

**BIG AND SMALL CITY PREFERENCES OF MIGRANT
WORKERS IN CHINA: CASE STUDIES OF BEIJING AND
JINZHOU**

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ABSTRACT

Set in the New-Style Urbanisation era in China, this thesis focuses upon migrant workers in two case study cities—one super-large municipality Beijing and one small county-level city Jinzhou. The Chinese government put forward the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014 to combat the big city preferences of migrant workers and direct more of them into small cities and towns. This study has adopted a mixed methods approach and collected primary data through a face-to-face survey and in-depth interviews of migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou, which is supplemented with secondary data from various sources.

The study found that migrant workers in Beijing had different characteristics than those in Jinzhou. They were relatively older, better educated, predominately male, and had more urban employment experiences than those in Jinzhou. Migrants had moved primarily for economic reasons, such as employment opportunities, in both Beijing and Jinzhou. However, many migrant workers in Jinzhou also chose that city because it was close to their hometown villages. Migrant workers were attracted to Beijing because it had more employment opportunities, higher wages, and better infrastructure and services, however, they were also faced with higher living costs, poor traffic conditions, more discrimination and lower social status.

When asked about their migration intentions in the next five years, it was clear that migrant workers, especially those who were better educated with high incomes and good social networks, preferred larger urban centres to small cities or towns. Since the discontinuation of the ‘deportation policies’ in 2003, which made rural-urban migration illegal without according hukou conversion, Chinese citizens are now legally allowed to reside somewhere which does not match their hukou registration. However, the hierarchical hukou regulations, as advocated by the New-Style Urbanisation policies, appear to have prevented migrant workers from transferring their hukou from rural to urban in larger cities, and yet has not changed their migration intentions to go to those cities.

In other words, little has changed in the preference of migrant workers for large cities, especially of those who are better educated with high incomes and good social networks. To improve the attractiveness of small cities and towns for migrant workers as preferable

migration destination, this study suggests a significant change in the hierarchical resource distribution system across cities of different administrative ranks, especially in respect to fiscal allocation and resources, which are essential to create employment opportunities, to improve wages, to develop infrastructure, and to provide adequate education and medical services.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

I give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Sign: _

Date: 24/02/2020

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACROMYMS

ACMI	Administration Centre of Medical Insurance
AMAP	AMAP Traffic Analysis Report of China's Major Cities
BMBS	Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics
BMG	Beijing Municipal Government
BMBF	Beijing Municipal Bureau of Finance
BMCE	Beijing Municipal Commission of Education
BPLR	Bureau of Planning and Land Resources
COBMG	Central Office of Beijing Municipal Government
COSCC	Central Office of the State Council of China
CPC	Communist Party of China
DRCSC	Development Research Centre of the State Council
DiDi	DiDi Report on Traffic of Main Cities in China
EII	Employment Injury Insurance
JEB	Jinzhou Education Bureau
JOTG	Jinzhou Official Town Government
JRDC	Jinzhou Regional Documentary Committee
HAF	Housing Accumulation Fund
HRSS	Human Resource and Social Security Bureau
IBMIRU	Integrated Basic Medical Insurance for Rural and Urban Residents
MI	Maternity Insurance
MIUE	Medical Insurance for Urban Employees
MIUR	Medical Insurance for Urban Residents
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRCMI	New Rural Cooperative Medical Insurance
NRSEI	New Rural Social Endowment Insurance
OR	Odds Ratio
PPR	Property Purchase Restrictions
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRC-CPG	Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China
PRC-MHURD	Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the Republic of China
PRC-NBS	National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China

PRC-NHC	National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China
SCC	State Council of China
SEIUE	Social Endowment Insurance for Urban Employees
SEIUR	Social Endowment Insurance for Urban Residents
SPBS	Shijiazhuang Prefectural Bureau of Statistics
SPG	Shijiazhuang Prefectural Government
UI	Unemployment Insurance

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and background to this study

This study seeks to investigate the big and small city preferences of migrant workers in China focusing upon two case study cities—one super-large municipality Beijing¹ and one small county-level city Jinzhou². It is set within the parameters of the New-Style Urbanisation policy, which was put forward by the Chinese government in 2014 to combat the big city preferences of migrant workers, and direct more of them into small cities and towns. This study aims to compare the lives of migrant workers currently residing in big and small cities, and to discuss their migration and hukou intentions in the next five years, as well as their choices of likely migration destinations and hukou conversion locations.

Internal migration in China was regulated by the Household Registration (hukou) System, which was introduced in the 1950s to distribute welfare to Chinese citizens and to control internal migration. Chinese citizens were obliged to live wherever their hukou was registered. However, since late 1970s and after a few rounds of hukou reforms, especially after 2003 when the deportation policies were abolished, there is now more flexibility in relation to migration. As China embarked on economic reforms in the late 1970s, internal migration became a fundamental feature of social change. Since the 1990s, migration has replaced natural population growth to become the main determinant of population change in villages, towns and cities across China (PRC-NHC2017). By 2015, official estimates of the *'floating population'*—people not living in places where they were registered—was in the range of 247 million, accounting for 18 percent of China's total population (PRC-NHC2016). About 55 percent of this *'floating population'* was residing in central cities, including municipalities, vice-provincial cities and provincial capitals (PRC-NHC2016). This proportion is huge considering that these cities only count for about 45 percent of all cities in China (official towns were not calculated into these figures) (PRC-NBS 2016b), highlighting the fact that rural-urban migrants showed an overwhelming preference for larger cities (Xing et al. 2013).

¹ Written as '北京' in Chinese

² Written as '晋州' in Chinese

Internal migration cannot be separated from the remarkable development and urbanisation that has occurred in China since 1978. Li et al. (2016b) commented that in a little over forty years China has transformed itself from an overwhelmingly poor rural society to a predominantly urban society. They also pointed out that:

“At the same time, China’s development and urbanisation have separated parts of migrating family members from parents and children, fouled China’s air and water with industrial pollution, depleted resources, created social conflict over land conversion, allowed the income, infrastructure, and social service gap between urban and rural areas to widen, littered the landscape with some irrational development zones and enterprises, allowed development that is much too dense or not nearly dense enough, failed to create a sustainable system of local government revenue, and replicated on a vast scale many other urban problems that every country confronts. There is consensus that China must adopt a ‘new style’ urbanisation model from now on.” (Li et al. 2016b, p. 5)

The term ‘*urbanisation with Chinese characteristics*’ is routinely used by policy makers and researchers to suggest that China’s path to urbanisation is different from typical urbanisation experiences (Chan 2018). The fundamental feature which sets China apart is the never absent influence of state and government in the urbanisation process (Chan 2010a). Despite the adaptation of market logic in the transition to urbanisation undertaken for four decades, the state in China continues to take the role of the ultimate planner that guides and regulates the economy (Fan 2004). It has long been an important part of the national industrialisation strategy to keep the migration in China highly regulated (Chan 2009). The influence of the state on China’s internal migration has varied over time and within geographic locations, but it is never absent. It is impossible to address internal migration in China without addressing the influence of the state (Fan 2008; Huang 2010; Meng et al. 2010a; Fan 2011b; White 2016).

Faced with ‘*big city diseases*’ and ‘*problematic urbanisation*’ as stated by Li et al. (2016b), China has again sought to solve these emerging challenges with policy change. The New-Style Urbanisation plan, released in 2014, aimed to both alter the distribution of inequities between rural and urban areas, between different levels of cities, and between migrant groups and local populations in urban areas (SCC 2014a; CSC, 2014b). It also aimed to direct more rural-urban migrant workers away from mega cities to smaller cities by changing its hukou regulations (SCC 2014e). Just how effective these policy goals have been remains unclear, including any shifts in urban small/big city inequalities,

and migrant preferences for big cities. Furthermore, it remains uncertain if the recently reformed hukou system has influenced migration flows.

Traditional migration theories are often considered to be of little use in understanding Chinese migration patterns due to the lack of consideration of policies. However, the role of inequality in motivating migration has been well demonstrated in existing theories and empirical studies (Massey 1999; Castles 2014). The administrative hierarchy in China is one salient reason for spatial inequality and the hukou system can explain much of the social inequality between Chinese people. In this sense, it is logical to assert that state policies in China play a dominant role in internal migration patterns. Therefore, this research brings together these salient points by examining the New-Style Urbanisation policies, the hukou registration system, as well as the administrative systems of hierarchical cities, and the preferences of migrant workers for big and small cities, and takes into account their migration and hukou plans in the next five years.

1.2 Selection of study areas

This study utilises two case study areas: one municipality city or super-large city—Beijing, and one county-level city or small city—Jinzhou. Beijing city³ is the capital city of China with regular residents⁴ of about 21.71 million in 2015 (PRC-NBS 2016b). Jinzhou city¹ is a county level city in Shijiazhuang prefecture, Hebei province of China. Its regular residents numbered about 130 thousand at the end of 2015 (PRC-NBS 2016b). Beijing and Jinzhou both belong to the ‘Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei’ urban cluster, so they are geographically close and culturally similar. Yet they are highly distinctive from each other in terms of economic development, population size and administrative rank. Most importantly for this study, the ‘Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei’ urban cluster was included in the ‘San Zong Liang Heng’ strategic layout of urban clusters in the New-Style Urbanisation policy (SCC 2014a).

³ In this study, Beijing city and Jinzhou city refers only to the urban districts or urban seat proper. Other towns, villages and areas under the regulation of those cities are not included.

⁴ Regular residents are a concept commonly used by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2018), referring to the population who have stayed in a certain area for no less than six months, whether with or without local hukou registration.

Jinzhou is my hometown and Beijing is one of the cities where I studied for three years, so I am familiar with both cities and have a good understanding of their functioning, as well as their advantages and disadvantages for migrants.

Abundant research has addressed migration issues in larger cities, while few have paid attention to smaller cities, let alone comparing the larger ones with the smaller cities. By selecting these two cities, it is possible to compare the context of two distinctive urban units, and the life of rural-urban migrant workers within the same urban cluster.

1.3 Research questions and objectives

The main objective of this study is to establish the big and small city preferences of migrant workers through an analysis of the complex relationship between state policy, hukou, inequality, and their migration decision-making processes. The focus is on the comparison of one top city, Beijing, and one bottom city, Jinzhou. It is logical to first describe the two cities as well as the migrant workers in these two cities, then explore their future migration intentions, and finally to examine the influence of hukou on their migration decisions. In pursuit of the main objective, through the lens of the New-Style Urbanisation policies in China, this study specifically seeks:

1. To compare the characteristics of migrant workers and their migration and settlement experiences in Beijing and Jinzhou;
2. To ascertain the migration intentions of migrant workers in Beijing and of those in Jinzhou in the next five years;
3. To establish the popularity of small cities and towns as migration destinations in the next five years;
4. To examine the relationship between changes in the hukou arrangements of migrant workers, their migration decisions and choice of migration destination in the next five years.

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. To what extent do migrant workers in Beijing and those in Jinzhou differ in terms of their demographic characteristics, socio-economic status and their settlement experiences?
2. What are the main factors which motivated them to migrate to their current city of residence?

3. What are the main factors influencing the migration intentions of migrant workers in the next five years?
4. Whether small cities and towns rather than big cities are likely to be more attractive to migrant workers in the next five years?
5. How do hukou regulations across tiers of cities influence the migration intentions of migrant workers and their likely migration destination in the next five years?

1.4 Inequality and internal migration in China

Inequality is the study of who gets what and why (Lobao et al. 2007). Social inequality refers to the stratified distribution of social, political, economic and cultural resources between groups of people that are diversified in nature (Habibis et al. 2015). Social inequalities are entailed in social stratification, for example: power, class, status, money and lifestyle (Blackburn 2008). These social inequalities have been shown to vary by location, with evidence of spatial factors affecting individual's access to resources and infrastructure, described as spatial inequalities (Tickamyer 2000).

Among determinants of migration, the impact of inequalities (both social and spatial inequality) have been emphasised in both theoretical and empirical studies (Massey 1999; Castles 2014). There are three main types of inequalities that have been well-studied concerning rural-urban migrant workers in China: social inequality between the migrants and the local population, social inequalities among migrants, and spatial inequality between the western, central and eastern regions of China. For example, researchers have explored the influence of inequalities in employment on settlement intentions of migrants in urban areas (Wang et al. 2013; Tang et al. 2015). Other researchers have analysed the relationship between income inequality and rural-urban migrant workers' intentions to stay in urban areas or to leave (Cai et al. 2008a; Cai et al. 2008b; Fan 2011a; Tang et al. 2015). Some have also explained the impact of social status disparities on migrant workers' migration intentions (Cai et al. 2008b), while Fan (2011a) took the inequalities of social networks into account to explain the settlement intentions of migrant workers in Beijing. Zang et al. (2015) distinguished between the western, central and eastern parts of China when discussing migration intentions. However, little research attention has been given to the inequalities between different levels of cities, especially the distinctive contexts between large and small cities, and how this may influence the migration intentions of migrant workers in China. Although there are some studies distinguishing

the varied settlement intentions of migrants within different level of cities, these studies have not addressed city preferences for migration. For example, Hao et al. (2015) distinguished settlement intentions of migrant workers among cities of various administrative levels but ignored their future choices concerning migration. Thus, spatial inequality for the purposes of this study refers only to the inequality among different administrative level cities, towns and villages.

1.5 State policy and inequality in China

China's urbanisation processes are closely linked to the governmental system (Chan 2010a). Therefore, government policy is responsible for many of the social and economic inequalities resulting from the urbanisation process. For example, research has found that the social inequality which migrants have experienced for some time can be largely attributed to the hukou system (Wei et al. 1996; Kanbur et al. 2001; Lu et al. 2006; Zhigang et al. 2006; Gustafsson et al. 2008; Park 2008; Chan 2010a; Afridi et al. 2015). Similarly, spatial inequality—particularly as it relates to city/town size—concerning migrant outcomes and choices, derives both from the hukou system and the Chinese administrative system (Chan 2010a).

