou status, the better.

Unlike all the existing studies, my study contributes to the literature on hukou and urban dynamics in three novel ways: Firstly, it analyzes hukou's role in the governance of spaces and populations, particularly how hukou influences the logics of space and population valorization and devaluation in Jinan. Secondly, Jinan, a second-tier city, offers a more typical example than Beijing, Shanghai, and other very much studied larger cities relating to how Chinese cities have used hukou for urban governance across the country over time. Thirdly, it offers a comprehensive view of how the migration policies attached to hukou have changed to incorporate individual agency, a topic that has not yet been explored in the hukou nor in the urban dynamics literature.

Methods

The analysis in this chapter results from a broader research project that inquiries into the transformation of hukou as a technology of government (Foucault 1991a) since the beginning of the hukou reforms. I base this chapter on a multitude of data sources collected during a nine-month research process in Jinan between 2015 and 2016.

The interview data for this chapter consists primarily of accounts from hukou officials, police officers, mortgage clerks at financial institutions, and other informants that could reveal details about the impact of hukou in Jinan's urban dynamics, especially the real estate market. Interviews with real estate agents (21) and homebuyers (23) especially inform this analysis. Real estate agents refer to realtors, sales personnel, and clerks in the sales office of residential

development sites. I conducted the interviews with real estate agents and homebuyers in eight residential developments in Jinan between January and May 2016; three in Tianqiao, three in Huaiyin, and two in Lixia, all of which are districts of Jinan.

The residential developments were in areas that form the inner city and neighboring suburbs, including two areas of recent urbanization; the west side of Huaiyin and the east side of Lixia by the Olympic Sports Center and Qilu Software College. I did not conduct interviews in Licheng and Central; I focused on the areas with larger numbers of developments with sales offices on site. To support my analysis involving Licheng and Central, I relied on information collected during interviews with Licheng and Central residents (10 participants) and my observations. With specific regards to Licheng, I have lived in that district for a total of five years, between 2002 and 2006, and during the 2015-2016 fieldwork, having had the chance to watch the neighborhoods grow and collect numerous accounts as a resident of the area. In my participant role, I observed the factors guiding homebuyers' decision-making process and their connection with hukou. The interviews cited in this analysis lasted thirty minutes on average. My interview recording method consisted of notetaking during and after the interview event and audio recording followed by transcribing. I used Nvivo to code and analyze the interviews.

Hukou Compliance Without a Will: The Creation of a Divided City (1978-2005)

1978 and 1998: Hukou Restriction and the Politics of Space Valorization and Devaluation

With the gradual reestablishment of a private market economy in the country in the late 1970s, labor demand in urban areas increased dramatically. The Municipality of Jinan, however, did not have the capacity to govern large contingents of migrant workers and had to find strategies to restrict migration. Thus, between 1978 and 1998, the Municipality of Jinan used hukou to break the connection between economic growth, job availability (i.e., labor demand), and spatial concentration of populations (i.e., urbanization). It did so by flexibilizing the hukou registration rules just enough to allow employers to fulfill their labor demands while limiting the criteria for hukou transfers (i.e., actual settlement in the city). How did the municipality achieve that strategy?

Practically, the municipality conditioned hukou transfer to house tenure in the city. However, as public employers and other state institutions fully regulated the housing and construction market at that time, the only pathway to obtain housing tenure and to officially migrate to Jinan consisted in finding a job in the city that included housing, which was incredibly difficult. Such jobs were limited, subjected to institutional politics, surrounded by favoritism, and were therefore very competitive. Following Beijing's guidelines on the topic (State Council 1977, 1981), the municipality also actively discouraged and limited hukou transfers. Exceptional hukou transfers had to be authorized by the agencies that represented the State Council in Jinan (State Council 1981).[7]

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[7] Nonetheless, approximately one million people transferred hukou to Jinan between 1978 and 1998 (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015, 32), six times more than in the 1970s, when there were 162,600 transfers in total according to the same source. Most of those hukou transfers, however, did not impact housing. They consisted primarily of cases of family reunification, as

To supply their labor demands, employers usually hired migrants as "temporary," "contract," or "part-time" workers, offering them accommodations in on-site dormitories with shared rooms, which were usually overcrowded. Often, these dormitories were shacks behind the main buildings forming the work unit compound. Registered with the police as "temporary populations" (zanzhu renkou), migrants had no rights in Jinan, as they were outside their hukou jurisdiction, living confined to their workplaces, under the management and responsibility of their employers. When they were not working, they were in their dorms resting from long-working hours. The municipality, as well as employers and Jinan residents, greatly benefited from having a large contingent of temporary workers who created value for the city's economy without burdening its services and finances, viewing their presence in the city as a "necessary evil" that was justified only by work—hard work! However, the country's economic growth

Beijing allowed individuals who had been sent out to rural areas for reeducation or other purposes to return to their original hukou jurisdiction (State Council 1998, 216-219; Wang 2013). The small minority of hukou transfers between 1978 and 1998 that did not involve family reunification comprised of migrant entrepreneurs. These migrants had accumulated substantial amounts of capital in the years following the Economic Reform and Opening Up Policy (1978), qualifying for a migration program referred to "self-supply grain household," which was launched by the State Council in 1984. This migration program required migrant entrepreneurs to provide for themselves, in all domains of life, and create business for the cities and towns (State Council 1984). To address their housing issue, migrant entrepreneurs usually lived at the back of their shops.

continuously renewed the “temporary” labor demand these migrants fulfilled, making their “temporary” condition permanent, but also grounded in uncertainty.

The municipality’s strategy to break the nexus between labor demand and urbanization was not fully successful, though; it created unintended consequences for the city dynamics. Restrictions on hukou transfer did not deter large contingents of surplus migrant workers from entering and living in Jinan, pursuing a better life and making the streets of Jinan more populous and diverse. While thousands of rural migrants or “mobile workers” lived in Jinan lawfully in the 1980s, registered as temporary populations, an equally large number of migrants lived and worked in the city without authorization and registration. “All of a sudden, Jinan became bustling with noise,” observed a resident who moved to the city in 1950 and watched the waves of rural migrants or “peasant workers” (nongmingong), as they were referred to, arriving firsthand. “They were everywhere! Peddling fruits, vegetables, and household utensils on the streets, working at little shops, restaurants, everywhere,” he added, referring specifically to the unauthorized migrants and the changes they brought to the city’s landscape. The presence of unauthorized migrants in Jinan imprinted socio-spatial hierarchies in the city’s urban fabric, which later, with the privatization of the housing system, acquired a monetary value. In the remainder of this section, I provide details about the formation of such socio-spatial hierarchies in Jinan city.

Unauthorized Migrants in Jinan’s West Side (Tianqiao and Huaiyin Districts)

These individuals were street vendors, unauthorized migrants who peddled fruits, vegetables, and other products around the city. Many also worked in small businesses and

markets, which mushroomed in Jinan following the Economic Reform and Opening Up Policy. Continually on the run from police surveillance, migrants sought invisibility in the suburbs of the city at night. During the day, they traded their products and services, preferably in high traffic areas.

Interview accounts and news articles (Jinan Daily 1991a, 1998b) on life in Jinan in the 1980s and 1990s reveal that most unauthorized migrants lived and worked in the Tianqiao District, which is famous for its epic floods. Tianqiao covers the city's central-western and northern parts, stretching from the surroundings of Jinan Train Station, which is outside the flooding zone, to the southern bank of the Yellow River. The train station represented the backbone of life in the district, with its economy revolving around the commodities transported by rail, especially grains and textiles, and warehousing activity. In addition to unauthorized migrants, Tianqiao's population included members of the urban population that had not been absorbed by the work unit system during the Mao era (Bray 2005). Living in self-built shacks and simple houses across the district, these urbanites (i.e., about 10 percent of Jinan's urban population) tried to make a living off the railway that crossed the district from south to north, linking Jinan to Beijing.

The hustle and bustle of the train station and the numerous wholesales markets of the Luokou area in Tianqiao offered migrants in the 1980s a good environment to work and hide. At night, numerous migrants sought refuge in Dikou. One of the few private housing areas in Tianqiao and the city, Dikou was inhabited by urbanites that were not integrated into work units. Dikou landlords were famous for renting to migrants without authorization (Jinan Daily 1991b), in violation of hukou rules. Unauthorized migrants liked to cluster in Dikou because of its convenient location. It was close to the train station area, where many unauthorized migrants

worked, and on the way to Huaiyin District, on the west side of Tianqiao, where the rural perimeter of the city started. Dikou's proximity to Huaiyin, a district that was mostly rural at that time, made it easier for rural migrants to return to the countryside in the event of police chases.

Law-enforcement continually raided Tianqiao and the urban perimeter of Huaiyin in search of unauthorized migrants, but it was not easy to capture them. Mobility was their strategy to make a living and evade police surveillance. Even police departments that were notorious for their efficacy in the management of migrant populations, like the Hongjialou Police Department in Licheng District, experienced challenges managing unauthorized migrants. "The most difficult type of migrant to manage are vendors and people doing small, random gigs; they live dispersedly and are hypermobile," the Party Secretary of Hongjialou Police Department admitted during a newspaper interview (Jinan Daily 1993b). Despite the efforts of law enforcement, the number of irregular temporary migrants increased rapidly in the early 1980s. Jinan's Public Security Bureau estimated that about two-hundred thousand migrants entered the city in the first quarter of 1993, half of them irregularly (Jinan Daily 1993c). The increased presence of unauthorized migrants in Tianqiao and Huaiyin and the continual police campaigns to "rectify" (qingcha zhengdun) (Jinan Daily 1995a, 1997b, 1993c) temporary populations reinforced the stigma that already surrounded those districts and their populations.

The municipality's campaigns to force the registration and management of migrants presupposed that Tianqiao and Huaiyin were foci of irregularity and criminality, depicting the district as a hub of social problems. Addressing migrants as "floating populations" (liudong renkou) in the sense of "mobile" workers, the campaigns usually suggested that rural migrants took advantage of their mobility and temporariness in the city, as well as alleged lack of sense of belonging Jinan, to breach local rules, including the birth planning regulations (Jinan Daily

1991a, b). Also, these campaigns usually emphasized the need to elevate the "human quality" (suzhi) of temporary populations (Jinan Daily 1993a) and enhance their "self-consciousness" (zijue) regarding compliance with the law (Jinan Daily 1993c), characterizing rural migrants as inferior human beings (i.e., uneducated, corrupt, impolite, and disorderly) and potential criminals. Overall, these campaigns to rectify the hukou registration of migrants associated life outside one's hukou jurisdiction with disruption in the social and legal order.

Validated by the municipality and its law enforcement agents, the coupling of migration with disorder contributed to residents' view of migrant neighborhoods as spaces of reduced social and economic worth. However, until the late 1990s, the socio-spatial devaluation of Tianqiao and Huaiyin could not be measured. It was only in 1998, with the privatization of the housing sector in Jinan (i.e., Housing Reforms), that the stigma surrounding Tianqiao and Huaiyin acquired a monetary value, as it was translated into the price of real estate. With the privatization of the housing system in Jinan, Tianqiao and Huaiyin became the cheapest square meter in the city and set the pricing standard for real estate elsewhere in Jinan. Tianqiao and Huaiyin became the counterpoint to evaluate and price real estate and space in the city. Homebuyers viewed spatial or social proximity to these districts as demerits. While spatial proximity was measured in meters, social proximity was assessed in terms of symbolic elements that signified rurality, such as the presence of migrant workers, schools that admitted migrant children, and any collective history involving the policing of unauthorized migrants.

In the next section, I discuss how, at the beginning of the Housing Reforms, real estate firms focused primarily on building private housing on the east side of the city, distancing their developments from Tianqiao and Huaiyin spatially and symbolically. The eastern Districts of Licheng and Lixia, with its large state-owned enterprises and population entirely organized into

work units, embodied the prestige of the "new China" under the Communist Party and the institutional privileges that the non-agricultural hukou registration conferred to urban residents.

1998-2005: Creating Conditions to Facilitate Hukou Transfer: The Privatization of Housing and the Valorization of Jinan's East Side

In the years following the Housing Reforms, i.e., between 1998 and 2005, hukou transfer was still conditioned to obtaining housing tenure in the city. Although housing started to be traded in the private market, rural migrants still had no access. Firstly, without access to a mortgage or any kind of financing, migrants usually could not afford housing in the city. Secondly, the private residential developments built in Jinan in the early years of the Housing Reforms were available only to work unit employees. Urbanites linked to work units (90 percent of Jinan's urban population) were the only social group in the municipality with resources to purchase a home. Such economic resources, however, referred to hukou-based and hukou-guaranteed institutional privileges and subsidies, particularly the "Housing Accumulation Fund" (gongjijin). Planned and distributed according to hukou jurisdiction and hukou classification to non-agricultural hukou holders only, this fund allowed Jinan urbanites to convert their hukou-based socioeconomic advantage over rural migrants into private property in the most prestigious spaces of the city, on the east side, far away from Tianqiao and Huaiyin.

Although rural migrants still had no access to permanent residence in Jinan between 1998 and 2005, the municipality started to slowly consider that the formation of private economies and markets implied spatial concentration of populations and to view the "temporary" presence of rural migrants in the city as potentially permanent. With the Housing Reforms, the municipality

ordered its law enforcement network to launch a standardized system to register mobile workers, allowing them to live and work in the city. This measure also allowed unauthorized migrants to regularize their status in the city.

The Housing Accumulation Fund and the Reproduction of Social-Spatial Privileges

The Housing Accumulation Fund, which included large housing subsidies and super-low interest rate mortgages schemes, was the only source of real estate financing at the beginning of the Housing Reforms. It covered most or the entirety of the home price, allowing urbanites to convert their "urbanity" into private real estate. Although virtually the entire urban population had access to the housing fund, not every urbanite had access to the same type of funding. The funding and the financing schemes available to the population varied according to the employees' work unit, which coincided with their hukou jurisdiction, and rank.

High-ranked employees (i.e., "cadres" or "ganbu") and employees from prestigious work units could purchase better apartments, as they had larger sums of money in their housing funds and cheaper mortgage schemes. "The housing subsidies of low-ranked employees from locally administrated work units were not enough to purchase an apartment in the best areas of Licheng," a realtor who had been in business since the beginning of the Housing Reforms told me. His comment suggests that the Housing Reforms enabled the creation of a clear socio-spatial distinction between high and low-status urbanites in the city's space. While high-ranking employees and employees from prestigious work units purchased real estate in the best areas of Licheng, lower-rank employees and employees from less prestigious work units stayed in the least desirable areas of those two districts. Variations in the distribution of housing funds and

mortgage schemes according to employee ranking and work unit transported the social inequalities that existed within the workforce (i.e., ranks) and between hukou jurisdiction (i.e., work units) into socio-spatial hierarchies within the city, between urbanites.

The Rich East Side: The Districts of Licheng and Lixia

Between 1998 and 2005, the initial years of the Housing Reforms, Jinan expanded primarily on the east side, in Licheng District, away from Tianqiao and Huaiyin and their "rurality." Lixia also saw some expansion, but its real residential boom did not start until the mid or late 2000s, depending on the area. Signifying urban prosperity and economic development in the eyes of locals, Licheng and Lixia housed Jinan's largest and most prominent state-owned enterprises. Located on Industrial North and Industrial South roads, these enterprises included several large and prominent heavy industries that are still active, like Jinan Steel and Jinan Refinery from Sinopec. These firms offered the best welfare packages in the city to employees and their families, including the best housing subsidies and schools in the city. Shandong University's presence in Licheng, with two campuses, one on Shanda South Rd. and another in Hongjialou area also contributed to the good reputation of Jinan's "east side." Identified with high human quality and wealth, Lixia and Licheng dramatically opposed Tianqiao and Huaiyin symbolically, offering optimal conditions for social distinction.

With the number of temporary migrants increasing steadily in Jinan throughout the 2000s, urbanite homebuyers used space and homeownership as a tool to distinguish themselves from the "low human quality floating temporary migrants," as one interview participant put it to me. Thus, to market their units, developers played up the economic and cultural prestige of

Licheng and Lixia, reproducing and reinforcing the symbolic inferiority of Tianqiao and Huaiyin by proxy. "We didn't have much of a marketing strategy in the early 2000s. It was simple; there wasn't so much competition. We reminded homebuyers that Licheng and Lixia had high human quality, less rural migrants living in the district," an experienced agent who worked for Sanjian Shichan, a large builder in Jinan's market, told me, revealing the opposite; that there was a strategy. The marketing strategy in place at that time entailed using rural migrants as a means to oppose and valorize urbanity. Another veteran agent with the same builder told me that he often emphasized the "good" aspects of the area surrounding the developments by establishing a direct opposition with the "disorder" and the "peasant workers" of "Tianqiao." These and other similar interview accounts suggest that even though most migrants were only allowed in the city as temporary residents, their presence still influenced the direction of real estate investment and the delineation of socio-spatial hierarchies in the city.

