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REGULATING URBAN BELONGING: CHINA'S HUKOU SYSTEM AS
INTRA-NATIONAL BORDERING PROCESS

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

Leif Johnson

Director: Dr. Patricia Ehrkamp

Lexington, Kentucky

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

REGULATING URBAN BELONGING: CHINA'S HUKOU SYSTEM AS INTRA-NATIONAL BORDERING PROCESS

In China's urban metropolises, the *hukou* system of household registration regulates one of the largest movements of people in human history. While rural-urban migrations are reshaping societies worldwide, the migrants who make up a great portion of urban China's low-wage labor force and burgeoning population face unique legal and social challenges. Although the trajectories of their migration do not cross international boundaries, most are legally prevented from ever gaining the within China's *hukou* system of household registration. The functions of this system parallel those of national citizenship policies, and are difficult to explain through standard conceptions of sovereignty and national citizenship. Extending recent work in border studies that thinks of borders in dimensions that go beyond the line itself, this thesis argues that national borders and national citizenship should not be considered as the exclusive sites from which bordering processes emanate. Instead, I argue that citizenship and bordering processes can both take place apart from the norms of nation-state territory. Based on a series of qualitative interviews conducted in Shanghai and Anhui province, this article examines the structure and effects of the *hukou* system as it regulates legal inclusion and exclusion of migrant workers.

Keywords: Internal Migration, China, Hukou, Citizenship, Bordering

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NATIONAL BORDERING PROCESS

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In contemporary Shanghai, the evidence of internal migration is woven through the fabric of the city itself. Its impact on the city's role as the greatest economic and financial center in modern China is undeniable. When I asked a group of financial professionals about the role migrants have played in the city's development, the response was simple. Gesturing out the window of the 40th floor conference room toward the glittering skyline of central Shanghai, a young actuary gave a simple but powerful answer: "Without them, buildings like this could not be built." The internal migrants whose labor plays an integral part not only in construction but also in Shanghai's burgeoning service industry, however, are set apart from their counterparts elsewhere around the world. Through a legal system known as the *hukou*, internal migrants across China are explicitly excluded from full membership in the urban polity. Instead, they remain as temporary residents, a legal status that not only denies them many of the state benefits that accrue to full residents of China's largest cities, but also solidifying the social exclusion faced by migrants in a codified legal framework. Functioning as a citizenship policy that is enforced at the local level, the *hukou* system controls access to healthcare, education, some kinds of housing, and employment in state-owned enterprises.

The image of the migrant has figured heavily among the tropes of globalization. As the common narrative goes, changing economies and warming climates have increasingly become the drivers for migration patterns that bring hundreds of millions of

people worldwide into motion – some looking for a better life, others in search of adventure or a temporary boost in income, and still others driven from their homes by war or other catastrophe. On the other end of the spectrum of wealth, some people move to reunify families, manage multinational corporations, or to seek tax havens. The vast majority of migrants worldwide, however, originate in communities that are comparatively poor, rural, and otherwise peripheral – at least in relation to their destinations.

Like all presumptively global phenomena, the phenomenon of migration is cut across with contradictions and incongruences. To make sense of one aspect of human mobility inevitably requires one to ignore, downplay, or potentially even misrepresent aspects that would cause an otherwise coherent understanding to unravel. It should not come as a surprise, then, that any hard and fast typology is untenable. In fact, the broader phenomenon of migration is rarely considered as a whole, and is commonly divided into more theoretically manageable elements. While these categorizations vary widely in methodology and function, one of the most basic divisions in migration studies is theoretical boundary between internal migration – occurring within the territory of one nation-state – and international migration, which crosses international borders. This distinction carries such power that its effects have been enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that individuals have unqualified freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state (United Nations 1948).

Beyond normative frameworks, the divide between internal and international migration is readily visible in scholarship. A broad literature has emerged that deals

explicitly with questions of international migration, including questions of transnationalism, citizenship, and bordering (Johnson et al. 2011; Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). Perspectives on international migration range from theoretical to practical, critical to conservative, and often invokes debates over ethical and legal norms (Bauder 2003; Millner 2011). Internal migration, however, has attracted a very different tradition of scholarship. Much of the theoretical attention that has been directed at internal migration relates to development and economic transitions, demography, and the effects of internal migration on migrant-receiving cities (Skeldon 2014; Ackah and Medvedev 2012). While the plight of migrants is a common topic in both internal and international contexts (M. Davis 2006; De Genova and Peutz 2010), the tone of discussion is tempered by normative differences between the largely unquestionable legitimacy of internal migrants and the various shades of legal acceptance and rejection that are so central to the process of international migration. When viewing state controls over international migration through the normative framework of citizenship and sovereign control of territory, the justifications for tight controls over international migration and a comparative paucity of regulation over internal migration are easy to see (Bosniak 2008).

Despite its utility and near-universal acceptance, this divide between internal and international migration is not fundamental. The regulation of the movements of citizens within national boundaries has important theoretical repercussions, and reflects meaningfully on the narratives that nation-states employ to justify their (often harsh) policies regulating international migration. In order to bring these insights to bear on the

current tight relationship between citizenship, sovereignty, and migration control, I have chosen to analyze the case of the *hukou* household registration system that governs internal migration within China. While China does present a unique case – the *hukou* can to some extent be seen as a relic resulting from China's postsocialist history – it is also far from a fringe case, as China's current internal migration – which by some estimates represents the mobilization of over 260 million people - represents what is arguably the largest population transfer in human history. Based on the insights I have gained through five months of qualitative fieldwork in Shanghai, China, I argue in this thesis that comparative analysis of the structure and function of china's *hukou* system of household registration requires a re-theorization of one of the most fundamental analytical divisions in migration studies. Theoretically, this thesis should be read as an attempt to add complexity to current analyses of state efforts to regulate, manage, or control human mobility. Empirically, it should be viewed as a bridge, drawing the threads of preliminary connection between the experiences of migrants whose journeys have brought them into unfamiliar and often hostile territories – whether their journeys crossed international boundaries or not.

This chapter introduces the setting, subject, and methodology of this study. First, I outline the historical trajectory of the *hukou* system, which continues to be reshaped to fit the needs of the state. I move then to address the more recent history of internal migration in China, focusing especially on the rise of the so-called “floating population” – the increasingly large social class living outside of their place of *hukou* registration, and as such existing “out of place” in the eyes of the state. Following my discussion of China’s

floating population as a whole, I focus on Shanghai, the site of my empirical research, and point out its unique place in modern Chinese history, as well as the impact that successive waves of migration have had in bringing it to its current prominence as China's most economically powerful urban area. I then discuss of the methodology and scope of my five months of research in Shanghai, clarifying the goals and approach I took to research, as well as issues of site selection, recruitment of informants, and the role of research assistants in facilitating my work. Finally, I close with an outline of the purpose and goals of this thesis as a whole, as well as its place in a continuing research agenda that hopes to shed critical light on the tools states use to regulate human mobility across wildly different contexts.

Hukou and mangliu: Histories of Chinese migration and control

To effectively capture an understanding of the history and contemporary reach of the *hukou* system as a whole would vastly exceed the possible scope of this thesis. After having passed through a complex history in which its purpose and scope have changed profoundly, the current *hukou* system can perhaps be best understood as a citizenship policy contained within the broader rubric of China's national citizenship policy. While China is formally constituted as a unitary (as opposed to federal) nation-state, the *hukou* system effectively divides membership in the nation-state through the registration of individuals and households as official legal residents of villages, towns, and specific districts in urban areas. As such, the *hukou* creates another layer to the conception of what citizenship really means in China (Guo 2014). Under the current legal structure, *hukou* registration is administered in a decentralized manner, with the practical matters of

implementation left to local governments under the guidance of the central government (Zhao and Zhang 1999). While this decentralization does not mean that the *hukou* exists outside the realm of party-state government, it has led to a proliferation of *hukou* implementations by local governments at the urban, village, and town level (Chan and Buckingham 2008).

While China's national government is concerned by the plight of millions of rural workers without permanent status in urban areas, and has begun to promote policies that will facilitate easier *hukou* transfer between rural areas and from rural areas to small and medium-sized cities, the decentralization of *hukou* administration has in fact led large, first-tier cities to implement even more restrictive policies under which permanent *hukou* transfer is even more difficult than before. In effect, the decentralization of *hukou* policy has led to a gradation of accessibility in which large, wealthy urban areas are almost completely closed to official *hukou* transfer (while simultaneously issuing millions of temporary residence permits) and smaller villages and towns (which often have relatively little to offer in terms of government services or economic prospects) are completely open to new residents. This creates a de-facto system of political closure and urban citizenship, in which nearly half of the residents of China's largest and most prosperous cities are unable to access state resources and are permanently and legally excluded from political membership, as well as much of social life.

The *hukou* system has not always functioned in this way. In this section, I provide a brief outline of the history of the *hukou* system, which I hope will aid in understanding the structure of the current system. The *hukou*, as well as the mass migration that it

attempts to regulate, have their roots in the development of early socialist policy, enacted in the years immediately following the 1949 communist revolution. While the system's conceptual underpinnings may be linked historically to the *baojia* system for registering households in premodern China, the history of which stretches back as far back as 685 BC (Zhu 2003; Fan 2008), the *hukou* system was first and foremost developed as a central tool for social control in the early Communist period. In many ways, the *hukou* system is directly connected to the Soviet *propiska*, or internal passport system. The *propiska* regulated internal migration in the Soviet Union primarily through access to housing, combining the functions of an ID card with something that was very much like an “internal visa” (Pipko and Pucciarelli 1985, 916). Justified as providing a functional, modern, and manageable alternative to the chaos of capitalist migration, the *propiska* system was intended to provide an efficient distribution of labor, and was defended as a necessary aspect of the Soviet system until well into the 1980s (Buckley 1995). However, the rise in the *hukou* system's importance did not occur through the wholesale adoption of the Soviet system, but rather through the specific history of economic and political challenges to the People's Republic after its formation.

The earliest communist policies in fact enshrined a right to free internal migration and freedom of residence in both the 1949 Common Program and 1954 constitution. Rather than representing an anomaly, this policy was in fact a continuation of the de-facto lack of regulation over movement under past administrations, from the Qing dynasty to the Guomindang republic to Japanese rule. At the same time, however, the new government began the resettlement of tens of thousands of unemployed residents of

Beijing, Shanghai, and other large cities. Shanghai in particular was targeted, as only about half of its six million residents were estimated to be contributing to what the state considered (according to a rather narrow definition) productive labor. As a result, thousands of people were encouraged to relocate inland, although these relocations were for the most part voluntary (Cheng and Selden 1994).

In its first instance, implemented through a set of “Regulations Governing Urban Population (Ibid 1994, 649)” the *hukou* system served only as a registration system – a function that it still fulfills, but which it has long since surpassed. Like similar systems in other contexts, the *hukou* required the registration of residences according to set categories, but did not offer any real restrictions on the freedom of residence or movement. By 1952, however, the state turned to the system not only as a tool for registration, but also as a means to check increasing peasant migration into urban areas. This migration was referred to in official policy and common parlance alike as *mangliu*, or “blind flow.” In this understanding, officials worried that poorly-informed peasants would flood urban areas without any definite prospects, overwhelming fledgling socialist systems and draining the countryside of productive labor necessary for the continued maintenance of the urban laboring population (Fan 2008, 43-44). *Mangliu* is also significant as a reverse homophone for *liumang*, or hooligan (Cheng and Selden 1994, 654). Through their identification with *mangliu*, migrants were painted not only as moving irrationally, but also as potentially disruptive. Despite official preoccupations, migration continued apace, without substantial limitations on rural to urban mobility. This migration accounted for an increase in China’s urban population by nearly 20 million

between 1949 and 1956, with most migrants attracted by urban employment, which was preferable over farm labor in terms of security, prestige, and benefits.

Throughout the 1950s, there was a progressive tightening of the *hukou* system, transforming it from a simple registration system into the primary means of control under a command economy. Housing, food, and even temporary lodging in hotels and guesthouses were all controlled according to the various gradations in *hukou* status (Cheng and Selden 1994). A simplified version of the system implemented in 1956 succeeded in virtually eliminating migration to urban areas. Distribution of food was dependent on *hukou* status, such that urban residents and state employees were eligible for grain rations, while all persons falling under the “rural” classification (*nongye hu*) were rendered ineligible, under the assumption that rural farm families produced grain primarily for subsistence, and had no need for food distributed by the state. With foodstuffs largely unavailable in urban areas outside of state-provided rations, it became difficult or nearly impossible for migrants to survive in urban areas without the blessing of the state, granted when state enterprises needed access to rural labor. Even in these cases, recruited labor migrants were discouraged from bringing their dependents (as so-called nonproductive surplus population) to the cities with them (Cheng and Selden 1994).

A redesigned *hukou* system was implemented in 1958, with new provisions for official labor recruitment, migration permits, and processes for changing one’s *hukou* status. Under the system as reformed in 1958, *hukou* statuses are divided not only according to the sole registered place of residence of each individual, but also between

agricultural (*nongye*) and non-agricultural (*fei nongye*) hukou statuses (Chan and Zhang 1999; Fan 2008). At the same time, the bureaucratic chaos of the Great Leap Forward and devolution of formerly centralized state authority to local governments made any attempts to implement the new regulations nearly impossible. Apart from bureaucratic difficulties themselves, the unprecedented industrialization of the Great Leap Forward brought with it unprecedented migration to urban areas, driven by the combination of labor recruitment for urban industry and rural famine. After the re-imposition of the system in 1960, it has retained much of the structure that was laid out in 1958 (Chan and Zhang 1999).

China's contemporary floating population

Although its early history was complex, the function of the *hukou* system has remained relatively stable since it was restructured in 1958, and – unlike its Soviet counterpart, which had a relatively small effect on migration in a structural sense (Buckley 1995) – was largely successful in limiting the size of China's internal migrant population, at least until marketization reforms made it possible for agricultural hukou holders to obtain food in China's cities. These reforms, beginning in the late 1970s, permitted the purchase of food in urban areas on the open market, and also made it possible for rural migrants to find employment outside of state-owned firms, where local *hukou* status is a precondition for hiring.

Perhaps the most emblematic term associated with the vast population transfer that began with China's marketization reforms is the idea of the "floating population" or

liudong renkou, which became the primary identifier for migrants in the 1980s (Chan and Zhang 1999). While the earlier concept of *mangliu* emphasized the supposed irrational, blind nature of migration to the cities, the increased use of the term *liudong renkou* in the 1980s is based on different priorities. In fact, categorization itself depends on the *hukou* system for meaning. In the eyes of the state, individuals' place belonging is reflected solely through their place of *hukou* registration – as a result, any movement without a corresponding change in registration is anomalous and undirected. The floating population, then, is made up of individuals who have come unmoored from firm – that is, legal – ties to their official place of residence.

Since the late 1970s, internal migration and the floating population have been key areas of concern for the Chinese state. The sheer scale of the phenomenon is an important reason in itself. From 1982, when census data estimated that approximately 11.2 million people were permanently living outside their place of registration, the size of the floating population has skyrocketed (H. X. Wu 1994). Because of the transient and often-irregular character of internal migration in China, the size of the floating population is notoriously difficult to estimate with any degree of certainty. By the mid-1990s, official government estimates placed the size of the floating population at around 80 million. 44 million migrants had registered for temporary residence certificates – a system that had only been implemented in 1985. According to survey data, however, nearly 80% of migrants had failed to register for temporary residence certificates (Chan and Zhang 1999). Given the large number of migrants, the legal circumvention necessary to migrate, and the pressure placed on census takers and local administrators to report favorable population figures, it

is easy to see the difficulties inherent in estimating the size of the migrant population across China.