1.5.1 State policy and the formation of spatial inequality between cities in China

Since the foundation of the hukou system, Chinese society has been divided into rural and urban parts (Zhou et al. 2017). Before the implementation of the *Reform and Opening Up* policy in 1978, spatial inequality in China existed mainly between rural and urban areas due to the dual hukou division between them and the urban-biased development policy (Lu et al. 2006). At that time, studies showed that social welfare disparities between different administrative levels of cities were not significant (Li et al. 2016b). However since 1978, due to the development of China's administrative system and the reform of the hukou system, the pattern of spatial inequality has changed, especially between different administrative levels of cities (Li et al. 2016b). China has gradually built up a hierarchical city system in accordance with its administrative level and with reference to the formal system of fiscal resources (budget revenue allocation) (Chan 2010a). The higher the administrative rank, the more directly a city answers to the central government, the greater its autonomy and resources, the larger the area it governs and the larger its population size (Song et al. 2002; Wei 2014). Small cities are usually cities with

a lower administrative rank (usually county-level), smaller population, and limited resources (Chan et al. 2002; Wei 2014). Higher ranks not only reflect more political/administrative power, but also indicate a larger portion of resources (especially fiscal resources) and more opportunities for local development (Chan 2010a; Wei 2014).

Small cities and towns were not always disadvantaged. In fact, developing small cities and towns was once part of the national policy which was announced at the *National Conference on Urban Planning* in 1980 (Cannon et al. 1990). Policy formation favouring the growth of small cities and towns was spearheaded by sociology pioneer Fei Xiaotong, and his thoughts about small town development was adopted by policy makers in the 1980s and early 1990s (Carrillo Garcia 2011). In the late 1990s, this policy orientation was challenged by researchers as well as policy makers (Wang 2010b; Ming et al. 2012). The preference for developing small cities and towns was discontinued by the Development and Research Centre (a research body under the supervision of the State Council of China), due to the failure of some small towns to boost local industry, trade, job creation and tax revenue in poor areas. Carrillo Garcia (2011) pointed out that the Development and Research Centre advanced the advantage of growing large and medium-sized cities over developing small towns, and as a consequence, since the late 1990s, large cities became the engine of China's economic growth.

In the meantime, a series of hukou reform measures have blurred the line between agricultural 'hukou' and non-agricultural 'hukou' and reinforced disparities between different levels of cities. Thus, China has been working towards weakening the rural-urban dualism but has gradually built up a hierarchical urban system to replace it. Thus, it is no longer valid to see all cities as identical when addressing rural-urban migration in China. The evident spatial inequality between cities needs to be considered in migration intention research in China.

1.5.2 State policy and the formation of social inequality between rural-urban migrant workers and local urban hukou holders

As stated by Chan (2013, p. 2):

“Any meaningful analysis of internal migration in China must begin by understanding the hukou system and its relationship to migration.”

The hukou system is crucial in explaining the social inequalities between rural-urban migrant workers and the local urban hukou holders in cities.

In China, the Modern Household Registration System, also known as the hukou system, was established in the 1950s (Li et al. 2016b). It is the basic institution in China which documents population information and distributes public resources, thus, it also controls internal migration in China (Wu 2013). Since 1958, every household in mainland China holds a hukou booklet which documents the age, marital status, ethnicity, hukou status and hukou location (also known as place of hukou registration) of every individual registered in that household. A newborn's hukou status is usually inherited from the parents (Xing et al. 2013). The hukou location, a geographically based concept, is usually documented as the birthplace of the head of the household, if no hukou conversion has ever been conducted. It includes both the nature (rural or urban) and the administrative rank of the registered location. Based on this information, China has been able to stratify its citizens, and to distribute welfare according to that stratification. The two most influential standards of stratification are hukou status and hukou location (Fan 2008).

Many Chinese researchers have so far argued that the hukou status is an important factor shaping the opportunities and well-being of residents in a city (Fan 2002; Chan et al. 2008; Liu et al. 2017b). Before 2014, hukou status could be generally labelled as agricultural or non-agricultural. This is because rural Chinese tend to have an agricultural hukou that is registered in a rural location, and urban Chinese tend to have a non-agricultural hukou that is registered in an urban location, therefore, it is customary that some researchers consider agricultural hukou equivalent to rural hukou and non-agricultural hukou equivalent to urban hukou (Afridi et al. 2015; Chen et al. 2016a). However, after the official abolishment of hukou status on 24 July 2014 (State Council of China 2014d), in effect hukou location continues to define one's access to resources and one's life chances to a large extent (Li et al. 2016b). The *Opinion on Further Boosting the Reform of Household Registration System* claimed that China would replace the hukou status division between agricultural and non-agricultural with a universal residence status (State Council of China 2014d). However, it was neither the end of the hukou system, nor the end of distributing benefits and welfare through the hukou system.

Due to its unequal treatment of rural and urban citizens, the hukou system has received extensive criticism from both the academic world and the public since its establishment (Chan et al. 1999; Solinger 1999; Wang 2005; Chan 2009; Wu 2013). During the pre-reform period (pre-1978), city dwellers enjoyed their socialist 'cradle-to-grave' welfare,

while rural residents were tied to farms to support the industrialisation of the cities without any welfare scheme⁵ (Wu 2013). After the initiation of reform and opening-up policies in 1978, urban income increased, creating demand for various types of services and the need for labourers who could provide those services (Banister et al. 1989; Cai et al. 2008a). In the meantime, agricultural productivity was also promoted by the reform, with many rural villagers becoming redundant in farming, allowing rural workers to move out of agriculture (Cai et al. 2008a). This prompted large scale migration flows from rural regions to urban areas. However, those rural migrants (without formal hukou conversion) were not provided with the same level of welfare as local urban hukou holders (Solinger 1999). For example, Solinger (1999) stated that some occupations in Beijing were listed as only being available for local hukou holders: managers in finance and insurance companies, accountant, cashier, service staff in star-rated hotels, telephone operator, and warehouse staff.

Rural migrants with few skills on the other hand were forced to work in 3D (dirty, difficult and dangerous) jobs (Solinger 1999). They were not entitled to employers' contributions to various insurance schemes, and housing in urban China was also linked to the hukou system, in which rural migrants were further disadvantaged as they did not receive housing subsidies or pension contributions without a local hukou (Meng et al. 2010a). Hukou also restricted their access to medical services. Many migrants who had work-related injuries or illness had to return to rural areas after years of hard work in cities, due to the absence of labour protection or available health services (Wu 2013). Another disadvantage to families was that migrant children without local urban hukou were prevented from enrolling in normal public schools without paying extra fees or providing extra paperwork (West et al. 2000; Montgomery et al. 2012; Lu et al. 2013).

In recent years, the central government of China has introduced several new laws and regulations to protect migrants' benefits and increase their access to urban services (Cai 2011). After the introduction of the *Labour Contract Law of the People's Republic of China* in 2008, and the *Social Insurance Law of the People's Republic of China* in 2011,

⁵ According to Xing et al. (2013) and Chan et al. (1999), hukou is more than a residence permit in some jurisdictions. Urban and rural hukou grants people with different entitlements. In the early years, urban hukou granted access to local public school and health care systems, job opportunities, subsidized grain supply, and permits to purchase rationed goods such as bicycles or sewing machines. In those years, rural hukou entitles individuals to farm on land owned by local economic collectives. It similarly granted access to local public schools. The rights and responsibilities associated with a hukou have changed over time.

rural migrants were included in the social insurance system. However, it was found that about 52 percent of employed rural migrants still did not take part in any social insurance scheme (Lv 2012). Although the conditions of rural migrants appear to have improved according to those laws and regulations, the hukou system remains as a disadvantage to the bulk of migrant workers who are labelled '*outsiders*'. For example, the *Measures for the Guarantee of Low-rent Homes scheme*, which was put into practice in 2007, still uses local hukou as a precondition of applying for low-rent homes (PRC-MHURD 2007). Systematic discrimination against rural migrants has not yet been eliminated entirely.

Before the 1990s, the central government led the process of hukou system reforms, however, the task of developing specific policies concerning the integration of migrant workers has been gradually decentralised to local governments since the mid-1990s (Wu 2013). Due to strong policy interventions, larger cities have gained most of the resources (e.g. financial, economic, cultural, medical, educational) and developed better infrastructure and welfare systems for their residents compared to small cities, towns and rural areas (Sun 2015). The openness and acceptance of rural-urban migrant workers in big cities has also been found to differ a great deal from small cities (Carrillo Garcia 2011).

A number of studies have addressed rural-urban migration in the major cities of China. Wang et al. (2015b) analysed discrimination issues against migrant workers in employment-based benefits in four megacities (Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Guangzhou), and the results show that there were gradient differences in access to employee benefits and urban social welfare among urban locals, urban migrants, and rural migrants. Due to intense competition in big cities, rural migrants come across many challenges including housing (Tao et al. 2015b), children's education (Kwong 2004; Li et al. 2010; Lu et al. 2013) and health (Peng et al. 2010; Mou et al. 2013). In comparison, research on rural-urban migration issues in the context of small cities and towns remains limited (Xu et al. 2004; Wu et al. 2009). Although there have been many studies addressing small cities and towns in the 1980s and 1990s, most of them have focused on economic or environmental issues related to urbanisation. Emerging research suggests that there is greater openness and flexibility in the incorporation of rural workers in small cities and towns than in big cities (Carrillo Garcia 2011). However, the level of inequalities against rural migrants in small cities and towns after the application of New-

Style Urbanisation policy has not been fully scrutinised. Most importantly, the big city/small city context under this new policy has yet to be compared.

1.5.3 China as a case of interwoven spatial and social inequality

Much conventional literature focused on inequality has bypassed the exploration of how social inequality is influenced by place (Lobao et al. 2007). Research demonstrates that in many cases, social inequality is interwoven with spatial inequality, and that the distribution of social inequality varies by geographic place (Lobao et al. 2007). In China, the hukou related benefits and the strict measures concerning hukou conversion are inextricably tied with place (the level of cities). The administrative system and the hukou system have played a crucial role in resource distribution among places and social groups. The inequalities across tiers of cities are passed on to their legal residents through the hukou system. The migration process from rural to urban, from less developed areas to more developed places, from smaller towns to larger cities has resulted in various entitlement disparities between migrant groups and local hukou holders. Therefore, the administrative hierarchy and the hukou system have worked hand in hand in the formation of interwoven social and spatial inequalities against rural-urban migrant workers in China. However, the level of social inequalities experienced by migrant workers in Beijing can be assumed to be very different from that in Jinzhou city. This study addresses the social inequalities which migrant workers suffer in Beijing compared to those in Jinzhou.

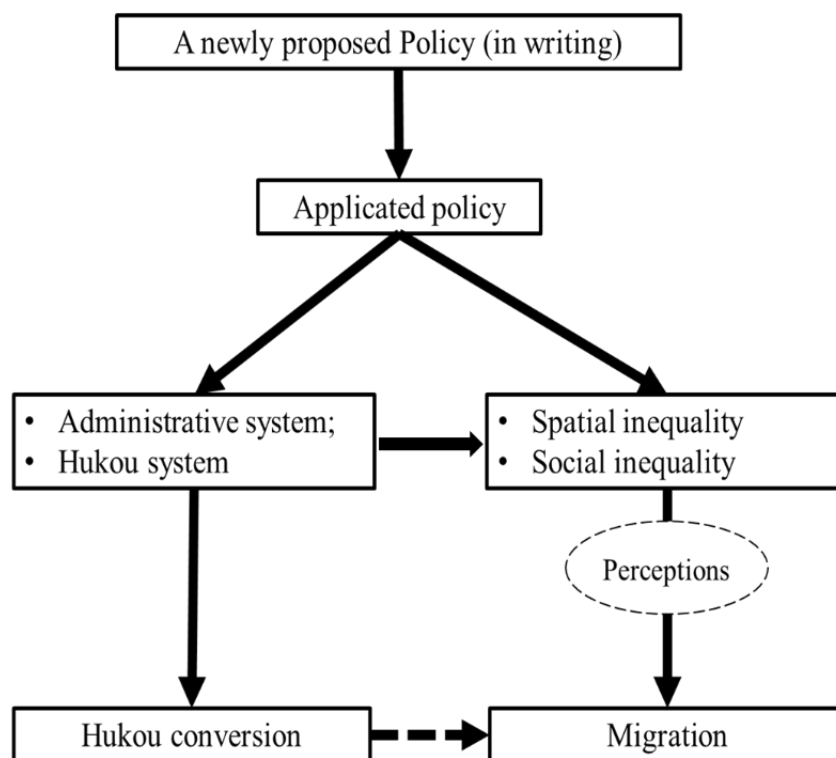
1.6 State policy and internal migration: from direct interference to indirect influence

Migrating without formal hukou conversion was illegal in China between 1982 to 2003. In that period, rural-urban migrant workers could be repatriated to their registered place according to the '*deportation policies*'⁶, used as a tool to directly curb rural-urban migration but were discontinued in 2003 (Zhu 2006). The existing policies which allow hukou conversion from rural to urban, from less developed areas to more developed ones were usually exclusive to '*elites*' who were talented, well-educated and wealthy (Chan 2013; Zhang 2018). Whether one can realise his/her willingness to convert hukou to a

⁶ "deporting" policy refers to the policy which legitimated deportation of migrants without local hukou to their hukou registered location.

certain destination is subject to both *'the standard of qualification'* and the *'quota'* which is set by the central or local government (Chan et al. 1999; He et al. 2016a). After the abolishment of *'deportation'* in 2003, migrant workers could live or work outside their registered places legally without hukou conversion. The hukou system gradually ceased to function as a major deterrent to rural-urban migration, but continues to regulate an individual's access to social benefits and public services (Miller 2012). Figure 1.1 displays a model of the relationship between policy, inequality, hukou and migration in contemporary China.

Figure 1.1 The relationship between policy, inequality and migration in China



Note: The dotted arrow from hukou conversion to migration shows that the influence of hukou on migration needs further examination.