As the Housing Reforms advanced, the demand from urbanites for larger and more comfortable apartment units increased rapidly and consistently on the east side, leading the municipality to facilitate transfers of hukou jurisdiction within the city. Lixia was the first district to facilitate intra-city hukou transfers (Jinan Daily 2001d). By the mid-2000s, all police stations had dropped all restrictions on intra-city hukou transfers, making changes of hukou jurisdiction easy and simple for urbanites.

Making Space for Migrants in the City as Legitimate Temporary Workers

As urbanites started to leave their tiny apartments in work unit dormitories for brand-new spacious apartments, a large inventory of old apartment units started to emerge in the city,

making space for migrant tenants who wanted to formally rent in the city and wealthy migrants who wanted to purchase a home in Jinan. Essentially, the Housing Reforms led to the creation of spaces where migrants could live formally, rather than in the shacks in their workplaces or the rented rooms in the private houses of Dikou (Tianqiao). They also led migrants to spread across the city; with the privatization of housing, migrants could occupy virtually any place they had money to purchase or rent.

Coinciding with the Housing Reforms, changes in the hukou legislation facilitated the presence of migrants in the city, making urban landlords more at ease with renting to migrants. In July 1998, the municipality enacted a piece of legislation that standardized the management and registration of temporary populations in the city. Ordering the police stations to unify and improve the system that registered "temporary residents" in Jinan, this legislation (Jinan Daily 1998c) indicated that the municipal government intended to legitimize the presence of migrants in the city. A few years later, in 2002, the municipality canceled the fees charged for applying for temporary residents (Jinan Daily 2002a), reinforcing the idea that migrants had become a normal part of the urban landscape. These messages had concrete effects on the ground, as wealthy migrants benefited from the oversupply of old apartments in the market to buy a home and transfer hukou to the city. Of the 1.1 million hukou transfers registered between 1998 and 2004, almost two-thirds happened between 2001 and 2002 (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015). Despite the high volume of migrants getting Jinan citizenship in the early 2000s, the transference application process was still expensive, unclear, non-standard across the city, and marked by secrecy and corruption. Also, hukou transfer was available only to migrant homeowners, as rental properties are not eligible for hukou transfer application.

So far, I tried to demonstrate that between 1978 and 2005, it was nearly impossible for migrants to transfer hukou to Jinan. They usually lived in the city either as semi-captive workers or unauthorized migrants. Despite their lack of official attachment to Jinan, they still guided the construction of urban spaces form the physical and symbolic perspectives. Urbanites viewed the mobility of temporary migrants as a threat, a symbol of disorder, and wanted to reside away from migrant enclaves. Based on this mindset, Tianqiao and Huaiyin, with their large migrant population, became a negative reference in Jinan's collective urban imaginary and a symbol of what was not desirable in terms of urbanism. However, Tianqiao and Huaiyin also became a site of power that urbanites and real estate developers tapped into to achieve their goals. For urbanites from the east side, Tianqiao and Huaiyin became a source of identity construction and distinction; even today, many urbanites refer to Tianqiao and Huaiyin in derogatory terms, saying that those areas are populated by people of low human quality. Meanwhile, for real estate firms, Tianqiao and Huaiyin became a source of valorization of developments built elsewhere, as real estate agents resorted to discourses on Tianqiao and Huaiyin to justify the high prices of developments on the east side.

Hukou Compliance Embedded in Homebuyer Choice: Home Size, Home Location, and Inhabitants (2005-2016)

2005 to 2008: Jinan Hukou and the 100 Square Meter Home Policy

Following the elimination of fees from the application for temporary residence in the city in 2002, the first large alteration in Jinan's hukou system occurred in 2005, when the municipality launched the "Provisional Measures for Deepening the Hukou Reform in Jinan" (Jinan Government 2005). As will become clear in this section, the 2005 Measures represent a turning point in the use of hukou to govern population and urban dynamics in the city. Fully embracing the idea that economic growth in private capitalism means a spatial concentration of populations, the municipality started to use hukou as a filter to select and attract migrants deemed desirable for the city's economic growth. How so? The municipality decoupled migration from the need to get access to an institutional environment that tied hukou jurisdiction and hukou classification to obtaining employment and welfare in a specific place. In doing so, the municipality conditioned migration to individual will and individual capacity to be self-sustainable independently of state subsidies. Practically, the 2005 Measures entailed the following two initiatives:

Firstly, the Measures created official, fully regulated opportunities for temporary populations to apply for hukou transfer to Jinan, upon meeting specific requirements. These "opportunities" were expressed in the following application programs for hukou transfer: post-secondary graduates and "talented students" (rencai) (i.e., graduate students) willing to work in the city; individuals who needed care from family members living in the city (i.e., usually parents of rural migrants); retirees, military members, honorary citizens, and model workers willing to settle in the city for any reason; employees of state-owned enterprises relocated in Jinan; business investors who generated revenue to the city in the form of taxes; and homebuyers, which were required to purchase a new home of at least 100 square meters in the city to apply to transfer hukou to Jinan. These hukou transfer application programs allowed the

municipality to target specific social groups, regulating their specific needs and presence in the city, while deterring other groups; those whose conditions and needs were not addressed by any of the programs.

Secondly, the Measures dropped the need to prove employment in the city from hukou transfer applications, replacing it with the somewhat loose concept of "legal occupation and income" (hefa zhiye he shouru) (Jinan Government 2005). Hukou transfer applicants still needed a home to register hukou in the city, but this requirement became independent from employment. Alternatively, migrants could be listed in the hukou registration of a family member who lived in the city, which was the norm for the aging parents of rural migrants who applied for hukou transfer to be cared for by their adult children. This initiative empowered migrants with agency and autonomy, allowing them to move to Jinan independently of employment, and to purchase a home in the city at their will, provided they had money to do so.

The Selective Nature of the Homebuyer Hukou Transfer Program

The homebuyer program was by far the most popular among migrants, dwarfing the other programs regarding the number of hukou transfers. Based on interview accounts with hukou officers from the police stations in Hongjialou and Shanda North Rd, migrants willing to settle in Jinan tended to use the homebuyer program because property ownership was a primary condition to register hukou anyway; the only exception to this rule referred to migrant parents joining their adult children in the city. Between 2004 and 2005, when the 2005 Measures were launched, hukou transfers increased by 223,000 cases, more than twice than in the previous year (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015). Considering the popularity of the homebuyer program, the 2005

Measures validated and reinforced the privatization of housing in Jinan, promoting the real estate market. They also contributed to the dismantling of the urban governance model that marked the Mao era, according to which individuals lived and worked in the same place—the work unit.

Redesigning Jinan's Population

Most people applying for hukou transfer under the homebuyer program were couples about to get married. In Jinan, as in most parts of China, homeownership represents a basic condition for marriage and the registration of a new household. According to hukou rules, couples cannot form an official household unless they have a property to register their family. Also, only one household can be registered per address, which impedes couples form using their parental address to register their new family. Newlyweds who do not own a residential property must stay registered as members of the parental household, which is seen as a "loss of face" (mei mianzi). In fact, the homeownership program of the 2005 Measures found support and validation in several elements of the local culture that intersected with marriage, facilitating hukou transfers for young couples and deterring older migrants.

The 2005 homebuyer program applied only to migrants who were married and had no underage children. These criteria also drew on cultural norms to incentivize young migrant couples, especially recent graduates, to settle in the city, while deterring middle-aged migrants. Together, these two criteria helped the government set the migration age threshold at about 30 without having to declare it, which could provoke some resistance. The municipality included family characteristics in the policy also to gain time to address the shortage of schools in the city, according to interviews with hukou officers from the police station on Shanda North Rd.,

Licheng. In Jinan, as well as in other parts of China, childbearing is highly correlated with age. People in Jinan often get married around 25 years of age or just a little older and have their first child before reaching 30. Therefore, the policy automatically excluded migrants in their early or mid-30s.

The homebuyer program wanted to attract young couples to support the city's economic need to expand its pool of skilled workers; the policy assumed that young migrants, born and raised after Mao's era, were more skilled and qualified than older migrants, an idea that is still common in Jinan. "Our homebuyers have high human quality; they're all from the reform era, aged below forty," a real estate agent with Shun Ao in Lixia, told me. He used the Economic Reforms and Opening Up Policy as a threshold of civility. "You know, people below this age have much higher quality," he repeated while checking my notes to see if I had written the characters for "human quality" correctly. From this perspective, the family-related criteria of the 2005 homebuyer program, setting the migration threshold at about 30 years of age, also contributed to the exclusion of migrants raised in the Mao era.

Highly selective, the homebuyer program, with apartment size threshold at 100 square meters, eliminated poor rural migrants from the pool of hukou applicants, that is, most migrants willing to transfer hukou to Jinan; the size requirement kept low-income migrants as temporary residents and safeguarded Jinan citizenship from poor migrants. The family-related criteria I mentioned earlier also made the homebuyer program more restrictive for rural residents because rural couples tended to start pregnancy right after marriage. The homebuyer program—to prevent fraud and ensure the integrity of the migration scheme—offered another challenge to migrants. Applicants also had to complete payment and obtain the deed title for the property before getting approval to transfer hukou. Such requirements made migrants pay for the property

not only in full but also in cash, with the caveat that migrants, unlike urbanites, enjoyed no housing subsidies, nor could they apply for credit lines. Essentially, the 2005 homebuyer program hid a selective urban agenda that allowed only the rich and educated into the city.

Rebuilding Jinan's Spaces

The Municipality of Jinan used the homebuyer program to design not only the city's population but also the city's space. With the homebuyer program, the municipality was able to regulate the real estate market and organize, yet broadly, populations socioeconomically in space, that is, to attract migrants to specific spaces, deterring them from settling in others.

Based on interview accounts, between 2005 and 2008, real estate firms concentrated their building capacity on apartment units larger than 100 square meters, between 100 and 125 square meters. They intended to primarily target urbanites, especially work unit employees, as they represented the largest and wealthiest market segment. Traditional urbanites happily welcomed apartments above 100 square meters, as they wanted to distinguish themselves from migrants by purchasing units larger than the "migrant threshold" (gei waidi luohu menkan) A retired professor from Shandong University who purchased a 126 square meter-apartment with housing subsidies in 2006 told me, how he chose his apartment size: "At that time, 100 square meter was the popular size, like the 90 square meters today, it was meant primarily for migrants; we, city people, did not want that threshold size." Tapping in the urbanite's need for distinction, real estate firms started to develop a "luxury" segment in the neighborhoods that were regarded as prestigious. Almost every new apartment in the most expensive areas of Licheng, Lixia, and Central, which started to be developed later, around 2008, had at least 110 square meters,

according to several real estate agents and long-term residents. Most new apartment units in Jinan at that time were at least 100 square meters. Prompting builders to focus on apartment units above the "migration size" (gei waidide), the 2005 homebuyer program created a residential building standard in Jinan and barriers for wealthy migrants to enter the city and share the same spatial status with traditional urbanites. While migrants considered apartments below the 100 square meter-hukou transfer threshold a "loss of money" (diu qiande) or a "useless purchase" (bu zhi qiande) that they usually could not afford larger sizes.

In addition to 100 square meters, apartment units eligible to transfer hukou had to be new, not a second-hand property, according to the 2005 homebuyer program, as I indicated earlier. This broad requirement deterred migrants from purchasing apartment units close to the most traditional and prestigious secondary schools in Jinan, like Shandong Experimental School in Central, Shandong Normal University Affiliated School in Lixia, and School No. 2 in Licheng. Most apartments in highly desirable school districts were old and small, built as work unit dormitories. There was a small number of larger apartments in those consolidated neighborhoods at 100 square meters or a few meters above; they were built for work unit managers and directors between 1998 and the early 2000s, but they were second-hand and therefore not eligible to transfer hukou either. The ineligibility of old, second-hand apartment units for hukou transfer helped the economic elites to drive wealthy migrant homeowners away from the best school districts in Jinan, those few schools that send children to first and second-tier universities. Most migrants only accessed these neighborhoods as tenants.

The educational and economic value of apartments in prestigious school districts led wealthy urbanites to keep them for hukou registration, as children must attend school in the district where their hukou is registered according to Jinan's school district policy. Most also

viewed these properties as an important economic and cultural inheritance, in the sense of guaranteed school access, for their future generations. Thus, when urbanites moved away from school districts to the suburbs, upgrading their living conditions to luxurious condos, they often rented these properties out to temporary residents, that is, low-income migrants. By securing their children's access to the best education institutions in the city, wealthy urbanites safeguarded their sustainability as Jinan's economic and cultural elite.

The emerging rental market in areas of old urbanization created a population counter flux in the city, with rich urbanites moving out of the inner areas into the newly-built suburbs and temporary migrants moving from the outskirts of the city into the central areas. Temporary residents greatly benefited from this situation as they moved closer to work, to commercially convenient areas, for cheap rent. In the same fashion, urbanites also benefited from this arrangement; it gave them an additional source of income. Despite facing numerous restrictions and obstacles to transfer hukou and get Jinan citizenship, migrants voluntarily complied with the 2005 Measures, many even found in it a source of power underpinned in social distinction.

Flexibilizing Residence in Jinan

Most interview participants perceived the effects of the 2005 Measures as the beginning of the "flexibilization" of hukou in Jinan. In the eyes of migrants, the 2005 Measures transformed hukou, migration, as well as their presence in the city, into a matter of individual choice and life success. They viewed homeownership and thus migration as an expression of economic accomplishment and city worthiness. "The government used homeownership as a 'threshold' to separate the bad from the good migrant. If you managed throughout it, you were

considered city worthy. It made us all want to succeed," said a middle-aged taxi driver who moved to Jinan in 2006. His comment, as well as other numerous similar accounts, suggests that migrants incorporated the municipality's practices, viewing Jinan hukou as a measurement of socioeconomic status and a source of upward social mobility. It also indicates that the homebuyer program, for numerous migrants, represented a mechanism to legitimize their presence in the city and a tool for them to distinguish themselves socially and spatially from peers, those migrants that fail to prove their worthiness by not acquiring a property in the city.

The municipality's practices and discourses around migration and urbanity found support in the news media as well. *Jinan Daily* often published stories of "role model" migrants, outlining the requisites a person had to fill in to enter the city. One story from 1999 presents obeying traffic lights and properly disposing of garbage, among other behaviors, as basic requirements for rural migrants to prove that they have a city-worthy human quality (Jinan Daily 1999f) and get a "quality hukou" (suzhi hukou) in Jinan. The article conflates urban hukou status (i.e., the non-agricultural hukou) with "high human quality" (sushi), using the expression "quality hukou" as a replacement for "Jinan hukou." The article concludes saying that when rural migrants voluntarily give up their seat for the elderly on the bus, they graduate from the "quality hukou" course, accomplishing a "self-improvement process towards civic and moral civilization" (bian shi goingmin daode wenming yishi de ziwo wanshan guocheng) (ibid.). This terminology, embedded in signifiers of urban life (e.g., traffic lights and transit), validates Mao's era urban-rural dichotomy inside urban Jinan while projecting urbanites as superior beings in comparison with migrants.

As I said at the beginning of this section, the 2005 Measures gave migrants an "opportunity" to transfer hukou to the city and become Jinan citizens, but it by no means made

migration easier. As I demonstrated, the 2005 homebuyer application to transfer hukou included several criteria and requirements that excluded most migrants, especially low-income migrants, that is, the vast majority of people. Real estate market dynamics, which included the use of property size to enable and promote social distinction between potential homebuyers, often kept urbanites and wealthy migrants spatially segregated either in apartments of different sizes or in neighborhoods of varying prestige. Combined with the home school district policy, the 2005 homebuyer program prevented migrant children from accessing the same schools as urbanite children. In doing so, it safeguarded the cultural and economic order of Jinan's society. From these perspectives, the 2005 Measures regulated the presence of migrants in the city. Like in the 1980s and 1990s, migrants, as homebuyers and tenants, continued to help delineated the transformation of Jinan's landscape and population. However, the regulation of migration that the 2005 Measures embodied represented a novelty in the history of population governance in Jinan. Instead of simply disallowing migrants from entering the city, the policy interacted with their identity, autonomy, and even economic capability to guide their choices, invoking the migrant's freedom of choice to attract the desirable and drive the undesirable away. To this end, the 2005 homebuyer program relied on family characteristics as criteria to select migrants.

The family criteria of the 2005 homebuyer program conditioned migration to the world of personal autonomy, to something that migrants could control; despite being regulated by cultural norms, marriage and children fall into the domain of individual freedom or at least include some personal freedom. Selective processes that draw on elements influenced or related to personal choice tend to be viewed as a matter of personal freedom and individual capability (e.g., skill, ability), even though they often result, at a closer look, from societal conditions. In the case of hukou, family criteria made the state's role in determining people's choices regarding migration

somewhat invisible. In a nutshell, instead of using a series of impassable institutional obstacles to restrict migration in the city, like the employment-accommodation requirement of the 1980s and 1990s, the municipality enforced a type of governmentality based on directing and steering autonomy and responsibility.

