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Hukou as a case of multi-level citizenship

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9fj6m9hn>

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### Publication Date

2021-10-19

### DOI

10.4324/9781003225843-12

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*Hukou* as a Case of Multi-level Citizenship  
By Samantha A. Vortherms

In *The Routledge Handbook of Chinese Citizenship*

Edited by Zhonghua Guo

London: Routledge 2021.

Citizenship in China cannot be understood by looking at the national level alone. Instead, membership rules and rights entitlements that define citizenship operate below the national level. The local, not central, state provides the majority of citizenship rights and define who is entitled to those rights—controlling local membership. Like other contexts with sub-national citizenship (Maas 2017), China’s citizenship system must be understood at multiple levels, with individuals belonging not only to the national polity but also the local level. Simply looking at the national level would obscure the depth of potential citizenship rights available in China, but also variation in how citizens access those rights. Local government both provide rights and limit who is eligible to claim benefits. This means citizenship functions at the local level.

Local citizenship in China is highly institutionalized. Belonging and entitlements to rights provided by the local government is dictated by the *hukou*, or household registration system. A political institution rooted in centuries of Chinese bureaucracy, the modern *hukou* is the primary identity document defining membership and entitlements for local citizenship. Accessing fundamental citizenship rights depends on your registration status (Cheng and Selden 1994, Vortherms 2019, Chan 2009, Solinger 1999b). Every citizen in China is entitled to a *hukou* registration with either their private household (家庭户口 *jiating hukou*) or through their employer or school (集体户口 *jiti hukou*).<sup>1</sup> Registration includes basic identifying information, a specific address of registration, and a type: urban, rural, or resident. Those without local *hukou* are considered non-citizens and denied access to locally provided government entitlements. Those with local rural *hukou* status are often treated, but formally and informally, as second class citizens (Solinger 1999b).

This chapter outlines how the subnational nature of China’s citizenship is a fundamental design and functional feature of Chinese citizenship. Local citizenship through the *hukou* system is required to access the full suite of local citizenship rights and to be considered a citizen by the local state. It is rooted in historically driven institutional forms of state belonging and deeply intertwined with the social welfare systems of the modern Chinese state. I then discuss how issues related to *hukou*-defined citizenship complicates traditional Western conceptions of citizenship. Finally, the chapter concludes with a

discussion of how lessons from China's *hukou* system can broaden the existing literature on citizenship by understanding the Chinese system in comparative context.

### **The *Hukou* System**

China's modern *hukou* system is the latest evolution of bureaucratic institutions used to define, delineate, and manage the Chinese population over hundreds of years. The *hukou* counts the *xiangtui* system of urban and rural hierarchical bureaucracy (Western Zhou Dynasty 1046–256 BCE, refined by Han Dynasty 206 BCE–220 CE),<sup>2</sup> the land equalization system that distributed land-use rights across households (*juntian zhi*, Tang Dynasty 618–906 CE),<sup>3</sup> and the *baojia* system of taxation and conscription (Song Dynasty 960–1279)<sup>4</sup> among its institutional ancestors (Cheng 1991, Wang 2005). Each of these systems layered belonging, based on either one's location or urban versus rural status, onto the idea of dynastic subjects. These registration systems defined the rights and responsibilities of individuals, including land distribution, taxation, migration control, and conscription.

The Great Leap Forward (1958) saw a significant shift in the *hukou* system as detailed and totalizing control over the population became a necessity for implementing the command economy. Tasked with “maintaining social order, protecting citizens' rights and interests and serving socialist construction” (State Council 1958), the household registration system allowed the national government to specifically allocate labor like other factors of production. Instead of registering individuals as part of kinship-based families, it created units based on work organization: urban work units, or *danwei*, in the urban centers and rural collectives in the countryside (Cheng and Selden 1994). Labor became socialized, a necessary lever of state control. Like other local-citizenship institutions designed to implement command economies, including the Soviet *propiska*, the state used redistribution of resources, including housing, healthcare, and food rations to enforce order on society (Buckley 1995). Anyone living outside of their officially designated location lacked entitlements to centrally distributed and managed goods, creating strong incentives to comply with strict labor and migration policies.