These circumstances have scarcely improved, as Cindy Fan notes in her in-depth analysis of more recent migration statistics and governmental estimates (Fan 2008). After sorting through ambiguous data and discarding obviously specious population claims, Fan arrives at an estimate for the size of the floating population in 2000 at nearly 200 million people. However, this estimate of the floating population references all individuals who have stayed outside their place of registration for more than six months, regardless of rationale or reason. Considering a smaller subset of the population, the 2013 National Peasant Worker Monitoring Survey reports that as of 2013, of the 268 million *nongmingong*, or peasant workers (that is, individuals with agricultural *hukou* status engaged in non-agricultural wage labor), 166 million were counted as *waichu nongmingong* – peasants who had gone out to work (China Statistical Bureau 2014). This distinction is important – popular media and scholarship alike has seized on the “floating population” label to signify the migration of poor rural workers to urban areas, but many statistical analyses extend far beyond counts of labor migrants, statistically capturing a variety of other populations. While the bulk of medium and long-term internal movement in China does consist of labor migration, and is primarily represented by rural workers who “go out” to work in urban centers, statistical counts of the “floating population” based on raw *hukou* data also includes students who move to enroll in university, spouses who move for marriage purposes but are unable to obtain a local *hukou*, and others. Even when considering only labor migrants, however, the scale of China’s current internal

migration is incomparable, existing on the same order of magnitude as worldwide international migration. For reference, UN estimates of the global population of migrants living outside their country of citizenship (which, naturally, are also subject to a wide margin of error) put that number at 178 million in 2000, and 214 million in 2010 (Henning and Hovy 2011).

Shanghai: History of a migrant metropolis

The size and widely varied nature of China's floating population makes any kind of coherent unifying analysis difficult. Scholarly attempts to understand the phenomenon as a whole generally lean heavily on statistics (e.g. Fan 2008) or analyses of specific legal particularities (e.g. Chan and Zhang 1999; Zhang and Tao 2012), while popular accounts follow along with the trials and joys of individual migrant lives in order to write vignettes condensing the sweeping changes brought by migration and rapid urbanization into archetypes representing the phenomenon as a whole (e.g. Chang 2008; Loyalka 2012). Other work simply does not attempt to understand or theorize the experiences of the floating population as a coherent whole. Anthropologists in particular have brought ethnographic methodologies to bear on the local specificities of migrant experiences, offering theoretically complex accounts of small slices of migrant experience (P. Ngai 2005; Zhang 2001).

The experiences of factory workers in the factory cities of the Pearl River Delta – Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Dongguan – are perhaps the most commonly invoked example of Chinese internal migration in popular media. Besides Leslie Chang's *Factory Girls* (2008), which may be one of the most popular books on the floating population, the 2012

storm of media attention following investigations into suicides by workers in electronics factories that manufacture Apple products brought unprecedented Western attention to the stories of migrant workers in China, from CNN specials (Weir 2012) to Wall Street Journal reports (Mozur 2015). This focus makes sense, as Guangdong province is the single largest destination for internal migrants within China (Fan 2008). Shenzhen, the largest manufacturing hub in southern China, had locally registered population of about 1 million people in 2005, but a total resident population of about 8 million, putting the migrant share of the population over 85% (Chan 2010; Chan 2009). For visibility in the West, of course, it doesn't hurt that the region centralizes production of vast quantities of goods for popular consumption in Western markets.

Shanghai, however, is not seen as a production hub or migrant city, but as China's financial center. The Pudong New District development project, and particularly the Lujiazui financial district that began construction in the 1990s, is immediately recognizable from a Western vantage point as an iconic symbol of futuristic Asian development.¹ While Shenzhen rose to prominence after the establishment of the special economic zone there in 1980, Shanghai has also been a migrant city. After the end of the Opium War in 1842, Shanghai was forcibly opened to Western trade as a treaty port, and quickly became a trade, manufacturing, and financial center. Fifty years later, its population had surpassed one million, and between 1900 and 1950 the population had

1 The 2013 Oscar-winning science fiction film *Her*, a portrayal of love in the time of artificial intelligence, was filmed in Shanghai. The atmosphere of the film's portrayal of a bright, clean, technology driven and yet profoundly melancholic future was largely established through aerial establishing shots looking down canyonlike avenues between skyscrapers in Lujiazui.

grown by an additional three million. Much of this growth was due to migration: A survey conducted in 1946 showed that four-fifths of the city's population originated elsewhere in China (Feng, Zuo, and Ruan 2002). At the time of the 1949 revolution, Shanghai was China's most prominent industrial city, and continued to draw significant in-migration in the years following 1949. Some of the earliest developments in the *hukou* system were targeted directly at Shanghai, which had experienced high rates of in-migration throughout the early 1950s. In 1951 alone, when the city's total population was still below five million, in-migration estimates reached 930,000 – a population growth of nearly 20%. Many of these early migrants were later expelled to the countryside as the state attempted to enact controls over migration and solidify Shanghai's position as an economic center under the firm control of the state – reported outmigration rates in 1978 reached 461,000, much of which was encouraged by the state, if not facilitated through outright coercion (Gui and Liu 1992; Cheng and Selden 1994).

Through the 1960s and most of the 1970s, internal migration to Shanghai was significantly reduced, primarily through the combination of the *hukou* system with the restriction of food rations. Between 1960 and 1977, in-migration to the city hovered below 100,000 annually, while out-migration (much of it coerced either through the *hukou* system or through the “sending down” process of the cultural revolution) fluctuated, but remained largely above 100,000 annually. This negative net population transfer actually resulted in Shanghai's 1977 population being lower – at 5.4 million – than it had been prior to the crackdown on migration twenty years earlier, when it had surpassed 6 million (Gui and Liu 1992). At the time, migrants made up less than 5% of

Shanghai's resident population. By 1993, however, the migrant population had expanded significantly as a result of increased migration rates through the 1980s, and internal migrants made up over 20% of the population, or nearly 3 million people. Most recently, the 2010 census reports that Shanghai's population had reached 23 million by the end of the year, and that the resident floating population present in the city for more than six months had reached 8.97 million, or 38 percent of the total resident population. In addition to the almost nine million long-term resident migrants living in Shanghai, the census tabulated an additional 2.24 million "short term" members of the floating population, who had been in the city for less than six months (Shanghai Statistical Bureau 2011).

Researching the *hukou* system in Shanghai

The initial idea for this thesis originated during my final year as an undergraduate student, when I carried out a small research project on Chinese internal migration as part of an advanced Chinese language course. At the time, my research was focused squarely on political conflicts over migration and border control along the U.S. – Mexico border, and I was struck by the similarities between the circumstances of Chinese migrants and undocumented migrants in the United States. As I saw it, both cases were extreme – if very different – examples of what happens when human mobility runs up against legal barriers intended to manage and regulate populations. After completing my project on the US-Mexico border, I began to question the broader frameworks that allow these legal barriers to function. Much of the literature on citizenship and bordering that I had read based the legal viability of such processes on the sovereign right of the nation-state to

regulate its borders and to exclude foreigners. In China, however, such a system exists within the boundaries of a single state, separated from any potential justification by the supposed right of nations to exclude foreigners. The situation in China, it seemed to me, was yet another example of how state power can be leveraged against migrants as part of a system of exclusion and dominance that solidifies gaps in wealth and status through official legal categorizations. If, as some scholars have argued, the system of international borders itself represents a system of “global apartheid,” (Nevins 2010; Sharma 2005) what are the implications of a system that performs similar work within one nation’s borders?

I chose Shanghai as the site of my research for two reasons. Li Zhang, the professor at Fudan University who I first made contact with as I was applying for the National Science Foundation EAPSI fellowship that funded my research encouraged me to come to Shanghai, and was exceptionally supportive of my work while I was there. The help I received from Professor Zhang and his students Tao Li, Yuan Jing, and Miao Jiaju was invaluable, and I doubt that this project would have reached this state without their assistance. In addition to the connections I was able to make, Shanghai is a theoretically and empirically ideal location for my fieldwork. As outlined above, while Shanghai may be outshone by the Pearl River Delta as a statistical and narrative archetype for Chinese internal migration under the *hukou* system, the city has a long history as a hub for migration, and in fact most of its residents have family histories in the city that date back one generation or less. As China’s most “developed” city, Shanghai also highlights the social gulf that separates migrant workers from relatively privileged

locals. Finally, Shanghai has an outsize impact on urban policy throughout China, and has come to the forefront as an innovator in reconfiguring local implementations of *hukou* reform and migration management (Zhang and Tao 2012).

Intended to provide a grounded framework for deeper understanding of the *hukou* system and to draw out useful information about how migrant and non-migrant residents of Shanghai understand both migration and the *hukou* system itself, the questions I posed to frame my research were as follows:

1. **How is the *hukou* system in china operationalized in Shanghai? What mechanisms (judicial, disciplinary, economic, structural, affective) create and enforce difference for rural migrants to the city?**

1a. How do migrants experience *hukou* status in their everyday lives?

1b. What are the paths through which *hukou* is implemented? What official or unofficial personnel, if any, are tasked with implementing and maintaining the system at “street level”?

While the *hukou* system itself exists as a series of legal inscriptions and policy decisions, it is also lived out in real life, in the everyday lived experiences of migrants and in the opportunities or lack thereof that they encounter as migrant subjects in Shanghai. By examining how legal norms are operationalized in practice, it is possible to gain an understanding of the *hukou* system that goes beyond a close reading of *hukou* policy documents.

2. How is the *hukou* system rendered justifiable? Do justifications of the system refer to productive work done by internal bordering?

2a. How do migrants in Shanghai and Shanghai *hukou* holders view the effects of migration on the city?

2b. How do *hukou* implementers understand their roles in the internal migration system?

2c. How are migrants understood as “other” through media and legal discourse surrounding the *hukou* system?

The migration management policies enacted on and across international borders are largely naturalized through notions of citizenship and sovereignty. Within China, however, such narratives have no purchase, as migrants do not cross recognized international borders. How, then, do the subjects of China’s migration management regime understand its (il)legitimacy? Taking a slightly different tack, scholarly work on bordering processes has asked the question of who benefits and how from the imposition of borders (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Harrison and Lloyd 2012). Given that much of China’s export production and rapid urbanization rests on the labor of migrant workers, I was curious to see how migrants and locals alike viewed migrant contributions to the city. While research question 2b reflects my initial hope to conduct interviews with officials inside and outside the state who have a direct or indirect role in the implementation of the *hukou* system, I was largely unable to secure this level of access. In particular, recorded interviews with state officials were impossible to obtain as a foreign researcher without

any official connection to a university work unit, and the outstanding assistance I received from graduate students at Fudan university simply did not carry enough weight.

In order to answer the questions outlined above, I conducted a series of 12 interviews and one formal and one informal focus group over the course of five months spent in China, altogether speaking on the record with 26 individuals. Basic information about these interviews is collected in Table 1. The majority (10) of my interviews were conducted in Shanghai, while six were conducted during a trip to Anhui province, in a rural community that is home to many migrants who have worked in Shanghai and elsewhere. In selecting interview subjects, my intention was to capture a broad slice of opinion and experience. As such, my interview subjects span a broad variety of occupations, roles, and backgrounds, from a long-term migrant who first came to Shanghai when grain markets opened in the late 1970s, to a retired administrator with decades of experience in Shanghai's population statistics bureau, to a group of young Shanghainese financial professionals, to the migrant owners of street restaurants. While the specific questions I used to structure my open-ended interviews varied between interviewees, most interviews followed a similar structure, beginning with questions about the interviewee's employment, history of migration or family history in Shanghai. These questions then built into queries about perceptions of the *hukou* system, migrants and migration itself, and (for migrants) experiences of discrimination.

In addition to the interviews I conducted, my understanding of the *hukou* system and the function of migration management in China is also supported by my experience as an observer living in Shanghai over the course of five months. While the *hukou* system

itself is not necessarily a common conversation topic for most of the people I ran across in my day-to-day life, migration is a very visible phenomenon in Shanghai's public and economic life. In contrast to many of the stories of migrants in Pearl River Delta factory cities, where many migrants' lives revolve around life in employer-run dormitories (P. Ngai 2005; Chang 2008), many Shanghai migrants work in the service industry. Anecdotally, in the five months I spent in Shanghai, most of the low-wage service industry workers I interacted with were migrants. As a white foreigner, many of the people I interacted with often asked me what I was doing in Shanghai. The vast majority of the individuals I spoke with regularly – shopkeepers, restaurant workers, and other service industry employees – were migrants, and when I replied that I was a graduate student studying migration, the conversation would often turn to that person's hometown, or their own migrant experience. While these interactions were often fleeting and difficult to quantify, they gave me an additional window into the texture of everyday migrant life in Shanghai.

Table 1: Interviews and Focus Groups

Pseudonym	Location	Information
Xiaohua	Shanghai (Yangpu District)	Middle-aged Anhui migrant woman employed as a maid/janitor. About 5 years in Shanghai.
Lao Jin	Shanghai (Yangpu District)	Elderly Anhui man employed as a water deliveryman. Over 20 years in Shanghai.
Ren Zhusun, Wang Xiaoyan	Shanghai (Yangpu District)	Elderly Sichuan couple operating an informal rice/noodle stand. Over 10 years living in Shanghai.
Zhang Menggan	Shanghai (Yangpu District)	Middle-aged Sichuan restaurant owner (formal economy). 7 years living in Shanghai.
Tan Baibao	Shanghai (Pudong New District)	Middle-aged Shandong housewife. Moved to Shanghai for husband's middle-class job prospects 12 years ago.
Ping Chenguang, Zhu Baiyue	Shanghai (Yangpu District)	Middle-aged Shanghai women – both are retired members of the Shanghai population statistics department.
Guo Tai	Shanghai (Yangpu District)	Young male Shanghainese Demographic Studies professor at Fudan University
Wu Li Li	Anhui Province (Taoyangcun)	Young migrant woman, currently working as a nanny in Shanghai.
Zhang Bangrong	Anhui Province (Taoyangcun)	Middle-aged Anhui man, working as a shopkeeper. Several family members currently performing migrant labor..
Feng Longshi	Anhui Province (Taoyangcun)	Middle-aged Anhui migrant, working in Shandong province as a truck driver for about 8 years.
Liu Nukuang	Anhui Province (Taoyangcun)	Young Anhui shopkeeper. Her husband has worked as an itinerant construction worker for 3 years.
Yuan Zhinu	Anhui Province (Wuhu city)	Elderly middle-class Anhui woman. Several family members work and attend school in Shanghai.
Focus Group 1	Shanghai (Huangpu District)	Six young Shanghai natives working as actuaries in a foreign-owned finance corporation. All had attended universities in either the U.S. or U.K.
Focus Group 2	Anhui (Taoyangcun)	Informal focus group conversation with six Anhui natives of varying ages on the main commercial street of Taoyangcun village. All had either performed migrant labor themselves or had close friends and family who had.

Thesis outline

Through the research design outlined above, my intent was to provide a theoretical and empirical bridge between studies of internal migration and international migration. Such work would not only question some of the underpinnings of citizenship theories, but would also allow scholars to draw a greater diversity of useful connections between the experiences of social and legal exclusion faced by labor migrants who cross boundaries that exist at scales other than the traditional nation-state border. This work is not only a continuation of current trends in border studies, which have begun to move outward away from the border itself to consider the fields and processes that regulate migration far from lines themselves (Johnson et al. 2011), but also an empirical response to the numerous scholars writing on dilemmas of citizenship and bordering who have made gestures toward similarities between the experiences of Chinese migrants and their own research agendas, but have not yet fully drawn the connections between Chinese migration, the *hukou* system, and current developments in border studies (McNevin 2013; Ong 2006; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008).

In the following chapters, I will trace a framework for understanding the connections and discontinuities between international systems of migration management. In Chapter 2, I review existing literature on both borders and citizenship, outlining the theoretical reasoning that justifies an understanding of China's *hukou* system as a bordering process understood alongside other similar processes in the international context. I also point out the inroads that have been made by existing literature, particularly scholarship on the *hukou* system that positions it as an urban citizenship

policy and work in border studies that has mentioned (albeit briefly) the possibility of drawing a comparison between internal migrants in China and international migrants elsewhere. In drawing conclusions from this literature, I also address a primary question that faces this scholarly project: How are we to understand the bordering of Chinese cities without a clearly visible physical border?

In Chapter 3, I consider the legal bordering facilitated by the *hukou* system in detail, drawing specific comparisons between the structures that divide China's urban and rural, areas and the ways that the boundaries of citizenship are drawn in the international context. Rather than attempting to address all of the myriad specificities of the *hukou* system and of international border policy, I draw out specific legal aspects of the *hukou* that have particularly strong impacts on migrants in China: The provision of medical care to migrants, the education of migrant children, and the erection of a “points system” that determines eligibility for *hukou* transfer. When seen alongside similar policies and struggles over migration in other contexts, it is apparent that the frameworks underpinning legal restrictions on internal migration within China are shared by many citizenship policies as they regulate international migration.