From 2008 to 2016: Home Size Requirement and Original Hukou Jurisdiction

In November 2008, the municipality dramatically improved the selective power of the homebuyer hukou transfer program, using the hukou system to sort migrants in the city according to their place of hukou jurisdiction and down to the apartment building level. More importantly, the 2008 policy engaged hukou to guide the migrant homebuyer's choice of home size, residential development, neighborhood, and district, improving the efficacy of the hukou system as a tool of population governance that respects and promotes individual autonomy and personal interests. To that end, the municipality divided the homebuyer hukou transfer program into two subprograms or minimum home size categories, which were linked to the migrant's hukou jurisdiction.

Migrants coming from within the Municipality of Jinan had to purchase a home of at least 75 square meters to transfer hukou to the city, while migrants coming from outside the municipality had to purchase a home of at least 90 square meters. While migrants from within the municipality referred to rural residents (i.e., agricultural hukou holders) from the villages in the rural perimeter of the municipality, migrants from outside the municipality, henceforth "external migrants," came from various places in the province or the country, including rural and urban areas. Further, the 2008 homebuyer policy allowed rural migrants from within the

municipality to use second-hand properties in hukou transfer applications, favoring the alleged cultural proximity between the municipality's rural and urban populations. Meanwhile, external migrants (i.e., from outside the municipality) still had to purchase a newly built home and promote the local construction market. Further, the 2008 homebuyer program, like its 2005 version, continued to limit hukou transfer applications to married couples with underage children.

By using the original hukou jurisdiction to define the requirement for home size, the 2008 policy allowed the municipality to transfer the hukou-based urban-rural spatial dichotomy that marked Mao's era to Jinan city, especially to the districts undergoing a residential development boom in the late 2000s (i.e., Tianqiao, Huaiyin, and Lixia). In doing so, the 2008 policy reinforced the socioeconomic and socio-spatial signifiers of the Mao era, helping urbanites reproduce their economic advantage over rural residents with politics that led migrants to voluntarily confine themselves in segregated spaces (i.e., in neighborhoods and apartment buildings containing units of 75 or 90 square meters). Because hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction bureaucratically supported those signifiers of the Mao era, the 2008 policy also reinforced the hukou system, contradicting the widespread understanding that hukou classification did not matter anymore. The municipality stopped reporting population counts based on hukou classification in 2006 (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015), but, as I demonstrate here, it had not stopped making policies and sorting populations based on hukou classification.

In the following subsections, I analyze the effects of the 2008 policy in the three districts that started to experience developments and expansion in the late 2000s (i.e., Tianqiao, Huaiyin, and Lixia), and discuss how this policy guided the behavior of homebuyers, especially migrants.

Tianqiao

Tianqiao had only five residential developments in construction in 2016, the time of my research, and it was the district with the smallest number of such developments in the city. I visited three of the five developments in the area between Yellow River (north), Xiaoqing River (south), Jiluo Rd. (east), and Second Ring West Rd. (west side). The developments I visited in Tianqiao, Gilded Metropolis, Fine Sweet Garden, and Richview Garden, targeted primarily newlywed couples who were raised in the neighborhood and wanted to buy a "marriage home" (hunfang), Many couples were agricultural hukou holders originally from Tianqiao, residents from Tianqiao's "urban villages" (chengzhongcun). Urban villages are rural villages that were engulfed by urbanization throughout the years, becoming isolated pockets of village houses in the city. Urban village residents are rural de jure but urban de facto, that is, they are agricultural hukou holders. Tianqiao developments' newlywed clientele also included many actual rural couples born to rural migrant parents who moved to Tianqiao in the 1980s and early 1990s. They also were raised in Tianqiao's urban villages. Their parents were either tenants in these communities or owners of irregular homes, i.e., housing without a deed title built without a permit in the past two decades.

Newlywed couples from urban villages in the area viewed homeownership in Tianqiao as a strategy to break a generational cycle of stigma. They wanted to change their hukou status to get official citizenship in the city. "I was born here, I am urban, I feel urban, but I am not counted as urban; I just want to be counted," said a rural hukou holder aged 27 whose village has been engulfed by Tianqiao's urban expansion. Also, they often talked of homeownership as a strategy to secure for their future children access to education in the district.

Rural migrants, from nearby villages, often mentioned rural land rights to explain their decision to transfer hukou to Jinan. They tended to associate the lack of land rights with a sense of being spatially detached. “We have nothing to lose. We know that Jinan hukou is not worth money anymore, but we also have no land assigned to us, nothing. We belong nowhere,” said a couple looking for a wedding home to “settle” (luohu) hukou in Tianqiao after living in the district as temporary migrants for almost three decades, essentially their entire lives. Their comment confirmed land rights as an important factor in the rural migrant’s decision-making process around hukou transfers, a trend already noticed by researchers. As I mentioned earlier, transferring hukou to the city means giving up land rights in the countryside. “We could buy an irregular home somewhere here in Tianqiao, do like our parents, but we think it is too risky; we might not get compensated in case of demotion. It is better to buy a legal home,” she continued indicating that the demotion of urban villages has become an additional factor in housing tenure choices among rural migrants.

Original rural residents from Tianqiao, as well as rural migrants from nearby villages, usually choose a property of at least 90 square meters, despite being eligible to transfer hukou with a property of only 75 square meters. They viewed this larger size as a symbol of economic success, as it is meant for external migrants, who are commonly regarded as richer than rural migrants. Also, reproducing the discrimination their parents faced in Jinan, many of them refused to “live like rural migrants.” “I want to do better than my parents! I also want them to have better dwelling conditions when they move in with me to help raise my child,” said a young mechanic whose parents bought an irregular apartment in Tianqiao in the mid-1990s. Demonstrating a reasonable knowledge of these populations and their needs, developers in Tianqiao focused on sizes that varied between 90 and 190 square meters on average. Fine Sweet Garden was the only

development in Tianqiao visibility targeting rural migrants, as it included 76 square meter units in some of its nine towers, each with 34 floors. According to a real estate agent at the site, these units targeted primarily low-income rural residents who already lived in the district but had no money for a 90 square meter home.

Apartments sized at or above 100 square meters were meant for the few Tianqiao urbanites who wanted to upgrade dwelling conditions without leaving the district. At the Fine Sweet Garden, I learned that urbanites wanted larger units because their original apartments tended to be between 55 and 66 square meters. Thus, an apartment of 90 square meters did not represent much of an upgrade for them. Every urbanite I interviewed and observed in Tianqiao carried folders and advertisements for apartments sized above 100 square meters. Also, cognizant that rural migrants in Tianqiao often opted for a 90 square meter unit, urbanites avoided the migrant threshold. In Tianqiao, as well as in Lixia, I overheard several times real estate agents telling urbanite clients that "migrant-size" (gei waidi zhude fang) apartments were in a different tower, not in their tower, tapping into the notion of social distinction, as usual.

In March 2016, visiting developments in Tianqiao with a friend who was looking for a home, I further explored this specific topic. After we visited a large unit of 108 square meters in the Fine Sweet Garden, I asked the real estate agent if that specific tower also had smaller apartments of 76 square meters and waited silently for his reply. He looked at me from head to toe, as if he was trying to grasp my concerns, and said: "Yes, we have a few 76 and 96 square meter units in this tower, but don't worry, our clients here have a high human quality, they're like you, well-educated people, from families that have a bit more money," he said conflating money, education, and human quality. "These smaller units are on lower-floors; we don't mix them on the same floor! Really, don't worry," he added. His reply, as well as other numerous

conversations I held at the developments, confirmed that developers often drew on people's desire for a social distinction to market their units. Developers used size as a major signifier of socioeconomic status, life trajectory, and civility, that is, social distinction. While urbanites wanted to distinguish themselves from migrants by purchasing apartments above 100 square meters, richer rural residents, migrants or not, opted for a 90 square meter home to distinguish themselves from low-income rural migrants.

According to real estate agents from the developments I visited, several factors limited the expansion of housing and the attractiveness of homebuyers to Tianqiao. This included the risk of flooding that mark the area available for development, which is squished between the Yellow and the Xiaoqing Rivers, and the low quality of its educational institutions. However, Tianqiao's reputation consisted of the main challenge for developers willing to invest in the district. Urbanites often talked of Tianqiao as "rural," "disorganized" (luan), "unclean" (bu ganjing), and "unstable" (bu wending). When I inquired into the meanings of these adjectives, they mentioned the historical presence of irregular migrants, especially from the countryside, in the district. Some participants emphasized the rurality and the "low human quality" of migrant populations, conflating the two ideas.

Others viewed migrants as "outsiders" in the sense of "odd" (qi or qiren), different, identifying the strangeness that can potentially result from interactions with people from other customs with "instability." According to these participants, individuals outside their hukou jurisdiction become placeless, unclassifiable, and thus unstable and dangerous. Drawing on the idea that hukou promotes a sense of spatial belonging (i.e., "diyuan" or regionalism), a bookstore manager in his late 50s clarified the relationship between hukou and instability: "People in Tianqiao are mostly migrants. Migrants can do anything they want when they're far from home;

nobody will know. Their families won't ever know what they're up to. It can get really unstable," he told me, drawing on family regulation and bloodline (i.e., "xueyuan"), another idea embedded in the household registration, to explain the connection between migration and instability. Another participant connected migration and disorder to lack of state planning: "For us who have had a work unit, people in Tianqiao feel weird and unfamiliar; their lifestyle, their coming and going, their reliance on trading, all felt very unstable to us. It felt they don't have a place; they belonged nowhere," a former employee from Jinan Refinery (i.e., Sinopec Jinan) told me.

My interview accounts demonstrate that despite housing developments and urban expansion, the spaces of Tianqiao carried the marks from the past; the association of Tianqiao with farmlands, wastelands, huge floods, and temporary, often irregular, migrants still resonated with Jinan's social imaginary. Tianqiao's bad reputation translated into the average housing price. In May 2016, Tianqiao had the least expensive residential square meters in the city, after only Huaiyin, which was still mostly farmland in the 1980s. Quoted at about USD 1,250 on average, the square meter in Tianqiao was about 45 percent cheaper than the average square meter in Lixia.

Huaiyin

Unlike Tianqiao and the other districts in Jinan (i.e., Central, Licheng, and Lixia), Huaiyin is a district of recent urbanization. Most of today's Huaiyin used to be occupied by rural villages until 2005 when the municipality started to demolish seven rural villages in the district to make space for Jinan West Train Station. The demolition process expropriated the equivalent of 590 soccer fields in rural land, displacing about 70,000 rural hukou holders or 21,000

households. The municipality reclassified the village population's hukou status to non-agricultural and relocated most villagers to 19 "relocation" projects in the area (huiqianqu or laoqu). Such relocation projects referred to subsidized housing developments exclusively for former villagers, who were often referred to as "returnees" (huiqiande). Regarded as inferiors because of their rural origins, returnees now shared the neighborhood with migrant homebuyers from "commercial" residential developments, which looked fancier and had better finishing and faced consistent stigma.

As most of Huaiyin was countryside, urbanization there started as a greenfield project, meaning that housing there consists primarily of recently built apartment units in the early and mid-2010s. Developments in Huaiyin, differently than those in Tianqiao, targeted primarily external newlywed migrants, with apartment sizes usually averaging between 90 and 170 square meters. In Huaiyin, I visited three out of 23 new projects on the west end area (as of April 2016), Champs Mansions, Wisdom Garden, and Jinan Water Court. None of them had units at or below 75 square meters; their units started at 90-square meters, targeting external migrants primarily. Interview accounts with homebuyers and real estate agents in the area also confirmed that most apartments in the west end area are sized 90 square meters and above.

Figure 17: A newly built “commercial” residential development in the west side, by the train station, Jinan, May 11, 2016.

Figure 18: Apartment advertisement in Huaiyin District by CSC Dongfu. “Facilitated procedures for 90m^2 hukou size. To have a second child, first buy a three-bed apartment. Buy with Lanting and get a big discount of 60,000,” Jinan, May 2016.

Like most developments in the area target external migrants, migrants from within the municipality who could not find a smaller apartment unit, hukou transfer-size, in Huaiyin had to either upgrade to a larger size, and spend more money, or change district. Based on interview accounts, developers in the west end of Huaiyin prioritized larger apartments to deter rural migrants from settling in the neighborhood, while attracting wealthy non-rural migrants. Their agenda aimed at improving the reputation of the district and thus increase the property price in the area. People in today's Jinan, especially traditional urbanites, often talked of Huaiyin as a place of "too many peasants" and "low human quality," a space that conflicts with Jinan's symbolic urbanity. Real estate agents at the projects I visited said that urbanites avoid properties in the area. "The number of urbanites in our portfolio is small," an agent from Wisdom Garden told me. "Jinan hukou holders see Huaiyin as a 'downgrade,' not an upgrade. The few 'locals' who buy here are the very rich who want to invest in the future of this district," a clerk who processed purchase applications at Champs Mansions told me. "They expect that the stigma to wash away eventually," the clerk added, offering me her interpretation.

To improve Huaiyin's status, associating the area with high human quality and civility, ideas that oppose rurality in China, the Municipality of Jinan commissioned the construction of world-class infrastructures in the area related to culture to internationally recognized architecture firms. These infrastructures include the Provincial Grand Theatre and the Three Pavilion Art Center, formed by one library and two art museums. The municipality also encouraged Shandong Experimental School, one of the best education institutions in the city, to open a branch in the area, which happened in 2013. Even real estate developers tipped with investment in education to improve Huaiyin's status, as well as the price of real estate in the area. One developer opened a private elementary school, High Seas Experimental, which gives automatic

admission to the prominent Jinan Foreign Language School (i.e., Sanjian campus). Still, the few educational institutions in Huaiyi do not have a good reputation regarding academic performance. Overall, these initiatives were not enough to boost the price of real estate in the area, which was quoted at USD 1,240 per square meter (as of May 2016), 10 dollars cheaper than in Tianqiao, despite its proximity to the West Train Station, which offers bullet train services to virtually everywhere in the country.

Figure 19: Three Pavilion Art Center, Huaiyin District, Jinan, 2016 by Gabriel Vital.

In fact, the efforts to build "magnificent" infrastructures in Huaiyin and improve the district's attractiveness seemed to have caused the opposite effect, visibly contrasting the modernity of its landmarks and the alleged rural habits of its residents. Comparing the "quality" (zhiliang) of Huaiyin landmarks, in the sense of well-constructed, modern, with the "quality" of residents (suzhi), in the sense of "human quality," numerous people in Jinan used these

infrastructures to argue that the architecture in Huaiyin did not suit its residents. Nonetheless, the Huaiyin infrastructure seemed attractive to external migrants from nearby municipalities, people who are not aware of Jinan's urban dynamics or who did not have resources for an apartment in another place. However, some external migrant homebuyers changed their minds about buying in Huaiyin upon becoming aware of the district's stigma.

A young couple from the neighboring Tai'an city, Jinan's neighbor on the east side, told me, while we strolled around the facilities of Wisdom Garden, that they liked the apartment they had just seen and did not mind the fact that Huaiyin is not a good school district, but they did have a problem with the neighborhood. "This project is surrounded by relocation projects. If we choose to purchase in Huaiyin, we'll opt for Champs Mansions. At least it is close to the Experimental School, more in the eastern part of the district," they told me. I visited staged apartments with them for about two hours, always trying to understand their decision-making process. Once they realized the vast scope of Huaiyin's urbanization project, including what it entailed, and its importance for Jinan's real estate market, the couple became suspicious of CSC Dongfu Group, the builder of Wisdom Garden. They called into question CSC Dongfu's participation in the construction of a relocation project nearby and started to doubt the quality of the apartments they had just seen and initially regarded as "very good:" "I am not sure about the quality of these apartments. You know, these companies involved with large government projects often cut corners; they know returnees have no power to complain," said the man, conflating large urbanization projects with irregularity, while putting returnees in a subaltern position. The couple continued, saying that they did not want to pay an enormous amount of money for the fixtures and finishings used in relocation projects, visibly displaying their

prejudice against rural migrants and desire to distinguish themselves as a social group of higher social standing.

Later that day, at Champs Mansions, another couple also shared with me their concerns with the relocation projects. "The villages were demolished, but the area feels the same! The people still behave like they were in the countryside. They even sell live chickens and other animals by those relocation project on the north side of the train station," the couple told me, confirming the fact that spaces are made of social relationships and daily routines, a common place for researchers in the social sciences.