State policy can only now influence migration indirectly through adjusting the distribution of resources across population groups or places, or through its control over hukou conversion. The control of state policies over migration evolved from direct measures such as the demolition of urban villages, repatriation and illegalisation of migrants, to indirect and market-based mechanisms, such as industrial restructuring or regulating the property-market (Zhang 2018). This study argues that subjective perceptions, instead of objective facts, can influence the migration intentions of migrant

workers. However, it remains unknown how much hukou still impacts the migration decisions of individuals since a wide range of resources have been delinked from hukou in many cities during the process of hukou reform. It should also be clarified that there is usually a gap or structural lag between the writing of policy and policy implementation (Blahna et al. 1989; Clement et al. 2009). This study emphasises the influence of *policy implementation* rather than the written policy.

1.7 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter One outlines the research context which informs the rest of the study, introduces the case study areas, and outlines objectives and research questions. The influence of policy on migration in China has evolved from direct control to indirect control. The extent to which the hukou system influences rural-urban migration through its regulations for hukou conversion across tiers of cities, and the inequalities which also determine migration between tiers of cities, are briefly discussed.

Chapter Two is an overview of literature on the macro-level determinants and micro-level motivations of migration. It focuses upon rural-urban migrant workers in China, and their decisions relating to migration and hukou conversion, their migration intentions, and the aims and measures of the New-Style Urbanisation policy. The theoretical framework used in this study is then outlined.

Chapter Three introduces the methodological approaches employed in formulating the research design, data collection, and choice of techniques of data analysis. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, which employed face-to-face survey and in-depth interview, as well as secondary data analysis. Details are provided for the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou. The techniques for the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data are outlined. The ethical considerations and limitations are also introduced in this chapter.

Chapter Four provides an overall examination of the contextual differences between Beijing city and Jinzhou city in the New-Style Urbanisation era using secondary data. The administrative ranks, economy, population, city infrastructure and services, various restrictions, and the hukou conversion requirements in Beijing and Jinzhou are discussed.

Chapter Five compares Beijing and Jinzhou from the perspective of rural-urban migrant workers using primary data collected from the survey and interviews. It first distinguishes between the migrant workers of the two cities based on their experiences and personal

characteristics. The reasons for migrating to their current city of residence are introduced, as well as the living environment for migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou. The level of social inequalities associated with rural migrant workers in the two cities are described and also compared. It addresses the interpretation of ‘settlement’ from the perspective of migrant workers, and then compares their settlement experiences and satisfaction with the cities in which they currently live.

Chapter Six explores the migration intentions of migrant workers in the next five years. First it examines the factors which are strongly associated with their future migration intentions and identifies the characteristics of respondents who are more likely to relocate, and the factors influencing their choice of destination. The question of whether small cities and towns will be more popular destinations for migrant workers in the next five years is also addressed.

Chapter Seven focuses on the hukou conversion intentions of migrant workers, and how these intentions influence their migration intentions. First it examines the factors which are related to the hukou conversion decisions of migrant workers to match their current city of residence. Then it examines the factors influencing the choice of hukou registration locations elsewhere and how they relate to migration decisions. The influences of hukou regulations on the migration decisions of migrant workers, as well as their choice of destination, are also discussed.

Chapter Eight concludes with a discussion of the major findings, limitations of this study, and areas for future research. It addresses the question of whether hukou reforms or policies moderating inequalities between tiers of cities, are effective or necessary to restrain the migration to larger cities and to make small cities and towns more attractive to migrant workers.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study seeks to explore the influence of the New-Style Urbanisation policy on China's rural-urban migration and the future migration intentions of migrant workers in the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou. As stated in Chapter One, since abolishing deportation measures in 2003 and after a few rounds of hukou reform, state policies tend now to influence migration indirectly through the distribution of resources across cities and people. It is necessary to relate macro-level policy changes to micro-level influences on the decisions of rural-urban migrant workers to understand their destination preferences between big and small cities. This chapter reviews the macro determinants and micro motivations of migration, both in the general context and in the rural-urban migration context of China. The chapter also introduces the study population: rural-urban migrant workers in China, explains the possible destinations for their future migration, examines the New-Style Urbanisation policy, and clarifies the concept of migration intentions used in this study.

This chapter examines the relevance of some selected theories of migration to this study. Then, a few concepts are introduced to better define the research population. It also introduces two most commonly used concepts describing the population in Chinese cities: hukou residents and regular residents. The definition and relative status of rural-urban migrant workers in Chinese cities are clarified and studies focusing upon the life experiences of migrant workers in both big and small cities. It also clarifies the rural-urban division in China, the tiered city system and the changing value of hukou. Then, it outlines the New-Style Urbanisation policy, which is concerned with the adjustment of inequalities, the hukou system, and controlling migration to big cities. Studies examining the influence of hukou on the migration decisions of migrant workers are reviewed to identify any research gaps and to introduce the theoretical framework employed by this study.

2.2 Macro determinants and micro motivations of migration

Migration research can be broadly classified into two broad areas: the determinants/motivations of migration and the consequences/influences of migration (Fan 2011b). The former area of research focuses upon the initiators of the action to

migrate whereas the later pays attention to the adjustment and responses of the society to migration. This study discusses future migrant intentions, more specifically it focuses on the factors which influence the migration decisions of rural-urban migrant workers in the era of the New-Style Urbanisation in China. Migration research can also be categorised into internal and international migration studies. The latter category is often characterised by a relatively high level of legal control over who migrate and how many do so. Internal migration is unregulated in most countries, however, that is not the case in China (Vendryes 2011). This study focuses upon internal migration in the context of China's regulatory system. The analytical framework of migration research can be explored at the macro/meso and micro levels. Macro studies describe and explain broad patterns of migration, which may conceal the heterogeneity of migratory behaviours and the underlying migration processes (Liu et al. 2017b), whereas micro studies generally focus on the individual and/or the household as the unit of analysis in describing and explaining migration behaviour. This study looks to incorporate macro/meso factors into micro (individual) migration decision-making processes.

2.2.1 Theories explaining migration

Since Ravenstein's (1885) pioneering work *The Laws of Migration*, many theories have been developed in various social science disciplines to explain the motivations for migration. Massey et al. (1993) commented that migration theories employ radically different concepts, assumptions, and frames of references, although each ultimately seeks to explain the same phenomenon. Fan (2011b) points out that human migration is a rational decision. White (2016) believed that among all factors that would facilitate a rational decision for migration, economics was the main driving force. According to Massey (1999), neoclassical economics theory argues that migration is an individual level rational decision made by assessing the expected return on migration. Massey (1999, p. 36) stated:

“In theory, a potential migrant goes to wherever the expected net returns to migration are greatest.”

The new economics theory of migration, on the other hand, considered migration as a decision made by households instead of individuals and claimed that the greatest relative return, rather than absolute return, was the decisive factor behind migration (Massey 1999). White (2016, p. 15) points out that:

“When utility in alternative locations exceeds that in the current location by a critical threshold, people migrate. A key component of this utility is, of course, labour market conditions.”

Hicks (1963), for example, asserted that differences in net economic advantage were the main drivers of migration; while Raimon (1962), Sjaastad (1970) and Gatons et al. (1972) studied the influence of regional wage differences on migration. Fan (2011b) considered employment as the most important factor in internal migration studies, which Lowry (1966) had argued much earlier that relative levels of employment and wage conditions encouraged migration, and that people move from places with low wages and high unemployment rates to places with high wages and low unemployment rates. In China, there has been extensive research showing that wages and employment play a crucial role in driving rural-urban migration (Hu 2002; Démurger et al. 2010; Meng et al. 2010b; Knight et al. 2011; Rabe et al. 2012).

Although economic reasons are central in most theoretical concerns in the micro level analysis of migration, King (2012) believes that there has been a shift towards other drivers of migration. The migration ‘*gain*’ of a destination is expanded to encapsulate a wide range of social, cultural, environmental, political, and other factors, called amenities, that influence where people want to live (White 2016). For example, Morrison et al. (2011) found that the majority of internal migrants of working age in New Zealand appeared to be motivated by goals other than simply enhancing their employment through internal migration, and while employment remained important, it was found in most cases to be only insofar as the new destination enables its continuity. Social ties are also identified by some researchers as a determinant of migration. Hugo (1981) found that persons with stronger ties at their origin were less prone to break them by moving. Similarly, De Jong et al. (1981) demonstrated that family and friends at potential new destinations may enhance migration intentions. Lifestyle preferences and satisfaction with both origin and destination areas are also included as determinants of the individual or household level decision to migrate (Zelinsky 1971; Speare 1974; Li et al. 2016a). Other researchers have collected ideas in empirical studies by asking “why did you move?”. The major merit of statements about reasons for migration is that they represent the simplest and most direct statement about the phenomenon by the decision maker (De Jong et al. 1981).

In addition to economic drivers, assertions that amenities are important factors influencing migration have also been examined in the rural-urban migration context of

China. Xing et al. (2013, p. 72) conjectured:

“...larger cities in China offer a better quality of life and more opportunities. We thus predict that a typical rural-urban migrant is willing to give up some income in order to live in a larger city. We present a simple model in which rural-urban migrants choose destination cities to maximise utilities from consumption and urban amenities.”

Zhang et al. (2011) argued that the choice of migration destination was a trade-off between income and distance. Their study found:

“Rural-urban migrants in China appear to prefer nearby destination cities...to induce a migrant to move 10 percent further away from home, the income of this migrant has to increase by 15 percent. (Zhang et al. 2011, p. 1)”

Chen et al. (2016b, p. 42) argued that:

“...socio-cultural attachment plays an equally, if not more important role in determining migrant settlement intention.”

Carrillo Garcia (2004) suggests that networks – ties of kinship or friendship—have been a major factor in facilitating migration. Korinek et al. (2005) found that stronger social networks and social interaction at destination encourage migrants to permanently settle rather than return to their origin country or city. Conversely, Fan (2011a) asserted that migrants’ settlement intention in cities did not increase with the size of their social network in their destination community. Li et al. (2016a) concluded that internal migration in China is empirically driven by employment opportunities, higher income and different lifestyles that can be pursued in cities.

Unlike the paradigm in which migration is considered more as ‘*voluntary*’ and ‘*a decision*’, there is another theoretical thread that views migration as a result of structural forces. Segmented labour market theory proposes that migration is driven by the intrinsic labour demand of modern industrial societies (Castles 2014), while world system theory deems migration as the structural consequence of the expansion of markets within a global political hierarchy (Massey 1999). Macro level research on the influence of the hukou system and political or economic reforms on migration in China falls into this genre. Young (2013, p. 12) points out that several policy changes in China have influenced internal migration since the 1970s:

“...firstly, the breakdown of collectivisation and the introduction of the ‘household contract responsibility system’ (家庭联产责任承包制 HCRS) that unbound an excess of rural labourers that led to them seeking employment in non-agricultural industries; secondly, reform of urban SOEs⁷ and the growth of private enterprise and markets that allowed rural migrants to survive and participate in urban economies and provided the economic incentive to try to improve their economic livelihood through urbanisation; and finally, the incremental ‘opening’ of specific areas of China to rapid development, foreign direct investment (FDI) and joint enterprises that led to a widening of regional and socioeconomic disparity.”

He also suggested that the hukou reform processes which dismantled many urban benefits have increased migration flows to urban areas in the last two decades. Furthermore, he demonstrated that the uneven distribution of market opportunities, as a result of the reforms, have motivated migration from underdeveloped regions to more developed areas, particularly to the coastal cities. This genre of studies usually links macro-level structural change directly to macro-level migration shifts. But as Judson (1990, p. 283) stated:

“While demography deals traditionally with aggregates, aggregates do not act; individuals act. Unless one holds that structure is everything and social psychology is nothing, the important point of analysis lies in the link between structure and social psychology.”

The above theoretical paradigm, which views migration as a result of structural forces, neglects the mechanisms behind the aggregates and usually cannot prove a causal relationship between political or market change and migration with empirical evidence. It is often challenged for its failure, under the same structural changes, to answer why some people move, while others do not. This research is also faced with the challenge of linking macro policy change to micro-level migration intentions of individuals. To solve this issue, the behavioural aspects of individual migration decisions need to be understood.

2.2.2 The behavioural aspects of migration

Fan (2008) argues that mainstream migration theories do not usually address the role of government and state policy, and that they do not provide means of incorporating state policies in the analysis of migration. However, De Jong et al. (1981, p. 4) point out:

“...all noncoercive migration-related policies—whether stated or unstated, direct or indirect, based on incentives or disincentives—must

⁷ SOE refers to State-owned enterprise according to Young (2013)

affect or respond to individual—and/or household-level migration decisions.”

Under macro influences, they argue that:

“the most deficient areas of migration knowledge concern individual-level and family-level explanations of migration decision-making behaviour.” (De Jong et al. 1981, p. 2)

De Jong et al. (1981) and Judson (1990) believed that a decision approach to migration has the potential to show that ‘determinants’ at the macro level correspond roughly to ‘motivations’ at the micro level. Human migration, as a behaviour, is considered by many researchers as the descendent of a psychological or cognitive process (Wolpert 1965; Gordon et al. 1995; De Jong 1999). This conceptual approach to migration takes its theoretical basis from the social psychological theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour (Grothmann et al. 2005; Martin et al. 2014).

Satisfaction and aspiration are two psychological concepts which are usually discussed in migration and settlement studies. Locke (1969) defined ‘*satisfaction/dissatisfaction*’ as a function of the perceived relationship between what one values from one’s experience and what one perceives it as offering or entailing⁸. This concept has been employed for some time to explain voluntary migration or settlement in a place (Speare 1974; Bach et al. 1977; Lu 1998; De Jong et al. 2002; Bozek et al. 2012; Zenker et al. 2013). ‘*Life aspirations*’ are also integrated into migration decision-making studies, whereby Carling (2014) argues that people’s general aspirations in life affect their choice of migration destination, given that migration is an instrument for achieving another objective. That objective, for instance, could be happiness, wealth, security or family formation (Carling 2014).