In Chapter 4, I return to the question asked in concluding Chapter 2: Where does the border that divides urban and rural China lie? While it is possible to point to the shifting judicial boundaries of urban areas that determine rural and urban jurisdictions, this legalistic approach fails to effectively explain the depth to which the *hukou* system is ingrained in identity formation and understandings of urban (or rural) belonging. In order

to locate the border, I inquire as to the grounds on which the *hukou* system is culturally legitimized. In particular, I point to discourses surrounding migrants' *suzhi* or “quality”, as well as the prevalence of local belonging as a primary site of identification.

Considering these factors in the context of international bordering, I ask what might be gained by understanding how borders can become embedded in the mobile bodies of migrants themselves.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I bring together the understanding of China's internal bordering system that I have developed throughout my thesis, pointing out how this analysis serves to both denaturalize and ultimately better explain the structures that govern migration in the international context. While deep attachments between citizenship, belonging, and the territory of the sovereign state make it easy to see states as the natural unit of analysis for questions of migration or bordering, the understanding of China's *hukou* system questions the primacy that nation-state borders have held in the analysis of border-making and the constraints faced by migrants.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

On its surface, the question of where to apply the concept of citizenship is easy to answer. The figure of the nation-state looms large in common understandings of the concept: To consider oneself a citizen is to consider oneself attached to one – or, in some cases, more than one – particular nation-state. While it might not be strange to consider oneself as “belonging” to a city, town, village, state, province, or subnational region (see Zimmerbauer, Suutari, and Saartenoja 2012; Freeman 2003), the legal rights attached to citizenship most often manifest through the nation-state, rather than the city itself (Secor 2003, 149). On the other side of the coin, the existence of or potential for supranational citizenship schemes or the potential territorial inclusion of migrants fan nationalist fears of cultural erasure, at least in the U.S. context (Spark 2000; Williams and Boyce 2013). In this sense, citizenship makes the imagined community of the nation-state real in legal terms. These terms, however, are historically contingent and malleable. In the end, the question of the institutions to which citizenship is affixed may be difficult to fully answer through simple, homogenizing narratives of the nation and national citizen.

One example, drawn from the history of South Africa under apartheid, is particularly instructive when it comes to the ways that common understandings of national sovereignty (and, consequentially, citizenship as national belonging) “localize and depoliticize” our perceptions of poverty (Ferguson 2006, 51). Ferguson juxtaposes the history of an attempt by South African politicians to establish what he calls “pseudo-states” in the Bantustans – so-called “ethnic homelands” that were reserved for “native” Black South Africans, with the experience of residents of Lesotho, a state completely

enclosed within the territory of South Africa, but nonetheless recognized internationally as a sovereign and independent state. The “Republic of Transkei,” which was to be the first independent Bantustan, was given the trappings of official statehood (flags, borders, a national seal) but was nonetheless never accepted as legitimate by any nation outside of South Africa. This lack of recognition was in part due to fierce “anti-independence” resistance movements that pointed out the political maneuver inherent in apartheid South Africa's push to excise Black “homelands” from its national territory. As the Black People's Convention declared in 1975,

“The Independence of Transkei is a cunning manoeuvre by the racist regime of Vorster to give National and International credibility to the abhorrent policy of apartheid [...] The so-called independence is nothing but another manoeuvre to “legalize” the alienation of the people of Transkei from the rest of Azania [...] so as to give the denial of their rights in Azania a legal and constitutional backing (Quoted in Ferguson 2006, 59).

It is clear that the scale at which struggles around belonging – around citizenship – play out makes a difference. “Independence” for black residents of the proposed Bantustans certainly would have come at a price. The discrimination practiced through racist apartheid legislation appears abhorrent in part because it is carried out within one nation – enacted on a group that is at least nominally recognized as citizens of the same state. As the declaration of the Black People's Convention makes clear, as soon as that citizenship status is altered or lost, it becomes possible to naturalize discrimination – to give national and international credibility to the abhorrent policy of apartheid.

This chapter, which ties theoretical literature on China's internal migration policy to developments in international migration scholarship, is written as part of a broader push by scholars to de-naturalize the idea that, as non-citizens, migrants may be legally

discriminated against. While there is a substantial tradition of highly critical scholarship on international bordering processes, much of this work takes the spatialities of citizenship and bordering enacted by the nation-state at face value. In turning to China's internal migration governance regime, I hope to suggest that despite narratives of sovereign control that obfuscate the exercise of discriminatory state violence in policing the boundaries of citizenship and territory, the common thread running through processes of spatial boundary-making is naked state violence. As Ferguson argues based on the attempt to mint the “Republic of Transkei” as an “independent” nation-state, apartheid – or the violent erection of divisions within a citizenry itself – is not as far removed from discrimination against noncitizens as it appears at first glance.

My argument for a theoretical approach to border and migration studies that includes Chinese internal migration and the *hukou* system forms part of a line of thought that emerged first in the late 1990s, as part of the rapid profusion of scholarly literature focusing on Chinese internal migration at the time. In particular, influential work by Kenneth Roberts (1997) and Dorothy Solinger (1999a; 1999b) directly compared the limitation of migrant rights through the *hukou* system to international migration control regimes. However, as I will demonstrate, this level of empirical and theoretical attention has not been sustained, and despite the existence some more recent work that recognizes the function of the *hukou* system as a bordering process, recent engagements between the two fields have not fully brought together the various developments in border and migration studies over the past decade and the empirical changes in the *hukou* system and the ongoing influx of rural migrants into China's urban centers.

This section first outlines recent developments in border and citizenship literatures that I see as facilitating a renewed interest in the discussion of Chinese internal migration, before addressing the work that has already begun to cross over the two subjects. Because current scholarship has largely approached this question along disciplinary lines, the remainder of the section is organized according to past scholarly approaches to the discussion of citizenship issues in Chinese migration. Following up on my discussion of recent developments in border scholarship, I outline the ways in which China scholars understand the relationship between internal migration policies and international citizenship norms. As I will show, much of this literature takes the metaphor of internal citizenship as a given, and considers theories of citizenship norms as an implicit prerequisites to any understanding of the structure and function of China's *hukou* system. Finally, I discuss how Chinese migration management schemes have been represented in scholarship that explicitly ties the *hukou* system broader conceptions of (international) bordering and citizenship, arguing that current engagements by border scholars present an incomplete understanding of how China's migration management processes mirror international citizenship policies – a gap in scholarly literature on the subject that can be rectified through the application of new theoretical concepts from border and migration studies to empirical evidence from the Chinese case.

Citizenship and legalized community belonging

The interest to be found in China's *hukou* system lies primarily in its function as system that replicates legal structures of national citizenship at the urban scale. To place the *hukou* system in this context, then, it is necessary to first discuss the concept of citizenship itself. In the broadest sense, I understand citizenship as referring to various forms of territorialized belonging and attachment in which norms of acceptance and belonging are entangled with legal structures. As Linda Bosniak has argued, while the meanings the concept of citizenship can take on are diverse, in most cases it is understood as an unalloyed positive force (Bosniak 2008, 17). In this framework, citizenship is tied to belonging, togetherness, attachment – a confirmation of membership in a community.

As opposed to this “inward looking” analysis of citizenship, my approach here understands citizenship from the other perspective Bosniak suggests, viewing the concept from the outside and taking particular note of the boundaries it draws. In the act of constituting a community, citizenship also marks its edges. This not only freights membership with obligations to the community as a whole, but also creates the category of the non-citizen, who is by nature excluded from the rights and obligations of citizenship (Isin 2002). Standing opposite the citizen is the foreigner, the alien, the other, and the criminal. In China, where national citizenship is complemented by structures of belonging at the local level, this distinction is mirrored in the opposition between native *bendi ren* and migrant *waidi ren* – categories that mark natives and outsiders both socially and legally through the connection between the *hukou* system and the receipt of state-funded benefits. Citizenship brings with it the ability to base a claim on one's

official belonging, to argue that as a citizen, the state has certain responsibilities to individual or collective desires. Thus, with no inherent obligation to the nation-state in question, non-citizens are also bereft of rights in many senses – they lack the basis upon which to base rights claims within a polity that is not their own.

Beyond its function as a specific determinant of rights and obligations, however, citizenship is also a field of contestation. This includes both contestation at the edges of belonging as well as contestation over rights and norms that takes place through citizenship itself. For Peter Nyers, “historically, citizenship has been the identity through which claims to political being are enacted” (Nyers 2010, 129). Thus, citizenship is both a signal of belonging and a means of making political claims. For many migrants who arrive without legal status, much less formal citizenship, informal standards of belonging are the terrain on which rights claims must first be brought. For example, as Sébastien Chauvin and Blanca Garcés Mascareñas have argued, many of the actions of noncitizen migrants constitute acts of “probationary citizenship” - actions along a spectrum of legal and semi-legal belonging that bring some level of protection with which migrants can make claims on their not-quite-adopted states (Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2012). As Anne McNevin (2013) argues, this ability to contest belonging has emerged because non-citizens have constructed openings within which they can be understood as political subjects deserving of rights and protection, putting pressure on legalistic understandings of citizenship that position it as tied solely to legal belonging at the national scale.

While I acknowledge the role that migrants have played in contesting national citizenship norms from multiple angles and at multiple scales, however, I have chosen to

speak primarily to citizenship as a legal construct in this thesis. I have made this theoretical move for two reasons. First, from a simply pragmatic perspective, the complications of citizenship that scholars have put forth are largely tangential to my core argument that China's *hukou* system functions similarly to systems of national citizenship. China's urban citizenship policies have certainly faced contestation, but any effective comparative analysis of how identities and legal belongings are contested in China and internationally depends on a basic understanding of how the two systems are related to each other. Second, while theoretical reframings of citizenship do demonstrate that the concept can be understood from a wide variety of perspectives, these theoretical rearticulations have not ultimately destabilized the fundamental link between citizenship and the nation-state (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008). Thus, I see citizenship as a policy that legalizes belonging and determines individual membership in a given polity. Citizenship is most commonly understood as being implemented at the national level, and almost everyone is understood as a citizen belonging to a country, to the extent where the right to a nationality (and in most cases, an associated citizenship) is part of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Citizenship is most often acquired at birth, based on principles of *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli*, which grant citizenship at birth according to (blood) heritage or physical presence in sovereign territory, respectively. This status has a significant impact on individuals' life chances from birth onwards (Shachar 2003). Because citizenship is fixed at birth and is very difficult to change, it represents a significant barrier to individuals' ability to surmount the vast gulfs of inequality that divide nations and their citizens.

As a system that explicitly legislates the norms determining individuals' belonging in a given urban community, the *hukou* system deviates from assumptions about belonging at the subnational level in liberal democracies, where enforceable norms of legal belonging typically function at the scale of the nation-state. As such, policies that limit or expand legal belonging at the subnational level in this context generally retain this focus on explicitly *national* citizenship. For example, Arizona's recent expansion of state-level controls on undocumented migrants would have no impact on a “migrant” moving to the state from Texas (Campbell 2011). On the other side of the coin, there exist a variety of policies providing formal and informal avenues by which undocumented (international) migrants may gain some level of belonging in their adopted communities. However, these examples naturally continue to circle around national borders. Monica Varsanyi, for example, discusses the provision of identity documents (*matrículas consulares*) to migrant citizens issued by Mexican consulates to undocumented Mexican migrants in the United States. These documents have become recognized by several state and local jurisdictions as valid identifying documents, a development which Varsanyi identifies as a “partial rescaling of membership policy” (2007, 299) that nonetheless strengthens the ability of the nation-state to manage the neoliberal contradiction of national borders that are open to all commodities but labor. This re-scaling of citizenship policy, however, remains centered in and bounded by the scale of the nation-state: The recipients of *matrículas consulares* are identified most strongly in citizenship and immigration discourse, (as well as Varsanyi's paper) not by their specific places of origin, but as generically “Mexican” citizens. This “localization” of citizenship policy occurs

only once the geographic boundaries of the nation-state have been crossed.

To consider another example, Harald Bauder discusses sanctuary cities – cities in the United States and Canada that have either publicly or in a de facto sense refused to cooperate with some tenets of national citizenship and immigration policy – as enacting a type of urban citizenship based on *jus domicili*, or domicile citizenship, as opposed to the traditional citizenship norms of *jus sanguinis* or *jus soli* referenced above. In the cases Bauder discusses, cities have taken steps to creating their own policies of legal belonging that base the rights, obligations, and benefits of citizenship not on blood or birthplace, but on an individual's current status of “effective residence” in the community (Bauder 2013, 2). Because the concept of domicile may potentially be understood as subverting national citizenship policies (and, thus, applying to citizens of the United States or Canada as well as to migrants arriving from elsewhere) it does significant work toward the de-centering of the nation-state as the primary basis for border control and legal, political belonging. Along similar lines, Ranier Bauböck has argued for a return to urban citizenship “emancipated from imperatives of national sovereignty and homogeneity may become a homebase for cosmopolitan democracy (2003, 157).” In these formulations, however, the link between domicile citizenship and urban citizenship is drawn in such a way as to suggest that urban citizenship may be an emancipatory alternative to current national citizenship policies. While developments in sanctuary cities are no doubt promising, the comparison I draw in this thesis demonstrates that urban citizenship policies are by no means a simple, unalloyed positive. The structure and function of the *hukou* system demonstrates that the subnational scale of these policies is not directly linked to their

liberatory nature. The re-scaling of national citizenship policies with limited alteration of their current normative structure does not significantly alter their function. Indeed, *hukou* reform based on domicile citizenship is a project that is similarly compelling when compared to issues in international bordering.

Developments in border theory beyond the line

As discussed above, citizenship provides the legal framework for a divide between insiders and outsiders. This bordering function of citizenship is operationalized through multiple legal structures such as citizenship and naturalization policies, immigration laws, and the provision of visas to foreign visitors. In the international context, traditional understandings of citizenship are closely tied to policies that implement and secure the territorial boundaries of the nation-state (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008; Rainer Bauböck 2005). Similarly in discussions of migration, the legal boundaries of citizenship are directly connected to the territorial boundaries of the border: *jus soli* citizenship links legal belonging directly to birth in a certain territory (Shachar 2003), and many of the rights of citizenship are tied to presence within national territory – to living in the right place. For the purposes of the comparison I make in this thesis, territorial borders and the legal extremities of citizenship are two inextricably linked components of systems that legalize and formally spatialize community belonging. The following section addresses territorial boundaries, pointing out theoretical developments in understandings of borders that facilitate an understanding of the *hukou* system as an urban citizenship policy that effectively borders urban polities.

Pushed by the emergence and subsequent disavowal of globalization-driven, postmodern narratives of “disappearing borders” (Newman and Paasi 1998), scholars have pushed theoretical conceptions of borders beyond the classical definition of borders as the static boundaries of state territory (Prescott 1987). In the following section, I examine some of these developments that have a particular relevance in relation to China's *hukou* system and the prospects for theorizations of bordering processes that divide not along international borders, but within the nation-state itself. Specifically, I address recent developments in the processual understanding of bordering, the turn toward borders as managerial tools for managing migration, and theorizations that question the scale at which borders and citizenship are constructed. I then address the continued focus on instances of international bordering, paying attention to norms of national citizenship and past efforts to consider intranational migration alongside movement over international borders.