To improve their reputation, developers in Huaiyin used their promotional materials (i.e., folders, billboards, and pamphlets) to emphasize the by-pass that connects the neighborhood to downtown Jinan and the east side and the train station with its bullet trains, portraying the area as a "convenient" "gateway" to several "metropolises," that is "urbanity." For many homebuyers, however, those promotional words are "empty" and "nonsense talk" (feihua). To others, like myself, they only reinforced the non-urbanity of the district. Meanwhile, other developments instead relied on dishonest marketing strategies to improve the reputation of their projects.

To attract "rich" homebuyers, Wisdom Garden and Jinan Water Court, two projects in the north part of the west end, surrounded by eight relocation projects, concealed the fact that their developments included hundreds of 90 square meters-units, focusing their marketing efforts on large apartments first. I asked their agents for folders with detailed information on the 90 square meter-units, but both refused my request, even though they knew I was a researcher. Instead, they gave me the folders for apartments ranging from 101 to 136 square meters. The tactic seemed to work; I noticed that agents at Wisdom Garden and Jinan Water Court were better than their counterparts from other developments at convincing newlywed homebuyers. They argued

that their developments were a better option for homebuyers of "higher human quality" because they did not have "so many smaller apartments." Quite often, they drew on family values, arguing that homebuyers needed to protect their future children by letting them grow up surrounded by neighbors of "better" human quality. They were also good at giving discounts too, but the art of negotiating stigmatized space is not an easy one; overall, Huaiyin still had a large inventory of unsold units (as of May 2016).

My night-time bicycle excursions into the district revealed that at least until May 2016, the west end portion of the district was barely inhabited. Most apartments had their lights off early in the evening when people are still supposed to be having supper with their families. When I inquired with real estate agents in the area about the low occupancy of the developments, several presented the stigma of the area as a real obstacle for the market. "You know, we barely have schools in this district; there isn't much to offer other than good logistics, plus there's all this stigma. The train station is right here, and it's easy to access the Second Ring West Rd. Viaduct from the area, the by-pass," an agent at Champs Mansions, one of the most prestigious developments in the area, told me. The municipality, through urbanization processes, was able to convert Huaiyin's spaces and populations from rural to urban, but it failed, so far, to undo the hukou-grounded socioeconomic inequality and the stigma that surrounds populations of rural origin. Urban policies in Jinan, including the 2008 homebuyer program, reinforced hukou-sorting of populations in the city, unifying rural and urban spaces while keeping original populations segregated.

Lixia (Eastern Side)

For a completely different market segment, developments in Lixia targeted primarily high-income urbanites, especially government officials and highly skilled professionals in the fields of finance, technology, and business consultancy. Based on interview accounts, Lixia developments also catered to a smaller but important population of highly-skilled, well-paid commuters from Beijing, Qingdao, and other cities easily accessible by bullet train. Apartment sizes varied greatly in Lixia, from 40 square meters to 400 square meters, but most apartments had more than 100 square meters. Such a diversity of sizes reflects the increased diversity of lifestyles, income levels, and needs in post-Mao's China, especially among members of the traditional urban elite, that is, families registered as non-agricultural hukou holders since the Mao era.

Lixia, like Licheng, enjoys high prestige since Mao's era. In addition to having important work units, this district has always represented a vital transportation corridor in Shandong; it leads to Qingdao, a wealthy city Shandong's coast, which has one of the largest ports in the world. In 2015, the government started to build Jinan East Train Station in Licheng, which was inaugurated in 2018, improving the corridor's capacity to transport passengers, as well as its economic importance.

The municipality started to urbanize Lixia towards the east, beyond the East Ring Rd, the east side of a ring that circles Jinan's urban core, in the early 2000s, with the inauguration of the Qilu Software College and the Jinan International Convention & Exhibition Center in the area. A few years later, the municipality announced that it was going to transfer Jinan's City Hall to the area as well, a plan that was accomplished in 2009. Jinan residents viewed the municipality's plan to move the City Hall from the west side, in northern Central, on the border with Tianqiao,

to Lixia as a confirmation of the municipality's plan to renew the east as the direction of urban growth and economic investment.

The urbanization of the eastern area of Lixia implied the expropriation of farming land and the demolition of numerous villages, like in Huaiyin. Following the pattern in Jinan, the original population of eastern Lixia was transferred to relocation projects in the proximities. Next to the commercial developments that I visited in the Lixia area, there were more than 20 relocation projects with thousands of returnees. However, unlike Huaiyin, the eastern Lixia area did not struggle with stigma; on the contrary, it had a good reputation, being considered highly "civilized" (wenming). The status differential between Huaiyin and this part of Lixia suggests that the prestige that Lixia and Licheng enjoyed during the Mao era has become ingrained in Jinan's collective imagination.

In Lixia, I centered my research on the developments located on the east and northeast side of the Olympic Sports Center, between Tourist Rd. and Industrial South Rd., which I refer to as the "eastern Lixia." The most expensive square meters in the city, at USD 2,150, property prices in eastern Lixia were prohibitive for most urbanite families in Jinan, considering that the average annual household income among this group was USD 11,300 (Jinan Statistical Yearbook 2015, 13). Lixia real estate was even more inaccessible to migrants, who faced additional mortgage restrictions and were least likely to opt for the area. "The price here selects only people of high human quality; there are not migrants among our clients," said the agent at Shun Ao, conflating migration with a low human quality.

I visited most of the 19 developments in the area, but I only managed to collect interview data at Hisense N.9 and Shun Ao. Most of the others were sold out, with few or no real estate

agents or customers on-site. Developments in the area sold incredibly fast; Jinan's economic elite had a strong desire for the luxury that apartment units in Lixia offered, including apartments with higher ceiling and panoramic windows, using them as a form of conspicuous consumption. Small and prestigious, Hisense sold out on its inauguration day. At Hisense, I learned that developers in Jinan segment the clients according to the following three categories, "luxury seekers" (zhu haozhai de goufang zhe), "upgraders" (gaishan xing goufang) and "first-timers" (gangxing xuqiu).

While upgraders and first-timers had somewhat rigid cost-oriented demands that always involve buying properties in school districts to guarantee schooling for their children, luxury buyers focused primarily on the social history of the area and the prestige of the development. The area's social history usually signaled its use and function during the Mao era, whereas the development's prestige varied according to the architectonic features that the towers and apartment units offered to home buyers. Luxury clients expected such features to promote a "rich western feel," the real estate agent at Hisense, who had never left eastern China, told me. "Environments like the one you have in US, France, these countries," he continued trying to clarify the spatial feeling that the developer tried to convey to its clients. "Our clients are the luxury type; they want something unique, distinctive. Our project sold out quickly because it is one of the smaller in the area," the agent told me. "They buy to show off; unlike 'first-timers' and 'upgraders,' our clients don't really know what they want; we tell them what the novelty is, leading their decision," he added outlining the conspicuous side of real estate transactions.

When I asked the agent at Hisense about the presence of upgraders and first-timers in the area, he told me that homebuyers in Lixia were either luxury seekers or upgraders, mostly members of the traditional elite who already live in Lixia or Licheng. "We have no first-timers

here," he said, adding that most first-timers were usually young couples hukou transferees with strict demands involving apartment size, square meter price, and access to school, as they wanted to be economical and have access to a school district. As eastern Lixia had no high-ranking primary and secondary schools, except for Xiao Ya, an elementary affiliated to Shandong Normal University, he confirmed that homebuyers there were not first-timers. The lack of schools also confirmed that the families buying in eastern Lixia, luxury seekers and upgraders, did not need to factor schooling in their decision-making process; they were probably members of the traditional urban elite, the group who worked in prestigious work units in the past, having access to the best schools in the city, which are usually in their old neighborhoods. Thus, to continue to secure schooling for their children and grandchildren, this group usually moved away from their old neighborhoods but left their hukou registered there, as children must go to school in their hukou jurisdiction. Despite the lack of schools in eastern Lixia, it was still an expensive area, confirming once again that its homebuyers were not first-timers, including hukou transferees.

Secondhand Apartments in Old Neighborhoods

With a limited offer of new apartments sized at 75 square meters across the city, rural migrants willing to convert their hukou tended to opt for secondhand apartments, occupying the old and comparatively small apartment units in work unit dormitories that urbanites left vacant. However, migrants, particularly rural migrants, faced many challenges purchasing a home in Jinan. Firstly, they had limited access to mortgages. Secondly, it was hard to find affordable secondhand apartments sized at 75 square meters; Thirdly, in case they found a suitable apartment, they faced further challenges trying to get their children in the nearby school.

Together, these factors contributed to driving rural migrants away from the best areas and school districts of Jinan.

Most rural migrants were not eligible for a mortgage, having to resort to favors and risky alternative schemes in case they needed financing. Also, because they often faced comparatively more challenges than urbanites to get any type of loan, migrant couples tended to borrow money from family members and rely on “loan sharks” to purchase a home in the city. Rural migrant homeowners endured so much pressure and hardship to repay the loans that they thought twice about having a second child, fearing that it could be a boy, which meant that they would have to purchase a marriage home for their adult sons to get married; women usually are not willing to marry men who cannot provide a home for the family. “What if I have another baby boy? We don’t want to try the second one,” a young bank clerk told me. He had just bought a home to transfer the family’s hukou from the countryside of Taishan to Jinan. “Can you imagine? How would I buy a home for him to get married? I can’t bear even thinking about it,” he continued, indicating the hardships that migrant homebuyers go through.

Most secondhand apartments did not meet the hukou transfer size requirement. While some units were too small, others were too expensive; more expensive than new apartments in modern developments. Following a city-wide norm, the price of real estate in each district and neighborhood varied according to the number and quality of schools available in the area. This norm impacted every apartment, new, old, small, or large. Most old and small apartments in Jinan dated from the Mao era, being in work unit dormitories close to prestigious schools, that is, they were extremely expensive despite their age and deteriorating quality. For instance, an old apartment in the consolidated parts of Lixia could cost more than some new units in eastern Lixia. In May 2019, an old apartment in the old parts of Lixia was listed for 290,000, while the

same size unit in eastern Lixia was advertised for USD 170,000, according to Fang.com, a popular real estate website in Jinan. Thus, real estate market dynamics involving school districts, which are grounded in hukou jurisdiction, in addition to the 2008 homebuyer policy, drove migrants away from the best school districts, making them "opt" (xuan) for apartments in bad school districts, like Tianqiao, or areas without a school district, like Huaiyin.

In the rare cases that rural migrants managed to transfer hukou to a school district of reasonable quality, they still had to consider whether they would be able to raise the money to enroll their children in school. Migrants, like locals, were charged a "school selection fees" (ze xiao fei) whenever their children change schools; the better the school, the higher the fee. Negotiable and variable, this fee included arbitrary or irregular charges determined by the relationship of the student's family with the school principal. Displaced from their birthplaces, migrants did not enjoy the same bargaining power as urbanites in the negotiation of school fees. Thus, in addition to considering the property size and price, rural migrant homebuyers had to weigh in the power of their urban social networks to secure education for their children. The limitations that rural migrants faced to secure housing tenure and education in the city led many to continue to live in Jinan as temporary residents in rented apartments. As tenants, however, migrants were not free of obstacles. Prestigious schools usually did not accept children with hukou registered outside their school districts. In case they did, schools charged temporary migrant children huge sums referred to as "sponsorship fees" (zanzhufei) in addition to the selection fees, creating additional difficulties for migrant enrolment. They also had to deal with other school requirements such as limited vacancies and other requirements related to academic performance.

With my research accounts on the re-development of Tianqiao, urbanization of Huaiyin and eastern Lixia, and dynamics involving old, consolidated neighborhoods with their apartment units, I tried to demonstrate how the 2008 homebuyer program used hukou to govern the presence of migrants in the city, sorting them according to their place of origin (i.e., hukou jurisdiction). By regulating the presence of migrants, the municipality also managed to govern the presence of locals, as urbanites tended to move away from districts and neighborhoods featuring too many hukou transfer apartment sizes in a quest for social distinction.

Most importantly, the 2008 homebuyer program displayed an innovative use of hukou for urban governance. It relied on hukou to include migrants in Jinan's urban project by giving them the option to remain as temporary residents or become permanent citizens. Practically, the policy used hukou classification and hukou jurisdiction to format consumer choice, leading migrant and local homebuyers to embed hukou distinction in their decision-making processes and actions voluntarily. In doing so, the municipality was able to guide Jinan's urban dynamics, including the valorization and devaluation of spaces, while protecting and fostering individual autonomy and personal interests. Most rural migrants from within the municipality found that being subjected to a smaller hukou transfer size requirement (i.e., 75 square meters) suited their needs. They especially appreciated the municipality incorporating their needs into policymaking by giving them the "option" to migrate. "My hukou doesn't matter! What matters is that I have the option to transfer it here if I want to! It is just a matter of buying a seventy-some square meter," a bus driver told me, indicating that having the option (i.e., autonomy) to do something sometimes is more important than doing it. Although purchasing a home to transfer hukou was a quasi-unobtainable lifetime project, as I heard from numerous migrants, most migrants found the 2008 policy with its "options" empowering and liberating.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I demonstrated that between 1978 and 1998, until the Housing Reforms, the municipality used hukou to disarticulate economic growth and job creation from urbanization by conditioning hukou transfer to specific and hard to meet requirements. Restrictions on hukou transfer had several consequences to Jinan's urban dynamics. It created a large contingent of unauthorized migrants in the city, whose presence marked the spaces they inhabited with symbols of stigma. With the Housing Reforms, those marks translated negatively in the price of real estate.

Between 1998 and 2005, in the early years of the Housing Reforms, hukou transfers remained restrictive to most migrants, who lived in the city either as temporary labor confined in their workplaces or as unauthorized workers. Meanwhile, traditional urbanites left their old apartments in work unit dormitories to move to newly built units purchased with public subsidies, which were set based on hukou jurisdiction. Most homebuyers in that period (1998-2005) were employees from Jinan's most prestigious work units, mostly located on the east side of the city. As they benefited from the Housing Reforms by using public housing subsidies to upgrade to private apartments close to their work units, they carried their prestigious status with them to their new neighborhoods, transforming Jinan's east side into the most expensive square meter in the city. Meanwhile, Tianqiao and Huaiyin, the migrant districts on the west side, counterpointed the east (Licheng and Lixia Districts) with low social status and low real estate prices.

In 2005, the municipality finally created an official pathway for migrants to transfer hukou to the city. To be eligible for hukou transfer, migrants had to purchase a home of at least 100 square meters; that is, they had to be rich; migration was an option only for those who had money. With the 2005 policy (i.e., the 2005 Measures), the municipality used hukou to select the populations it wanted to attract to the city and organize them in space. The minimum property size eligible for migration became a sort of ruler against which homeowners were measured regarding socioeconomic status. By treating property size as a requirement for permanent residence in the city, the 2005 policy led urbanites to purchase homes above the minimum hukou transfer threshold simply to distinguish themselves from migrants. Thus, the use of property size as a form of social distinction started to create more nuanced social-spatial divisions in the city. Regardless of the dynamics, the 2005 migration policy represented the first time that the municipality used hukou to advance a kind of urban governance that promoted individual autonomy to make choices and personal interests.

In 2008, the municipality redesigned the homebuyer migration program, creating hukou-based requirements for hukou transfers to Jinan. The 2008 migration policy created different criteria and requirements for migration. To transfer hukou to Jinan, migrants coming from within the Municipality of Jinan, that is, rural migrants had to purchase a residential property of 75 square meters in the city, while migrants from outside the Municipality had to buy a 90 square meter home. In other words, migrants from different spaces and hukou classification were subjected to different options involving migration and homeownership. In this sense, the 2008 policy consolidated the division of urban spaces, from apartment buildings all the way to regions, according to population categories (e.g., urbanites, rural migrants, and migrants in general), strengthening the importance of hukou in the governance of spaces. Also, because of the 2008

policy, residential property size became a consistent proxy for socioeconomic status and original hukou classification. In most societies in the world, residential property size is an expression of socioeconomic status, but in Jinan, the paring between people and property size resulted from rationalities of population governance grounded in hukou.

From a broader perspective, I demonstrated in this chapter that Jinan's hukou transfer policies between 1978 and 2017 renewed the hukou system and strengthened its legitimacy as a technology that governs populations in spaces, including inside the city, articulating collective and private interests. Lastly, in 2017, when socio-spatial divisions and inequalities were already crystallized into the city in the form of property size and space value, the municipality dropped residential property size as a requirement for hukou transcendence, reinforcing the governance based on individual autonomy and personal choice that I outline in this chapter.