Zhang Xiaoqiu et al. (2013) have argued that rural-urban migration in China should be studied from the behavioural perspective, however, this perspective has rarely been explored. Tan et al. (2017) have also argued that the attitude of migrants toward the hosting city were important factors in settlement intentions. Similarly, Du et al. (2012) discussed the relationship between satisfaction, attachment, and the stay-leave decisions.

⁸ There is another genre of definition of satisfaction which is not employed in mainstream migration studies. According to Chen et al. (2010), satisfaction refers to the perceived discrepancy between prior expectation and perceived performance after consumption—when performance differs from expectations, dissatisfaction occurs.

Huang et al. (2014) claimed that intentions of migrant workers to stay or leave were related to the extent to which migration experiences and socio-economic variables along with other factors, contributed to their sense of attachment toward urban societies. Limited research has been done to address the choices of destination among several options through the cognitive processes involved in the migration-decision making process.

2.2.3 Household migration

The consideration of the role of the household in migration decisions derived from the *New Economics Theory of Migration* (Massey 1999). Massey et al. (1993, p. 436) addressed the importance of household migration decision-making:

“While some family members can be assigned economic activities in the local economy, others may be sent to work in foreign labour markets where wages and employment conditions are negatively correlated or weakly correlated with those in the local area. In the event that local economic conditions deteriorate and activities there fail to bring in sufficient income, the household can rely on migrant remittances for support.”

Migration of some family members is seen by many scholars as a strategy to increase income and diversify income sources for the whole household both in the international and internal migration context (Richard et al. 2003; Tao et al. 2015a). Of particular interest, Wallace (2002) has argued that household strategies are likely to become more important when a society is subject to rapid social change that leaves households in a situation of risk and uncertainty, when more women enter into the labour force, and when large parts of the economy are informal. Fan (2008) ascertained that all these three conditions describe current situations in China. Migration studies which emphasise household strategies tend to interpret the influence of demographic variables from household gains, and focus upon gender roles, marital and family status, or other characteristics of the household (Wallace 2002; Fan 2008).

Gender roles

It is widely believed by migration researchers that males are more likely to migrate than females, that they travel longer distances than females, and that they are also more likely to migrate for economic reasons, while females do so for social reasons. Fan (2008) has argued that these notions are reinforced in China due to the traditional Chinese belief that

woman's place is inside the family while men's sphere is outside (*nan zhu wai nv zhu nei*⁹). Researchers (Mann 2000; Fan 2008) referred to this division of responsibilities inside a Chinese family as '*the inside–outside dichotomy*'. This study assumes that such a dichotomy influences the migration strategies of male and female migrant workers, which will be discussed later.

Marriage and children

Fan (2008) has mentioned that in the Chinese context, rural women face extensive social pressure to marry during their '*marriage-able age*¹⁰'. She has also pointed out that the mobility of female migrant workers declines sharply after they marry and especially after they have children. This tends to leave young, single women over-represented among migrant workers. In China, having a child not only influences the migration decisions of migrant workers, but also their hukou strategies. Hukou is linked to education for children in China, and for children to access urban education, it usually requires their parents to hold a local urban hukou. Chen et al. (2016a) found from the *China Migrants Dynamic Survey* that children's education was the main driving force for rural-urban hukou conversion.

Rural landholding

The rural landholding of households has also been found to have a significant influence on migration decisions of their family members both in western and Chinese studies (Massey et al. 1993; Mullan et al. 2011; Wang 2013; Rao et al. 2015). In China, some other studies have also found that rural landholding is a significant deterrent for hukou conversion among migrant workers, which can discourage their permanent settlement in destination cities (Hao et al. 2015; Tang et al. 2016). This is because obtaining urban hukou in China usually implicates that one will give up their entitlement to farming land and the housing parcel.

2.2.4 Stepwise migration

Stepwise migration implies a spatial relocation of migrants by steps or stages from origin (invariably a rural hometown) to an intended destination (usually an urban centre) (Conway 1980). In the process of migration, rural-urban migrants seek to improve their

⁹ Written as '男主外女主内' in Chinese

¹⁰ Usually in their early 20s.

own welfare and that of their family step by step, and move from undeveloped areas to more developed ones. For example, they migrate from remote rural villages to suburban country or towns, then to small cities and then to medium-sized or big cities, from low-paid jobs to high-paid work with higher social status, and from family separation to reunion stage by stage, which can be compared to climbing a ladder. Du et al. (2010) explained step migration using neoclassical economics theory and new economics theory, arguing that the expected absolute and relative income gap serves as the main factor that pull migrants to climb the ladder.

This study deals with the secondary migration intentions of those individuals who have already left their hometown villages and are still searching for an ideal or more suitable migration destination, through which they can achieve their life aspirations and improve their chances of a better life, that can take several stages and involve different destination cities.

2.3 Rural-urban migrant workers in China

Lee (1966) defined migration broadly as a permanent or semipermanent change of residence. However, the discussion of migration in China is more complicated than the western scenario due to the existence of the hukou system. As a result, the terminology used in China in migration research is quite different from that commonly employed in other countries (Davin 1998; Chan 2013).

2.3.1 Migration, hukou conversion, official migrants and unofficial migrants

Hukou conversion refers to the process of officially changing hukou status (from agricultural to non-agricultural and vice versa) or hukou registration locations. This study only discusses changes in hukou registration locations since the division of hukou status had been abolished officially in 2014 (State Council of China 2014d). Before the 1970s, the registered hukou location was usually the actual location of Chinese citizens, migrating without formal hukou conversion was deemed illegal, let alone the fact that basic goods (for example food) were distributed according to hukou (Chan 2009; Cai 2011). Even if one did migrate, he/she could not make a living outside his/her hukou location. But nowadays, migration does not necessarily involve a process of hukou conversion, which has made it necessary to distinguish between '*migration*' and '*changes in hukou locations*'.

In China, officially only migration matched with hukou conversion is considered by the state as ‘Renkou Qianyi’¹¹ (population migration). Migration itself can only be referred to as ‘Renkou Liudong’¹² (‘population movements’ or ‘floating’ of population) by the government. Migrants without an accompanying hukou conversion are known as ‘Liudong Renkou’¹³ (‘floating population’ or ‘mobile population’). Migrants with hukou transferred to the destination are called ‘permanent migrants’, ‘de-jure migrants’, ‘official migrants’; the rest are, therefore, called ‘temporary migrants’, ‘de-facto migrants’, ‘unofficial migrants’ by some Chinese scholars (Davin 1998; Chan 2013). This study uses ‘official migrants’ and ‘unofficial migrants’ to distinguish those who have transferred their hukou locations to their migration destinations from those who have not.

Official migrants are usually documented by census data, and before 2009, it appeared that unofficial migrants were ‘statistically invisible’ in official Chinese data (Riskin 2000; Roberts 2002). However, since 2009, the National Health Commission (PRC-NHC) has conducted the *China Migrants Dynamic Survey* annually to document changes in unofficial migrants. Unfortunately, to access such data, scholars need to go through a complicated application process, and so it is not readily available.

Until today, one’s hukou location remains unchanged regardless of the individual’s actual location, unless he/she goes through a formal hukou conversion (Chan 2009). The **migrant workers discussed in this study** only refer to those who migrated crossing administrative boundaries (townships, cities, or provinces), but have not changed their hukou locations from their rural hometowns to their destination cities. Hukou conversion, as a de-jure change of hukou location, does not necessarily involve physical migration (Chan 2010b, 2010a, 2012). Some scholars argue that hukou conversion from rural to urban has become much easier now than ever before (Chan 2010a; Wu 2013; He et al. 2016a). However, Dreger et al. (2015) state that urban hukou provision is usually provided indirectly, with actual practices differing across cities. According to Chan (2013, p. 2), hukou conversion to relatively large cities:

¹¹ Written as ‘人口迁移’ in Chinese

¹² Written as ‘人口流动’ in Chinese

¹³ Written as ‘流动人口’ in Chinese

“...is usually open only to a very select group (currently, the rich or the highly educated), and immediate family members of residents with local *hukou*...”

2.3.2 Hukou residents, regular residents and existing population of a city

Kam Wing Chan, a professor at the University of Washington and an expert on China's urbanisation, calls Chinese cities '*cities with invisible walls*' (Chan 1994a, p. 1), because the hukou system creates stark divisions between the status and entitlements of urban residents with urban hukou and migrants without an official residence address in a city or town (Chan 1994b; Miller 2012; Li et al. 2016b).

According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2018), '*regular residents*' of an area are the population who have stayed in that area for six months or more, whether with or without local hukou registration. A '*regular resident*' can be born in that area, migrated there from a rural area or from another urban place. '*Hukou residents*' of an area are the population whose hukou location falls into that area, even if the residents have already physically migrated to somewhere else (PRC-NBS 2018). '*Regular residents*' (number of people actually residing in a specified location) is the concept which has usually been applied to the Chinese census data. Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2017b) has admitted that this concept tends to reflect the population situation of an area in relation to its economic and social development, when considering the growth in migration between rural and urban areas and between cities in China. Thus the term '*regular residents*' instead of '*hukou residents*' is employed as the statistical calibre to identify the level of a city based on its resident population (SCC 2014c). However, the provision of some crucial resources, for example public education, are still only associated with hukou residents instead of regular residents in cities. Regular residents whose hukou is registered elsewhere are either excluded from, or have to pay additional fees, and prepare extensive mandatory paperwork to access those resources (New Citizen Program 2014).

Another widely employed population term associated with statistics in China is '*existing population*'. This term refers to the whole population in one area at a specific point in time (PRC-NBS 2014b). It differs from '*regular population*' since it does not require the length of stay (usually six months to qualify for '*regular population*'), and differs from '*hukou population*' since it does not address hukou status or hukou locations. This term has been applied in the 2010 census.

2.3.3 The diversity of rural-urban migrant workers in China

The population addressed in this study is a subset and probably the largest constituent group of unofficial migrants (Chan 2013). By definition, *rural-urban migrant workers*¹⁴ are those whose hukou have been registered in rural places but are currently employed or seeking employment in urban areas according to the *Regulations on Statistical Urban–Rural Divisions* (PRC-NBS 2008). There is no limit to the minimum length of stay attached to this definition. They are not necessarily part of the regular population (they only count as regular population if they have stayed in urban destinations for six months or more), and definitely not part of the hukou residents of urban places in China. This study explores the migration decision-making process and the rationale of those decisions, for this specific population sub-set. The opinions of both the longer-term and the shorter-term migrant workers are considered.

Although migrant workers consider the best destination for themselves, local states are intent on working out what type of migrants they would like to attract the most. Cheng et al. (2013) argue that contemporary migrant workers are more diversified than was the case in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, migrants are made up of individuals with various backgrounds, and there are now many more female migrants than in the past. However, most cities seem to be only interested in the ‘*talents*’ (usually young, rich, better-educated, and skilled). The ‘*war for attracting talents*’ first started in second-tier cities and then extended to top cities by mid-2010 (Ye 2019). Several regional administrative measures provided the ‘*talent migrants*’ with a chance to become hukou residents of their host cities. For example, the Human Resource and Social Security Bureau of Beijing Municipal (HRSS Beijing) published the *Administrative Measures on Attracting Talents to Beijing Municipality (Trial)* in 2018. Those migrants who met the standards of ‘*talents*’ were to be granted local Beijing hukou immediately according to this document (HRSS Beijing 2018a). The ‘*talents*’ referred to in this document, for example, included scientists who had won the *Highest National Science and Technology Prize*, and entrepreneurs who had invested no less than 50 million Chinese Yuan accumulatively and independently in the last three years. However, those standards are generally not achievable for an average Chinese citizen. Even though the standard of ‘*talents*’ in less

¹⁴ This is the definition employed in this study. However, other studies might add additional requirements on the base of this definition, for example, staying in one urban destination for no less than six months.

privileged cities are more achievable accordingly, they still usually require a college or university degree. However, Miller (2012) pointed out that almost no migrant workers had a university degree and only a small portion held a college degree.

Cheng et al. (2013) argue that rural-urban migrant workers should be considered separately from those urban-hukou college-and-university-graduates who originated from other small or medium cities seeking career opportunities in higher-level cities. Moreover, Chan (2013) points out that the majority of rural-urban migrant workers are unskilled or low-skilled workers. According to Lai et al. (2011), they tend to present lower levels of education and exhibit poorer job prospects. The study population of this research were seen as *'low-end'* labour, faced with a very slim chance of hukou transfer to the central cities. Therefore, even though living in the same city, the life chances given to the *'low-end'* migrants differ significantly from migrant *'talents'* or *'elites'*. Miller (2012) argued that migrant workers do all the toughest, dirtiest jobs, but receive the smallest social benefits from their work. Of particular interest here, the question "*where will rural-urban migrant workers migrate to next?*" became even more interesting in the New-Style Urbanisation era when big cities limited population growth, but at the same time are competing with one another for migrant *'talents'*¹⁵ (Okulicz-Kozaryn 2013; Wang Hongru 2017).

The rural-urban migrant population is also highly diversified. Studies reveal that the life situation of rural-urban migrant workers varies by demographic characteristics such as gender (Davin 1996a; Davin 1996b; Zhu 2002; Luo 2006; Xu et al. 2006; Magnani et al. 2011; Gaetano 2015), age or generation (Yue et al. 2010; Yang 2013; Cheng et al. 2014b; Du et al. 2014; Zhou et al. 2015); socio-economic status such as income or wage (Li et al. 2007; Song 2009; Rabe et al. 2012; Wang et al. 2015a), level of education (Wang et al. 2010a; Koo 2012; Messinis 2013; Ling 2015), marital and family status (Connelly et al. 2010; Fan 2011a; Fan et al. 2011; Liu 2012; Meng et al. 2014), and, possession of social networks (Wang et al. 2015a). Others have taken party affiliations (Gao et al. 2011), social status (Li et al. 2007), urban employment experiences (Zhao 1999) and perceived

¹⁵ For example, the Human Resource and Social Security Bureau of Beijing city (HRSS Beijing) published the Administrative Measures on Attracting Talents to Beijing Municipality (trial) in 2018. Those who meet the standard of 'talent' according to this document will be granted local Beijing hukou shortly after application.

personal responsibilities (Knight et al. 2010; Gao et al. 2011) into consideration when analysing the life status or destination choices of rural-urban migrant workers.