This modern form of registration created a fundamental shift to comprehensive rights provided in urban areas. The Stalinist industrial policy followed by the People's Republic of China in the early Mao era, focused investment in urban centers as drivers of economic growth. This urban bias meant that urban centers, and the people who lived and worked in them, gained the full support of the state, with cradle to grave social support. Rural areas were largely neglected. Rural cooperatives outside of the formal state were expected to provide resources and services for their people, in contrast to the highly structured provision in urban centers (Cheng and Selden 1994, Croll 1999, Solinger 1999b). This urban-rural division was not just geographic but also formally institutionalized in one's *hukou* identity. You not only

lived in urban and rural environments but your *hukou* marked you as either urban and entitled to state provisions or rural and excluded.

Initially, membership regulations restricted the physical movement of people such that only local citizens could reside within a given locality.<sup>5</sup> The *hukou* constrained all workers and their families to their registered location to facilitate the command economy and prevent excess burden on fledgling industrial centers (Cheng 1991). State planners feared that market-driven migration would overwhelm urban centers, challenging the ability of the state to provide for industrial workers privileged by industrial policy. Enforcement of *hukou* mobility restrictions occurred through government provisions of subsistence necessities. An unauthorized migrant would find themselves without housing or food rations, with no local market to rely on.

Significant institutional change occurred when market reforms accompanied Reform and Opening Up. New industrial policy could not succeed without a dynamic labor market where rural workers were pulled into factories. In the early years of reform during the 1980s, migration was allowed if migrants did not depend on government resources. A new *hukou*, titled “*hukou* with self-supplied grain,” allowed outsiders to come to the city center on the condition of ineligibility for government entitlements. During the 1980s and 1990s, local government redistribution of resources shifted not to a logic driven by market competition, but a need to conserve resources (Solinger 2014). This meant exploiting institutions like the *hukou* used to restrict the fiscal burden inherent in socialist redistribution.

Similar to the concrete goods of housing and food, social welfare programs, including health insurance and education, were originally designed along *hukou* lines. Only locals were entitled to services and urban entitlements were better funded than rural ones. Even as the state moved away from rights provisions in the reform era and formal, explicit migration controls completely disappeared in the 1990s with the rise of local markets for food and housing, government welfare programs reflected the *hukou*'s institutional legacy of division (Duckett 2011). While national reforms after 2003 pushed to integrate social welfare programs, the core of Chinese citizenship rights, holding a local urban *hukou* is the only permanent means of securing entitlements and lacking one prevents access to citizenship rights (Cheng and Selden 1994, Vortherms 2019).

Distributing citizenship rights is just one way the *hukou* system acts as a local citizenship institution. Its other essential function is as a membership institution. Citizenship is fundamentally a delineation of membership, where some hold a privileged, included status, and others are formally excluded. Local governments write the rules governing who is eligible for local *hukou* and who can transfer their *hukou*. They are the gatekeepers of local membership. The acquisition of *hukou*, by design, mirrors international citizenship acquisition processes and creates citizenship regimes within the Chinese

local state. Unlike informal or less institutionalized local citizenship practices, the local government practices strict control over who is entitled to locally provided citizenship rights.

*Hukou* type and location for the majority of Chinese citizens is registered at birth: parents register their children through a *jus sanguinis*, or blood-based right, to a specific *hukou* location and type. Before 1999, only mothers could register their children, making the system fully matrilineally inherited. After 1999, either parent can register their newborn in their *hukou* location, although many cities still implement barriers to fathers registering their children.<sup>6</sup> Changing one's status—to transfer one's *hukou* (转户口 *zhuan hukou*)—involves qualifying for a highly restrictive transfer program in a new city; a significant bureaucratic process involving approval from three levels of local government as well as in the home government; and relinquishing one's old status. Local governments manipulate local naturalization policies to privilege some populations and not others. Generally, migrants who are wealthy and those with higher education have more opportunities to change their status (Zhang 2012).

While a constantly evolving institution, the *hukou* system of the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century bore many of the same characteristics of the original system and operates as a formal institution of social control adapted to the societal changes of the new market-socialism. Institutional reforms to the *hukou* itself beginning in the early 2000s signaled the merging of the outdated urban and rural residence statuses. As part of the greater wave to integrate social welfare systems to advance Hu Jintao's scientific development of a harmonious society, the central government encouraged localities to integrate urban and rural populations especially in small and medium cities. Sub-nationally, this push was met with varying tactics and levels of success. For example, Chengdu spearheaded reforms to integrate social welfare programs, removing the functional differences between the urban and rural status. Chongqing infamously pushed a "land for *hukou*" model where ruralites traded land-use rights for local urban *hukou*. About a dozen cities, less than 5 percent of all cities, mostly in Guangdong stopped issuing rural *hukous* all together and actively integrated existing rural populations into urban status, including Foshan and Shenzhen. Two decades later, progress on these reforms remain spottily implemented.