Chapter 6 • China's Hukou Platform: Windows into the Family[8]

Abstract

When news media in the UK and US discuss China's surveillance networks, it is often to imply that the Chinese government is creating a "techno-authoritarian state" to track and monitor its citizens. News outlets, however, are missing a larger point. The specific problem with China's surveillance apparatus is not that it is technologically "totalizing" and "intrusive," but that it relies on a newly digitized information platform that connects surveillance subjects to information about their households and family members, allowing the simultaneous identification and monitoring of everyone in each kinship network. Referred to as the Household Register or *hukou*, this platform is the backbone of China's "surveillant assemblage"(Haggerty and Ericson 2000). Until the late 1990s, when it was digitalized, hukou was an individually separate and distinct surveillance system that contained both general and detailed information about a household and its members. With digitalization, hukou became a platform that integrates different computer systems and databases and became the backbone of China's surveillance assemblage. CCTV surveillance that involves facial recognition and Internet surveillance practices are connected to and supported by information from hukou. In the case of CCTV surveillance, cameras equipped with facial recognition features match the face of surveillance

[8] This chapter was published in 2019. See: Cassiano, Marcella Siqueira. 2019. "China's Hukou Platform: Windows into the Family." Surveillance & Society 17 (1/2): 232–39. doi:10.24908/ss.v17i1/2.13125.

subjects with their ID, and trace them back to their families. As for Internet surveillance, the connection between hukou and surveillance subjects happen via telephone number. Access to the Internet and social media platforms such WeChat, SinaWeibo, and e-mail services requires a telephone number purchased with a government-issued ID card, which is connected to a household register and therefore the telephone card owner's family. Chinese law enforcement's ability to treat individual Internet users also as "collective units" represents the most distinctive feature of Chinese surveillance, an unlimited source of coercion for the Communist Party to reproduce itself as the ruling party.

Introduction

In 2017, in Guiyang city, southwestern China, BBC News correspondent John Sudworth decided to test the capacity and effectiveness of China's surveillance network to identify and track non-conforming individuals (Sudworth 2017). His experiment entailed providing local law enforcement with his photo and trying to disappear in the downtown rush of 4.3 million people. Using a network of cameras equipped with facial recognition features, it took seven minutes for the Guiyang police to identify and immobilize Mr. Sudworth. In an unusual break with the secrecy that marks public discussions about surveillance in China, one expert features in the story noted: "We can match every face with an ID card and trace all your movements back one week in time…*Match you with your relatives and the people you are in touch with* [emphasis added]" (Sudworth 2017). Focused solely on the technological-electronic component of surveillance, Sudworth's story lets the rare public statement about matching surveillance subjects with their relatives in real-time go unexplored. The piece ends on an ominous tone, showing

surveillance footage of ordinary people going about their lives in the city. The footage is backed by a soundtrack of electronic beeps and a sequence of subtitled-messages suggesting that the Chinese state is using its "rapidly-expanding" facial recognition surveillance network to, arguably, commit injustices against its citizens. Like almost every news item on China's surveillance networks published by UK- and US-based media coverage (Doffman 2018; Lucas and Feng 2018; Mitchel and Diamond 2018), Sudworth's story overly focuses on the Chinese government's continual expansion and innovation of its surveillance technologies, and overlooks the most important and distinctive factor of Chinese surveillance: The Chinese government's ability to treat individuals under surveillance as single persons and family members, seamlessly and simultaneously.

China, the most populous and third largest country in the world, has the most extensive and technologically advanced surveillance network on Earth. Chinese law enforcement already operates more than 170 million CCTV cameras (Cuthbertson 2018); many of which are fitted with artificial intelligence technology that recognizes faces and other physical attributes, connected to databases that can effectively link Internet users to their true identities (Global Times 2017). This network is likely to continue growing as the Chinese government announced in 2015 that it wants to have an all-encompassing surveillance system implemented by 2020. Dubbed "skeynet," according to the Chinese government, this system entails: "'global coverage, network-wide sharing, full-time availability, full controllable' public safety video surveillance construction networking applications" (National Development and Reform Commission 2015). The official goals of such a system include strengthening public security, optimizing traffic, service city management, and innovations in social governance. Although the Chinese surveillance networks and its related governmental ambitions may sound "scary" and

"totalizing" in size and technology, my main concern lies elsewhere: the ability of the Chinese state to use computer technologies and artificial intelligence to combine numerous, initially independent bureaucratic registration systems that sort, classify, and scrutinize humans with the real-time monitoring of human action and interaction into a single, large-scale digital platform of surveillance or, a "surveillant assemblage" (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). History has already demonstrated that the bureaucratic process involving making up people through formal categories can converge in formal and totalizing ways to create enormous suffering to those who are assigned disadvantageous categories, and who do not fit the prescribed categories or are trapped in between categories (Bowker and Star 2000, 195-225). Apartheid in South Africa and the Nazi regime in Germany stand as the exemplars of such processes. Imagine now if such classificatory dynamics were enhanced by the seamless digital integration of numerous surveillance systems that combine "traditional" and "new" forms of surveillance (Marx 2017, 13-84). In a best-case scenario, such a situation could contribute to making the standards and classifications used to order life by the government even more invisible, and thus more potent.

In this article I argue that surveillance subjects in China are understood by officials as units that can be seamlessly and simultaneously approached as individuals (i.e., surveillance subjects) and/or members of a collective (i.e., their family members). This means that when law enforcement officials profile someone walking down the street or browsing the Internet, it also exposes this person's immediate and extended family to scrutiny. China is the only country in the world that has this capacity to treat the individual as a "data flow" encoded with detailed information on their entire family tree. Such a capacity results from the transformation of the Household Registration System into a "surveillant assemblage" (Haggerty and Ericson 2000): that is, a digital platform that integrates numerous originally intended "old" and "new"

surveillance systems (Marx 2017, 13-84). Chinese people, as well as academics, refer to the Household Registration System as the *hukou* system or simply hukou; hukou meaning "family" or "household" in the Chinese language. The backbone of China's surveillance apparatus, hukou was an individually separate and distinct household classification and registration system until approximately 1998, when it was digitized. Hukou contains both general and detailed information about each household in China and its members, as discussed later in this article. With digitalization, the original design of hukou was altered to include the ID number and photograph of every household member, creating a new pathway to effectively match surveillance subjects and their family information, as well as integrate different computer systems and databases including systems of CCTV and Internet monitoring.

Hukou Platform: China's Surveillant Assemblage

A twenty-year old scholarly piece about the trends in surveillance practices in the West inspired the research and framework supporting this article about surveillance in China. Ironically, it is the "East" (China in particular), that is most dramatically fulfilling the vision articulated in that piece. Published by Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericsson (2000), the article outlined a new trend in the world of surveillance which entailed the seamless integration of numerous surveillance systems into a comprehensive, totalizing "surveillant assemblage." They argued that "discrete" and "heterogenous" state and extra-state surveillance systems had begun to operate together—as a "surveillant assemblage" in the sense of a "functional entity"—to treat the human body as a series of discrete and abstract flows of information. Such information could be collected, manipulated and recreated for an infinite number of purposes, including control,

governance, security, mobility, efficiency, profit, entertainment, education, knowledge, consumption, and lifestyle activities. Haggerty and Ericsson's outline represents a succinct statement of the vision of China's State Council (i.e., China's executive branch) for hukou (State Council 2014b) and for information systems in general (National Development and Reform Commission 2015). But, in the case of China, the process of building and integrating the component parts of the surveillant assemblage is still commanded by the state; extra-state institutions must "tag along," or put themselves out of business.

China State Council's vision entails "designing" and "sharing" a "database" with information of the "entire population" (State Council 2014b). Touching every aspect of life, such a database includes information on the following topics, according to the State Council: "labour and employment, education, income, social security, real estate, credit systems, health, family planning, taxation, marriage, ethnicity, etc.," as well as domestic migration (State Council 2014b). Further, the State Council's vision is primarily oriented towards building a more effective and better-informed governance, with less waste and a more efficient allocation of resources. Consequently, the hukou database, or platform, has the mandate to improve the quality of policies and services involving education, employment, retirement pensions, housing, and basic medical care (State Council 2014b), in addition to maintaining public order (National Development and Reform Commission 2015).

The State Council's vision for the hukou platform is represented in my research findings and compiled through interviews, observations, and documentary information. With regards specifically to documentary information, I amassed standard operating procedures published by the Ministry of Public Security on the hukou platform in 2015/2016 when I was in China doing fieldwork. These documents included numerical and categorical codes used to enter and modify

information into the hukou platform, and covered the following themes: ID card application and issuance (Ministry of Public Security 2004b, c, d); religious affiliation (Ministry of Public Security 2004e); variables and codes used in the digitalization of the hukou register (Ministry of Public Security 2004a); variables and codes for altering items in the hukou database (Ministry of Public Security 2004f); and variables and codes to classify the population according to household status and place of origin (Ministry of Public Security 2004a). The content of such documents, especially references to other materials, reveals that the hukou platform relates to numerous other surveillance systems operated by state and extra-state institutions, as per the surveillant assemblage model (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). For instance, two of those standard operating procedures are targeted to the "security industry" (Ministry of Public Security 2004a, b), revealing that private firms are also contributing to the operation of China's surveillance systems. Lastly, the labels and descriptions of numerical and categorical codes in these documents demonstrate how humans have become discrete flows of information detached from corporeal, territorial, social, political, and economic contexts on the hukou platform; flows described in "serial number," "data item label," "data item length," and "explanation." And yet, these data flows are always encoded with family identification information, the initial and primary purpose of hukou.

Family: The Starting Point of China's Surveillant Assemblage

Structured around the notion of family, the hukou surveillance systems draw their legitimacy from deep-rooted and widely-supported cultural elements related to family and territory in China. These include a focus on bloodline (e.g., lineage, kinship) and spatial roots

(i.e., regionalisms), as well as aspects of social hierarchy and emotional component that involve family and territory. The capacity of the Chinese surveillant assemblage to encode personal information flow with family identification emerged after the Communist Revolution (1949), more precisely with the national deployment of the Household Registration System (i.e., hukou) in 1958 by the Communist government. Historically, the Communist hukou was derived from ancient systems of household registration that organized the family as a unit of data and was also an agent of social conformity, also serving as a disciplinary tool (Dutton 1992). Unlike the ancient systems, the Communist updates on the hukou system made it more flexible because it focuses both on the family and its members, treating both entities as autonomous categories yet encoded with each other's information.

Up to the point when it was digitized in 1998 (circa), the Communist version of hukou consisted only of a booklet, its main material signifier, which is officially called "Household Register." The first page of this booklet identifies the household unit, including its type (rural or urban), household identification number, address, and the name of the primary adult, or head of the household. Subsequent pages display the name, gender, ethnicity, birthplace, birthdate, ancestral origin, height, blood time, religious affiliation, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, workplace, and military service status and ID card number of every member attached to that household. Their relationship with the head of the household (e.g., wife, son, and daughter) and spatial mobility history (i.e., address of origin and destination) are also recorded. With digitization, household members started to have their ID card number linked to their household information, and the handwritten booklets were replaced with a computer-printed (but still hard copy) version. Despite the link between hukou and ID, the household register operates over and above one's personal ID card and number, and is regarded by the Chinese as a kind of

official confirmation of the link between individuals, their kinship, lineage, and ancestral birthplace. In 2015, during my fieldwork, one interviewee concluded our long conversation about the important of hukou saying, "hukou tells who you really are! Where one can find you!" This interview participant, like numerous others, talked about hukou as a bureaucratic tool that makes their kinship relations and sense of belonging to a territory count from a legal perspective. As my fieldwork advanced, I learned that hukou signifies the intersection of legal-rational authority and deep-rooted traditional beliefs, or traditional authority ingrained in habituation, patriarchy, lineage.

In practical terms, the operating dynamics of China's hukou surveillant platform revolves around three milestones in a person's life, all related to the household register, which ensure that the Chinese surveillant infrastructure will encompass every aspect of a person's life. The first milestone is birth, including family-planning components. The second is when an individual registers for the national identity card, and the third refers to their first telephone number.

Using the Family to Order the Life of Individuals: Birth Permit, Household Register, ID Card, and SIM Card

In order to list a newborn child in their household register, couples planning a pregnancy must apply for a "birth permit" (a "Fertility Services Certificate"). Having a baby without this permit violates China's family-planning policies. Without it, parents cannot include their baby in the household register, which results in the baby being considered an "irregular" person (i.e., a non-citizen or *heiren* in the Chinese language). The birth permit also legitimises and provides an

identity for the child. In a country where children are viewed as symbols of happiness and prosperity, no one wants their child to be an "irregular" person.

At the age of 16, individuals must apply for a national identity card. This is linked to the household register with an identification number, fingerprints, and photograph. This system of ongoing renewal of household information, combined with identification numbers and biometrics, provides law enforcement with expansive surveillance capacity. They can use biometric cameras to zoom in on the faces of anyone walking down the street and match their face with an identity, their license plate, and phone numbers. It is noteworthy that the Chinese were not required to obtain and carry an identity card until 1984, and that the identification number began to be listed in the household register only in the late 1990s, when the Ministry of Public Security began to digitize this information into a system and format that allowed law enforcement to access, code, recode, retrieve, and link data easily. The emergence of the identity card as a required document, and its link to the household register, co-occurred with advances in microchip and data processing technology. Further, changes in internal migration and urbanization obliged the Chinese state to design strategies to govern and control a fast-developing new social category: migrants.

Between the national deployment of the household register in 1958 and the Economic Reforms and Opening Up Policy of 1978, the central government in Beijing strictly limited domestic migration (Cheng and Selden 1994). Prior to the 1980s, municipal governments had few tools to manage new residents; but as China began to adopt private market initiatives, the promise of prosperity in urban areas triggered a massive internal migration movement. By the late 1990s, Chinese cities were packed with "peasant migrants," that is, individuals living away from their official household registration jurisdiction and away from the watchful eyes of their

families and village governments. This prompted the creation of a digital link between households and personal identification. Such a link was imperative for policing the mobile populations of urban areas. It greatly expanded the state's ability to monitor anyone, anywhere. It also renewed the family's capacity to guide the behaviour of its members; non-conforming members could be tracked, exposed, and face kinship sanctions, regardless of their movements or location. This continues to be crucial, as the Chinese migrant population officially reached about 250 million in 2016 (Wang 2017).

The surveillance networks feeding into the household registration system are also connected to Internet access. In 2018, China had 800 million internet users (Cao 2018); that is more people going online than the population of the entire European Union and the United States, combined. Nearly one quarter of Chinese citizens rely exclusively on smartphones, compared to only five percent in the United States (Woetzel et al. 2017). But to access the Internet and connect to social media platforms and e-mail, a person must provide their cellular phone number, which is linked with their government-issued ID card, which is linked to an identifying number generated at the point of sale. For instance, to log on to Starbuck's publicly-available Internet, you enter your telephone number on the WiFi webpage. Then in a matter of seconds, you receive a numbered code via SMS (text message). While there are pre-paid telephone numbers in China that are not matched to ID numbers from the point of sale, but they cannot connect you to the Internet. One can access some public WiFi connections with pre-paid numbers, but these platforms cannot connect to social media, e-mail, and popular applications such as WeChat, QQ, SinaWeibo, Youku. Relying on international social media, e-mail providers, and applications is also not an option, unless users have a VPN (virtual private network) installed in their devices. In fact, Internet-based firms that refuse to endorse China's

Internet surveillance system or to collaborate with law enforcement demands for information are not allowed to operate in China; this is the case with Google, Facebook, and Twitter, for example.

The Chinese propensity for using smartphones makes the surveillance of individuals and their households even more dependent on accurately matching telephone and identity numbers. This represents an important pillar of Internet surveillance in China, because it also allows the recording and encoding of online consumer behaviour to connect with family information. This is significant because of the increasingly large number of people in China using the Internet to communicate, shop, and pay for various services and goods. China is the world's largest and fastest-growing e-commerce market, accounting for about 15 percent of all retail spending (or $630 billion of sales in 2015), a larger share than any other economy with the exception of the United Kingdom (Wei Wang et al. 2016). Tencent, China's largest Internet-based technology firm, owns two of the most popular social media platforms, WeChat (*Weixin* in Chinese) and QQ, with about one billion and 598 million active users respectively (Tencent 2018). If one were to imaging rolling Facebook, Amazon, PayPal, Uber, WhatsApp, Tinder, and tens of other applications into one system; that is WeChat. It is so embedded in Chinese daily life that it can be conceived of as a digital ecosystem. This popularity of online communication and shopping represents another mechanism for surveillance legitimacy, operating in the name of socializing, networking, security, safety, and convenience. As online platforms become integrated into everyday life, this helps ensure mass compliance with surveillance, including having individuals use their regular, registered phone number and keeping their profile information updated.

Information about off-line commodities and services, such as purchasing train tickets, requires that users provide an official government-issued ID number or telephone number, which

is matched with the household registration profile on the hukou platform. This allows law enforcement to connect the travellers' identity with all their family members and scrutinize every member's travelling habits, even if the ticket was bought in person at the ticket office.