The process of reimagining borders beyond classical understandings of national territory has required understandings of borders and bordering as processual, fluid, and – most importantly – taking place beyond the “lines in the sand” (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009) that divide national territories. These conceptions of borders and bordering have led to a profusion of theoretical takes on who makes borders, where they are made, how they come together, who is affected, and how those effects are felt (Johnson et al. 2011). Spatially, scholars have investigated the ways state power to regulate borders extends beyond the territorial boundaries of the nation itself. In the U.S., the externalization of border controls coexists with increased enforcement along the line

itself, with increased collaboration (under the guise of security) between the U.S. and Mexican governments. Directed at stopping or redirecting flows of South and Central American migrants, externalization consists not only of an increased border security presence along Mexico's southern border, but also internal enforcement that – when viewed from the perspective of Central America – renders Mexico itself a “buffer zone” or extension of the U.S. border regime (Menjívar 2014). Elsewhere, scholars examining border regimes in Canada and Australia have provided thought-provoking accounts of the increasing practice of migrant detention on islands as a way to prevent refugees from accessing sovereign territory upon which they would be capable of mounting rights claims (Mountz 2011; McNevin 2013). Importantly, this work, along with other scholarship that questions the scales at which borders are enacted, discussed below, has pointed out the detachment of enforcement practices from boundaries themselves. This is an important development not only because it more accurately describes current developments in migration and border policy, but also because it provides a versatile set of terms that enable the expansion of theorization beyond questions of legal norms enforced by the nation-state itself. Through the concept of borderwork (Vaughan-Williams 2008), it is possible to understand the act of drawing and enforcing territorial boundaries as processual – not limited to the static enforcement of immovable geopolitical boundaries between nation-states, but fluid, mobile, and often enforced in ways that may not make sense in traditional understandings of borders and bordering.

Meanwhile, scholarship has also recognized that the cultural and material work that serves to include or exclude migrants is not always carried out by nation-states as

unitary actors. In the United States, the state of Arizona has long established itself as a “laboratory” for immigration enforcement activity (Campbell 2011), and cemented its position through the passage of particularly harsh state-mandated measures intended to incapacitate migrants and facilitate immigration control, including the recent passage of the highly controversial SB 1070. As Walker and Leitner argue, this represents one more step in a broader trend toward the “devolution” of immigration control authority from the national level (through programs such as 287(g) and Secure Communities, which partner local law enforcement with federal immigration authorities) as well as “grassroots responses to the presence (or potential presence) of undocumented immigrants.” (Walker and Leitner 2011) Beyond legal authority entirely, scholars have recognized that various civil society actors play important roles in the inclusion or exclusion of migrants – from border residents themselves (Williams and Boyce 2013) to faith communities that may prove welcoming or exclusive to migrants depending on context (Ehrkamp and Nagel 2014). While some organizations, such as vigilante “civilian border patrol” groups in the United States, view their work as fundamentally serving the interests of the nation-state by taking the task of border control into their own hands (Shapira 2013), scholarship on this kind of borderwork beyond the confines of national government can be productively read as pointing out the fuzzy boundaries between legalized standards of citizenship and belonging on one hand, and the norms of acceptance and exclusion that emerge outside legal structures. Put together, I read this scholarship as destabilizing the position that the nation-state holds as the foundation of the work (legal and otherwise) that goes into the construction of community belonging.

The character of this work has changed as well. Influenced by the confluence of border control and securitization, both of which have intensified since 9/11 (Paasi 2012, 2303), scholars have begun to describe the organizations that govern and implement international borders as implementing managerial strategies that control and direct flows of migration, separating desirable migrants from those who are seen as unproductive or even as potential threats to security. In particular, this argument has been made with reference to agencies that implement transnational migration management practices, such as the International Organization for Migration and Frontex, the European agency that takes charge of various externalizations of border policy (Andrijasevic and Walters 2010; Vaughan-Williams 2008). More generally, Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013) have argued that management of migration in service to global capitalism is a key element of the current international border regime. Of particular interest is their argument that border policies not only manage which migrants may be admitted to a given territory, but that there is a significant temporal aspect to this management system: Migrants, as laborers, may be admitted or rejected based on the needs of industry at a given time, and queue systems facilitate this temporal management of the admission of migrants. One additional shift in the work ascribed to bordering processes is the increase of what Kanstroom (2007) calls “post-entry social control” – policies that implicitly or explicitly regulate the conduct and opportunities permissible to migrants, particularly those without legal status in their country of residence. As scholars working on the opportunities and legal challenges undocumented migrants encounter within their countries of residence have shown, systems of migration control within national borders serve less as tools to

preserve the integrity of national borders by excluding migrants wholesale, and more as tools to manage opportunities for migrants, constrain their (social and material) mobility, and ensure their productivity as a highly exploitable low-wage workforce (Harrison and Lloyd 2012; Coleman and Kocher 2011).

The question of where precisely borders can be said to lie has been similarly reconfigured. On one hand, researchers have investigated the questions of how the work that constructs borders plays out as an element of local politics, both near the border and far beyond it (e.g. Gilbert 2009; Madsen 2014; Coleman and Kocher 2011; Walker and Leitner 2011). On the other, scholarship has focused on the development of borderwork at the supranational level, with a particular focus on Europe and the creation of the shared Schengen border system (Scott and van Houtum 2009; van Houtum 2010; Andrijasevic and Walters 2010; Vaughan-Williams 2008). Despite these developments, as Parker and Vaughan-Williams et al note, the study of borders remains marked by its “territorialist epistemology” (2009, 583). In suggesting that alternative epistemological approaches to the border are necessary, Parker and Vaughan-Williams call for a research agenda that might “extrapolate new border concepts, logics, and imaginaries that capture the changing perspective on what borders are supposed to be and where they may be supposed to lie.” (ibid) This call for research that will provide new ways of knowing the border follows clearly from the scholarship outlined above: While scholarship has reimagined the spatialities that borders may be said to occupy, the borders that surround national territory have remained the primary object of analysis. In the following section, I will point out work that has already considered alternative understandings of what

borders are supposed to be, and begin the work of connecting China's *hukou* system to this work.

Urban citizenship: Connecting the *hukou* system to international bordering

In using this thesis to consider the *hukou* system as ultimately analogous to international bordering regimes, I have been in part motivated by the possibilities I see emerging from this kind of analysis. In particular, I find the ongoing focus on national territory within border studies troubling for two reasons. First, following Linda Bosniak, who points out the extent to which citizenship exclusion based on “normative nationalism” is unknowingly perpetuated in both popular discourse and scholarship (2008, 135), I wonder if the continued focus on nation-state borders as the “proper” axis around which the territorialization of belonging revolves may contribute to the naturalization of citizenship norms as a legitimate grounds for state discrimination and violence. The potential impact of this naturalization is particularly visible in the example of apartheid-era South Africa introduced at the beginning of this chapter, which offers a compelling reason to point out that while the violence of the borders established under apartheid have been rightly decried from all corners, the violence inherent in borderwork carried out by nation states has been largely seen as justified by normative understandings of citizenship. Second, by focusing the lens of border studies solely on international boundaries, we miss the broader picture of how access to space comes to be partitioned for different individuals and groups. Following Foucault's shift of focus from the study of government to the study of governmentality, Anne Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Giraut argue for analysis of

“borderities,” or technologies of socio-spatial limits. As they argue, one of the main challenges for contemporary border studies is to “name and understand the border condition that is everywhere and concerns everybody (Szary and Giraut 2015).” I would argue that this task entails tracking not only the movements of nation-state borders as they diverge from their supposed territorial locations, but also an understanding the cross-fertilization of international bordering spatial boundary-making that has nothing to do with national territory whatsoever. In my eyes, the *hukou* system is an excellent point of departure for this type of research, because the way it classifies and filters migrants within China is so recognizably connected to the systems governing international migration. While the *hukou* system does not depend on the same level of violence as the apartheid system in South Africa, it does offer a compelling opportunity to destabilize the “normative nationalism” present even in much of the critical work in border studies.

The theoretical inclusion of the *hukou* system as doing borderwork opens new avenues through which to consider the process of bordering itself. Although theorists have begun to reconsider the scales at which borders operate, most of this attention has been focused on the supernational arena. Up to this point, bordering proper has only been pertinent to national territories and, through a sort of associative property, agglomerations of states. As mentioned above, migration within states – and any restrictions placed upon it, from apartheid systems to segregation policies to historical practices of urban redlining – have been considered as an entirely separate phenomena. As noted above, literature on citizenship and migration has categorically excluded internal migration from consideration (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008).

Nevertheless, there are important connections to be drawn between attempts to control mobility within state boundaries and processes building borders between states. Freedom of movement and residence within the boundaries of a given state are widely considered to be fundamental rights, and are enshrined within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that individuals have unqualified freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state (United Nations 1948). Meanwhile, the sovereign right of states to safeguard their populations and manage the admission and expulsion of non-citizens is a central tenet of international law. Although the norms that govern citizenship are no less firmly established, their particulars are certainly subject to intense debate, in policy circles as well as academic theorizations. The fact that the norms of citizenship that facilitate international bordering lead to the perpetuation of vast international inequality, as well as the legal and economic exploitation of migrant labor, has led to numerous scholarly calls for the abolition of international migration controls as such (Anderson, Sharma, and Wright 2011; Burrige 2014; Walters 2006; Megoran 2005; Carens 1987). Paralleling this argument, there is a significant body of work that draws connections between the system of international borders and (illegitimate) controls on mobility within states through the conceptualization of international borders as a system of global apartheid (Nevins and Aizeki 2008; Sharma 2005; van Houtum 2010). This pointed connection between international and internal migration controls functions to draw contradictions between the norms that govern each system to the surface.

That scholars and activists should draw connections between controls on

international and internal mobility should hardly be surprising, given the complicated history shared by the two systems. In writing the history of the deportation system that is so central to current border enforcement policy in the United States, Daniel Kanstroom (2007) locates the roots of deportation not solely in international laws of citizenship, but also in “various historical forms of exclusion and forced removal, many of which had little to do with citizenship law as such.” These policies include the English practice of “transportation” or forced removal of convicts, the removal of Native American communities as part of ongoing US colonialism, the Fugitive Slave Acts, and “colonization” schemes intended to facilitate the deportation of free African Americans to Africa (Ibid).

While these examples obviously do not speak directly to the comparison between China's *hukou* system and border politics more generally, they do tell an important story of the shared lineage of state power that lies behind state regulations over the freedom of movement. Through lingering effects of territorialist epistemology in border studies, much of the current literature on borders either naturalizes or reifies the concepts of citizenship and sovereign power as they relate to state treatment of non-citizens. Even as scholars direct compelling critiques at systems of bordering, they fail to disturb the normative façade that attaches territorialized norms of community belonging (currently legalized through citizenship policies) to the naked state power that is brought to bear on migrants through systems of exclusion and forced expulsion from national territory. The chief value of the global apartheid concept, which effectively scales critique of illegitimate state violence up to the international scene, lies in its refusal to accept the

norms of state and territory as natural. From a theoretical perspective, the inclusion of Chinese internal migration within the framework of bordering follows this same line of argument by scaling the frame of reference *down*: Bordering processes, as elements of a global apartheid system, are present at multiple scales.

Beside theoretical connections between the *hukou* system's management of Chinese internal migration, there are also compelling empirical reasons to draw connections between processes of international bordering and the control leveraged over Chinese internal migration through the *hukou* system. While I will explore these empirical similarities in depth in a following chapter, it is important to first recognize the scholarship that has drawn comparisons between Chinese internal migration and international migration. Probably the first scholar to draw a direct comparison between Chinese internal migration and international migration processes was Kenneth Roberts, whose heavily-cited 1997 article on China's floating population was explicitly positioned as an attempt to bring that case into conversation with literature on international migration at the time by comparing China's floating population to the population of undocumented Mexican migrants within the United States (Roberts 1997, 249). Roberts focuses primarily on migrant populations themselves, rather than focusing on the *hukou* system, and offers analysis of numerous similarities between Chinese and Mexican migrant populations, particularly their rural origins, the vast gap between China's countryside and urban metropolises which mirrors the gap in incomes and wealth that exists between the United States and Mexico, and patterns of circular migration that Roberts argues were characteristic of both migratory processes at the time. More recently,

Cindy Fan's definitive review of statistical and qualitative data on China's floating population and the *hukou* system, *China On The Move* follows up on Roberts' comparison, paying particular attention to the connections that migrants maintain to farmland in their home villages (Fan 2008, 7).

Two years later, Dorothy Solinger's 1999 book on the *hukou* system *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China* explored the *hukou* system as de-facto policy of "urban citizenship," laying the groundwork for much of the writing on the topic in the following decades (Solinger 1999b). In a separate article published the same year, Solinger makes her case explicit through a comparison of China's *hukou* system and the citizenship and immigration policies at work in Germany and Japan, which are positioned as nations reluctant to accept immigration. As Solinger notes, all three cases present citizenship policies based on the principle of *jus sanguinis* that make citizenship particularly difficult to obtain for outsiders. Nevertheless, Germany, Japan, and China have all found economic success through the recruitment of migrant laborers, most of whom were unable to obtain full membership in their adoptive communities (Solinger 1999a).

While relatively little work coming from the perspective of international bordering or theories of citizenship has taken on the question of China's internal migration since the early 2000s, the metaphor of internal citizenship is commonly used in studies of China's floating population. Li Zhang points this connection out most directly, arguing that urban and rural citizenship statuses under the *hukou* system function as part of an explicit social asymmetry that determines access to a diverse package of rights and entitlements of (local) citizenship (Zhang 2002, 312). More recently, Cindy Fan's review

of the intersections between the Chinese state, household, and migration similarly refers to migrants' lack of access to urban citizenship, noting that the *hukou* framework as well as the rural-urban divide have become widely accepted paradigms for managing migration within China (Fan 2008). Developing scholarship also takes the comparison between China's internal migration and international migration into consideration, as was in evidence at a 2014 Beijing conference on urbanization and migration. Hosted as a collaboration between the Center for Collaboration and Innovation in Social Transformation and Governance at Renmin University and the National Health and Family Planning Commission's Floating Population Department. One of six paper sessions were dedicated specifically to developments in theorization of internal and international migration, and juxtaposed discussion of topics such as US skilled migrants and racial diversity in Canadian urban neighborhoods with analyses of the causes of circular migration patterns for Chinese migrants. In other sessions, such as one focused on migrant assimilation, comparisons between international cases and China's internal migration were made as a matter of course, and examples were drawn from the context of Mexican migration in the US as well as other instances of international migration in order to help explain how migrants are or are not able to integrate themselves into urban Chinese society (see National Health and Family Planning Council and Center for Collaboration and Innovation in Social Transformation and Governance, 2014)

Borders, territory, and the *hukou* system

In comparing the *hukou* system to processes of international bordering, one significant difficulty remains. While I have shown that scholarship on borders and bordering processes are increasingly moving away from analysis of international borders as enacted specifically at the territorial boundary itself, and outlined the deep connections between the *hukou* system and citizenship in the international context, the location of the border itself is an obvious question. Frustratingly, it is not easy to point to specific boundaries that separate “urban China” from “rural China”, or to locate the specific line along which *hukou* divisions are drawn. In fact, much of the existing scholarship that compares the *hukou* system to international bordering processes sidesteps this difficulty. In particular, many studies point directly or indirectly to Aihwa Ong's treatment of migrant labor in China's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in *Neoliberalism as Exception*, in which Ong points to the boundaries of SEZs as the primary border faced by migrants (Ong 2006, 104-110). Mezzadra and Nielson, for example, recognize the impact of the *hukou* system as a legal border with important consequences for Chinese migrant workers, but focus primarily on the application of the system within the Shenzhen and Shanghai SEZs (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). Similarly, Anne McNevin (2013, 54) points to the floating population as a potential mirror for the circumstances of irregular migrants worldwide, but limits her argument to migrant workers in SEZs.

While the implementation of SEZs has undoubtedly had important effects on the development of export industry in China and the recruitment of migrant labor from rural areas, the impacts of the *hukou* system are much broader, and impact migrants in urban

areas across China. Arguing along similar lines, Luigi Tomba cites the patterns of residential segregation that characterize migrant and local neighborhoods in urban China to question Ong's focus on governmental zoning technologies:

Since these practices of segregation characterize large parts of the urban territory, however, I interpret them not simply as exceptions to existing patterns of sovereignty but, rather, as a technology to classify individuals and groups, resulting in different practices of government being applied to different people (more or less autonomous, more or less reliable, more or less self-disciplined). (Tomba 2009, 598-599)

Ultimately, the focus on SEZs identified is strikingly influenced by the territorialist epistemology identified by Parker and Vaughan-Williams (2009) that I have discussed above. In theorizing the bordering of internal migration, SEZs – specifically delimited areas that exist under different economic and legal structures and surrounding territory – seem at first glance to be a functional object of analysis. Indeed, Shenzhen, which is perhaps the most iconic site of Chinese factory production (and a major draw for migrants, with about 80 percent of its population lacking local *hukou*) is constituted as an SEZ. Further, as Ong rightly points out, SEZ boundaries do demonstrate a new kind of bounded economic space with its own connections to migrant labor and legislated belonging. However, to focus on SEZs and neglect the exclusion of migrants throughout China as a whole is misleading, and misrepresents the legal structure of urban belonging in China by ignoring the fact that rural migrants in urban areas across the country are excluded from the rights and opportunities available to “permanent” urban residents through their *hukou* status as “temporary” residents who retain a legal attachment to their place of origin.