Mobility restrictions previously synonymous with *hukou* restrictions are long gone, but both the formal and informal institutional discrimination against those with rural or non-local *hukou* lasts. It is these related institutions, dictating one's identity and filtering all interactions with the state, that *hukou* still defines Chinese citizenship at the local level. Which rights and protections from the state an individual holds are defined by where their *hukou* is registered and the type of *hukou* they hold. Local governments view those with non-local *hukou* as non-citizens who lack entitlements to government services and rural *hukou* holders are systematically treated as second-class citizens compared to urban registrants (Solinger 1999b).<sup>7</sup>

## The 21<sup>st</sup> Century *Hukou* and Citizenship

The institutional legacy of the imperial *hukou* Mao era transformed *hukou* into one of the most important citizenship institutions in China. Citizenship rights are defined by socio-economic collective rights including social welfare and local state redistribution (Perry 2008). Access to these rights depends on holding the proper *hukou*. Without *hukou*, one has little access to government provisions and can be treated as a non-citizen.

Scholars have long studied the *hukou* as a citizenship institution. The strongest theme in the existing *hukou* as citizenship literature emphasized how local-urban registration was a necessary condition for accessing citizenship rights (Solinger 1999b, Huang and Guo 2015, Guo and Liang 2017, Woodman 2016, Chan 1996, Zhang 2013, Cheng and Selden 1994). From the policy perspective, significant research explores the perverse incentives for local governments to strengthen the membership elements of local citizenship. Excluding as many migrants as possible reduces local financial burdens and helps maintain control over society even if these fiscal concerns are unfounded (Li, Li, and Chen 2010, Zhang and Wang 2010, Wang 2005, Smart and Smart 2001). Scholars also compare and contrast local citizenship and domestic migration in China with other international contexts (Kovacheva et al. 2012, Solinger 1999a)

The modern *hukou* system interacts with citizenship at the local level in three key ways. First and most formally, many of the institutions that define citizenship rights still divide the population along *hukou* lines. Social welfare programs remain segregated by *hukou* type. Local governments are responsible for providing the bulk of citizenship rights defined by access to government services, welfare entitlements, and local voting rights. The current system of rights provisions resulted from the decentralization of government services, with local governments now dominating service provision (Vortherms 2015, Croll 1999). The quality of services depends on which local government an individual is registered with (Huang 2015).

For example, the national health insurance programs are divided by *hukou* location and type. There are both urban and rural resident insurance programs, run separately and are often geographically constrained. A migrant seeking medical treatment in a city where they live but are not registered faces barriers to using their health insurance. While the central government issued directives to integrate urban and rural programs and to make health insurance programs transferrable, in practice, very little integration has occurred at the local level (Liu, Vortherms, and Hong 2017).

Similarly, only local residents are guaranteed rights provided by the local government. Non-local residents are expected to access government services elsewhere. In fact, many of the reforms pushing to integrate rural and urban services and populations have strengthened the local-non-local divisions among the populations (Wang, Guo, and Cheng 2015, Smart and Smart 2001, Yang 2020). Governments may

begin to integrate rural populations previously excluded but do so at the expense of non-local residents. And the quality and depth of rights available depend on where one is registered, as different local governments provide different levels of protections (Huang 2015, Ratigan 2017, Chan 2015).

Second, even when barriers are removed, administrative burden prevents the full realization of welfare rights. Because local citizenship is so entrenched in social welfare institutions, a fragmented system of entitlements mean that physical mobility of workers undermines the realization of rights. For example, reforms in 2010 to the urban pension system (Urban Employee Basic Pension System 城镇职工基本养老保险制度) aimed to increase the transferability of pensions for migrants. While creating a national standard allowing migrants to transfer their pensions between jurisdictions, transfer was incomplete—up to 60 percent of firm contributions rather than full amount—subject to different financial capabilities of one’s registered *hukou* location, and interrupted by fragmented administration of the pension system (Zhang and Li 2018). The entrenched nature of *hukou* in almost all forms of social welfare mean that welfare systems reinforce local citizens. Even national-level reforms meant to mitigate the segregating nature of local citizenship are often unable to disentangle its effects.