A surveillant assemblage that is as totalizing and comprehensive as that of hukou comes at a technological cost; it requires powerful means to save and retrieve just-in-time and real-time information. To accomplish this, China has been investing heavily in supercomputers. According to numerous news reports (BBC News 2018), China and the US are in a head-to-head competition for the global leadership in supercomputers. As of November 2018, China had 227 systems, compared to 109 in the US (Xinhua News 2018). As of today, these computers can process up to 200 trillion (i.e., teraflops) mathematical operations per second.

Conclusion

Most researchers of contemporary Chinese society focus on the socioeconomic inequalities that are correlated to systems of household classification, especially those distinguishing between migration and access to education. In contrast, I focus my research on the governance facet, including the state's capacity to use family-related surveillance to guide behavior and generate compliance. Because surveillance by the Chinese government ties individuals to their family members, the family becomes an additional source of coercive and non-coercive (i.e., "soft") power. In fact, the effectiveness and resilience of the Chinese surveillant assemblage is related to the interdependence with the family as an operational platform that collects and creates information about its member individuals, and acts as an accepted agent of behaviour regulation. The use of the family as a regulatory agency stems from

the meaning that people in China attach to the idea of the family as a supreme authority. Their lives and behaviours are usually oriented towards kinship. The Chinese also view the family as two sides of the same coin; the family is the smallest unit of a country, and the country is a collection of families. From their perspective, the individual exists primarily to support and continue the family unit. This internal logic extrapolates to the state without diminishing the importance of the individual. Further, the maintenance of this sophisticated surveillance program requires the promotion of the importance of the family as an institution. Advances in surveillance technology can accommodate, create, and transform the types of families, but the importance of the institution must be maintained at any cost. In fact, president Xi Jinping's administration has launched a series of mass media campaigns to reinforce the centrality of family to daily life, known as the "China Dream" (Xinhua News 2013). Initiated in 2013, this campaign outlines a vision for the nation's future which integrates national and personal aspirations, and goals, by advancing cultural values. Overall, the China Dream emphasizes "family value," "family education," and "family building" as the pathway to a happy life and a harmonious society.

China's hukou platform can guide individuals into compliance with a range of cultural and political norms by virtue of relying on both authority (coercive compliance) and a constellation of "interests" (voluntary compliance) (Weber 1978 [1920], 941-948). Some individuals comply because they want to protect their families; others because they fear being subjected to sanctions and scorn from their family members. This system engages power and compliance with flexibility, suited to individual cases, where it can engage coercive or voluntary power. Such a capability gives the state direct influence on intimate relationships at home behind closed doors—a window into the family. It also gives the state the option to use the family or the individual (or both) as a conduit to macro and micro government policies. No other government

in the world has such an effective, cohesive, and culturally-rooted surveillant assemblage at its disposal; one that can harness and foster compliance with its political, social, and economic agenda. China's hukou platform represents a remarkable source of power for the Communist Party; one that is poised to continually regenerate its domination over China's political arena.

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Chapter 7 • Conclusion: The Power of Hukou

In this concluding chapter, I outline my thesis's most important findings and summarize hukou's characteristics into a unified analytical construct (i.e., an ideal type, as per Weber's definition). With this construct, I intend to make the theorizing of hukou historically comparable to other technologies of governance. Then, I offer a brief reflection on my thesis's contributions to the fields of Deviance and Social Control, particularly Surveillance Studies, and China Studies. Lastly, I discuss the most important challenge I faced to conduct this research.

The Liberal Facet of Hukou Governance

Based on a dataset of documentary information and 250 interviews conducted with a wide-profile of Jinan residents about the role hukou plays in their lives, I argued that today's hukou system includes liberating practices of population control; it represents a new form of state-society relations that values and fosters individual autonomy and private interests. According to my research data, today's hukou infuses individuals with the autonomy to plan their lives and make decisions according to their interests, especially regarding matters that used to be fully decided by the state, such as work, family formation, dwelling, and migration. Nonetheless, hukou still keeps its capability to limit individual autonomy, especially regarding access to education. In fact, my thesis demonstrates that hukou is more effective as a technology of population governance today than it has ever been; displaying liberating governing capabilities, in addition to its well-discussed coercive roles, today's hukou reconciles and articulates into a single mechanism of social control two distinctive and often contradictory forms of power, the power that liberates people and the power that quashes individual will.

In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that hukou began to emerge as a mechanism that stimulates the ability for individuals to decide for themselves and pursue a course of action in the late 1970s, within a process that was kickstarted and underpinned by China's State Council (i.e., Beijing). In 1978, the State Council authorized "work units" (i.e., state-owned and collectively owned firms) and private employers to change the official place of residence of rural migrant workers (i.e., their hukou jurisdiction) to their workplace. Several other important measures accompanied the 1978 initiative in the following decades. In 1984, Beijing allowed rural migrants who could support themselves to opt for permanent settlement in urban areas through a scheme that became known as "self-supplied food grain hukou." This policy officially coupled geographical mobility and private entrepreneurialism, reversing Mao's government rational, which banned private ventures and imposed geographical stasis. A year later, in 1985, Beijing gave employers full autonomy and the responsibility to manage the lives of rural migrant populations working in urban areas. It also empowered homeowners renting to migrants with the responsibility to regulate the presence of rural migrant workers in the cities. In 1997, Beijing gave mixed-hukou couples autonomy to decide on their children's hukou jurisdiction and classification; before that, children from mixed-hukou parents had to be registered in their mother's jurisdiction and receive their mother's family classification. This measure, I argued, was the first practice to embed individual choice within hukou in a universal way, sharing power over hukou with potentially all members of society. In 1998, Beijing expanded people's autonomy to decide on hukou affairs in the domain of family. It allowed mixed-hukou couples to choose in which jurisdiction they wanted to register their household (husband's or wife's) and unify household registration records. All these measures triggered a process referred to as the "hukou reforms."

At first sight, the hukou reforms seem to have been executed in a 'top-down" fashion, as if fully imposed by Beijing upon society. Many hukou analysts refer to the hukou reforms as a "decentralization" of hukou power "from Beijing" to "lower" levels of government (Chapter 3). Unlike them, I view the reforms as a "diffusion" of hukou power across society. The data I discussed in Chapter 3 indicated that Beijing has never "let go" of its authority over the hukou system. Instead, Beijing "shared" its authority with lower government levels of the state bureaucracy and extra-state members of society such as private employers, homeowners renting to migrant workers, and citizens (i.e., the hukou subjects themselves). In fact, the hukou reforms embody intricate strategies that also stimulate and count on the society's capacity to react and advance Beijing's initiatives. In addition to taking the measures I outlined earlier, Beijing used state media outlets to provide society a "vision" of what hukou-attached policies should look like, invite action on the part of local governments, and enforce its vision. Practically, since the beginning of the reforms, Beijing has used news coverage to stimulate local governments to change hukou-based policies and practices and provide feedback on those changes. Through news articles, Beijing has been publicly guiding local governments with regards to hukou by praising and criticizing actions considered effective and ineffective. Upon gaining legitimacy to exercise autonomy and alter hukou-attached policies, local governments across the country (i.e., provinces, municipalities, and towns) started to gradually discontinue the practice of using hukou to determine duties and rights in China; this includes using hukou as a criterion to regulate the distribution of "welfare," in the broadest sense of the word. This movement, which I also discussed in Chapter 3, led to the gradual dismantling of the collectivist policies from the Mao era that relied upon hukou status (i.e., classification and jurisdiction).

In 1998, Jinan launched a system of temporary residence permits to regulate the presence of rural migrants in the city. This system regulated not only the various previously existing practices of migrant control but also the duties and responsibilities of employers and homeowners renting to migrants pertaining the hukou management. With the temporary residence permit system of 1998, Jinan treated migrant populations in its jurisdiction as subjects of legal rights for the first time ever in the city since the foundation of the People's Republic. In 2002, Jinan abolished the fee charged from migrants applying for temporary resident permits and created a migration scheme to retain higher education graduates in the city. This scheme gave graduates the option to settle in the city permanently, regardless of securing employment in the city. In 2005, Jinan expanded the scope of choice around migration, launching several programs for migrants to settle in the city permanently. The Municipality tailor-made those programs to accommodate migrants with a diverse range of interests, including those seeking to study, invest, retire, reunite with family, work or simply live in the city. To transfer their hukou to the city and become a permanent resident, applicants had to either buy a home of at least 100 square meters in the city or be listed in the hukou registration of a family member. In 2008, Jinan revised and streamlined these permanent residence programs, conditioning the home size criterion to the migrant's original hukou status. With this measure, the government typified migrants and tried to influence their decisions around the place of residence within Jinan City. In 2017, reacting to a readjustment that Beijing made to its hukou vision in 2014, Jinan dropped the home size requirement from hukou transfer applications. Migrants willing to settle in Jinan permanently still need to have a home to register their hukou in the city, but the home can be of any type or size, it can even be rented, as long as legal (i.e., with a deed). This change, which happened a

year after I completed data collection for this research, gave migrants even more autonomy over their decision to migrate (or not migrate).

Overall, I argued in Chapter 3 that the hukou reforms started to equip people, beginning with migrants, with the autonomy to make decisions about their lives and created a new regulatory environment in China that benefited and even enabled the reestablishment of private capitalism. By making their own choices about family and migration, people started to develop several skills that are crucial to surviving in a private market-oriented society such as managing risks, personal responsibilities, and changes. Also, people started to view choice as "rational" and "instrumental" behaviors that must fall in line with economic theories and consumerism, as well as assess their choices based on economic outcomes. The hukou reforms also worked as a training ground for the government bureaucracy to move beyond the state-planning mindset that prevailed in China throughout the Mao era and learn how to deal with autonomy, risk, and responsibility.

While in Chapter 3 I laid out the policies that foreground my argument about the diffusion of hukou power in Chinese society, in the following chapters I demonstrated how hukou holders operate in a regulatory environment that rewards individual autonomy to make choices, as well as the ability to deal with the risks and uncertainties of independent decision-making processes.

Drawing on data collected at a marriage fair in Jinan (Chapter 4), I analyzed the use of hukou in family formation. I argued that, when selecting a mate, people still identify and reward hukou status as a symbol of social sameness, as was the case in the Mao era. However, the role of hukou within mate selection changed dramatically since then. In the Mao era, Beijing dissuaded mixed-hukou marriages by forcing mixed-hukou couples to register their offspring's

hukou in the mother jurisdiction. This strategy prevented urban residents, especially males, from seeking mates in rural areas. Urban fathers strongly opposed having their children being raised by their wives' family, especially sons, as they carried on the family bloodline. Urban fathers also did not want to subject their children to the hardships and limitations of being assigned an "agricultural family" hukou classification. While the hukou of the Mao era functioned to limit choice or produce forced choices, today's hukou operates to boost individual autonomy within mate selection.

Fairgoers viewed hukou as a currency, with a face value that could be negotiated, exchanged, or simply disregarded, depending on the fair participant's needs or circumstances. Hukou was usually presented as a source of and a representative of economic stability and overall life security, as was the case in the Mao era. However, unlike in the Mao era, when security and stability had "fixed" meanings (e.g., being associated to a work unit, having a specific class label, and being a member of the Communist Party), economic stability and life security today entail a diverse range of situations, varying according to a person's needs and interests. For instance, my research showed that marrying a local Jinan hukou holder often provided a greater possibility for owning a residential property in Jinan and thus transferring hukou to the city permanently. Nonetheless, with the high price of real estate in Jinan making residential property unaffordable to most people, numerous fairgoers were open to trading local hukou mates for mates who were "good enough" or "skilled enough" to purchase a home and secure hukou transfer to Jinan. In other cases, people interpreted hukou as a burden, especially the socioeconomic and psychological burden of providing and caring for their aging in-laws. Those folks often considered the legacy of the One-Child Policy when factoring hukou in their mate choices, which connects offspring allowance with hukou status; they usually assumed that

mates from rural and urban areas had, respectively, a sibling or no sibling at all. For instance, local men did not want to marry women from rural areas assuming they had no brothers. These women feared to take on the responsibility of caring for their in-laws. Meanwhile, local women would only marry men from the countryside if they had older brothers who would be the "natural" person to be responsible for providing for their in-laws in old age. However, most people would reconsider their options in case their in-laws had some sort of retirement pension, which is now available to rural residents as well, as retirement pension usually displaces people's obligation to support their in-laws. Some local hukou holders analyzed hukou from the perspective of inherence, wanting to marry a local mate to accumulate assets; because of the One-Child policy, these people assumed that local hukou holders were only-children and thus their parents' sole heir. Nonetheless, the meaning assigned to hukou depended primarily on the personal values and plans of those seeking a mate, not so much on their own hukou status, as was the case in the Mao era. Generally, the data I collected at the marriage fair suggested that people's hukou status is no longer a reliable and strong predictor of hukou status preference in mate selection. Although a third of fair participants had a more traditional approach to mixed-hukou marriage, seeking to marry someone of the same hukou status, the vast majority (about 70 percent) considered hukou irrelevant or entirely negotiable.

In Chapter 5, drawing on interviews with real estate agents and homebuyers, I discussed the role of hukou in guiding real estate investment to shape urban growth and sort residents spatially and socioeconomically. My analysis covered four different historical periods. In the first period, between 1978 and 1998, Jinan used hukou to prevent migrants from moving to the city if they did not have formal employment, the only way to obtain housing in Jinan and become a permanent resident. Nonetheless, the impossibility of getting formal employment and housing

in Jinan did not prevent huge flows of migrants, particularly from rural areas, from moving and working in the city irregularly. Most of them lived in the districts of Tianqiao (north side) and Huaiyin (west side), which became tainted with the stigma that marked irregular migration and thus devalued their property values until today. In the second period, between 1998 and 2005, which coincided with the privatization of housing, the municipal government stimulated real estate development on the east side, in Licheng District, away from the north and west sides and the rurality that marked their inhabitants. Government subsidies made it extremely easy for the urban elite to invest in Licheng, thereby consolidating the district, which already enjoyed high status, as a premium space in the city. Aware of the recent-emerging tensions between migrants and locals, real estate agents often marketed apartments in Licheng by counterposing the east and the west, presenting the former as "civil" (wenmin) and "orderly" (zengjie you xu) and the latter as "backward" (luohu) and "disorderly" (luan) Once the traditional urban residents managed to use their subsidies to buy new homes in the best places of the city, the Municipality opened the doors of the city to all manner of migrants. Between 2005 and 2008, the third period covered in my analysis, Jinan decoupled migration from employment and employer-supplied housing, facilitating and thus guiding temporary migrants to rent the old apartments that the traditional urbanites had vacated. In the same period, the Municipality also launched the permanent residence programs discussed earlier (Chapter 3), associating permanence in the city with homeownership. Highly selective socioeconomically, this program eliminated poor rural migrants from the pool of applicants willing to transfer their hukou to Jinan, attracting only rich migrants. Further, the Municipality used its discretion to issue building permits and by-laws to regulate the neighborhoods and even developments that migrants could live in, thereby regulating the migrant's choice of residence.

From 2008 to 2016, the last period covered in my analysis, the Municipality fine-tuned its ability to sort migrants within the city by using hukou status to designate the size of home migrants needed to buy in order to transfer hukou to Jinan. Migrants from within the Municipality, mostly rural residents, had to buy an apartment of at least 75 square meters, while migrants from outside the Municipality had to purchase a larger apartment, of at least 90 square meters. Both groups, rural and urban migrants, tended to buy apartments in Tianqiao and Huaiyin, spaces that had long been tainted with symbols of rurality because of rural migrant presence. However, rural migrants from within Jinan usually bought secondhand apartments in older developments, while migrants from other municipalities, mostly urban hukou holders, usually bought new apartments in recently built developments. In general, Jinan's decision to tie home size to hukou status perpetuated hukou-based socioeconomic inequalities between rural and urban populations that date from the Mao era in today Jinan's urban fabric. With this policy, I argued, the Municipality also triggered a clear project of space valorization (including devaluation), as well as of social distinction within the city; local hukou holders, who often viewed the presence of migrants as negative, could easily sort migrant populations according to neighborhood and apartment size. Thus, from a bird's-eye view, Jinan in 2016 was configured with the traditional urban elite dating from the Mao era on the east side and migrants on the north (Tianqiao District) and west (Huaiyin District) sides. Specifically, migrants lived in old (i.e., secondhand, mostly small apartments from the Mao era) and new apartments, depending on their original hukou status, if agricultural or non-agricultural. In sum, Chapter 5 offered a view into the power of hukou in guiding people's choices of real estate investment, and dwelling to (re)produce urban dynamics, including inequalities within the city, and sorting populations socioeconomically in Jinan.