In fact, the administrative divisions that mark the boundaries of urban areas – and even SEZs themselves – are hard to pin down. As Carolyn Cartier has recently argued, Western scholars have barely begun to study China's administrative divisions on their own terms, instead “subsuming them under internationally recognizable epistemologies such as urban and regional planning (Cartier 2015, 7).” In China, the administrative divisions that designate territory as rural or urban, belonging to this town or that urban area, are permanently open to re-definition by the central government. This process is relatively opaque, and can lead to the overnight redefinition and re-zoning of large areas, and can lead to the subsumption of rural areas and smaller cities alike into the administrative space of larger cities. The example that Cartier gives is particularly instructive both in pointing out the issues present in an uncomplicated focus on SEZs, and in pointing out the flexibility of the territorial boundaries defining urban China. In 2013, it was announced that Shanghai – specifically, the Pudong New Area, which was itself formed in 1990 as a special trade zone and financial center – would be the site of the new China (Shanghai) Pilot Free Trade Zone. However, this new zone is not really “new” at all – in fact, it is made up of a non-contiguous collection of specially designated territories that have been variously repurposed over the past few decades. Of particular interest is the subsumption of the port city of Nanhui into the jurisdiction of Shanghai in April, 2009 in order to provide deep-water shipping access for the new Free Trade Zone (Cartier 2015). While this example is particularly impactful and involved the dissolution of an entire city government, the re-drawing of boundaries is relatively common, and wholesale urban district mergers is becoming more so, with 15 urban areas having been

absorbed by other jurisdictions in the period from 2008 to 2013 (ibid, 12). The effect of these mergers and territorial changes on *hukou* status varies widely, and can lead to re-registration in newly created districts, but most often maintains the status quo in terms of social exclusion, either through the limited provision of services to certain intra-urban districts, and often does not alter the “rural” *hukou* category of new “urban” residents (Kam Wing Chan, personal communication, 2015).

To further complicate the already-difficult task of locating the shifting borders that divide rural migrants from urban residents, administrative divisions themselves are no more visible in China than they are anywhere else. In comparison to the increasing enforcement of many international borders around the world, the boundaries divide Shanghai, Beijing, and Shenzhen from surrounding jurisdictions are permeable and largely invisible. While the deep divide between rural poverty and urban wealth is of course easy to see, stark divides like the one that marks the U.S. - Mexico border between El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua are nowhere to be seen. Nonetheless, implementations of the *hukou* system continue to facilitate an effective legal divide between locals and outsiders that places spatial limits of belonging and restricts migrants' abilities to enjoy the rights of (urban) citizenship that are available to locals.

As I have demonstrated, there is a need for theorizations of the *hukou* system that place it in conversation with international bordering literature. While previous scholarship – particularly Dorothy Solinger's work in in the 1990s and Li Zhang's 2002 article on the *hukou* as urban citizenship policy – have highlighted citizenship as a clear entry point for the inclusion of the *hukou* system and China's floating population as topics

for analysis within studies of bordering and citizenship, recent work on borders and migration have not convincingly followed up on this avenue with work that integrates recent advancements in border theory alongside empirical work that takes the *hukou* system seriously as a boundary-defining legal system. This remains true despite significant advances in scholarly understandings of borders and migration, as well as the reconfigurations of both the *hukou* system and systems of international boundary-making. As I have shown, scholarship on borders has begun to accept increasingly fluid conceptions of what borders are, where they are enacted, and which agents bring them into being. At the same time, the legal boundaries that mark China's migrant population as nonmembers of the urban polities in which they reside have not remained static, and have shifted significantly since the wave of Chinese migration scholarship that erupted in the mid to late 1990s. It is time for scholars to revisit the connections between *hukou* and citizenship – to bring new understandings of both concepts to bear on one another, and to take the results of these comparisons seriously. The remainder of my thesis, drawn from empirical research on migrant and local conceptions of the *hukou* system in Shanghai, serves as a preliminary example of this type of analysis, providing a set of comparisons that demonstrate the viability of comparative analyses linking the *hukou* system and the enforcement of migration restrictions across international borders.

Chapter 3: The *Hukou* System and Urban Citizenship

This chapter considers China's *hukou* system as a citizenship policy enacted at the urban scale. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, a significant scholarly tradition has already established the strength of this analogy – in particular, work by Li Zhang (2002) and Dorothy Solinger (1999a; 1999b) have used the concept of citizenship to great effect in understanding the legal difficulties faced by rural migrants in urban China. However, as I have argued, the full import of an understanding of citizenship that does not find its roots in nation-state borders has not been fully realized by theorists of the border or of citizenship itself. In an attempt to point out what can be gained through the analysis of China's *hukou* system through the lens of international bordering (and vice-versa), this chapter considers a series of empirical examples arising from China's urban migration and *hukou* policy alongside theoretical and empirical perspectives on international bordering.

While previous chapters examined the history and context of the *hukou* system and developments in theories of international bordering and citizenship, here I use specific examples and empirical perspectives to point out some of the many overlaps present between the *hukou* system and international bordering regimes. I discuss the structure and function of the *hukou* system as a legal organ for the exclusion of migrants, beginning with the function of the *hukou* in facilitating the legal division between “insiders” and “outsiders”, which is discursively tied to a narrative of limited (state) resources and the exclusion of noncitizens from various state services. In particular, I

focus on the provision of medical services and state-reimbursed medical care, as well as the exclusion of the children of temporary migrants from the compulsory education system in Shanghai. Following these discussions of the ways migrants are excluded from legal belonging in urban areas, I point to the systems in place for legally transferring one's *hukou* status part of a broader system of differential inclusion, in which migrant inclusion is flexible, contingent, and partial.

The *hukou* system and the boundaries of (urban) citizenship: Bordering as legal exclusion

As described in the previous chapter, my understanding of citizenship follows Linda Bosniak (2008) in approaching the concept from its edges and boundary conditions. By understanding the conditions under which citizenship functions exclusively – whether it is enacted at the urban or nation-state level – it is possible to think about the work citizenship does. In the case of China's *hukou* system, as well as many other citizenship policies worldwide, rights and access to the state are an important benefit of citizenship. One of the primary exclusionary functions of the temporary residence permit system for Chinese internal migrants is the limitation of access to government-funded social benefits. Under the same decentralization reforms mentioned above, China's urban governments provide a wide variety of benefits and services to residents, in some ways carrying forward the legacy of state-led resource provision beyond the Communist era. Although these benefits are a far cry from the full state control over resources that ended in the late 1970s, state-provided benefits include various forms of medical insurance,

unemployment insurance, and state-funded pensions, as well as compulsory education (Zhao and Zhang 1999).

The majority of these benefits accrue only to individuals registered with local *hukou*. Just as is the case in many immigrant-receiving countries worldwide, holders of temporary residence permits in urban China are legally prevented from accessing the majority of the state services guaranteed to official residents, as they have passed outside the territorial jurisdiction of the body charged with guaranteeing their rights of citizenship. Although the situation differs somewhat depending on the urban jurisdiction in question, it is fair to say that in most cases, the only benefits that accrue to migrants are those that they pay into in order to receive. In Shanghai, migrants are eligible for voluntary pension withholding programs, but not eligible for any services funded by state money or through employer contributions (Zhang, unpublished manuscript). In my interviews, Shanghai locals and migrants alike recognized this as one of the most important functions of the *hukou* system, making the point that without the system, migrants would flood into Shanghai, absorbing resources, driving prices up, and out-competing locals for jobs. As was repeated by young Shanghai financial workers and demographic researchers alike during my interviews, the *hukou* system serves “as a way to maintain social stability.” Harkening back to the conception of migration as *mangliu*, or blind flow, the inaccessibility of local *hukou* to the floating populations functions as a filtering technology that is seen as both necessary and natural by official Shanghai residents and migrants alike. As was discussed in Chapter 1, previous incarnations of this system were remarkably successful in cutting off migration entirely. Now, in the era of

mass migration, the *hukou* system functions less as a valve, and more as a system to manage flows of migration through differential inclusion. By allowing migrants access to livelihoods in urban areas through temporary residence permits, it is possible for urban areas to recruit a vast low-wage labor force, absent the assumption that local government should ever take full responsibility for their welfare. As temporary residents, migrants are prevented from accessing state services in their place of residence and remain tied to their home villages, unable to obtain full membership in the urban polities where many have resided for long periods of time.

Healthcare and Citizenship

Healthcare is one of the most important services currently reserved for local *hukou* holders. While migrants do have access to basic outpatient care services, funding for specialized services and any inpatient care is restricted to holders of local *hukou*. Due to the way local jurisdictions are understood as connected to *hukou* status, migrants do retain access to medical care in their home villages when they move, but these services are often far away and difficult to access. This difficulty of access is compounded by the fact that the quality of rural medical care is often far below the standard of care that can be found in urban areas. The regulation of access to medical care is an important feature of the *hukou* system in part because it vastly reduces the population for whom local governments are responsible. In urban areas such as Shanghai, where nine million migrants make up nearly 40% of the population (Shanghai Statistical Bureau 2011), the potential cost of expanding local healthcare services to migrants is astronomical. For

local residents and managers alike, the question of who is deserving of state-financed medical care is often answered by pointing first to the degradation of service quality (for locals) that would take place if rural migrants were offered state-funded medical care.

The lack of access to care for migrants can have devastating impacts on migrants' lives. Xiaohua, one of my interview participants, discussed the difficulties she found in accessing medical care at length. Her daughter had been diagnosed with leukemia as a young child, and had passed away less than a year before I interviewed her mother. Xiaohua was haunted by her inability to do more for her daughter's care. The costs of the necessary treatments were very high, and without state-provided medical reimbursements, were much more than she could afford on the piece-work salary she received as a janitorial employee at a Shanghai university. While her family moved into a cheaper apartment in order to better afford her daughter's medical bills, Xiaohua worried that the poor ventilation and damp conditions of their new apartment may have triggered her daughter's remission. Despite her best efforts, and a significant sum of money raised by students and faculty at the university, she was unable to pay the various medical fees necessary for her daughter's treatment. Nevertheless, while members of the university community came together to support Xiaohua, her inability to access state benefits that would have helped provide treatment for her daughter was a reflection of the explicit function of the *hukou* system's division of government benefits between “temporary” and “official” residents.

The complex relationships between belonging, deservingness, and law that are invoked in Xiaohua's dilemma are strikingly similar to those present in debates over the

provision of resources to international migrants. Similar questions revolving around the provision of health care for migrants have been hot-button political issues in the United States since the 1970s, when public and state fears of immigrant “freeloading” on welfare benefits have resulted in policies that prevent non-citizens from accessing federally-funded welfare resources, including many health services (Marrow 2012, 847). In other contexts, similar anxieties about state provision of services to “outsiders” have led to a variety of policies that explicitly attempt to prevent non-citizens from accessing publicly funded health care services through various tactics. This was the case with the 1994 passage of Proposition 187, California law requiring health care workers to refer potentially undocumented migrants to immigration services. Although this restriction was unique to California at the time, comparative analysis with undocumented migrant communities outside of the state demonstrated a pervasive fear among migrants that they might be unable to access needed services (Berk and Schur 2001).

In China and in the U.S., the results of limited access to care are often similar, as is made clear in Helen Marrow's (2012) investigation of a San Francisco healthcare initiative Healthy San Francisco (HSF) which makes explicit efforts provide healthcare to undocumented migrants. In contrast to the requirements of Proposition 187, San Francisco has prohibited the collection of information on legal status by a variety of state and peri-state officials, and providing “universal access” to primary care services for all individuals (including undocumented migrants) not covered under other federal or state health insurance programs. However, even in this relatively open environment there are numerous barriers to full healthcare provision for migrants. Despite attempts to open the

system to patients who may not have official identifications or proof of residence, service providers who themselves want to offer care to undocumented migrants still encounter documentation barriers that function to exclude some irregular migrants. Beyond the documentation barrier, services are also substantially limited by the fact that undocumented patients receiving coverage through HSF are ineligible for referrals for a variety of specialty care services, and also cannot be linked to other ancillary welfare services (Marrow 2012, 852).

The result of the exclusion of undocumented migrants discussed by Willen and Marrow mirrors Xiaohua's experience of a medical system that is functionally unable to provide care to certain residents due to their legal status. Bordering processes do not always succeed in spatially separating migrants from medical care, but they do reconfigure the real possibilities of migrants' access to care. While Shanghai's medical system is one of the best in China, Xiaohua's daughter – by virtue of her status as a temporary resident, legally attached to her home community rather than her actual residence – was excluded from access to treatment. It is important to note that this legal distinction was made despite the mobilization of (officially resident) community members, who raised money to pay the medical bills that Xiaohua was unable to meet. Jessica Santillan, a migrant organ transplant recipient whose experience Leo Chavez (2008) discusses as a prime example of the difficult intersection of citizenship and medical care, was put in a similar position: While opponents of migration viewed her surgery as emblematic of “wasteful” medical expenses on non-members of the (legal) US polity, local residents also contributed to a fund for her medical care (ibid, 129). Legal

constructs of citizenship, working at national and subnational scales, function to delimit the boundaries of deservingness in the eyes of the state. While migrants perform vital labor in both contexts, the benefits of citizenship are reserved for those with the privilege to have been born into the fold, or the social and economic resources necessary to modify their status.

As Willen (2012) argues, the pragmatic question of who has access to healthcare often overlooks the underlying question of “deservingness” – that is, the question of who really ought to have access to health care and who ultimately should not. In approaching the issue through analysis of migrants' access to healthcare, it becomes apparent that at least part of the question of deservingness is explicitly territorial and geographical. While I am concerned primarily with legal issues here, it is important to note that the legal question of who should have access to health care is inextricably linked to deeper issues of community belonging and membership that reach beyond the legal sphere and take root in social and cultural norms that define the edges of community for those within it and those who will never be able to access full membership. The complex relationship between social belonging and citizenship will be explored in depth in the following chapter; it is enough at this point to simply argue that citizenship and the provision of health care are deeply entangled in the context of international migration, and that the difficulties that confront attempts to provide care to undocumented migrants in the United States are at least partially mirrored in Xiaohua's contradictory experience of local support and simultaneous legal exclusion. Since internal migrants in urban China are nominally national citizens, they are consequentially understood as deserving of some

state protection, which does include healthcare. However, the limits of this protection are territorialized through the *hukou* system: While migrants ought to be able to receive care, the sensible place for them to do so is in their hometowns – their place of permanent residence – not in the cities where their residence is understood as merely temporary.

Education and Citizenship

Much like the healthcare system, China's education system is also segregated on the basis of *hukou* status. This division is particularly grating given the emphasis placed on education throughout China's long history. This tradition underlies the country's current education system, in which livelihood pathways are often determined by students' success or failure in the all-important *gaokao* college entrance examination. Because the *gaokao* is the primary determinant of secondary educational opportunities available to individuals, it has a significant impact on the life chances of everyone who takes it, or fails to do so. Rather than being standardized nationwide, however, the *gaokao* is administered by local and regional governments across China. Thus the test itself – and, accordingly, test preparation curricula – differ between various local areas, and test-takers may only test in the jurisdiction where their *hukou* is registered. Thus, like many other institutions in China, the *gaokao* and the provision of educational services are tied directly to *hukou* status.