2.3.4 Big city life and small city experience

Extensive literature has addressed rural-urban migrant workers in the major cities of China. Wang et al. (2015b) analysed discrimination issues against migrant workers in employment-based benefits in four megacities (Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Guangzhou), and found that there were huge differences in access to employee benefits and urban social welfare among urban locals, urban migrants, and rural migrants. Due to intense competition in big cities, rural migrants come across many challenges including housing (Tao et al. 2015b), children's education (Kwong 2004; Li et al. 2010; Lu et al. 2013) and health (Peng et al. 2010; Mou et al. 2013). Some rural migrants leave their children, spouse or elderly family members far behind in their villages while they go to big cities for employment opportunities. This can be emotionally hard for both the migrants and their families.

Only limited studies have described the life of migrant workers in the small cities or towns of China. The noted sociologist Xiaotong Fei in China, in his book *Peasant Life in China* stresses that towns in China are a distinct social entity that serve as an intersection between rural and urban societies (Li et al. 2016b). His 1984 article entitled *Small Towns, Big Matters* has stimulated a nationwide wave of research on towns (Li et al. 2016b). Although there were many ensuing studies addressing small cities and towns in the 1980s and 1990s, most of them focused on economic or environmental issues related to urbanisation. Scholars (Xu et al. 2004; Wu et al. 2009) have pointed out that rural-urban migration issues in the small town context are still understudied. Emerging research suggests that there is greater openness and flexibility in the incorporation of rural workers in small towns than in big cities (Carrillo Garcia 2011). However, much of this research has not paid attention to the hukou system nor to the new urbanisation policy. Empirical studies documenting the small city/town experiences of migrant workers in the New-Style Urbanisation era are rare, let alone research comparing the big city and small city scenarios.

2.4 The hierarchy of places in China as potential migration destinations

Li et al. (2016b) maintain that every country needs to establish an administrative structure to carry out both national and local policies. The administrative divisions and respective

authorities, as well as the relationships among different levels of governments in China, are extremely complicated. Since the units of government in China are so numerous and varied, a single term describing an administrative division may be describing quite different kinds of places (Li et al. 2016b). Therefore, it is important to clarify the rural-urban division and the administrative levels of cities in China.

2.4.1 Rural-Urban Division

In the west, the concept ‘urban’ usually refers to a spatial concentration of people whose lives are organised around non-agricultural activities, and the definition often involves (1) sheer population size, (2) space (land area), (3) the ratio of population to space (density or concentration), and (4) economic and social organisations (Weeks 2010). In China, administrative designations are more closely connected with urban-rural distinctions than the characteristics of places (Wang et al. 2008). Thus, the administrative ranks, instead of characteristics of places, are a more meaningful description of the rural-urban division in China. Urban places in this study refer to those places designated as urban by the Chinese government regardless of their area/population size. In accordance with the *Regulations on Statistical Urban–Rural Divisions* implemented in 2008, the *Compiling Rules of Statistical Area Codes and Rural-Urban Division Codes* published in 2009, and the *Statistical Area Codes and Rural-Urban Division Codes* of 2017, all the area covered by a neighbourhood committee¹⁶ is considered to be an urban area (PRC-NBS 2008; PRC-NBS 2009; PRC-NBS 2017c). If an administrative village is adjacent to an urban neighbourhood committee then, for census purposes, it is considered an urban area; otherwise, it is considered to be a rural area (Li et al. 2016b).

2.4.2 The tiered urban system in China

Shen (2007) suggests that there is a hierarchical administrative system in China from the top of central government to various local states. Before 1978, that system was highly centralised, however, since the early 1980s, it has been clearly decentralised resulting in a tiered urban system (Li et al. 2016b). The urban space in China has been expanded and massively re-organised with the designation of new cities and the constant adjustment of city boundaries since 1978 (Shen 2007). Unlike Beijing city, which has been a municipality since 1949, Jinzhou city was not designated as a county-level city until 1991.

¹⁶ Written as ‘居委会’ in Chinese

In the 1980s and 1990s, China adopted a short-lived formula-based county-to-city upgrading policy (Fan et al. 2012). The number of cities in China grew quickly from less than 250 in 1982 to more than 650 in 2001 (Fan et al. 2012). Cities in China usually govern a range of rural and urban areas. It should be clarified that a city refers only to the central built-up area in this study¹⁷.

Towns in China are also complicated concepts. They consist of county seats—the seats of county government¹⁸, official towns (Zhen), and communes (Xiang) (Li et al. 2016b). There is also a difference between a town seat and a town region. The former refers to the more developed urban area in an official town; the latter includes the official town seat and the rural area in an official town. According to the standard of the sixth census in 2010, county seats proper and official town seats are classified as urban areas, while other parts of the town are classified as rural areas. In some cases, the county seats proper or the official town coincide with the county-level city. For example, Jinzhou county-level city contains the Jinzhou Chengguan official town¹⁹.

There are three influential standards which classify urban entities in China: a) administrative level, b) Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and c) population size (South China Morning Post 2013).

a) Administrative rank

The present urban tiers in China can be summarised as municipalities, vice-provincial cities²⁰, prefecture-level cities, county-level cities and official towns according to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (PRC-NBS 2016a; 2018). The categories of administrative ranks and the numbers of cities and towns in accordance are shown in Table 2.1. It should be noted that cities of a higher administrative rank are fewer than those of a lower administrative rank. There are only four municipalities in China, namely

¹⁷ Beijing city refers to the eight established urban districts whilst Beijing municipal refers to the whole jurisdiction of Beijing.

Jinzhou city refers to the central built-up urban area situated in Jinzhou county.

¹⁸ Some county-seats are also county-level cities. It is not unusual in China that some county-seats hold three governments including the county government, the county-level city government and the government of an official/established town (Wang 2001b; Shen 2007).

¹⁹ Written as ‘晋州城关镇’ in Chinese

²⁰ There are fifteen cities designated as vice-provincial level cities which enjoy bigger administrative jurisdiction than prefecture-level cities but smaller jurisdiction than municipalities. Those cities include Changchun city, Chengdu city, Dalian city, Guangzhou city, Hangzhou city, Harbin city, Jinan city, Nanjing city, Ningbo city, Qingdao city, Shenyang city, Shenzhen city, Wuhan city, Xi’an city and Xiamen city

Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing, compared to 15 vice-provincial cities, 273 prefecture-level cities, 361 county-level cities and numerous official towns.

Table 2.1 Administrative ranks and the numbers of cities in accordance, 2015

Administrative ranks	Municipality	Vice-provincial cities	Prefecture-level cities	County-level cities	Official towns
Numbers of cities	4	15	273	361	Numerous

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (2016a, 2016b)

b) Gross Domestic Product

Chinese cities can also be grouped according to their level of economic development. In 2013, the first tier cities had a GDP equal to or over 300 billion US dollars; the second tier includes cities with a GDP between 68 billion and 299 billion US dollars; the third tier cities possess a GDP between 18 and 67 billion US dollars; most fourth tier cities had a GDP equal to or below 17 billion US dollars (South China Morning Post 2013).

c) Population size

Population size here refers to the number of regular residents²¹. According to the *Notice of the State Council on Adjusting the Standards for Categorising City Sizes* issued by State Council of China (2014c), cities in China can be categorised into five levels and seven groups. The city sizes, their scale of regular residents and the number of cities in accordance are shown in Table 2.2. Super-large and extra-large cities are fewer than large cities, and large and medium cities are fewer than small cities and small cities and towns. This study generally refers to super-large, extra-large and large cities as big cities.

Table 2.2 City sizes in China, 2015

City sizes	Super-large cities	Extra-large cities	Large cities		Medium cities	Small cities and towns	
			I	II		I	II
Regular residents (million)	>10	5~10	3~5	1~3	0.5~01	0.2~0.5	<0.2
Number of cities	4	3	13	51	100	250	Numerous

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (2016a, 2016b)

²¹ Written as ‘常住人口’ in Chinese

Using all three standards, Beijing city ranks as a ‘*top city*’ whilst Jinzhou city ranks as a ‘*bottom city*’. Chan (2010a) has mentioned that amenities usually align with economic inequality through the administrative hierarchy of the formal system of fiscal resources in China. Fan (2011b) has also pointed out that in places with lagging economies, their amenities were usually weak. According to Wei (2014), the size of cities in China and their economic development is closely related to their administrative ranks, and that cities with higher administrative ranks usually have bigger populations and larger land areas. Ni (2016) argues that cities with higher administrative ranks are equipped with more administrative power, preferable financial allocations and public resources, which further resulted in the stratification of employment opportunities, living environments, convenience of living, and education among those cities. The relationship between administrative ranks, sizes of hukou and non-hukou regular residents and GDP levels of cities are highlighted in Table 2.3. It is clearly shown that cities with a higher administrative rank also have a higher level of economic development (GDP) and more hukou and non-hukou regular residents on average, while municipalities have the highest GDP and the largest population, and county-level cities have the lowest GDP and the smallest population among all Chinese cities.

This research has adopted the administrative ranks of cities, rather than population sizes or economic development as a basis for analysis. Chan (2010a) ascribed the inequality of resources and population distributions among cities to the administrative hierarchy, and argued that policies instead of economic factors were the fundamental driver in the Chinese urbanisation process. Therefore, administrative ranks are selected among all the above standards discussed as the most crucial standard to categorise cities in China in this study.

Table 2.3 Mean of urban population and GDP by administrative rank of cities, 2015

Administrative rank	Hukou regular residents (thousand)	Non-hukou residents (thousand)	GDP (million yuan)
County-level city	194.2	23.9	35950.9
Prefecture-level city	726.0	139.0	87310.1
Vice-provincial city	4330.9	1047.1	755186.9
Municipality	15006.1	2518.6	1939935.3

Source: Calculated from data in *China Urban Construction Statistical Yearbook* (PRC-NBS 2016b)

2.5 Migration intentions

Migrant workers selected for this study had already migrated to urban destinations from their original rural villages. Therefore, the migration intentions analysed here refer to the secondary decisions to migrate again in the next five years, instead of the original decisions and reasons to leave their rural hometown villages. Such migration intentions are facilitated by the perceived inequalities between locations and the aspiration of migrant workers for achieving a better life step by step.

2.5.1 Migration intention and migration behaviour

Comprehensive migration research has demonstrated that people with intentions to move at an earlier time are more likely to migrate later than those showing no intentions (Gordon et al. 1995; Böheim et al. 2002). Therefore, De Jong (1999) asserts that intentions to migrate could provide insights into the underlying causes of migration. Simmons (1985) argued that delving into the determinants of migration intentions is useful from a policy perspective to provide an understanding of why some policies affect population redistribution and others do not. In studies of rural-urban migration in China, researchers usually emphasise the institutional constraints around migration instead of migration intentions (Zhu et al. 2010). However, Tao et al. (2015a) argue that migrant workers are enabling/active agents in the migration processes, not just passive recipients of the disadvantages generated by the hukou system. Their study found:

“Faced with disadvantages in terms of social capital, human capital, and institutional discrimination, these workers strive to cope with such disadvantages and formulate effective strategies.” (Tao et al. 2015a, p. 475)

They seek to actively cope with the institutional constraints and the market to achieve their own aspirations for life (Tao et al. 2015a). The decision-making process relating to migration or settlement intentions formed in the unique institutional context of China has begun to draw more attention of researchers (Zhu 2007; Zhu et al. 2010; Tang et al. 2015).

2.5.2 Classification of migration intentions

In current empirical studies, migration intentions in the rural to urban migration process of China were mostly measured primarily through the variables of ‘*stay or leave*’ or ‘*stay in this city, go back to hometown*’ or ‘*go to other cities*’ (Cai et al. 2008b; Yue et al. 2010; Fan 2011a; Wang et al. 2013; Hao et al. 2015; Tang et al. 2015; Zang et al. 2015). This

classification of migration intentions overlooked the fact that when making a decision about migration, rural-urban migrant workers are faced with stratified options of potential destinations. The distinctions between different cities as choices of migration destination have largely been neglected (Zhang 2011b). Therefore, migration intentions in this research are defined as an anticipated relocation of individuals within the next five years, and includes both general intentions to migrate and the choice of migration destinations. Migration destinations are grouped into rural and urban areas, and urban places are further distinguished by their administrative rank.

2.6 Hukou conversion intentions

2.6.1 The changing value of hukou

Hukou is considered to have a *'market value'* (Chen et al. 2016a); with that value generated from the entitlements attached to it. For the purpose of this research, hukou entitlements refer to the social and economic benefits linked to a certain hukou location. Originally, the divergence of hukou entitlements existed mostly between rural and urban citizens. Before the early 1980s the urban minority enjoyed housing, employment, health care, schooling and food rations, mostly provided by their state work units, while the rural majority struggled, with few social benefits, relying on their land for sustenance and security (Miller 2012). Urban hukou value absolutely outweighed rural hukou value in that period. As a result, in the late 1980s, a wave of local states started charging high fees—ranging from several thousand yuan to tens of thousands yuan—in exchange for hukou in small towns and cities (Fan 2008; Chen et al. 2016a). The *'price'* of a hukou varied greatly according to the administrative status of a city: an urban hukou of a prefecture-level city cost more than that of a county-level city (Han 1994; Chan et al. 1999; Fan 2008). It is estimated that by the end of 1993 three million rural citizens had purchased an urban hukou and contributed a total of 25 million yuan to the respective local states (Yu 2002). Similarly, practices of *'blue stamp'* urban hukou emerged in large cities from the mid-1990s (Fan 2008). *'Blue stamp'* urban hukou functioned like a *'green card'* for rural residents to access urban benefits while staying in a certain city (Fan 2008). The qualifying criteria for accessing those urban benefits were city specific, but usually involved making substantial investments in business, purchasing new housing or paying a substantial fee (Chan et al. 1999; Carrillo Garcia 2004; Fan 2008). The *'blue stamp'* hukou was gradually abolished in the early 2000s (Fan 2008; Li et al. 2016b). However,

these practices helped to commodify the hukou, and despite the central government requesting a halt to hukou selling as early as 1988, the practice had continued (Chen et al. 2016a). Fan (2008) points out that local urban governments in China exploited the institutional legacies of the hukou system inherited from the pre-reform period and made extensive profit out of them.