Third, informal discrimination maintains social segregation along *hukou* lines. Citizenship is fundamentally an identity institution. It defines who does and does not belong to the polity. This marker of belonging extends beyond formal state services, however, and includes social and local identities. Locals consider migrant workers and individuals from rural areas of “lower quality” compared to the entitled, local urban elite. *Hukou* discrimination results in lower social status, distrust, employment barriers, and income losses (Gravemeyer, Gries, and Xue 2010, Wang, Guo, and Cheng 2015, Cheng et al. 2013). Even changing one’s *hukou* may not fully transform a “naturalized” local citizen into a native citizen because of deeply seated divisions reinforcing the importance of “localness” for inclusion (Woodman 2016).

### **Chinese Local Citizenship through the Western Lens**

In this section, I highlight two views of citizenship from the western context and identify the ways in which the Chinese case does or does not fit into the broader existing narrative. If we define citizenship using classical conceptions developed in Western Europe, it would be easy to conclude that China lacks citizenship. This is due both to where the state-citizen relationship occurs and the types of rights the state provides.

Classical western conceptions of citizenship have two defining features at odds with citizenship in China: they are defined at the national (state) level and require direct political participation as a defining feature of citizenship. The state, and the nation-state specifically, is most often the center of citizenship analysis. Political polities defined by regimes outline the space in which citizenship occurs. A

monolithic state bestows upon its people political rights and the ability to participate in public life and guarantees property rights. Subjects, in contrast, lack voice in governing and have little claim to property of the state. Political liberalization and the rise of the Westphalian system of nation-states and self-determination reinforced these connections between state and citizen (Diener 2017). The right to vote became the core citizenship right that distinguished citizen among subjects. Democracy and citizenship go hand in hand, as the logic follows. If the most ideal-type understanding of citizenship is applied, only western, democratic citizenship can occur. The bluntest consequences of this stylistically view of the traditional citizenship literature is that the rest of the world falls into the non-liberated class of subjects. Empires and non-democratic regimes have subjects rather than citizens.

Based purely on this stark understanding of citizenship meaning national-level belonging that guarantees political voting rights, China has no citizenship. There are no direct elections for central-level leaders. If we loosen the definition of citizen from political voice via participation but also include property ownership, China again falls short. Rural farmers hold only land-use rights and the state regularly reallocates this land disrupting property rights in their simplest form.

Continued dependence on Marshallian conceptions of citizenship rights dramatically limits the application of western conceptions of citizenship to the Chinese case. In Marshall's seminal essays, he argues that citizenship rights develop consecutively from civil to political to social rights, defined almost purely by individualistic standards. It is widely recognized that this formulation is, normatively, elevating individual rights over collective rights. This balance simply does not apply in other parts of the world. Contexts like China fail quite noticeably on these individual rights provision. The true value of belonging in China, the value of citizenship, is defined by socio-economic collectivist rights (Perry 2008). Like many political contexts outside of the Western world, in democracies and non-democracies alike, citizenship rights are defined by collective rights (Distelhorst and Fu 2019, Mann 1987, Meijer 2017).

The bivariate understanding of citizenship—where either you are a citizen or not—routinely emphasized in the literature and through government policy, is not the only conception of citizenship. Many scholars, including those of western-style citizenship, reject this simplification of the citizen-non-citizen division, both when democratic political rights are present and when they are not. Recent scholarship pushes beyond the binary to recognize multiple layers of citizenship, from supra-national (Soysal 1994, Strumia 2017) to local citizenship (Maas 2017) to hierarchies of citizenship (Chung 2017). It is in these conceptions of citizenship more detached from the nation-state, that China's local citizenship is located. The application of these broader, more fluid understandings of citizenship as a membership institution do provide value to the study of Chinese citizenship because they relax the normative assumption of national-level democracy-dependent citizenship.



The rising field of multilevel citizenship, for example, helps conceptualize the relationship between national and local citizenship (Maas 2017). Individuals having a variety of citizenship rights with many layers of belonging (Chung 2017). The Chinese case of local citizenship highlights this variation. Looking at the national level, Chinese citizenship appears weak, with little social rights and almost no political participation. Citizenship responsibilities are located primarily at the national level in China, but local membership dictates entitlements to and provision of citizenship rights (Vortherms 2015). This localization includes limited political rights, such as property and voting. Locally political participation occurs through frequent, although unfair and unfree, elections, engagement with the local government, oversight of local leaders, and popular protest. Local political participation is weak, but a key feature of China's authoritarian stability (Chen 2012, Lee and Zhang 2013). And it is the local government that provides the socio-economic collective rights that define the value of Chinese citizenship. Because of this, while Chinese citizenship does not fit squarely in the traditional studies of citizenship from the western lens, it does engage directly with newer strands of the citizenship field in understanding citizenship below the national level and citizenship defined by collective entitlements rather than national rights.