The reality of the *hukou* system's effect on children's lives and education was brought home for me in an interview I conducted with Mrs. Zhang, a middle-aged migrant woman from a rural village in Sichuan province. When we spoke at a table in

front of her successful noodle shop, she was taking a brief break in the lull after the lunch hour. As she told me, she has been happily living in Shanghai for five years, and did not seem fazed by any difficulties involving the *hukou* system in her own life. While she does have to regularly renew her registration as a temporary resident, she reported that the process for her is streamlined, and that overall she is willing to deal with a small amount of bureaucracy in exchange for the substantial increase in income she has seen since coming to Shanghai and opening her shop. Nevertheless, her home life has been deeply marked by the manifestation of *hukou* categorization in China's education system. For the period she has lived in Shanghai, Mrs. Zhang's daughter remains in her home village in Sichuan, where she attends elementary school. As a result, Mrs. Zhang is only able to see her daughter a few times a year. When I asked her if she had ever considered bringing her to Shanghai to live, Mrs Zhang replied that she had never entertained the thought, primarily because when the time comes for her children to take the *zhongkao* (a test determining high school admission) or *gaokao*, they would have to leave Shanghai to do so, and the education systems and curricula are significantly different. Thus, for the sake of her children's education, they were left behind.

The plight of such “left-behind children” has become widely acknowledged in China, with a wide variety of journalistic and academic interventions pointing to the difficulties parents face when they are unable to bring their children with them as migrants (Ding and Bao 2014). This phenomenon has a huge impact across China as a whole: Over 60 million children have at least one migrant parent. This represents 21% of China's population under the age of 18 who are growing up outside of traditional family

structures. In part due to difficulties accessing educational services in destination communities, this population is nearly double the number of children who followed their parents' migration to urban areas, which accounts for another 35 million children, or approximately 13% of Chinese youth. All told, the lives of over a third of China's population under the age of 18 have been directly impacted by internal migration (Hu, Lu, and Huang 2014, 1). In migrant villages like Taoyangcun, so many working-age people have migrated that the remaining population is made up largely of the children and grandparents of the migrant generation.

Although the ways that migration affects individual families vary significantly depending on circumstances, they invariably disrupt the traditional structure of family life in China, in which the work of raising children is shared not only between two parents, but also with substantial assistance from grandparents, particularly on the paternal side. For left-behind children, the result of migration may be to be raised by a single parent (of either sex), or to be raised entirely by grandparents. For parents who bring their children with them, the trek to the city can mean separation due to long working hours, as well as a disconnection from extended family. Beyond family issues, the social divide that adult migrants face in urban areas is exacerbated for migrant children (Goodburn 2009). Investigating the quantifiable impacts of migration on both migrant children and those left behind by at least one parent, child psychologists have identified a significant link between migration and negative impacts children's psychological and behavioral development, with children left behind in migrant sending communities faring slightly worse on most measures than migrant children, and significantly worse than local

children in both sending and receiving communities (Hu, Lu, and Huang 2014).

The inclusion of migrant children in the (compulsory) urban education system is one of the primary sites of tension around the *hukou* system. In the face of calls by the central government for improved education of migrant youth, the localization of the *gaokao* may be the most enduring element of the educational segregation that China's migrant population has faced, but it is probably not the most severe. While conditions are changing rapidly and vary in different urban jurisdictions, the status quo is still very much one in which migrant children lack access to the same educational opportunities that are readily available – or, rather, legally compulsory – for official urban residents. Prior to reforms in 1996, public education was simply unavailable to migrant students in Chinese metropolises. As recently as 2009, a study of the education of migrants in Beijing demonstrated that the educational system remains largely segregated (Goodburn 2009). While migrants are now legally allowed to enroll in public schools, their ability to do so in most urban areas is limited by the number of available seats. In Beijing, space for local residents is guaranteed, and migrants are only allowed to enroll in schools that have “extra” space available.

As a result, the majority of migrant children in Beijing attend special “migrant” schools operating as part of the informal economy. While the central government has issued a variety of edicts that promote the education of migrant youth by local governments, it is likely that these instructions have not been widely followed. Indeed, efforts by the central government to promote public education for migrants may have harmed migrant education in real terms, because the same document that urged local

governments to take up the task of educating migrants also suggested that children should only be educated in state schools, and led in some cases to the forced closures of informal schools that were some migrants' only option for education (Goodburn 2009, 496). Even when migrants have formal access to schools, they are often excluded through other measures – for example, local governments can implement substantial fees to enroll children who lack local *hukou*, with the result that for-profit informal education is often actually less expensive than public education for migrant families.

There are severe limits to the education offered to migrants through the existing system. As has been convincingly demonstrated through a study of educational achievement that includes migrant children, a non-migrant cohort from the same home village, and local children in Beijing, migrant students' educational potential (which is often relatively high, given the self-selection bias of migration) is often wasted as they attend for-profit migrant schools, many of which have scant resources to offer, and provide sub-standard instruction that in many cases was actually inferior to the quality of education offered in rural public schools (Lai et al. 2014). After taking these factors into account, the *gaokao* continues to loom over the heads of all students, and migrants in particular. In Shanghai, where substantial reforms have resulted in the absorption of between 10 and 40% of the migrant student population into public schools (Goodburn 2009, 496), Helen Gao (2014) identifies a steady year-by-year decrease in the population of migrant students at each age cohort. While migrants make up nearly half of the population at age 1, less than one quarter of the population at age 14 lacks local *hukou*. From age 16 to 18, however, this gap closes rapidly, and half of the cohort of 18-year-old

Shanghai residents is made up of migrants lacking local *hukou*. Gao argues that this demographic shift – involving over 50,000 migrant youth in Shanghai alone – is likely caused by an educational strategy in which students return to their home villages by the age of fifteen, where they attend high school and prepare for the *gaokao*, since they would be unable to access tailored curriculum in Shanghai or other migration destinations.

For rural parents considering a move to urban areas, the structure of the *hukou* system creates a series of difficult decisions about education and parenting, with no simple solution. For Mrs. Zhang, leaving her children at home in Sichuan made the most sense, allowing her to focus entirely on running her business while her husband's parents raised her daughter. For other parents – those with less ability to rely on family at home to raise children, for example – it makes sense to bring children along to urban areas, despite the difficulty of accessing public education and the potentially substandard quality of unofficial migrant schools.

While the motivation of this segregation of the educational system are likely similar to those discussed above with relation to healthcare provisions, the segregated education of migrant youth is remarkable in that it is one area in which China's *hukou* system is in fact more restrictive than many international migration policies. The exclusion of migrant children under this policy appears particularly egregious from the perspective of the United States. While there have been significant battles over the provision of postsecondary education for migrants in the United States, largely centered around residence policies and tuition (see Gonzales 2008) all noncitizens – including undocumented residents – have been guaranteed equal access to state-funded primary

education under the Supreme Court ruling on *Plyler v. Doe* in 1982. Based on the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, this ruling explicitly separated education from other social welfare programs, and located the basis for the provision of education to all US residents (regardless of status) on the importance that education holds for the functioning of the U.S. democracy.

This continued stress on education as a centrally important function of the state is similar to the position the Chinese central government has taken on the education of internal migrants, at least on paper, since the 1980s, when the Central Committee of the CCP issued a decree promoting a focus on raising the “quality” (*suzhi*) of the Chinese people as a central tenet of education reform (Goodburn 2009). The politics of *suzhi* quality discourse will be discussed in depth in the following chapter – for now, it is simply worth noting that inclusive education reform is a widely accepted goal, and that local governments have largely failed to comply with the central government's repeated urging to provide adequate education to migrant children. Given the high costs of education and the understanding that migrants are nothing more than temporary residents and laborers, this logic makes a certain amount of sense. In the United States, the obligation of state governments to provide education services to undocumented migrants has been repeatedly challenged, with various attempts at the federal level to pass legislation invalidating the *Plyler v. Doe* decision. State-level lawmakers have also written their own challenges to these obligations, including California's Proposition 187, mentioned above in the context of healthcare restrictions (Lopez and Tsitouras 2007).

Flexible Inclusion and Points Systems

The process of reimagining borders beyond classical understandings of national territory has required understandings of borders/bordering as processual, fluid, and – most importantly – taking place beyond the “lines in the sand” (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009) that divide national territories. Scholars have begun to describe borders less as hard lines that seal off national territories, and more as managerial tools that direct flows of migration. The character of China's *hukou* system as it stands today fits very well within this rubric for understanding new developments in border policy. Reconfigurations of border control in the post-9/11 context have also led to the development of various “flexible” schemes in North America that make borders more porous, albeit only to certain privileged classes of travelers who are able to exempt themselves from many of the inconveniences, difficulties, and outright blockages that emerge through the securitization of borders (Sparke 2006). Meanwhile, as Gregory Feldman (2011) argues in his analysis of the European border regime under the Shengen agreement, the confluence of neo-nationalist sentiment (which rejects any steps toward providing citizenship for migrants) and neoliberal economic programs (which appreciate the value of flexible, mobile labor forces) has created a discourse in which migration management agencies champion a flexible regime of migration management that attempts to “regularize, encourage, and direct circular migration” in order to meet Europe's economic needs, while ensuring that migrants return to their countries of origin (ibid. 2011, 158–159).

While migrants may be disqualified for official membership, spatial boundaries are porous and serve to manage and regulate movement, as opposed to stopping it completely. Taken together, policies of boundary-making for some and freer movement for others constitute parts of a regime of flexible inclusion under which “the boundaries between the dynamics of filtering, subordination, and labor market discrimination that once occurred at the international border and those that take place within the bounded spaces of national societies have been blurred” (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 159). Migrant-receiving societies cannot afford to fully exclude migrants: someone must build the skyscrapers, man the factory lines, and staff the kitchens. The *hukou* system and floating population are particularly demonstrative of the ways in which the flexible inclusion of migrants helps manage and control a reliable workforce.

The importance of the *hukou* system as a system of flexible inclusion and labor market control is particularly visible through interviews I carried out with Ping Chengguang, a retired civil servant who was a member of Shanghai's population statistics bureau throughout the period of mass migration into Shanghai. She points out that migrants have formed the base of Shanghai's economy since the industrial reforms 1980s:

[After the reforms] Shanghai's societal and economic development went through a big transition - that is, the construction of buildings in the city was very fast. And the construction teams were all migrants. For example, Shanghai's great bridge, the Yangpu Daqiao, the Huangpu Daqiao, as well as other bridges and tunnels a great number of skyscrapers - the great majority were built by migrant work teams.

Nevertheless, understanding and regulating this population is a critical goal for urban governments, as Ping pointed out in defense of the continued existence of the *hukou* system:

If you were to ask me, I think the *hukou* system is still necessary. [...] Because Shanghai... it's not a renewable resource, it really is just one piece of land. If everyone was to come here, there would be problems! There still needs to be some kind of a threshold for admission. I think the *hukou* system is still necessary because if it wasn't there and everyone migrated, it would cause huge problems. From governmental management to resources, there could be problems across all sectors. I reckon the *hukou* system won't be opened up in a short time, but will continue to function.

While the *hukou* does not create the same acute precarity as that faced by many international migrants, it operates on a similar register. While migrant contributions to Shanghai's spectacular development are recognized, migrants themselves are not fully welcomed into urban polities, for fear that they would overwhelm the services (such as health and education) provided to local *hukou* holders. In the end, China's the neoliberal forms of urbanization that are remaking Chinese cities (He and Wu 2009; F. Wu 2008) owe much to the existence of the floating population, and to the policy of flexible inclusion through the *hukou* system and the system of temporary residence permits. While the lack of a fixed boundary intended to limit or prevent migrants' movement into China's urban areas does make internal mobility within the country arguably more free than movement across most international borders, the policies limiting migrants' potential for legal inclusion in urban areas constitute a border in themselves.

This regime of flexible, partial, and temporary inclusion is reminiscent of other policies of flexible inclusion in the context of international migration. For example, the Bracero program, which allowed US employers to recruit Mexican temporary workers from 1942 to 1964, was initially implemented in order to counter the labor shortage that arose when the United States entered World War II. The migrants who were admitted by the program were granted legal status, and encountered a relatively permeable

international boundary. However, visa status for Braceros offered them no path to citizenship or permanent legal membership in the United States. Instead, Braceros were “cast and treated [...] as a cheap, disposable, foreign, exploitable, and temporary commodity (M. M. Ngai 2004).” This combination of legal status, labor exploitation, and lack of access to the rights of citizenship is strikingly similar to the experience of many Chinese migrant workers, who form the backbone of the labor force that has driven China to record growth, while remaining legally segregated from the urban Chinese population that holds local *hukou*.

For migrants who are potentially included by the *hukou* system, very different factors come into play. Methods of securing urban *hukou* have existed throughout the duration of the system's implementation. Besides official job transfer and related forms of (centrally) “planned migration” (Fan 2008), cities have offered a “blue stamp” program that permitted migrants to purchase legal residence permits that – in much the same sense as programs of legal permanent residence in the United States – could be convertible to full local residence status following a definite period of good conduct (Chan and Zhang 1999, 839). However, “blue stamp” *hukou* was deprecated in the early 2000s, and has since been replaced by new entry-condition based systems (Wang 2004). Shanghai has played a leading role among Chinese cities in the development of new *hukou* policy, and implemented China's first points system for *hukou* eligibility in 2004, which was designed specifically to attract talented migrants. A similar policy, which purports to be more open to *hukou* transfers by migrant workers, was adopted in Guangdong province in 2011. Under the Shanghai points system, would-be migrants are scored on various

categories, including business credentials, academic credentials, and the qualifications of the candidate's employer. If a candidate meets the requirements, they then become eligible to apply immediately for Shanghai *hukou*.

Even for highly qualified applicants, this process places a high bar – a student I worked with at Fudan University had recently been granted her PhD and obtained a teaching position in another Shanghai university, but nevertheless was worried about her chances obtaining Shanghai *hukou*. Her educational achievements and recently-obtained employment were top-notch, but she was concerned by the possibility that she would not meet the requirements of the points system. The inability to obtain local residency would severely complicate her position: While she had secured high-status (if not high-paying) employment, lack of local *hukou* would still exclude her from many of the state-provided benefits of urban life discussed above. Many students who travel to attend universities are also technically included in the floating population, as their *hukou* status remains tied to their home communities. However, this status is considered an element of “planned” migration, and is considered in a different light to economic migration. Non-local students at universities in Shanghai are considered a class apart from “migrants” by local government and communities even if their origins lie in rural communities. After having secured admission to local universities through the *gaokao*, students join a class of upwardly mobile, educated, and “desirable” residents. However, upon graduation, students lose their association with the university and its associated status, unless they are able to convert their newly developed social capital in ways that are recognizable by the *hukou* points system.

The mechanics of this process are similar to migration and citizenship policies in several advanced economies. The points system implemented in Shanghai functions in direct parallel to similar systems for the recruitment of skilled migrants in the international context, where nations such as Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, and Australia use systems of points to categorize the human capital migrants bring with them when they enter the country (Papademetriou and Sumption 2011). “Blue Stamp” *hukou* transfers formerly conferred a probationary status that provided most of the benefits of full *hukou* transfer, and facilitated the eventual conversion into full membership. The resulting status permitted long-term legal residence and granted significant rights to migrants while withholding the status of full membership in the community. The function of this program is similar to visa programs that permit the “purchase” of long-term visa status through investment visas, a common practice worldwide, with US E-2 and EB-5 investment visas being a preferred method for wealthy migrants to obtain status in the United States, as well as “business class” migration categories in Canada (Galabuzi 2006, 163). At the same time, a variety of other preferential programs targeted at entrepreneurs and other elites make it clear that many of the restrictions imposed by bordering regimes do not apply to individuals of a certain status (Sparke 2006). In China as well as internationally, the boundaries that demarcate spatial belonging are applied unevenly, and function not to prevent movement altogether, but to filter and direct it, including migrants who are read as desirable and excluding others who are positioned as not belonging (Andrijasevic and Walters 2010; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Cacho 2012).