In Chapter 6, the last substantive chapter in this thesis, I discussed the transformation of hukou into a digital platform in 1998, the only, albeit important, technical alteration made to the hukou system regarding how it gathers data and produces information on households and its members since 1958. This alteration also entailed adding the ID number in the hukou dataset (as well as in the hukou booklet). First, I demonstrated how the hukou's digitization implied linking Internet monitoring and CCTV surveillance systems to people's hukou information. Then, I argued that the law enforcement's capacity to trace people's behavior online and in public to their family members simultaneously constitutes an important and distinctive feature of hukou. This capacity makes hukou subjects (i.e., citizens) accountable for actions that can harm not only their reputation and life but also the reputation and life of their family members. In doing so, it leads people to distinguish choices that shall be respected or made by virtue of obedience to authority (i.e., the state, the patriarch, or the loved one) from choices that are ruled by individual autonomy, thereby generating voluntary compliance with the social order. After demonstrating that the digitization of hukou elevated its efficacy to unimaginable dimensions, as hukou became connectable to the "Internet of things," I argued that the hukou platform represents an unlimited source of power that the Communist Party can use to various ends, including maintaining itself in power.

Overall, my thesis demonstrates that today's hukou represents a major rupture with the practices of population governance from the Mao era; today's hukou no longer attempts to promote population wellbeing by creating "state-planned" subjects, disregarding their individual autonomy and personal interests. Nevertheless, today's hukou continues to enjoy a central role in governing China's 1.4 billion people. If hukou played a core role in deploying China's state-planned economy during the Mao era, it plays an equally central role in building a private-

oriented market economy. In fact, throughout this thesis, I presented hukou as an important mechanism enabling China's transition from a primarily state-led system to a primarily private market-led system of capital accumulation, which includes a transformation in the economics of life making life choices. Essentially, my thesis demonstrates that hukou has never lost its importance and effectiveness as a tool of population governance, as some observers have suggested or argued. On the contrary, my thesis shows that Beijing's willingness to loosen its grip on power transformed hukou into a more comprehensive and influential technology of population governance

Hukou As a Technology of Government

In reconstructing the history of today's hukou and assessing how it operates within people's lives, I identified four remarkable features that contribute to hukou's effectiveness as a technology of government. Outlined below, such features refer to hukou's legitimacy, the family-based regulatory environment it enables, and its aim of regulating choice.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, hukou finds legitimacy (i.e., trustworthiness) in the values of lineage and regionalism, which constitute the institution of family and structure social relationships in China since time immemorial. Intertwined with and evoking various forms of traditional authority (Weber 1978 [1920]), hukou bonds individuals and groups through long-lasting and overarching values and beliefs, generating social cohesion. In doing so, hukou imprints the practice of surveillance, as systematic data collection in the Chinese "collective consciousness" (Durkheim 1984), fostering in hukou subjects a type of compliance with hukou-based policies that rely on pure habituation. Thus, surveillance becomes a "logical" and "natural" course of action, exempting the Communist Party from the need to justify the powers (coercive

or liberal), that hukou emanates, including its consequences. Nonetheless, Beijing has always legally and rationally justified hukou as necessary to control China's "large" population. In doing so, Beijing continually renews its monopoly over the management of hukou affairs and secures its power to bureaucratically regulate the values that sustain hukou in case these values ever need revamping or strengthening.

Drawing on lineage and regionalism, hukou groups individuals into household units, officially identifying and classifying them as part of a collective entity that shares the same bloodline and territorial origin. Hukou's ability to sort people according to bloodline and territorial origin creates a family-based regulatory environment that includes both the notions of individuality and collectivity. Further, this ability gives the most intimate spheres of private life, particularly personal family relationships, a collective dimension, in that kinship can be used by state and extra-state actors to accomplish their goals. Most importantly, hukou allows state and extra-state actors not only to leverage kinship to accomplish governance but also to embed surveillance in human emotions (i.e., love, respect, and fear for or of family members). In this regulatory environment where individuality mingles with collectivity and where emotions and family relations become the basic infrastructure of surveillance, surveillance of the family colludes with surveillance of the individual and vice-versa. Moreover, state surveillance acquires the format of mutual surveillance involving household and family members. Grounding surveillance in emotions and relationships, particularly those pertaining to kinship, gives state actors a remarkable advantage in governing populations; it allows state actors to control individuals and groups simultaneously and from a micro perspective (within daily life) without having their presence and actions noticed. How? Mutual surveillance becomes a form of relationship and a conduit of authority within relationships in society. In other words, hukou

surveillance becomes a social norm. In this context, hukou subjects tend to experience and view hukou-related regulatory processes as an individual force (not a social force), circumstantial, and independent of the state's authority. Embedded in family relationships, hukou surveillance becomes disconnected from the state, normalized (i.e., embedded in daily life and choices), and somewhat invisible.

I will never forget the surprised look that interview participants gave me when I told them that my country does not have a hukou system. I also will not forget their follow up questions and comments, which included the following: "How can you distinguish people?" "How can you tell who your family is?" "How do you find people without a hukou?" "Your country must be really 'disordered'" and "I can't believe it! That's impossible!" These questions and comments attest to the "normalization" of hukou, which causes it to disappear in the social environment. In fact, hukou hides so well behind some of China's most ingrained social norms, particularly those that rule family relations and identity formation, that it becomes a norm by itself. From this perspective, in addition to being protected by the invisibility that social norms confer, hukou also includes a built-in dispositive of self-preservation. Because it is mounted in the family, calling hukou into question means questioning the institution of the family, how it is formed, the relationships it shapes, and the identities it produces. It also means interfering in a domain of people's lives that is private and intimate. Thus, questions and inquiries about hukou always amount to an act of defiance.

Specifically, on the topic of choice, I shall add that numerous technologies of government regulate choice; hukou is not the only one. Reward cards or shopper cards dispensed at most supermarkets and drugstores around the world are an example of choice regulation. These cards gather data on people's choices of products and lifestyle (e.g., diets and habits) and provide

context or information for practices (e.g., advertising) that guide their thoughts, desires, and actions pertaining to consumption. Customers usually embrace such cards, keeping them readily available in their wallets in exchange for a shopping discount. However, hukou and reward cards share a distinction. While reward cards find their legitimacy in (more) consumerism, hukou finds its legitimacy in family relationships and values. This aspect gives hukou the ability to transcend modes of production, giving the Communist Party the power to continue mobilizing hukou for population governing, regardless of the existing economic model, as has been the case since 1949.

The Communist Party has always used hukou to guide people's choices. In the Mao era, Beijing used hukou to coercively make life decisions on behalf of populations and convey those pre-made choices to them, limiting or eliminating people's ability to make decisions about family affairs, work, and migration on their own. While limiting choices and imposing forced choices upon populations, hukou produced uniformity within social relationships, promoting specific types of social bonds and networks, especially those based on comradeship, mutual help, selflessness, collectivism. With the end of Mao's era, Beijing stopped using hukou primarily to convey pre-made choices to the population. Instead, Beijing and other state actors across the country started to use hukou to convey to populations the possibility of making life choices on their own, valuing individual autonomy. Governing people's choice either by imposing upon them forced choices or by allowing them to choose, hukou is probably the only choice regulator in the world that is formally controlled by a state and which can uniformly, consistently, and systematically guide 1.4 billion people. Most importantly, hukou, throughout its choice regulator facet, can lead its subjects to experience life changes and decision-making processes as if they were personalized, unique, individualized, and voluntary (i.e., not the result of a command);

individuals act and react on guidance without realizing it. When hukou limits choices, hukou subjects experience the act of choosing and the related situation as "fate," as in Mao's era. When hukou expands the scope of option, accommodating individual autonomy, hukou subjects experience the act of choosing and the related situation as "freedom." Regardless, one way or the other, hukou subjects often fail to view the importance of hukou and the roles it plays in society.

The features I outline—namely legitimacy ingrained in core cultural values from time immemorial, a family-based regulatory environment, and choice regulation—make hukou a core part of China's governance infrastructure and a normal "thing," to obey; While analyzing today's hukou and writing this thesis, I pondered on the questions that inspired Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star to write the book "Sorting Things Out," particularly the question of how classifications "are made and kept invisible" (2000, 5) (Bowker and Star are two widely read scholars in the field of Surveillance Studies). Reflecting on this question and finding different ways to answer it is important because, when invisible, classifications have the power to create advantages and suffering for their subjects in a silent and subtle way, making any form of resistance difficult. Inspired by the hukou features outlined in this section, I answered Bowker and Star's question as follows: Classification systems are made and kept invisible when they meet the following conditions: They draw legitimacy from deep-rooted values, regulate individuals and groups simultaneously in the context of public and private life, and are capable of teaching individuals how to distinguish orders that accommodate personal interests and voluntary compliance from those that must be obeyed without further consideration. In addition to making and keeping classification invisible, those conditions can empower technologies of government with longevity, flexibility, and resilience that only hukou has demonstrated thus far.

Contributions to Surveillance Studies and China Studies

This thesis and my reflections on hukou led me to ponder about some of the arguments that Gary T. Marx, a prominent figure in Surveillance Studies, laid out in his book "Windows into the Soul" (2017) about the alleged antagonistic relationships of surveillance with privacy and with neutrality. On surveillance and privacy, Marx argued that surveillance and privacy do not necessarily form an antagonistic relationship because data collection usually accompanies the intention to control the information collected, which would imply the protection of privacy (23-29). He suggested that surveillance and privacy co-exist in a symbiotic relationship, which is marked by mutual-dependence and mutual-protection. Also, he called into question the notion of "privacy," treating it as an "adjective" that can be relativized socially and geographically according to different circumstances. In doing so, he diminishes the conceptual and concrete importance of privacy, making surveillance sound somehow less intrusive. Despite Marx's attempts to soothe the alleged antagonism involving surveillance and privacy, his arguments did not eliminate the tension involving these two elements. After analyzing hukou, I reworked Marx's arguments, positing that surveillance plays the role of organizing the notions of private and public life, working as a bridge between the two. Private life, as well as public life, are simply subjects of surveillance in today's world and often connected by surveillance. There is no mutual-dependence or mutual-protection between surveillance and privacy, as Marx argued; instead, it aligns private and public life, transforming them into a continuum, as hukou does to family life and public life.

On the topic of surveillance and neutrality, Marx argued that the alleged neutrality of surveillance is fallacious and influenced by visions of society as being determined by

technologies (i.e., technological determinism) (2017). Marx did not provide further evidence to his argument other than saying that the idea of surveillance being neutral “sounded wrong” based on his “knowledge and values” (269). Overall, it seems that Marx took the idea of neutrality for its face value, engaging in “reification” (i.e., treating abstract concepts as a concrete reality). Unlike Marx, I consider debates that try to determine whether surveillance is neutral ineffective from the perspective of knowledge production. Instead, I explore what people mean or want to convey when they say that surveillance is neutral. In China, the many times I heard that hukou was neutral, people were actually trying to say that hukou is inherently flexible, changeable, engageable, attachable, and adaptable to multiple media and multiple interests, so adaptable that it becomes somewhat undefined, neutral. From this perspective, the neutrality of surveillance is not a fallacy, as Marx presented it; on the contrary. My analysis of hukou demonstrates that neutrality represents a source of power and efficacy for technologies of government, including mechanisms of surveillance and classification. It allows such mechanisms to be employed in several kinds of policies, including policies with contrasting goals, without having to undergo alterations. As I said earlier, the Communist Party has successfully used hukou to deliver policies that were dramatically distinctive, contrasting, without having to change hukou as a “device.” Thus, this study also represents a reminder for surveillance researchers to always decode the meanings behind the adjectives used to describe surveillance, as they may hide important sources from which surveillance draws its powers.

My last contribution to the field of Surveillance Studies entails a commentary on Foucault’s understanding of “modern” power. In “Discipline and Punish” (1979), Foucault outlined a dramatic transformation in the nature of power. Studying the reform of France’s penal system in the eighteenth century, Foucault argued that power has shifted from a visible sovereign

force to a type of social regulation that individualizes bodies through regular, invisible, continuous, refined, and effective compliance generating practices; he referred to this new form of power as "disciplinary power." Foucault presented visibility (and invisibility) as the main criterion to distinguish those two types of power (ibid., 187-188). While the old power had its generating principle in its deployment (and visibility), the new power has its generating principle in its own concealment and invisibility. Further, he correlated the emergence of disciplinary power with "two great discoveries" of the eighteenth century, more specifically from the Enlightenment, which are ideas of "progress" and "individuality." According to Foucault, these two ideas are correlated with a new way of managing time and make it useful through practices that involve segmentation, serialization, synthesis, and totalization (160). I interpret the transformation of power that Foucault outlined in his writings and lectures, especially in "Discipline and Punish" and "Society Must Be Defended" (2003), as incomplete. Although Foucault clearly described sovereign power and disciplinary power, he never articulated those two types of power together (i.e., their interactions and intersections), as two sides of the same coin. Instead, he presented them as two distinct types of power. This led numerous surveillance researchers, and Foucauldian scholars in general, to disregard the possibility that modern power also can "wear a crown;" be individuating and collectivizing, invisible and visible, liberating and coercive—all in an articulated and simultaneous way. Hukou is living proof of my claim.

My research suggests that modern types of governmentality reconcile two types of power, the power exerted through obedience to authority (based on collective grounds) and voluntary compliance (based on individuality); it reconnects the divide created by the Enlightenment between external guidance (e.g., the Church and the King), which Immanuel Kant presented as "inability to use one's own understanding" (Kant 1990 [1784]), and agency,

individual autonomy, or “enlightenment,” using Kant’s expression. Thus, to the field of Surveillance Studies, hukou represents a unique case of surveillance mechanism capable of assembling into one single system the regulation of individuals; families members and family relationships; and individual choice around family affairs (e.g., marriage), mobility within and between cities, migration, place of residence, real estate investment, schooling, and Internet browsing (i.e., entire virtual life). Moreover, it regulates these subjects simultaneously and by proxy (using one to control the other and vice versa). It also has the capacity to do so in coercive and liberal ways.

In the field of China Studies, this thesis demonstrates that hukou’s importance includes more than its ability to reproduce old, entrenched resource inequalities and create new ones. Such an account represents “only” the exclusionary facet of China’s hukou-based governance. Thus, this thesis moves the hukou system beyond its traditional foci of analysis, which addresses its role in producing socioeconomic inequalities in China. My thesis supplements the contemporary understanding of the hukou system through a new lens that focuses on its capacity to form liberal subjects, creating individualities and shaping identities that have the capacity to make choices about their lives on their own, even when those choices are forced or produce inequalities. By exploring the liberating side of hukou, I broke with the single-story that tells only hukou oppression. I also carved an academic space that analytically addresses, not disregard or overlook, what the people in Jinan and elsewhere in China mean when they regularly report that hukou “no longer matters.” By exploring the liberating side of hukou, I also broke with the single-story that portrays the Chinese tactics of population governance exclusively as authoritarian, demonstrating that governance in today’s China accounts for and uses individual agency.

Challenges, Limitations, and Future Directions

The fact that hukou is embedded in China's societal infrastructure, a "normal" part of China's landscape, makes it, at the same time, obvious and invisible to most people. Hukou's obvious side refers to the socioeconomic inequalities it creates in China, which carries on from one generation to the other. The obvious side of hukou is also its most popular side, which scholars have been exploring comprehensively since the 1990s (see Chapter 1). Meanwhile, hukou's invisible side, the side I tried to grasp, makes people feel autonomous, empowered, free from the shackles of social conditioning, and even free from hukou itself. Hukou's invisibility comprised a major challenge for me to "operationalize" this study. Operationalize means connecting abstract concepts to concrete observations and build a thesis. Although I overcame this obstacle, some of its aspects are noteworthy.

Today hukou's invisible nature allows hukou subjects to articulate within a single narrative apparently conflicting accounts of the impact of hukou in their lives. For instance, within a limited timeframe, interview participants would tell me that hukou "no longer matter" and then report some decision they had made "because" of hukou, contradicting themselves. In other words, they defined hukou as conceptually "unimportant" on the one hand, while providing concrete experiences that illustrated the opposite on the other hand. Once I became aware of this contradictory pattern, I stopped asking research participants to clarify their views. Instead, I incorporated that pattern into my analysis, understanding it as evidence of hukou's liberal side. Eventually, I came to the full realization that hukou's "unimportance" was meaningful, that it guides people's choices and actions.

Practically, as I advanced into data collection, I realized that the sentence "hukou no longer matters" had a hidden or implied part; in full, in meant that today's hukou no longer

matters “in the same way” as it used to in the Mao era. After decoding the “unimportance” of hukou, I captured the power of hukou’s invisibility in ordering the world of its subjects subtly and silently through choice and connected the abstract concepts of “government” and “choice” to concrete observations. In sum, the importance of today’s hukou as an object of study often appeared camouflaged into narratives of “unimportance,” “insignificance,” or “individual choice,” posing obstacles to my research process.