### **Chinese Local Citizenship in Comparative Context**

As argued throughout this volume, the Chinese case has a lot to add to the study of citizenship broadly. The subnational operation of citizenship through the *hukou* system provides an essential case of highly institutionalized multilevel citizenship, re-centers the discussion of citizenship as a membership institution, and provides an example of non-democratic citizenship.

First, as discussed in the previous section, national-level understandings of both the polity and individual engagement dominate the citizenship literature. The study of federalism only recently expanded into the idea of multi-level citizenship where individuals have both a national-level citizenship identity but also a local belonging that mediates the experiences of citizenship (Maas 2017). These “meso-level” citizenship institutions, defined as institutions between the macro and micro level, are particularly important for understanding non-Western contexts (Chung, Draudt, and Tian 2020, Chung 2017). China is an ideal institutionalized case where decentralization of the state led to decentralization of citizenship, including rights and formal belonging. The meso-level is clearly defined at the local state level and reinforced through institutional arrangements of distribution. Because of the *hukou*, China is one essential case of local citizenship: one with codified local rights provision and clearly delineated local membership. While superficially a stark contrast to democratic regimes, in reality, China lies on the same spectrum as democratic federalist states.

Localized citizenship is not new. The Soviet *propiska* system is possibly the most widely cited formal local citizenship regime. Residents of the Soviet Union's largest cities and most strategically important state-run farms held a *propiska*. Only those with a local *propiska* could live and work in these cities (Buckley 1995). An extreme example of rights being dictated by local citizenship is the Bantu system of apartheid South Africa. Black residents were stripped of any and all citizenship rights in white coastal and urban areas of the country. The black population was only entitled to the most meager of citizenship rights, such as residence rights, in hinterland "Bantu," or homeland, regions (Jones 1999). The Bantu system is a contrasting example of local citizenship based not only on geography, but, more importantly, on racial and ethnic groups. Furthermore, the dramatic stripping of citizenship rights from black populations under the guise of local citizenship marks the South African case an extreme example of how local citizenship can be used for ideological discrimination.

The institutional legacies built by formalized local citizenship also outlast the regimes that implement them. Many former Soviet republics, especially those in Central Asia, still use a *propiska* system to control access to the largest cities and the welfare system therein even though the full soviet style command economy and the Soviet Union itself has been dismantled (Tukmadiyeva 2016, Turaeva-Hoehne 2011). Welfare provision in Russia still bears the legacy of *hukou* divisions because state provision of socio-economic rights and services was designed with the internal passport divisions as a key implementing element.

Lessons from the Chinese case of sub-national citizenship are not isolated to extreme versions of local citizenship, however. Even strong federal democracies have local citizenship processes and institutions. The most famous of these is Switzerland with strong, thick citizenship rights defined at the local level. When an immigrant wants to naturalize as a Swiss citizen, their application is voted on within their local municipality (Helbling 2013). Federal welfare states with decentralized control of rights provisions creates local citizens with potentially differential access to rights (Maas 2017, Wallner 2009). Chinese local citizenship is not, of course, the same as, say, provincial residency in Canada. But the Chinese *hukou* falls well into this spectrum of local citizenship cases. In many respects, it is more pervasive than the more famous case of the *propiska* because every city and village has *hukou* designations, rather than the largest, most important places.<sup>8</sup> As such, the Chinese *hukou* is an essential case for understanding both formal systems more similar to China and informal systems of local citizenship in federal and decentralized contexts, regardless of regime type. Understanding the balance of national versus local citizenship and locating where citizenship rights and belonging operate is an important exercise for all political systems. Without this understanding, scholars are likely to misunderstand or misrepresent citizenship and its consequences. Strong central mandates for access to citizenship rights mean little if local governments vary in their means and political will to implement

them. This occurs even in advanced democracies such as the United States where different states have different barriers to accessing the right to vote or obtaining healthcare options. The key difference is that membership restrictions in the United States are significantly lower than in China. In the United States, residency is a notification process rather than a permission process which requires government approval. Moving, however, is not free, and not all citizens can “vote with their feet” and change districts as they please.