Citizenship and bordering

As this chapter has demonstrated, China's *hukou* system functions as an urban citizenship policy that creates a legal divide between rural migrants and official urban residents that has real impacts on millions of migrants' lives. While divides between newcomers and foreigners are common in other contexts of internal migration, the explicit legal categorizations present throughout China are unique in that they replicate many of the legal divides that are created in international citizenship policy. These legal divides are a crucial element of the modern process of bordering, and an understanding of citizenship that neglects to account for the borders that the concept draws loses much of its conceptual depth. While the examples I have provided in this chapter are only some of the possible angles along which the *hukou* system might be productively compared to processes of international bordering, they do illustrate some central truths about the structures borders can take, as well as the functions for which bordering processes can be employed. The *hukou* system has changed much since the earlier incarnations in which it was employed as a strikingly effective means of deterring all migration outside of that planned by China's central government. Under the current system, migration is not only an open possibility – in fact, it forms the basis of China's urban economy. Nonetheless, this lack of a hard boundary preventing or discouraging migration does not imply the lack of a border. The citizenship divides implied by the *hukou* system are disconnected from the fixed enforcement of jurisdictional boundaries, but are nonetheless decidedly spatial. This spatial division is apparent not only in the readily apparent difference between the fortunes and opportunities available in rural and urban China, but also in the pervasive

construction of rural migrants as “outsiders” and the legal limitation of their access to rights and services on the basis of this categorization.

Having developed an understanding of the *hukou* system as producing a legal border with regard to citizenship rights in urban China, however, several questions remain. Understanding that legal and cultural labels and divisions are largely co-constitutive, the focus on legal aspects of the *hukou* system in this chapter only tells part of the story of how migrants come to be understood as outsiders. In particular, the question of how the *hukou* system becomes justifiable in the absence of the norms of national sovereignty that are commonly used to justify international bordering. In the next chapter, I will explore the *hukou* system and the construction of migrant subjectivity in China beyond the law itself, a discussion that has deep implications for the question, raised in Chapter 2, of the location of the border that the *hukou* draws between migrants and locals, or rural and urban people.

Chapter 4: *Suzhi* Quality Discourse and Embodied Borders

Despite the legal exclusions explored in the previous chapter, all but one of the migrants I spoke to downplayed the impacts the *hukou* system has had on their lives. While it is impossible to know if criticisms of the *hukou* system were silenced by fear of reprisal or of speaking poorly of China's system of government to a foreigner, criticisms of the *hukou* system were surprisingly rare in my interviews. Of my 26 interviewees, only two expressed any structural critique of the *hukou* system. Xiaohua, the migrant woman whose story of insufficient medical care I discussed in the previous chapter, largely blamed her situation on the *hukou* system. Guo Tai, a professor in the School of Social Development whose research focuses on demographic shifts related to China's aging population, based his position against the *hukou* on references to Western countries' lack of internal migration control, and argued that ultimately, the labor market has stabilized internal population movements in most countries that do not regulate such migration.

That these were the only two substantial critiques of the *hukou* system I encountered while carrying out interviews was surprising. A conversation I had with Li Li, a domestic worker who I spoke to in her hometown, Taoyangcun, offers one way to understand the general acceptance of the system. When I asked Li Li if she had would apply for Shanghai *hukou* if given the chance, she replied that she wouldn't, and that many of her compatriots would not either. As she said,

“Right now, having a village *hukou* is pretty good. You have a field to plant. The people who can get urban *hukou* don't want to, because those of us who hold rural *hukou* have land, and aren't willing to give up the status. Non-agricultural [urban] *hukou* is basically no good.”

While rural *hukou* excludes migrants from many services in urban areas, it also is the legal mechanism through which rural families maintain control of the land that still provides a significant portion of their livelihood. Roberts (1997) as well as Fan (2008) argue that one explanation for migrants' continued connection to their places of origin lies in the fact that Chinese internal migrants' trajectories are often circular, constantly returning to hometowns where they themselves (or their families) maintain land that – while not enough to sustain the whole family – serves as a fallback and important resource. This land may be worked by family members or contracted out to other local families, but proves to be a material anchor for migrants' sense of local belonging.

The fact that expulsions of migrants are rare and mostly historical may also have had something to do with my interviewees' lack of concern for the impact the *hukou* system might have on their lives. While there have been notable historic instances in which migrants have been forcefully removed from urban areas, there has been no real threat to migrants' continued physical presence in urban areas since 1995, when state authorities demolished *Zhejiangcun*, an informal settlement in Beijing. While this destruction of housing displaced 40,000 migrants, the largest community of its kind in the city, the goal of the destruction was not to expel migrants themselves – rather, it was to break up an emerging migrant power structure that was seen as a threat to state hegemony. (Zhang 2001; Liu and Liang 1997). However, the destruction of *Zhejiangcun* was an isolated event, and has not been replicated. In Shanghai, none of the migrants I spoke to were particularly worried about being sent back to their home communities.

In this sense, the *hukou* system diverges significantly from the pervasive use of

deportation as a form of social control exerted on migrants in the context of international migration (Kanstroom 2007). It is likely that this divergence has important effects on migrants' understanding of citizenship and belonging in urban areas. In the international context, Patricia Ehrkamp and Helga Leitner, for example, find that many migrants have an understandable desire to maintain ties to their places of origin, even as they seek membership in their adopted communities. However, one of the primary rationales cited for needing full membership in adopted communities in the first place was the perception of secure livelihoods that citizenship brings: Citizens cannot be deported, and citizenship is seen as a way to secure long-term residence in the face of nativist politics and potential expulsion (Leitner and Ehrkamp 2006, 1622). In China, the issuance of temporary residence permits serves to effectively legalize and flexibly include labor migrants in urban areas. The pressures exerted by the ever-present threat of deportation in the international context (Harrison and Lloyd 2012) are conspicuously absent. Without the potential for deportation, the disinclusion of migrants from government benefits is likely easier for migrants themselves to rationalize.

Still, these differences between the *hukou* system and international border regimes do not explain how local or regional belonging is understood and felt by Chinese migrants, or how exactly the exclusion of migrants from local *hukou* is rationalized and justified. While migration control at international borders is largely naturalized through conceptions of sovereign nation-state territory as discussed in Chapter 2, freedom of movement within national borders is understood in the Western context as a basic human right. On the surface, at least, it is expected in most cases that cultural differences,

regional differentiation, or other divides within the national body are subsumed into the common legal framework and imagined community of the nation-state (Benedict Anderson 2006; Weber 1976). This subsumption of difference under the common rubric of nation-state citizenship is certainly at work in China. While the history of ethnic division in China is too extensive to explore in depth in this thesis, postsocialist China has been undergoing a revitalization of ethnic tradition that includes the recognition of subgroups within the Han nationality as well as the increasing recognition of a wide variety of minority ethnic groups (Gladney 2004). Ethnic difference as such no doubt plays an important role in the construction of “outsider” status for many Chinese migrants, it was rarely mentioned or discussed in my interviews. Muslim Hui migrant acquaintances with whom I did not record interviews did discuss how ethnic differences affected their positions with regard to Shanghai people, but spoke of ethnic difference and *hukou* as separate issues. Within my recorded interviews, regional identity and belonging were much more commonly referenced, and carry their own weight. Therefore, my discussion here focuses on the construction of “locals” and “outsiders” as a function of regional belonging, rather than ethnic or racial difference.

This is somewhat of a difficult position to take, in particular because from my own vantage point, it is hard to imagine a regime of intra-national bordering without drawing parallels to South African apartheid or the history of Jim Crow segregation in the United States – policies that have become synonymous with racialized oppression, which have since been delegitimized through protracted struggle. It is in part because of the legacy of this struggle, the drawing of enforceable borders within nation-states is difficult

to justify. In discussing the *hukou* system as closely related to regimes of international bordering, I do not intend to suggest that it bears no relationship to these more-racialized internal bordering systems such as South African apartheid or the history of Jim Crow segregation in the United States – policies that have become synonymous with racialized oppression.. Rather, I hope to join other scholars in destabilizing the commonly employed grounds used to rationalize international bordering. While it is easy to decry apartheid systems, most people find it easy to justify the enforcement of state boundaries.

Delimited territorially through borders and legally through citizenship, the purported unity of the nation-state goes a long way toward providing a rationale for the kind of us-and-them divides that are facilitated through nation-state bordering processes: Normative notions of territorial sovereignty and the legalistic models of citizenship that attach to them provide a more-or-less clear map of the lines between “us” and “them.”

As has been demonstrated in Chapter 3, the *hukou* bears important similarities to international bordering regimes. Nonetheless, the political structure it is based on – post-socialist rule by a party-state (Cartier 2015) that is decentralized but decidedly not federalist – cannot be effectively compared to the system of international norms that define citizenship and national bordering. How, then is the *hukou* system understood as justified within China? Beyond the fact that only two of my interviewees offered real critiques of the system, it was evident in many of the discussions I had about my research with friends, interviewees, or curious strangers that it is hard to comprehend a world without internal migration controls from within China. In fact, many of the people I spoke with were surprised to hear that the United States has no similar system. Absent the

norms that legitimate international bordering, what are the common understandings that make the *hukou* system so palatable to the people whose lives it affects?

This question cannot be answered by looking to the law alone. Operating from the assumption that legal and cultural norms are co-constituted and deeply entangled, this chapter briefly explores the depth of place-based identities in China, as well as the concept of *suzhi*, or “quality,” as sites from which legitimizing discourses may arise. Based on the construction of rural migrants as an Other that cannot fully assimilate into urban Chinese life, I finally return to the question posed at the end of Chapter 2: If the border that divides rural and urban China is not directly tied to enforcement of the shifting jurisdictional boundaries of urban territory, where can we locate the bordering process? I suggest, based in part on theories developed in the field of (international) border studies, that the borders that many Chinese migrants encounter are not mere legal implements, but are in fact embodied and enforced beyond the reach of the law itself.

Identity and local belonging

Local identities are a crucial aspect of identity formation for my interviewees. One migrant worker I spoke to, Lao Jin, had first come to Shanghai from Anhui province in September 1979. As he remembers it, he arrived just after the food markets made such a journey possible. After working for over a decade as a roadside grain peddler, he had worked various jobs before arriving at his current position, delivering drinking water for a local subsidiary of the multinational giant Nestle. When we spoke, he had lived in Shanghai for over twenty years. In the past, he routinely returned to Anhui to work his

land, but more recently he has remained in Shanghai full time. Despite his long tenure as a Shanghai resident when I asked him about the fairness of divisions between rural and urban areas, his first response was to try to help me understand that the question I was asking was based on a false premise: It would be impossible for him to consider himself as a Shanghai person, he argued, pointing out my own identity as an American before equating it to his own incontrovertible identity as an Anhui person “Even if you come here, you are still American. [In the same way] I just think, I am an Anhui person.” Even after twenty years of life in Shanghai, this privileging of local identity functions to naturalize the *hukou* system by legitimating the perpetuation of differences between “locals” and “outsiders”.

The stress on local identity has been widely referenced by many other scholars working on Chinese internal migration. In a manner similar to the forging of transnational ties between local sending communities and their counterparts in instances of transnational circular migration such as that between the US and Mexico (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002, 20), co-villagers from the same regions and rural villages across China retain close ties once they arrive in destination communities. As Li Zhang notes in her ethnography of migrants from Wenzhou, Zhejiang province in Beijing, networks based on shared native place are important driving factors that first brought a significant concentration of migrants to Beijing. These ties have endured and become strengthened, and at this point migrants' social positions depend heavily on their places of origin:

Zhejiang migrants dominate garment, leather, and eyeglass businesses; Xinjiang migrants run restaurants [...] Henan migrants sell vegetables and recycle trash;

Hebei migrants work in construction; Anhui migrant women work as maids; and Shandong migrants work as tricycle peddlers. Migrants from different regions see each other not only as economic competitors but also as social and cultural outsiders. (Zhang 2001, 31)

Beyond the various entrepreneurial sectors in which migrants are divided by their places of origin, local and regional identities also create important political and economic divisions in the context of factory labor. In her ethnography of Guangdong factory workers, Pun Ngai points out that the culturally and spatially loaded question “where are you from?” was the most common greeting between strangers. In the factory where Ngai did her research, local and regional identities attained stereotypical status for managers and workers alike. For managers, workers' regional identities were understood as being linked to various qualities and “defects,” including loyalty or rebelliousness, laziness or the ability to work hard for long hours, clumsiness or precision, and ambition or a lack thereof (Ngai 2005, 121-123).

These qualities were understood as being imparted by the places where migrants were born and grew up. In general, the ability to perform the kind of precise, “modern” labor necessary to manufacture electronic equipment was understood by (urban-identified) line managers as antithetical to the supposedly sloppy, imprecise, and low-quality “pre-modern” rural labor that workers were accustomed to prior to migrating. More specifically, work not only informed hiring decisions and staffing choices, but also formed the primary dividing lines for conflict and competition between workers themselves. Native-place identity was the foundation upon which many close relationships and affiliations between workers were built, and local affiliations became a

means of developing (factional) workplace power, with smaller groups of workers, such as those originating in northern provinces, being relegated to undesirable positions (ibid).

This pervasive emphasis on locality and local belonging functions alongside national identities. When Lao Jin refers to himself as an “Anhui person”, he does not disavow his Chinese identity. In fact, by pointing out my own status as a national Other – an American in China – he placed his status as an Anhui person in Shanghai in a category of regional belonging that parallels attachment to the nation-state. Unlike the complicated politics of ethnic solidarity and regional self-determination demonstrated in Uyghur and Tibetan resistance to full assimilation within the Chinese state (Yeh 2009; E. V. W. Davis 2008), this kind of regional belonging does not necessarily pose a threat to national unity. Rather than being oriented against the imagined community of China as a whole, Lao Jin's association as an Anhui person functions as a supplement to national belonging. In a sense, this kind of parallel belonging can be understood as functioning in the legal realm as well. For Guo (Guo 2014), the *hukou* system, legal regulation of ethnic identities, and national citizenship all function as parallel citizenship regimes. Each has different effects on the lives and livelihoods of the individuals it effects, but all can be meaningfully understood as legal organs of Chinese citizenship. Along the same lines, regional belonging can be productively understood as one subregister of Chinese belonging, with deep roots and important consequences for the millions of migrants who often find themselves physically present but socially and culturally excluded in China's urban metropolises.

Quality and discrimination in *suzhi* discourse

The regional identities and attachments described above are by no means understood as equally valuable. Beyond the stereotypes that employers and migrants themselves apply to certain regional identities, rural migrants are widely considered to be deficient when compared to urban residents. One primary axis for this hierarchical division is the concept of *suzhi*. Loosely translatable as “quality,” *suzhi* has no direct English translation. *Suzhi* is deeply tied to conceptions of modernity and “civilized” comportment, and the “quality” it implies is personal and embodied. This embodied condition can be innate and/or learned, and encompasses a variety of “physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, and ideological qualities of human bodies and their conduct (Jacka 2009, 524).”

Suzhi came into common usage in the 1980s, when it was used to discuss the quality of China's population as a whole in a push by the central government to emphasize the need to improve the “quality” of the Chinese population as a development goal, with “undeveloped” rural populations being seen as a particular target for the improvement (*tigao*) of *suzhi* (Anagnost 2004). This focus was reflected in the emphasis placed on *suzhi* as a goal of education reform, declaring that the goal of the education system ought to be to improve the *suzhi* of the whole population (Goodburn 2009). Since the beginning, *suzhi* has not been understood as being equally distributed. Rather, China's rural population has been repeatedly constructed as being particularly *suzhi* deficient,

although there are significant differences (as in the regional stereotypes mentioned above) in how *suzhi* is stereotypically connected to place throughout rural and urban China (Sun 2009). *Suzhi* may even be seen in operation in the mildly competitive discourse that pits “modern”, “entrepreneurial” Shanghai against “traditional” (but more politically central) Beijing.

It is the divide between rural peasants and an urban middle class, however, that appears to be the most deeply ingrained. Ann Anganost cites an interaction from her research into the educational practices of middle-class parents, whose efforts are largely focused on improving the *suzhi* of their children, to demonstrate the ways *suzhi* is understood in very different ways between the middle class and the class of migrant workers:

One of my interviewees, [...] an urban professional fully invested in managing the educational career of his child, testily interrupted me to say that the use of the term *suzhi* in evaluating the embodied value of both child and migrant referred to “two entirely different kinds of *suzhi*.” For him, *suzhi* represented a differential, a play between plenitude and lack that could not be set into relation with each other. (Anagnost 2004, 190)

Suzhi represents something different when it refers to migrants and the urban middle class – for the former, *suzhi* is commonly understood as that which migrants lack, at least until it is developed through a process of education, acculturation, and the assimilation of urban, middle-class values.