The types of entitlements attached to an urban hukou have generally been reduced due to several rounds of hukou reforms, which allowed the market to be more important in the allocation of resources. As stated by Chen et al. (2016a, p. 9):

“...the competitive advantage of urban hukou has declined as China seeks to expand basic public services to all and as the market’s role in distributing food, housing, and other needs increases.”

For example, the eligibility of employment in urban areas (since the early 1950s to 1986), and the commodity grain ration, and the rationing of other essential goods in urban areas (since the 1950s to 1980s), have been delinked from urban hukou (Guang 2001; Carrillo Garcia 2004). The links between hukou and urban housing has also weakened after the marketisation of urban housing and the relaxation of relative institutional constraints (Yang et al. 2018). However, the entitlements of urban hukou still vary significantly across tiers of cities. As such, before the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014, it was evident that more entitlements were associated with urban hukou in cities whose administrative ranks were higher or sizes were larger (Qu et al. 2015). For example, local urban hukou plays a bigger role in employment in metropolitan cities than in small cities and towns. Since 1995, some of the larger cities like Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Beijing have restricted migrants’ access to several job categories, limited their participation in some sectors, or completely banned them from others (Guang 2001). No such practices were documented or carried out in small cities and towns in the New-Style Urbanisation era. Similar comparisons include variations in access to education, medical care and so on (Banyuetan 2015).

It should also be noted that the respective values of rural and urban hukou have changed in recent decades: some urban hukou ceased to be superior to rural hukou (Chen et al. 2016a). Researchers have found that entitlements tied to rural hukou, including allocation of farming and housing land, compensation for land requisition, and more favourable birth control policies, are considered increasingly valuable (Mullan et al. 2011; Meng 2012; Song et al. 2012; Wang 2013; Ma et al. 2014; Maëlys et al. 2014; Siciliano 2014;

Hao et al. 2015; Rao et al. 2015; Chen et al. 2016a; Feng et al. 2016; Tang et al. 2016; Xie et al. 2016; Zhang 2017). In addition to the above entitlements, the rural conditions of education, health care, retirement and subsistence have also improved (Chen et al. 2016a).

In short, the recent policy changes have increased the benefits in rural areas, but decreased the value of urban hukou, especially the urban hukou in smaller cities and towns, indicating a possible change in the attitudes of migrant workers towards hukou conversion from rural to urban.

2.6.2 Hukou conversion intentions in the New-Style Urbanisation era

Scholars (Chen et al. 2016a; Tang et al. 2018) have argued that the recent policy changes concerning hukou have resulted in a lack of enthusiasm for many rural migrants to convert their hukou from rural to urban, and that they were especially reluctant to exchange their rural hukou for urban hukou in small cities or towns. Tang et al. (2018, p. 20) pointed out:

“Ten to 20 years ago, rural migrants were longing for an urban hukou to benefit from better social warfare and higher living standards.”

However, they tend to lack such intentions in the current policy environment, worrying that they might lose valued entitlements of a rural hukou. As a result, it has been found by Chen et al. (2016a) that many of them would rather straddle both regions and circulate between the city and countryside. Moreover, some farmers who have converted their rural hukou to urban later wanted to convert back to rural hukou (Chen et al. 2016a). However, Huang et al. (2012) point out that hukou conversion from urban to rural, which was encouraged during the 1960s and 1970s, has become almost impossible in the current system. Chen et al. (2016a) argue that this makes farmers even more hesitant to pursue an urban hukou when given the opportunity.

Tang et al. (2018) examined a 2015 survey conducted in Nanjing and Suzhou in the southern part of Jiangsu province, and found that only 12.8 percent of the respondents intended to convert their hukou from rural to urban. However, the interest of migrant workers in hukou conversion varies from city to city. Chen et al. (2016a) drew from the *China Migrants Dynamic Survey* (2010) to compare the hukou conversion intentions between migrant workers who resided in larger cities and those in smaller cities and towns, and found that about 68 percent of them preferred hukou conversion in larger cities. They

also argued that there was a mismatch between the hukou reforms and the preference of migrant workers for hukou conversion locations.

The New-Style Urbanisation plan has stratified hukou conversion requirements in different tiers of cities, with the lowest level of cities performing the most relaxed regimens and the higher levels applying the most strict standards, in the hope of combating the big city preferences of migrant workers (SCC 2014a Chapter Six). There are limited studies on how the hukou conversion intentions have changed across those cities after the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policies, and just how the hukou conversion intentions affect migration intentions.

2.6.3 Classification of hukou conversion intentions

The hukou conversion intentions discussed in this study only refer to those from rural to urban since all the surveyed respondents are rural-urban migrant workers who currently hold a rural hukou. In recent studies about hukou conversion intentions of migrant workers in China, researchers usually examine the hukou conversion intentions by asking the migrant workers whether they intend to obtain the local urban hukou (Tang et al. 2018). It neglected the possibility that some migrant workers hoped to obtain urban hukou in another urban place and therefore, underestimated the intentions of migrant workers to transfer their hukou from rural to urban. Hukou conversion intentions in this study refer to whether migrant workers intend to convert their hukou from rural to local urban hukou in their current cities of residence in the next five years. For those who did not want to obtain a local urban hukou, their intentions are further grouped as retaining rural hukou or converting to urban hukou in other urban locations, which are distinguished according to their administrative ranks. This study seeks to examine the relative popularity of rural and urban hukou, as well as the attraction of urban hukou among different tiers of cities.

2.7 Aims and measures of the New-Style Urbanisation policy

The advocacy of the government for developing large cities have made them the engine of China's economic growth, and attracted millions of rural-urban migrants in the last two decades migrating towards them, but it has also brought about environmental issues, traffic congestion pressure, housing shortages, and overcrowding problems in those cities.

To deal with those problems, in 2014 China put forward the New-Style Urbanisation plan (2014-2020). This policy serves as the national urbanisation guideline in China until 2020.

It was designed to combat problems associated with the *'old-style'* urbanisation of China and to better guide China's urbanisation in the future. It proposed to reduce the gap between urban hukou residents and urban regular residents, to achieve better inclusion of migrants in hosting cities, to make China's urbanisation more people-oriented, to achieve sustainable urbanisation, to adjust spatial inequality and to direct more migrants to small cities and towns (Wang et al. 2015d).

2.7.1 Adjustment of social inequality to achieve better inclusion of rural-urban migrant workers

The New-Style Urbanisation plan proposed to alter the inequalities between migrants and locals, and it aimed to positively facilitate the change in recipients entitled to basic public service provision, to shift from only hukou residents to all regular residents in urban areas (SCC 2014a Chapter Seven). The basic public services were meant to gradually cover the population who worked or lived in urban areas without local urban hukou. Specific measures were:

- a) Ensure equal rights of education between the migrants' children and local children
- b) Improve the service system of employment and self-employment for migrants, especially rural-urban migrant workers.
- c) Enlarge the coverage of social security and incorporate migrants, especially rural-urban migrant workers, into the basic social insurance schemes.
- d) Improve the quality of basic medical care and include migrants, especially rural-urban migrant workers, in the medical assistance provision.
- e) Improve the quality of accommodation of migrants, especially rural-urban migrant workers, through various models of housing.

There is usually a gap between policy and implementation, and the above stated measures were not fully implemented nationally by 2017, three years after the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation Policy. Although hukou policy was revised in 2014 to gradually allow migrant children to receive public education in cities, the local implementation of this policy has often made it conditional on additional fees, extensive mandatory paperwork, and limited space (New Citizen Program 2014). In 2015, the Human Resource and Social Security Bureau of Beijing city (HRSS Beijing) proposed to control population growth through the regulation of job opportunities (Yi Ye Kong Ren), and to subsidise enterprises which hire local hukou residents (HRSS Beijing 2015). The

variations in the implementation of the New-style Urbanisation policy between top and bottom cities has received little attention, and neither has the perceived level of social inequalities experienced by rural migrant workers residing and working in them.

2.7.2 Adjustment of spatial inequality between tiers of cities

It is asserted that China had built up a hierarchical urban system in accordance with its administrative ranks and with reference to the formal system of fiscal resources (budget revenue allocation) before the application of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014 (Chan 2010a). The New-Style Urbanisation policy proposed to alter the distribution of resources across tiers of cities (SCC 2014a Chapter Twelve). It proposed to:

- a) Emphasise the leading role of central cities.
- b) Accelerate the development of medium and small cities.
- c) Stimulate small towns in a focused manner.

Under this policy, development of infrastructure in small cities and towns was a focus (SCC 2014b). It even proposed to give suitable administration power to those more populous and developed official towns. However, there are usually discrepancies between the intentions and the outcomes of a policy (Clement et al. 2009), and the outcomes of this policy have been far from satisfactory. According to data from the *China Urban Construction Statistical Yearbook*, the big city preference was still apparent in 2015 (PRC-NBS 2016b).

As shown in Table 2.4, the administrative rank of a city was still strongly associated with the funding allocated from all levels of governments. The average fiscal budget assigned to municipalities from all level of governments was about 67.5 times the amount distributed to county-level cities. The fiscal budget limits the level of social services that a local government can provide to its citizen, the condition of overall infrastructure, and the extent to which the local state can invest in its local economy. Small cities and towns are put in a disadvantaged position due to their lack of fiscal allocation. The administrative rank of a city is also an indicator of the area of construction land designated to that city (PRC-NBS 2016b). On average, highly ranked cities are geographically 'bigger', and therefore, obtain more land for the placement and construction of new facilities.

Table 2.4 National fiscal budgets for urban maintenance and construction by administrative ranks of cities, 2015

Administrative rank	Total (mean)	National Level (mean)	Provincial Level (mean)	City-Level (mean)
County-level city	555.4	119.4	46.6	472.6
Prefecture-level city	2792.8	130.8	133.2	2535.4
Vice-provincial city	21198.9	247.3	227.4	17911.3
Municipality	37495.5	283.2	9516.5	29464.9

Source: Calculated from data in “China Urban Construction Statistical Yearbook” 2016 (PRC-NBS 2016b)

Note: Measurement unit is million yuan

2.7.3 Directing rural-urban migrant workers to smaller cities

Research shows that rural-urban migrants preferred big cities to middle-sized or small cities and towns to work, live or settle before the release of the New-Style Urbanisation policy (Peng et al. 2010; Zhang 2011b; Hao et al. 2015; Sun 2015; Pakrashi et al. 2017). Peng et al. (2010, p. 1) indicated that:

“...over 60% of rural migrant workers swarm into large cities so that many Chinese metropolises, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou become overloaded.”

Based on data collected in 2012 and 2013, Sun (2015) concluded that migrant workers in big cities were more likely to exhibit intentions to settle (or conduct hukou conversion) compared to those residing in small cities. Hao et al. (2015) distinguished settlement intentions of rural-urban migrant workers in different levels of urban units (administrative levels) in 2010, and found that migrants living in prefecture-level cities had significantly stronger intentions of obtaining urban hukou than rural migrants in smaller county-level cities or townships. However, these studies were done before the application of the New-Style Urbanisation policy. The updated variations in the attractiveness of tiers of cities to rural migrants in the new-style-urbanisation era have yet to be fully scrutinised.

The New-style Urbanisation plan stratified the hukou conversion regimen into different levels of cities, in the hope of directing more migrant workers to smaller cities and towns (SCC 2014a Chapter Six):

- a) On the basis of legal and stable employment and accommodation (renting included), eliminate ‘hukou’ gaining restrictions completely in county level cities, county seats proper, and official town seats;

- b) Orderly ease ‘hukou’ gaining restrictions in cities with a population between half million and one million;
- c) Rationally ease ‘hukou’ gaining restrictions in cities with a population between one million and three million;
- d) Rationally formulate ‘hukou’ gaining preconditions in cities with a population between three million and five million;
- e) Strictly control population growth in large cities with a population of more than five million.

Under these guidelines, the regulations for hukou conversion formulated for big cities were totally the opposite of those for small cities and towns. The strict hukou conversion regulations increased as the scale of a city grew (SCC 2014b). Of particular note, hukou conversion from rural to small cities and towns was totally unrestricted. However, the conversion from rural or lower level urban entities to higher-level urban units was still difficult (SCC 2014e). Recently, several central cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, adopted a point-based hukou conversion system with an annual quota. Beijing published its *Detailed Rules for Operation and Administration of Point-Based Hukou System* in Beijing (Trial) on 11 April 2018 (HRSSB Beijing 2018b). The *Cooperative Development Plan of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region*²² pointed out that Beijing aimed to keep its population below 23 million (it was already more than 21 million in 2014) and to reduce population in its six most developed urban districts²³ by 15 percent by 2020 (BMG 2015). The overall urban development plan of Shanghai (2015-2040) stressed that Shanghai would restrict population growth and maintain a population below 25 million by 2020 (it was already more than 24 million in 2014) (BPLR Shanghai 2016). Hukou conversion to municipalities such as Beijing and Shanghai will continue to be selective, with the ceilings set and the demands growing. Whether the stratified regimens for hukou conversion across tiers of cities actually curb migration to top cities and accelerate migration to smaller cities requires further investigation and evidence.

2.8 Influence of hukou on migration decisions

Before China abolished its ‘*deportation policies*’ in 2003, all Chinese citizens had to reside where their hukou was registered. Non-official migrants who migrated without

²² This region includes the case study area (Jinzhou city) of this research.