Second, understanding the *hukou* system also allows us to focus on citizenship as membership. Citizenship is fundamentally a membership institution. It marks who is included in the polity and who is excluded. Citizenship rights define what the consequences are for inclusion, but not necessarily the inclusion itself. Because the Chinese system is highly institutionalized, it provides an extreme case of this fundamental element of citizenship. By studying Chinese citizenship through the lens of localized citizenship and the *hukou* system, we can bring the core of the citizenship concept—membership—back into focus.

Developing the membership part of citizenship studies is particularly important to extend the academic understanding of citizenship beyond the experiences of advanced Western democracies. Concept continuity is essential in the assessment of academic concepts, but so, too, is diversity of perspectives. By focusing on the membership element of citizenship, our existing study of citizenship can travel well beyond the boundaries of the Western world and bring the experience of citizenship in advanced democracies into comparison with other country concepts.

Finally, the Chinese case of sub-national citizenship provides an important example of non-democratic citizenship. The current field of citizenship studies lacks a theoretical understanding of non-democratic citizenship. Chinese citizenship rights are not defined by individualistic political rights, but rather socio-economic collectivist rights (Perry 2008), and rights rarely operate at the national level. One key element of non-democratic citizenship and how individuals access rights is the sub-national provision of those rights. Non-democratic states must uphold their side of the “authoritarian bargain,” to provide social stability and economic development in exchange for more limited political rights. The key institutional process that allows non-democratic governments to maintain legitimacy at the national level is the decentralization of citizenship processes.

## **Conclusions**

Local citizenship is an essential element of how citizenship operates in China. Belonging at the local level, defined by household registration, entitles you to local government services and the collective socio-economic rights that define the value of Chinese citizenship. Local governments legally classify people who live locally but are registered elsewhere either as second-class citizens or non-citizens within

their own country. These local citizenship institutions developed during the command economy era continue to influence how Chinese citizens access their rights. The major consequence of hierarchies of citizenship in China is continued socio-economic inequality, with unequal access to protections from the state. This form of inequality may be more important for future political stability than income inequality (Whyte 2016).

By expanding the understanding of what citizenship is and how it operates in non-Western contexts, China provides an important and substantively important case. It requires a non-normative understanding of citizenship rights, but by doing so, citizenship becomes a global, rather than a regional phenomenon. Including China in the wider study of citizenship is particularly important when understanding multi-level citizenship, a growing field in the international citizenship literature. Because China is a highly institutionalized case of local citizenship, its institutions and the consequences thereof must be included in any understanding of how multi-level citizenship operates, regardless of the region or regime type. Indeed, the Chinese *hukou* systems is often mentioned, if not explored deeply, in discussion of local citizenship. This rich case is a necessity for understanding the broader phenomenon and an important comparison both for countries with highly institutionalized local citizenship such as Vietnam and the Central Asian states, but also less institutionalized settings such as federal democracies.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Since Reform and Opening Up, collective *hukou* have slowly phased out with most people now holding private household *hukou*. As of 2016, approximately one percent of the population lack any *hukou* registration. Political barriers related to birth planning and migration prevent parents from registering their children, who then fall through the cracks as non-citizens in their own country (Vortherms 2019).

<sup>2</sup> The *xiangxui* system created two bureaucratic hierarchies in imperial China, one for urban land and one for rural land and the people living there. The *xiangsui* system is the first institution that formally divided urban and rural administration.

<sup>3</sup> The *juntian* system systematically redistributed land to adults allowing only a portion for permanent land ownership. It also created fixed tax expectations based on land allotments.

<sup>4</sup> The *baojia* system grouped families into collective units used to ensure public order and responsible for providing men for the militia. It later evolved into the unit responsible for providing taxes.

<sup>5</sup> Most locations are registered at the county (县, 县级市) level. Recently, more reforms to the system have pushed this registration specifically to smaller townships (镇) in particular.

<sup>6</sup> City governments, for example, can require extra paperwork such as blood tests showing paternity or formal certification that the newborn is not registered elsewhere.

<sup>7</sup> The original *hukou* system only included urban and rural statuses, or non-agricultural and agricultural types. In the early 2000s, some cities and counties began experimenting with integrating urban and rural residencies to create a unified “resident” *hukou*. While the central government pushes for this integration, such reforms remain spottily implemented in 2020. In the 2013 wave of the Chinese Household Income Project Survey, approximately ten percent of the sample had a resident *hukou* instead of an urban or rural residency.

<sup>8</sup> Reforms of the 2010s suggest that the central government is attempting to reform the system to a more propiska-like system where local *hukou* and urban/rural distinctions dissolve while the largest cities get stricter. Implementation of this shift remains spotty, as discussed above.

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