When I discussed urban prejudices against rural migrants with a group of young Shanghainese finance workers, the language of *suzhi* was audible throughout the discussion. As one interviewee, Wang, stated about relationships between rural migrants and the urban middle class,

“Sometimes, we have conflicts because of cultural reasons. And sometimes we have... These people, I think are partly good and partly not that good. Because you know, some of them come from the country. They are not, you know, polite, they’re not educated. So, we don't have a lot of common language with them.”

Education and having the right kind of manners are deeply connected to *suzhi*, and seen as essential for effectively assimilating into the urban way of life. For Wang, some migrants can develop *suzhi*, while others cannot:

[Migrant] workers, they are not well educated because they’re aging, not that young. Like 30’s or 40’s. They come here, and this is one kind of category. Another category is their children. They come to the big city to study. Then, when they graduate, they have this kind of knowledge and they can do white collar [work]. But their parents come here to do the blue collar [work]. I think the objectives, the purpose for them coming is different. For the workers and the, ahh, not well educated or less educated people, they just come for money. And for the others who graduated or study in Shanghai or the big cities, they stay - what they search and plan for is the quality life.

Migrants who have passed the age where they might acquire *suzhi* are seen as permanently deficient – at odds with urban ways of life, and even causing conflicts. The characterization of migrants' goals is important as well: For the children of migrants, as well as rural students whose *gaokao* scores have earned them entry into Shanghai universities, the quality of urban life is a draw that leads them to search and plan for ways to stay. Older migrants, whose ways of life are less flexible are characterized here as not even desiring a truly urban lifestyle. At least in the understanding of many urban residents, the migration of older rural workers is merely temporary, a way to earn money that would be unavailable in rural areas. Thus, *suzhi* links perceptions of class, status, and worth to spatial belonging (Sun 2009).

Suzhi has material impacts on those it categorizes. The residential segregation

pointed out by Luigi Tomba (2009) and cited in Chapter 2 is based not on legal zoning or coding, but on *suzhi*-based classification that divides urban middle and upper classes, rural migrants, and the local class of workers formerly employed in now-shuttered state-owned enterprises. Beyond housing, *suzhi* also affects workers' ability to get jobs, as well as the kind of work they are considered eligible to apply for. In cases where work can be understood as aspirational (as opposed to dead-end manual labor in construction or transportation), management often employs discipline and harsh labor to “educate” migrant workers in the skills necessary to perform as urban workers. Pun Ngai catalogues a wide variety of such disciplinary moments in her ethnography of Guangdong factory workers, pointing out in particular one example in which a production line leader reprimanded a newly arrived worker for scratching the casing of an electronic device, saying “You know you're not plowing a furrow, don't you?” and deriding her rural, peasant-like qualities of “rough hands” and “rough feet” (Ngai 2005, 115-116). As Wanning Sun argues, the continued employment of *suzhi* discourse to disparage migrant workers' poor performance in certain aspects of their work further facilitates place-based discrimination and drives down wages. As she finds in the case of the Shanghai nanny (*baomu*) industry, which is heavily staffed by rural migrant women, non-migrant nannies are able to command much higher wages, to the extent that origin-place of domestic workers becomes a class distinction in itself: Local nannies, who are perceived as being of markedly higher quality than migrants, are hired almost exclusively by the upper echelons of Shanghai society – white-collar workers in foreign companies. Middle-class workers with less disposable income are often unable to pay the wages a local woman

would charge, and hire migrants despite worries that their low-*suzhi* habits might affect their child's development, and that migrants – by their very nature as members of the “floating” mobile population – are less trustworthy (Sun 2009 629-630).

As a discourse employed to categorize rural migrants, the politics of *suzhi* are closely linked to citizenship and the *hukou* system. For Sun, *suzhi* and the *hukou* system are essentially co-constitutive, with the kind of place-branding that *suzhi* entails having its roots in the initial establishment of the *hukou*. At the same time, while *hukou* restrictions have been loosened and mobility is now a possibility for many rural residents, *suzhi* discourse has arisen to fulfill the subsequent need for “exclusion and boundary keeping at a symbolic level (Sun 2009, 622).” Thus, *suzhi* can be seen as one of the primary discursive tools that not only legitimizes the ongoing segregation of migrants in urban areas, but also contributes materially to their segregation outside of the legal framework itself.

Theorizing borders through *suzhi*: The embodiment of not-belonging

The embodied nature of *suzhi* is a particularly interesting element of *suzhi* discourse, because it provides an alternative way of answering the question posed in Chapter 2, where I began to question the location of the border dividing rural and urban China. Because of their fluid nature and lack of enforcement, it is difficult to understand the jurisdictional boundaries that divide rural and urban areas in China as boundaries in the same way that we theorize the more-or-less “hard” militarized territorial boundaries of nation-states. Nonetheless, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, the *hukou* system creates

citizenship categories that in many ways function analogously the kinds of bounded citizenship that exist in the international context. While I have argued that the *hukou* system demonstrates that bordering processes need not be understood as being solely rooted in the boundaries of nation-state territory, this perspective does not fully explain how boundaries can come to be enacted on individual migrants. Based on the ways *suzhi* has come to signify and reinforce the legal boundaries of urban citizenship imposed by China's *hukou* system, I suggest that one way to look for the roots and effects of bordering processes beyond territorial divides themselves might be to think of borders as embodied – as carried in the bodies of migrants themselves, and in the ways migrant bodies are coded and read from the vantage point of migrant-receiving communities.

This analysis is highly indebted to Wanning Sun's reading of the overlap between the *hukou* system and migrants' supposed *suzhi* deficiencies. While she does not consider the embodiment of *suzhi* that she points out as a theory of bordering per se, the connections are readily apparent in her analysis, which I quote here at length:

Suzhi discourse operates at the corporeal level, not just because in theoretical terms it allows the value of one body to be transferred to the other, but more tangibly because it is embedded in an entire array of bodily practices including the following: what bodily smells, touch, and physical bearings are (un)acceptable in daily interaction; whose bodies are seen to be in need of being regulated, managed, and sanitized; and whose rules of bodily contact are dominating. The body functions as a way of regulating class-based difference, anxiety, and desire, allowing the urban middle class to claim superiority to its rural, peasant, or working-class other. Unbeknownst to rural migrants, when they leave the village, enter the city, and walk into urban residents' home as *baomu*, their place of origin has already been abstracted into a signifier of rurality and low *suzhi* which, against their wishes, is reinscribed onto their mobile body. (Sun 2009, 624)

If the legal borders drawn by the *hukou* system are justified and made legible through conceptions of migrants' (deficient) *suzhi*, then these borders are carried in migrants' very

bodies, and made visible through coding of behavior, style, language, and embodied characteristics as being attached to and belonging in certain places and not others.

More directed research would be required to fully explore the ways *suzhi* contributes to a kind of embodied bordering, but in a preliminary way, it is not difficult to draw connections with the ways international border regimes are tied to certain embodied traits. In France, the embodied evidence of torture or other bodily trauma is increasingly being used to sort “legitimate” asylum seekers, who must be granted legal status, from those who cannot substantiate their narratives of abuse or torture and are often subsequently rejected as mere economic migrants, who can be safely excluded through the law (Fassin and D’halluin 2005). In this case, the body becomes a site where specific signifiers alter the legal status of a mobile individual, verifying that their claims to legitimacy are genuine and that the rules governing the provision of asylum do in fact apply to them. Those whose bodies do not demonstrate this embodied worthiness are rendered vulnerable to expulsion and deportation.

In a different context, Lisa Marie Cacho points to the characteristics that make certain lives valuable, and argues that the perpetual criminalization and disenfranchisement of (predominantly Black) felons and undocumented migrants springs from a common experience of social death – a racialized process by which communities are symbolically excised from the national body and deprived of rights. This process is both embodied and spatial: “The bodies and localities of poor, criminalized people of color are signifiers for those who are ineligible for personhood, for those contemporary (il)legal statuses within U.S. law that are legally illegible (Cacho 2012, 6).” That the

embodied boundaries faced by undocumented migrants in the United States are deeply racially coded is a feature of the history of racialized exclusion in this country (see Kanstroom 2007). While *suzhi* discourse and the *hukou* system operate in a very different historical context, the embodied qualities of difference that they enforce on rural Chinese citizens in their home communities and in urban areas are at least reminiscent of the ways bordering processes manifest through the coding of embodied characteristics as negating claims to rights and official status in other contexts.

While it is unfortunately beyond the scope of my research and this thesis to build a definitive analysis of embodied nature of *hukou* status and *suzhi*, the analysis that I have presented offers a tantalizing if preliminary way to think about bordering processes beyond their traditional normative foundations in the sovereign territory of the nation-state. While structure of the *hukou* system is strikingly similar to that of many national citizenship regimes, it is the differences and difficulties this comparison implies – the lack of a hard boundary dividing rural and urban areas in particular – that ultimately lead me to think of borders as embodied. There is further work to be done on this issue, both in China and elsewhere. To do so, however, will require the development of an understanding of border enforcement that goes beyond justification of bordering through notions of sovereign territory. Like Cacho's work, such analyses of borders and bordering will have to be aware of the ways that national borders function in parallel to other racialized imaginaries that justify the excision of spaces and people from the bounds of full legal belonging. At the same time, such an analysis should be conscious of the ways borders are created and enforced apart from the territorial boundaries of the nation-state.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored the potential of a perspective that brings theories of (international) boundary-making to bear on the unique politics of China's *hukou* system. This comparison seems somewhat odd at first glance. After all, international boundaries hold a special place in our understanding of mobility. As a United States citizen, I am accustomed to unfettered mobility within national boundaries. My own family has made great use of this ability to move freely: My mother and father only met because my mother, who grew up in a rust-belt town in Ohio, moved West as a recent college graduate, restless and looking for new surroundings. After my parents married in Colorado, they moved frequently, following new opportunities – from Colorado to Arizona to Washington (my birthplace), back to Arizona, then to California and finally landing in South Dakota. Personally, I have taken a more eastward trajectory, leaving rural South Dakota for the Twin Cities in Minnesota before moving to Wisconsin and, for now, to Kentucky. The ability to move freely within national borders is seen as a foundational right, to the extent that it is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the same time, mobility across international borders is understood as rightly constrained by the sovereign right of nation-states to regulate and determine which foreigners may or may not enter their territory, for what reasons, and for how long.

This sovereign right to control international mobility is often seen as the foundation that legitimizes state control of migration across international borders. As such, it features heavily in popular discourse about migration and border control, as well as scholarly discussions of international boundary-making. By discussing the *hukou*

system in the same register as international bordering, I have argued that it is important to complicate these common understandings of how movement can be constrained, and how these constraints are legitimized. In China, as I and many others have shown, the dichotomy between free movement within national borders and limited mobility across them is nonexistent. Instead, internal migration is subject to regulations that make it difficult to officially change residence, require migrants to register as temporary residents of urban areas, and deprive all such “temporary” residents of most of the benefits offered to full urban residents. Thus, the *hukou* household registration system functions as a parallel register through which citizenship and belonging are understood in China (Guo 2014). While millions of migrants have traveled from rural to urban areas, and make up significant percentages of the population of some of China's largest cities, the vast majority of these migrants are legally understood as making up a “floating” population that is given little to no opportunity to become full, legally registered members of the urban polity. The *hukou* system spatializes internal belonging, drawing a legal divide between “rural” and “urban” population categories, as well as attaching households and individuals to specific jurisdictions. As such, I have argued that it constitutes a bordering system that enforces the boundaries of citizenship in urban China.

To understand the *hukou* system in this way troubles assumptions about international bordering in two ways. First, because the *hukou* system functions without the benefit of widely accepted norms of sovereign territory and national citizenship, the fact that it shares significant functionality with international bordering processes invites the question of whether norms of sovereign territory do in fact lie at the basis of border

control policies, or whether shared logics of border control may be considered instead as artifacts of political expediency and the illegitimate exercise of state violence. After all, the specters of words like apartheid and segregation – now synonymous with racialized control over access to space – are easily raised by discussions borders existing internal to nation-states. The violence of migrant detention, deportation, and border control, however, continues to be widely understood as justified. Part of my hope in juxtaposing international bordering and the *hukou* system, then, is to bolster critiques of international bordering that have already attempted to connect international and internal border-making through the phrase “global apartheid” (van Houtum 2010; Nevins and Aizeki 2008; Sharma 2005). By calling attention to the fact that borders are drawn apart from the sovereign right of the nation-state, I demonstrate the potential for analyses of the kinds of bordering that exist apart from and alongside nation-state boundaries.

In locating China's *hukou* system as an example of a “non-traditional” border, my thesis also demonstrates one of the possible responses to the various recent calls for new border epistemologies (Szary and Giraut 2015; Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009). In particular, the fact that the *hukou* system differentiates status without drawing fixed territorial lines offers a novel perspective on the broader trend in border studies toward the examination of border enforcement that takes place far from the boundary line itself, when immigration enforcement becomes internalized and takes place deep within national territory (Gilbert 2009; Coleman 2007) or is externalized and spreads beyond the confines of national territory (Menjívar 2014; Mountz 2011). In order to understand how the *hukou* system delineates boundaries without drawing hard and fast territorial lines, I

have turned to an analysis of the ways that the embodied characteristics of otherness – present in Chinese rural migrants as a supposed lack of *suzhi*, or “quality” – ultimately perform a bordering function in themselves. In this sense, I have suggested that the border that divides rural migrants from urban residents in China may be carried with migrants as they cross into the symbolic field of urban China.

These conclusions have considerable implications for future research in borders and migration studies generally, as well as for studies of Chinese internal migration. The possibility of separating the tight link between citizenship, border-making and the territory of the nation-state, in particular, creates questions about the ways that theories of international bordering might be applied to consider the internal boundaries that exist within states outside of China. Some of this work has already been done, including attempts to consider the prison-industrial complex and border-making projects alongside one another (Loyd, Mitchelson, and Burrige 2013) as well as work on the intersections of race, citizenship, migration, and criminal law (Dilts 2014; Cacho 2012). Citizenship and rights in the United States and other liberal democracies are not homogenous, and rights and opportunities differ substantially from place to place. Beyond China, the insights drawn from scholarship on borders and citizenship should be applied to the myriad ways that legal and social categorizations become actualized as borders within the territory of nation-states themselves.

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Vita

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Education

2011 BA, Macalester College

Cum Laude

International Studies, Latin American Studies.

Honors Thesis in Latin American Studies: “We Have Something to Say: Ideas and Mobilization in the Migrant Solidarity Movement”

2007 Spearfish High School, Spearfish, SD

Publications: Material Interventions on the U.S.-Mexico Border: Investigating a Sited Politics of Migrant Solidarity. *Antipode*. 2015.

Conference Presentations

2014 “Sites of Struggle: Enacting Pro-Migrant Solidarity on the U.S. - Mexico Border”
Paper presented at Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting, April 8, 2014

2011 “Arizona to Minnesota: Detention and Solidarity”

Presentation at Saint Cloud State University Global Goes Local Conference on Conditions of Immigrant Workers and Families, April 12th 2011

2011 “*Conscientizacion*: Framing Processes and Mobilization in the Migrant Solidarity Movement”

Paper presented at University of Texas–Austin Institute of Latin American Studies Student Association Conference on Latin America, February 3-5, 2011.

Awards

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program, 2015: Honorable Mention

National Science Foundation East Asia and Pacific Summer Institute, 2014: \$10,000

University of Kentucky Multi-Year Fellowship, 2014-15: \$40,000

Daniel R. Reedy Quality Achievement Award 2014-15: \$6,000 over two years
National Merit Scholarship, 2007: \$2,500

Internships / Employment

2009 – 2011 Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota – Detention Project / Document Translation

2010 The Language Banc – Medical Interpreter

2010 Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha – Organizing Intern

2010 No More Deaths/No Más Muertes – Abuse Documentation Intern

2009 Minnesota Chicano-Latino Affairs Council (CLAC) – Community and Research Fellow

2009 Centro Cultural Chicano – Adult Education Tutor

Languages

Spanish

Mandarin Chinese