²³ The six most developed urban districts of Beijing are Dongcheng district, Xicheng district, Haidian district, Chaoyang district, Fengtai district, Shijingshan district.

hukou conversion were deemed illegal and could be deported to their hometown. Overtime, it is indisputable that hukou had a significant influence on migration decisions of rural-urban migrant workers (Chan et al. 1999; Chan 2009). However, after the abolishment of the '*deportation policies*' and after a few rounds of hukou reforms, it has become difficult to ascertain how much hukou still influences the rural-urban migration of rural villagers and their choices of secondary migration destinations.

A few emerging studies suggest that the hukou conversion decisions of migrant workers no longer necessarily conform with their migration decisions. A study conducted by the Development Research Centre of the State council (DRCSC) in 2011 suggested that only a small proportion of migrant workers were willing to give up their farming land and housing parcel in exchange for urban hukou while they were staying in urban areas. Chen et al. (2016a) argued that many rural migrants wanted to stay in the cities but did not want urban hukou, based on their analysis of the *China Migrants Dynamic Survey* (2010-2012). Tang et al. (2018) found that migration decisions did not necessarily match their hukou arrangements based on a survey in 2015. They argued that the recent hukou reform policies have allowed more flexibility for migrant workers to choose migration destinations. However, the relationship between the hukou arrangements of migrant workers and their migration decisions after the implementation of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014, has received limited research attention to date.

2.9 Research gaps

From the literature, three challenges emerge from conceptualising and operationalising the influence of the New-Style Urbanisation policy on the internal migration of rural-urban migrant workers in the next five years (2017-2022):

- a) The life experiences of migrant workers in small cities in the New-Style Urbanisation era are rarely studied.
- b) It remains unclear whether the applied New-Style Urbanisation policy will curb big city preferences of migrant workers in the next five years.
- c) It is obvious that the hukou system influences migration, but there are limited studies looking into the extent to which hukou influences migration (to small cities).

This study seeks to fill several research gaps by evaluating and comparing two distinct cities Beijing and Jinzhou from the perspective of rural-urban migrant workers.

2.10 Theoretical framework

Walter (2013, p. 34) pointed out:

“... the theory or paradigm that a researcher uses will shape the way they understand their research topic.”

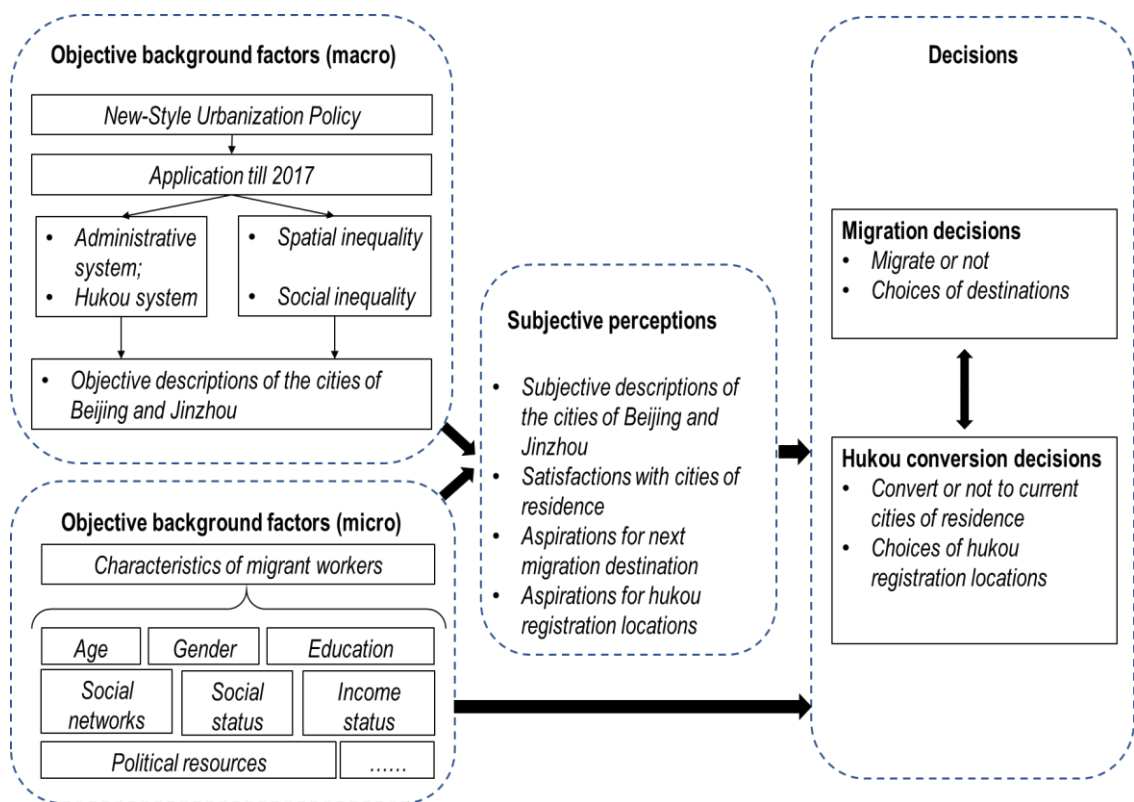
This study adopted a behavioural approach and employed the decision-making framework to understand migration and hukou decisions of Chinese migrant workers. The first implementation of the decision-making framework in population studies was in the field of fertility instead of migration (Arnold et al. 1975; Davidson et al. 1975). De Jong et al. (1981) was one of the first researchers who brought this framework to the studies of migration. The decision-making framework offers a conceptualisation to link the macro level changes to micro level migration decision-making behaviour (Adler 1979; Burch 1979).

A wide range of recent migration literature has employed the decision-making framework in various contexts: Kuschminder et al. (2017) examined the role of migration-specific and migration-relevant policies in migrant decision-making for onward migration in Greece and Turkey; Steiner (2019) studied the migration decision-making process of immigrants in a high-income country setting; Tabor et al. (2015) discussed the international migration decision-making and destination selection among skilled migrants. However, this framework has rarely been employed in studies about rural-urban migration and destination selection in China.

Rural-urban migration in China differs somewhat from the traditional migration contexts in western countries due to the existence of the hukou system. In this regard, this study adopted the migration decision-making framework and modified it so that it is relevant to the specific context of Chinese rural-urban migration, as indicated in Figure 2.1. The model includes background factors, both the macro and micro objective facts, and the subjective perception of migrant workers, as well as their characteristics, which are seen to affect their migration and hukou decisions, and that their migration decisions and hukou conversion decisions influence each other.

Background factors here include all factors that could influence the formation of individual perceptions of migrant workers about where they want to live. However, in this study, they mainly refer to the administrative system, the hukou system, the social and spatial inequalities, as well as the characteristics of migrant workers. Those inequalities could be summarised as economic inequalities such as employment opportunities (Fan 2011b) and regional wage differences (Sjaastad 1970; Gatons et al. 1972), and amenities including the cultural, environmental, political, and other factors (White 2016).

Figure 2.1 Decision-making framework



Source: Author's own construct 2017

Macro-level factors can be examined in a micro-level study through individual perceptions (Freedman 1979; De Jong et al. 1981), mainly as the level of satisfaction of migrant workers for their current city of residence, and their aspirations for future migration destinations and hukou locations. The demographic characteristics, and socio-economic and political status of migrant workers, can also influence their perceptions. It has been shown that migrant workers in China are highly heterogeneous. They are made up of both females and males, young and old, married and single individuals, a high proportion of illiterate labourers mixed with a small number of well-educated

professionals, while they are mainly low-income workers and only a few high-income earners.

The perception process and the formation of migration intentions are two major components of the cognitive process involved in migration decisions. It is the perceptions of the objective factors instead of the objective factors themselves which influence the decisions of migration and hukou conversion. Personal characteristics and the differences between migrant workers also influence those decisions. In this study, it is hypothesised that the degree of satisfaction expressed by migrant workers with their current cities of residence will affect their decision to relocate, and whether to convert hukou to match their current cities of residence or elsewhere. For those who decide to leave, it is also hypothesised that their destination aspirations would influence their choice of migration destinations.

2.11 Conclusion

Rural-urban migrant workers are a sub-group of unofficial migrants living in urban areas who failed to secure local urban hukou, with some not considering to convert their hukou. They are marginalised in the recent '*talents*' war among cities, being put in a vulnerable position compared to local citizens and other migrant groups. This population is diversified in terms of demographic characteristics, socio-economic and political status and life experiences.

The potential destinations for rural-urban migrant workers to choose from in the next five years can be divided into rural or urban, with urban areas further classified according to their economic development levels, administrative ranks or population sizes. This study emphasises the importance of administrative ranks. The local urban hukou of municipalities are identified as having the highest value compared to lower-ranked cities. Some researchers have argued that rural hukou has become more valuable than urban hukou in county-level small cities, which has been a major change over the last decade or so.

The New-Style Urbanisation policy proposed several measures in the hope of curbing migration to super-large cities and to accelerate migration to small cities and towns. Those measures can be generally categorised into three groups: measures dealing with the inclusion of migrant workers into host cities; measures dealing with resource

distribution between tiers of cities; and measures concerning building a stratified hukou conversion system across tiers of cities and towns.

Three gaps emerged from the review of literature: what are the life experiences of migrant workers in small cities in China; whether their big city preferences have been curbed; and to what extent does the hukou system still influence their migration intentions in the next five years? A decision-making framework was adopted for the comparison between migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou to link their metropolitan and small city experience, to their migration decisions and hukou conversion decisions, as well as the relationships between those two sets of decisions.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodological considerations to investigate the research questions and meet the research objectives. It should be noted that this study is set in the New-Style Urbanisation era in China and limited to the application of the New-Style Urbanisation policies until the middle of 2017 when the fieldwork was carried out (2014-2017). This study adopts a mixed methods research approach, which involves both quantitative and qualitative methods, but with an emphasis on quantitative methods. The specific methods and techniques employed in the data collection process are outlined in this chapter. Issues relating to the fieldwork schedule, survey, sampling methods, questionnaire design, interviews, and secondary data sources are explained here. The dimensions for measuring a city as a migration destination and hukou (conversion) location are explained. Specific techniques employed for quantitative and qualitative data analysis are also introduced. Main statistical techniques employed in the quantitative data analysis include summary and data reduction techniques, as well as techniques to identify relationships and to establish associations. Document analysis and the analysis of interview data are two main components of the qualitative data analysis that has been undertaken. Finally, the issues concerning ethics and the limitations of this study are introduced.

3.2 Selection of research approach: mixed methods

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, which combined both qualitative and quantitative methods. Walter (2013) claims that methodology is the theoretical lens through which research is designed and conducted. He also points out that all social science research methods have strengths and weaknesses, however, in the qualitative/quantitative debate, sides are taken as to whether quantitative methods or qualitative methods are ‘superior’.

Quantitative research is defined by Bryman (2015, p. 32) as:

“a research strategy that emphasises quantifications in the collection and analysis of data and that

- entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the accent is placed on the testing of theories;
- has incorporated the practices and norms of positivism in particular; and
- embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality.”

By contrast, he defines qualitative research (Bryman 2015, pp. 32-33) as:

“a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that

- emphasises an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which an emphasis is placed on the generation of theories;
- has rejected the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and of positivism in particular, in preference for an emphasis on how individuals interpret their social world; and
- embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals’ creation”.

According to Walter (2013), quantitative research methods collect data that can be analysed by statistical techniques, and is often used to identify and establish relationships between key variables; while qualitative research methods are concerned with exploring the understanding and meanings that people attribute to their social world. Neuman et al. (2003) claim that quantitative research tends to focus on hypothesis testing, while qualitative research pursues the meaning of the data.

According to Sale et al. (2002, p. 50), researchers advocating quantitative methods:

“...perceive truth as something which describes an objective reality, separate from the observer and waiting to be discovered.”

They tend to believe:

“...all phenomena can be reduced to empirical indicators which represent the truth.” (Sale et al. 2002, p. 44)

On the other hand, researchers in favour of qualitative methods such as Krauss (2005, pp. 759-760) believes that

“...the best way to understand any phenomenon is to view it in its context. They see all quantification as limited in nature, looking only at one small portion of a reality that cannot be split or unitised without losing the importance of the whole phenomenon...They do not assume that there is a single unitary reality apart from our perceptions. Since each of us experiences from our own point of view, each of us experiences a different reality. As such, the phenomenon of ‘multiple realities’ exists.”

Notwithstanding the detachments between qualitative and quantitative epistemologies, Walter (2013) suggests that qualitative and quantitative methods are equally vital aspects of the social science research endeavour. Johnson et al. (2007, pp. 112-113) state that mixed methods research, which combine qualitative and quantitative methods:

“is becoming increasingly articulated, attached to research practice, and recognised as the third major research approach or research paradigm... Mixed methods research is, generally speaking, an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints (always including the standpoints of qualitative and quantitative research).”

Literature suggests that neither qualitative nor quantitative data alone is sufficient for migration studies (Mason 2006; Yvonne Feilzer 2010; Ritchie et al. 2013). Walter (2013) argues that the research approach should be selected to suit the social science research project because it is fundamentally a tool of the project. Walter (2013) also points out that the main research questions in quantitative statistical research are ‘*how many*’ questions while the main research questions in qualitative interpretative research are ‘*what meaning*’ questions. This study calls for analysis of the trends which are more likely to be acquired from survey data, as well as interpretations from the perspective of migrant workers which are more likely to be provided from interviews. The complexity of this study determines that no single quantitative or qualitative method could completely capture the ‘*story*’. The heterogeneity of the research questions of this study requires both quantitative and qualitative approaches to supplement each other, and includes analysis of primary data collected from face-to-face survey and interviews, and secondary data collected from various reports, documents and government databases.

The value of the mixed methods approach is that the researcher can gain the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative methods and reduce the limitations of one single method. Bryman (2015) argues that adopting a mixed methods approach enables the researcher to address the research questions from multiple angles and to crosscheck data gathered from the field by different methods, thereby strengthening the validity and credibility of the study results. By adopting a mixed methods approach, this study is able to generate research results of validity and credibility through triangulation. By using a mixed methods approach, this study builds its arguments primarily on quantitative data, supplemented by qualitative data to elaborate the quantitative data.