This study, like any hukou study, contains limitations. Although I believe my argument that hukou has become conducive to autonomy, personal interest, and personal choice applies to hukou throughout the country, my readers shall keep in mind that the policies attached to hukou are not the same everywhere in China. Practically, most cities are creating policies that embed hukou status into people’s choices, but not every city is doing it in the same way. For instance, virtually every city in China connectes migration (i.e., hukou transfer) to real estate investment, but the type of investment varies across cities (e.g., apartment size). This makes my contextual finds comparable, albeit not identical, across all cities.

Regarding my research’s reliability, I believe that someone doing comparable research would hear similar stories, experiences, and opinions involving hukou. However, this study can only be duplicated and thus validated by those who are willing and open to drift away from the hukou literature’s traditional emphasis on socioeconomic inequality, embracing the idea that there is more to hukou than an exclusionary technology of governance. Those committed to finding inequality will certainly find inequality, as the urban-rural inequality that marked the Mao era still exists inside the policies that are currently attached to hukou; however, now it is reproduced, produced, mediated, and embedded in individual choice, that is no longer only imposed by the institutional mechanisms. Also, those committed to seeing inequality need to be

extra careful about hukou's invisibility, as they may easily fall prey to the narratives of "unimportance" that surround hukou, thereby locking themselves into dichotomic debates involving hukou's importance.

Finally, while doing this research, I realized that hukou is guiding people's choices in many more domains of life than what I could ever imagine, domains that are yet to be explored. For instance, hukou status influences choices around health insurance, pension plans, types of mortgage, among other services. When writing this conclusion, hukou's ability to guide people's choices once again surprised me, as I heard of a Chinese immigrant in Canada who chose her "Beijing hukou" over Canadian citizenship upon learning that she could not hold dual citizenship given restrictions on China's side. This story demonstrates that while the Communist Party reorganized and improved hukou to regulate its subjects geographically, among other things, hukou became individuated, internalized, and powerful enough to guide people's choices, while making them feel empowered, wherever they live.

Appendix 1 – Flyer

Study: Population Governance in China: An Analysis from the Household Registration System (Hukou) Perspective

About me…

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About my research…

My doctoral research is about the transformations of the Household Registration System and its impact on people's life. I would like to invite you to talk to me about your experience with the hukou registration. If you agree to talk to me about it, I will ask you questions related to how this registration influences your life and your opinion about it. The interview can take from 15 to 40 minutes, depending on how much you have to say about it. Some people might feel uncomfortable about talking about the challenges they faced with the hukou registration; in case you feel uncomfortable, we will stop the interview. You will not receive money or any kind of material benefit for participating, but I hope you will feel good about telling your story. Your participation is confidential. To keep confidentiality, I will replace your name with an alias. In case you are a government official or a leader of the community, I would like to ask your permission to use your real name; if permission is not granted, I will replace your name with an alias as well. Feel free to refuse to participate.

You have the right to withdraw or modify your participation in this project. In case you decide to withdraw parts or your entire interview from the study, you have 1 (one) month to do so, counting from your interview date ____________; in this case, contact me no later than ___________.

The Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta approved this research. For questions regarding your rights as a participant and research ethics, please contact the Research Ethics Office at +1 (780) 492-2615 or through e-mail reoffice@ualberta.ca. If you contact the Research Ethics Office, please, inform the research number: Pro00051675

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我的调查…

我的博士论文主题是关于户籍制度的变化以及对人们生活产生的影响。我想邀请您跟我聊一聊您关于户籍领域问题的相关经历。如您同意我的邀请，我会提问您(户口对您的生活带来的影响以及个人看法等问题)。采访时间会根据您的个人参与意愿做调整，大约持续 15 至 40 分钟。对讨论自己面临的户口方面的问题，有些受访者会感到不适，如果您感到不便，我们可以即刻终止谈话。对于此次会话，我们不会支付相关的采访费用，但是希望您可以畅所欲言讲出自己的经历。所有私人信息均为保密。对此，我会用化名来保护您的个人信息。如您是官员或社区领导请允许我用您的正名(如果不便同样可以给您使用化名)。另外，您有权拒绝此次采访。

您有权撤回或修改您给我提供的信息。您可在 1（个）月内退出部分或整个采访，从您的采访日期计数 (面试日期:年　　月　　日　)；在这种情况下，请您年　　月　　日　之前联系我 (来电话或发邮件)。

这个研究计划已经获得阿尔伯塔大学伦理研究委员会的许可。如您对这个项目任何问题(包括受访者或者伦理研究的相关权益问题)请您联系艾伯塔大学的伦理研究办公室。您可以致电+1 (780) 492-2615 或发送邮件至 reoffice@ualberta.ca（所有内容均可用中文）。 如您联系艾伯塔大学的伦理研究办公室，请您告知本项目编码：Pro00051675。

谢谢合作！

Appendix 2 - Interview Guide

G = General information asked all participants
M = Information asked migrants (including migrants who did not transfer hukou)
F = Additional information asked only to participants in the marriage fair
R = Additional information asked only to participants at real estate developments

G - Demographics

- Name
- Age
- Sex
- Original and current hukou classification and place (use 类型 for classification and 所在地 for a place)
  - Changes in the hukou booklet related to quantification and classification.
  - How participants view/talk about themselves (e.g., locals, outsiders, old Jinan, floating population, and peasant worker).
- Marital status & family info (i.e., children, schooling, and actual place of residence).
- Work/Occupation

G - Feelings and Opinions About Hukou

- Compare how hukou affects life today and in the past (Mao era / after the Reform) [watch for discourses around hukou policies].
- Perceptions of migrants or locals (check for variance between migrants and locals).

M - Mobility History (Applicable to Migrants Only)

- Places of origin and destiny and arrival/departure dates.
- Motives to leave and stay.
- Work-life in mobility (the type of work and challenges).
- Difficulties in living outside of hukou place.
  - Find work (type ad conditions).
  - Find accommodation (type and conditions).
  - Related to family affairs, especially related to education/schooling of children.
  - Related to policies (get a permit and transfer hukou).
- Hukou transfer decision-making (why transferred, why did not transfer; face/faced what economic challenges, if any; overcame what obstacles, if any).
- Impact of hukou policy on migration/mobility process. How are migrants…
  - counted/classified (e.g., how does the government manage you?)
  - qualified in the place of origin in comparison to Jinan (e.g., how do people call you here and at home?).

R – Real estate developments

- Info about property & neighborhood.
  - Targeted clientele (including how developers segment the clientele)
  - The language used to describe targeted clientele and the "excluded" clientele in general and with regards to hukou.
  - Schools in the area? Are the children going when in case of no school or bad school?
  - "Values" (advantages) advertised
  - How does this neighborhood rank in relation to others on the discourse level.
- Homebuying decision-making factors regarding hukou or its proxies (school, spatial stigma, or prestige).

F – Family Formation

- Why using the fair?
- Preference for the mate's hukou (if the participant has a preferred hukou, explore the advantages and disadvantages of that preference; if no preference, explore why).
- Meaning of marriage; family; home ownership; marrying someone from the same region; inheritance.
- Influence of One-Child policy on matchmaking.
- How fair participants, profile exhibitors, and matchmakers talk of hukou and different hukou groups.

G – OBSERVE/AVOID ASKING: Miscellaneous

- Participant's reaction to my introduction/hukou study; take note of initial comment on hukou (e.g., "important for kids to access schooling," "not important," "made flexible," "no longer worth the money," among others).
- How visible hukou policies are for the participant.
- How different groups (i.e., migrants, locals, transferees) talk of each other.

Appendix 3 - Glossary of Chinese Terms

Agricultural household or Agricultural hukou	农业家庭
Ancestral land	籍贯
Announcement	通知
Backward	落后
Bad elements	坏分子
Bare branches	光棍儿
Becoming a person	成人
Birthplace	出生地
Blocking migration	严格控制市 or 贯彻严格控制市 or 阻止农民盲目
Bloodline	血缘
Blue Hukou	蓝印户口
Breed	教养
Bribing fee	走后门
Bring in	引进
Burden	负担
Businesspeople	务工经商
Cadres	干部
Capacity	能力
Central District	市区
Certificate of origin	证明
Champs Mansion	济南绿地香榭丽公馆
Choice or have a choice	自己选择 or 有选择
Class label at birth	家下庭出身 (as in the original document)
Cold Water Ditch or Lengshuigou	冷水沟
Collective hukou	集体户口
Comfortable economic conditions	条件可以的 or 条件比较舒服
Community building	社区建设
Computerized	标准编入微机程序
Consciousness	自觉
Contract	合同工
Control	控制
Convenience	方便
Conversion	转户口
Counterrevolutionaries	反革命分子
Criminals	其他犯罪分子

Crippled	毛病
CSC Dongfu Group	中建东孚
Culture	文化
Customer-oriented	便民一新举措
Defiant	态度不好
Dikou	堤口
Disorder	乱
Disorderly	乱 or 不整洁的
Dissuade	劝阻
Diyuan	地缘
Easy, fast, and free	方便、快、免费
Eating bitterness	吃苦耐劳
Education for quality	素质教育
Excellence	优秀
Exhibitors	找相亲人
Experimental Elementary School	济南市历下实验小学
Extra mouth to feed	多一口
Fang.com	房天下
Fine Sweet Garden	荣盛花语馨苑
First settle hukou, then find a job	先落户后就业
First-timers	刚性需求
Floating	流动
Floating populations	流动人口
Free movement	自由流动
Freed	自由了
Freedom	自由
From Jinan city	济南市的
From the countryside	从农村过来的
From this city	本市的
From this place	本地的
Full of enthusiasm	满腔热情
Gilded Metropolis	万科金色悦城
Give children an education	给孩子学习 或 给孩子上学
Governance	治理
Government agencies	事业单位
Good enough	还可以的
Green light	绿色通道
Guanxi or relationship or connection	关系
Guihua	规划
Hanjiazhuang	韩家庄

Hero Mountain	英雄山
High Seas Experimental School	外海实验
Hisense	海信龙奥 9 号
Hisense Jiuyifu	海信九麓府
Hongjialou	洪家楼
Household head	户主
Household jurisdiction	户口所在地
Household number plaque	挂牌
Household Contract Responsibility System	家庭联产承包责任制
Household separation	分户
Household type	户别
Housing Accumulation Fund	公积金
Huaiyin District	槐荫区
Huji or hukou	户籍 or 户口
Hukou booklet	户口本 or 居民户口本
Hukou classification	户别
Hukou has already become flexible	户口放松了或 户口自由了
Hukou is flexible now	户口放松了
Hukou jurisdiction	户口所在地
Hukou Law	户口法
Hukou place	户口所在地
Hukou population	户口人口
Hukou red tape	办户口难
Hukou reform(s)	户口改革
Hukou registration or household registration	登记户口
Hukou settlement threshold	落户门槛
Hukou transfer is no longer worth the money	转户口不合算 或 转户口不值钱
Human quality	素质
If the door is equivalent, the family is the right one	门当户对
Inconvenience	麻烦 或不方便
Irrelevant	不重要 or 没事的
Jiang Zhen Library	蒋震图书馆—报纸库
Introduction letter	介绍信
Jihua	计划
Jiluo Rd.	济洛路
Jinan Daily	济南日报
Jinan East Train Station	济南东站 （高铁）
Jinan Foreign Language School	外国语学校

Jinan International Convention & Exhibition Center	济南国际会展中心
Jinan Oriental Bilingual Experimental School	济南市东方双语实验学校
Jinan Water Court	济水上苑
Jinan West Train Station	济南西客站（高铁）
Jinan’s Quancheng Park Marriage Fair	泉城公园相亲会
Jingshi Rd.	经十路
Job stability	工作稳定
Leftovers	剩女
Legal	合法
Legal and fixed residence	合法固定住所
Legal income	合法收入
Legal occupation	合法职业
Legal occupation and income	合法职业和收入
“Let “Work Unit People” Become “Society People”	让 “单位人” 变成 “社会人
Liberalized or flexibilized	自由化了 或 放松了
Licheng District	历城区
Life conditions	生活条件
Local hukou	本地户口
Local people	本地人
Locals	本地的
Long-term residents	常住人口
Loss of face	丢面子
Loss of money	丢钱的
Luokou	泺口
Luxury seekers	住豪宅的购房者
Manage; Management	管理
marriage broker	相亲代理
Marriage broker	相亲代理人
Marriage home	婚房
Marriage vehicle	婚车
Mate requirements	择偶要求
Migrant threshold	给外地落户门槛
Migration size home/apartment	给外地的
Mobile workers or mobile populations	流动人口
Negotiation	商量
Network	关系
Non-agricultural household or non-agricultural hukou	非农业家庭

Nongzhuanfei or landless farmers	农转非 或 失地农民
Not worth the money	不值钱 或 不合算
Odd	奇怪
Odd populations	奇人口
Of the three un-filial deeds, the worst is to be childless	不孝有三 无后为大
Old residential area	老区 或 回迁区
Olympic Sports Center	奥体中心
One-stop	一站式
Opinions	意见
Orderly	整洁有序
Outsiders	外地的
Outsider with ability is acceptable	外地有能力可以
Outsider with the ability to settle in Jinan is acceptable	外地有能力在济南落户可以 (colloquial expression at the marriage fair)
Outsider excellent enough to settle in Jinan is acceptable	外地优秀能在济南落户可以 (colloquial expression at the marriage fair)
Own personal will	本人意愿
Part-time workers	变工变农
Peasant worker	农民工
Peasants	农民
People of unclear background	来历不明的人
People's Daily	人民日报
People's hukou	建立便利于广大人民的户口制度；人民政府查户口
Personal class label	本人成份
Personnel from elsewhere	外地来济南人员
Personnel who come from outside to Jinan	外地来济人员
Play and have fun	玩儿
Police report	警告
The reactionary household registration system of the Nationalist government	国民党统治人民的反动户口制度
Population registration forms	人口登记表
Population welfare	人口福利
Provincial Grand Theatre	山东省会文化艺术中心大剧院
Qilu Software College	山东大学齐鲁软件学院高新区
Quality hukou	素质户口
Quancheng Park	泉城公园
Rectify hukou	清查整顿户口
Rectify mobile populations	清查整顿流动人口

Refinement	修养
Regionalism	地缘
Relaxed	放松了
Relocation projects	回迁 （老校区）
Remarks	备注
Resident Permit	居住证
Residents	居民 or 常住人口 or 常住居民
Returnee	回迁的
Richview Garden	三箭瑞景苑
Risky	有风险
Sanjian campus	三箭
School district	学区房
School Selection fees	攒学费
School selection fees	择校费
Second Ring West Rd. Viaduct	二环西路高架桥
Second-hand home	二手房
Self-conscious	自觉
Self-governance	管自己
Self-improvement process towards civic and moral civilization	便是公民道德文明意识的自我完善过程
Self-supplied food grain hukou	自立口粮户口
Settle hukou	落户
Shameful	没面子的
Shandong Sanjian	三箭世产
Shanghe County	商河县
Shortly married	短婚
Shun Ao	舜奥华府
Single dogs	单身狗
Small market town	集镇
Small-sized, ordinary commodity housing	中小套型普通商品住房
Social and economic development	经济和社会发展
Society persons	社会人
Special requirements	特殊要求
Sponsorship fees	赞助费
Stability	稳定性
Standard fees	收费标准
State farms	国营农场
State-owned enterprises	国有企业
Stock up	储备
Strict control	严格控制

Suzhi	素质
Talented or talent	人才
Temp	打工
Temporary	临时工
Temporary permit	暂住证
Temporary populations	暂住人口
Temporary Resident Permit	暂住证
There are many unfilial acts, but the worst is not to bear a son	不孝有三，无后为大
Three Pavilion Art Center	济南市省会文化艺术中心 “三馆”
Tianqiao District	天桥区
Unclean	不干净
Unfairness	不公平
Unhealthy children	有毛病的孩子
Unified resident hukou registration system	城乡统一的户口登记制度
University of Architecture and Engineering	山东建筑大学
Unstable	不稳定
Upgraders	改善性购房
Urban expansion fees	城市增容费
Urban Jinan hukou	济南非农业户口
Urban population	城市人口
Urban villages	城中村
Useless purchase	不值钱的
Vegetable squads	蔬菜队
Villas	别墅
Voluntary	本人自愿
Walking through the backdoor	走后门
West Side Conference and Exhibition Center	槐荫西部会展中心
Who hires manages, who shelters bears responsibility	谁用谁管理、谁住宿谁责任
Will	意愿
Will or ambition	有志
Wisdom garden	锦绣城睿园
Work unit	单位
Work unit dormitory	单位宿舍
Work unit persons	单位人
Workers and Businesspeople	务工经商
Xiaoqing River	小清河
Yanzi Mountain	燕子山小区东路单位宿舍
Zhonghua cigarettes	中华香烟

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