3.3. Justification of the case study areas

Beijing was chosen to represent super-large Chinese cities, which have the highest administrative rank, most advanced economic development and most densely settled population. Jinzhou was selected as a case study of small Chinese cities, representing

county-level administration cities, which usually have lagging economies, as well as small populations. The two cities are geographically close and culturally similar.

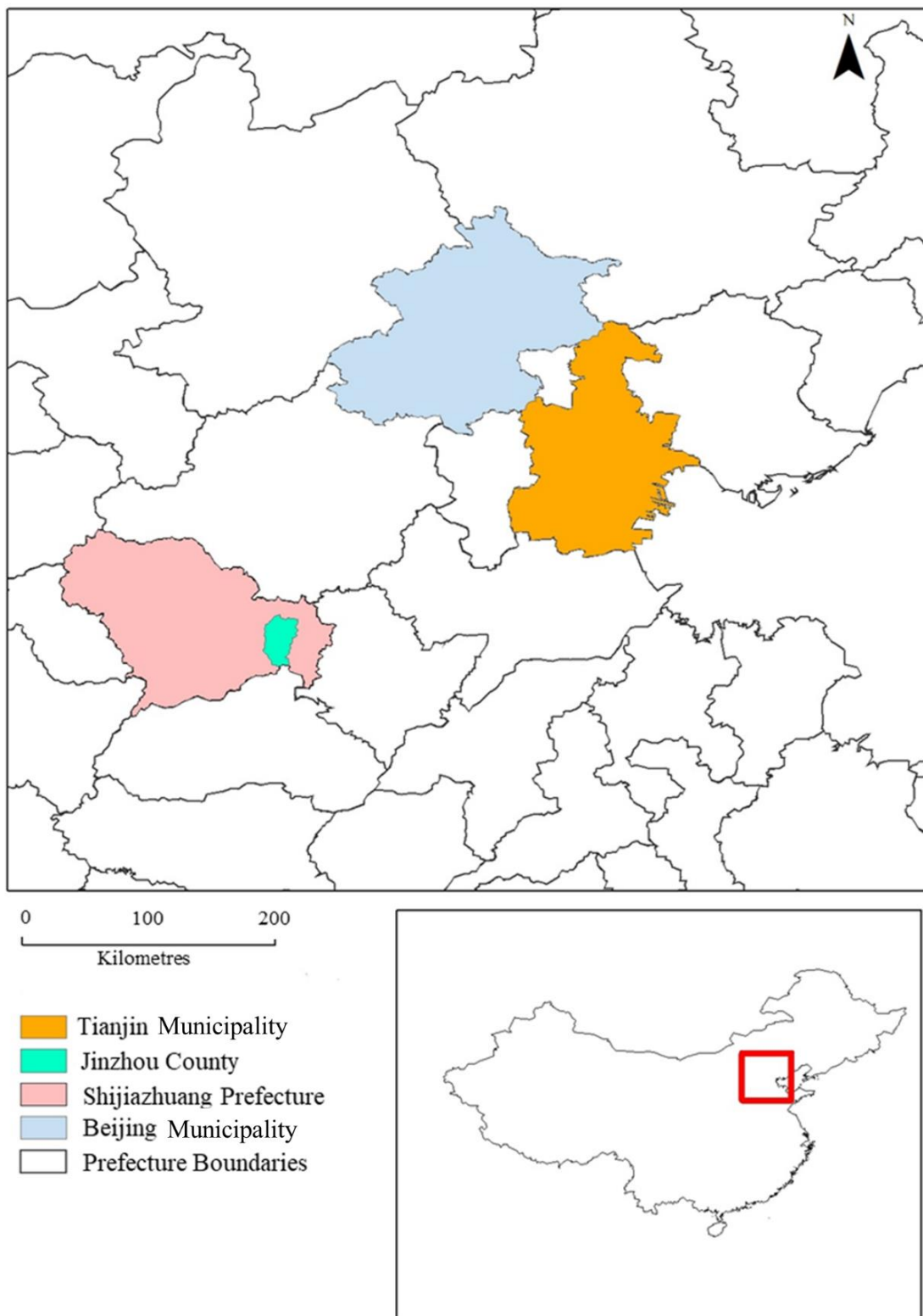
Figure 3.1 shows the relative locations of Beijing and Jinzhou. Beijing municipality is surrounded by Hebei Province with the exception of neighbouring Tianjin municipality to the southeast. Together the three divisions form the ‘Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei’ urban cluster of northern China (PRC-CPG 2013). The capital of Hebei province is Shijiazhuang prefecture. Under the jurisdiction of this prefecture, there are ten sub-districts (which form the Shijiazhuang city area) and 14 counties²⁴ (SPBS 2016). Among those 14 counties, the urban cores of Jinzhou county, Xinle county and Xinji county have been designated as county-level cities. Jinzhou is located 300 km away from Beijing city to the southeast, and 300km away from Tianjin city to the southeast and 50 km away from Shijiazhuang city to the east.

The New-Style Urbanisation policy specified a ‘*Liang Zong San Heng*’ layout of urbanisation with Beijing municipality and Tianjin municipality included in the ‘Huanbohai’ region, and Shijiazhuang prefecture and Jinzhou city incorporated in the ‘Jizhongnan’ region. This study seeks to demonstrate the differences in living conditions and settlement experiences of migrant workers who live in the top cities and those in the bottom ones in the Chinese urban system. It also compares the migration and hukou decisions of migrant workers.

Beijing has the highest administrative rank among Chinese cities and is equipped with the highest level of authority. As the capital of China, it is widely known that Beijing has a significant and central role in many aspects of modern China. More than 22 million people resided in Beijing regularly by the end of 2016, including eight million migrants. Jinzhou, on the other hand, is a small county-level city in Hebei province, an area which is somewhat overshadowed by the capital. Jinzhou city does not match Beijing either in terms of GDP, administrative rank or population size, and instead satisfies the definition of a bottom city. These contrasts between Beijing and Jinzhou made them ideal as case study areas for the purpose of this research. Detailed conditions of the two cities will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

²⁴ In 2015

Figure 3.1 The relative locations of Jinzhou, Beijing, Tianjin and Shijiazhuang



Source: ESRI (2018c, 2018b, 2018a)

Note: South China Sea is not shown for simplicity

3.4 Fieldwork schedule

Fieldwork was undertaken in the two case study cities (Beijing and Jinzhou), from late February to late July 2017, a total period of five months. Fieldwork was commenced in late February because it was usually the time of the year when migrant workers go back to work in the cities after spending the Chinese New Year in their hometown village with their families and friends.

The researcher, who has lived and studied in Beijing and Jinzhou, has a good understanding of the background, and before the survey or interviews were carried out, I spent several days to these two cities to make contact with family and friends who resided there, and to establish appropriate target areas to survey and interview migrant workers.

The personal networks helped the researcher gain background knowledge, and also assisted in establishing initial contacts with migrant workers. The researcher, while visiting the two cities, was able to observe their layout, their traffic conditions, and the working environment of migrant workers, which was invaluable for the analysis of interview and survey results. The knowledge which the researcher has about Beijing and Jinzhou also helped her achieve a valid sample of migrant workers without a sampling frame.

3.5 Sampling design

The term ‘population’ in this study refers to all the units of research interest, designated as rural-urban migrants aged 18 years or older in Beijing and Jinzhou, whose hukou were registered in rural areas but they themselves were currently working or living in the urban areas. The research population includes rural-urban migrants who have only resided in those two cities since leaving their hometown villages, and those who have explored a few other urban destinations before migrating to Beijing or Jinzhou at the time of this research. Unfortunately, it was difficult to establish the list of sampling units to form a sampling frame, which inhibited a simple random sampling strategy. This is mainly due to two reasons: First, rural-urban migrant workers are characterised by a high level of mobility (Chen et al. 2012). Second, in order to protect their privacy, the list of documented migrants in Chinese cities is confidential and only accessible for employees of related authorities. Therefore, this study adopted non-probability sampling methods and applied different strategies in Beijing and Jinzhou.

3.5.1 Sampling in Beijing city

The overall number of rural-urban migrant workers (as defined in this study) in urban Beijing is not clear. To set a sample size that is sufficient for the Beijing survey, a reliable estimation of the total population of rural-urban migrant workers was needed. According to the census conducted in 2010, the total population staying in the urban districts of Beijing with rural hukou was about 7.6 million (BS Beijing,2010). Based on a sample survey carried out in 2007, Chen et al. (2012) estimated that there was about five million rural-urban migrant workers in the urban districts of Beijing. The statistics yearbook of Beijing 2016 indicated that the number of regular residents (residents who have stayed in Beijing for six months or more) without native hukou (including those with both urban and rural hukou outside Beijing) had reached eight million in 2016, of a total 22 million regular residents (BS Beijing 2016b). Given that the research population is not geographically homogeneous and that the sampling frame cannot be established, this study combined '*convenience sampling*' and '*self-selected sampling*' to select migrant workers in Beijing. Walter (2013) defined convenience sampling as simply sampling people who are easy to locate using friends and relatives, while self-selected sampling was where people are requested to make contact with the researchers to participate in the survey.

According to the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2016a), there are 3054 urban neighbourhood committees (Ju Wei Hui) in Beijing. The size of communities and the density of rural-urban migrant workers in those communities vary from one to another. The researcher identified ten communities with high densities of migrant workers based on observation, and advertised and recruited respondents through friends who had access to migrant workers in those communities. A total of 476 rural-urban migrant workers responded to the questionnaire. However, after data cleaning, some 436 valid questionnaires were obtained and used for statistical analysis. Another 12 participants were recruited for interview, some of whom also responded to the questionnaire. Although convenience sampling and self-selected sampling have been disputed because of sample bias, it was found that the sample drawn in Beijing was highly representative of the research population. In the 2010 census, the sex ratio (male/female) of rural hukou holders in urban districts of Beijing was about 1.44 (BS Beijing 2010, p. 310). The sex ratio calculated from the survey data collected for this study was about 1.56 (male/female) which is very close to the census result.

3.5.2 Sampling in Jinzhou city

Knowledge based on existing literature of the rural-urban migrant workers in Jinzhou city was even more limited than in Beijing. The most recent data relating to the total number of rural-urban migrant workers in Jinzhou city was obtained from the 2010 census. The total number of rural-urban migrants in Jinzhou was only 1,219, compared to 135,521 regular residents, indicating that migrant workers made up about 0.9 percent of the total population. According to the researcher's observation, the distribution of rural-urban migrant workers in Jinzhou city was clustered, with migrant workers concentrated at several work sites. However, there was no valid data which could be used to estimate the size of the rural-urban migrant workers in Jinzhou city at the time of fieldwork. The researcher adopted adaptive cluster sampling as the main technique of sampling in Jinzhou. Adaptive cluster sampling was adopted to address the problem of sampling small and clustered populations (Thompson 1996), which has been used before to sample rural-urban migrant workers in China (Chen et al. 2012; Qin 2014). For this study, some 223 questionnaires were completed in Jinzhou, but after data cleaning, 207 valid questionnaires were obtained for analysis.

In Jinzhou, 60 participants of the total 207 respondents still made daily or weekly trips to their hometown villages even though they worked in Jinzhou city. These participants are included in this study as '*commuting migrant workers*', and are analysed together with '*residing migrant workers*' who both work and live in Jinzhou city for the longer term. Carrillo Garcia (2011) has pointed out that this is more likely to be the case for migrant workers in smaller urban centres. It should be noted that in the Beijing survey, all survey participants had relocated and had accommodation in Beijing, indicating that they both work and live there. Another 10 participants were recruited for interviews, some of whom also responded to the questionnaire.

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Survey

This study adopted survey as the primary tool of quantitative data collection. According to Walter (2013), surveys fall into three basic types: face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, or questionnaires that are mailed or otherwise delivered, i.e. via the internet, for the respondents to complete. The survey in this study was carried out solely by the researcher face-to-face. It has several advantages over web-based surveys or telephone

surveys for its higher response rate, it is less prone to question misinterpretation, and allows the researcher to directly address respondents' queries and concerns (Neuman et al. 2003; Walter 2013; Davies et al. 2014). In face-to-face surveys, observation data can also be gathered (Walter 2013). The research population of this study are characterised with relatively lower levels of education and a lack of computer skills, so online survey methods were inappropriate. Most questionnaires were finished one on one, some others were distributed to a group of migrant workers to fill out with the researcher present to provide help when needed.

3.6.2 Questionnaire design

A structured questionnaire for rural-urban migrant workers was designed according to the research questions and objectives, and is shown in Appendix 1. Data collected through the survey of migrant workers, include the migration experience, satisfaction with the cities of residence, working situation, accommodation situation, social networks, perception and aspirations related to the choices of migration destinations and preferred hukou locations. Knowledge about the New-Style Urbanisation policy, information about the reasons for migrating to their current cities was also collected in the questionnaire. Intentions to migrate and hukou arrangements in the next five years, and basic individual demographic characteristics, as well as the socio-economic and political status of the respondents were also documented.

Neuman et al. (2003) underlined two basic principles for questionnaire design: avoid confusion and keep the respondents' perspective in mind. Hence the design of the questionnaire avoided jargon, ambiguity, emotions, long or double-barrelled questions, false premises, and leading questions (Neuman et al. 2003; Somekh et al. 2005; Bryman 2015). The questionnaires were also accompanied by a paper clarifying key concepts to help respondents to understand relevant questions, because the rural-urban division, as well as the administrative ranking of cities in China are very complicated and most migrant workers had low levels of literacy. The questions were arranged in a logical order and divided into several sections in line with the main objectives of this study for the convenience of both the respondents and the researcher. Several filter questions were included in the questionnaire so that survey respondents could only answer relevant questions.

The questionnaire is comprised mainly of closed questions, with several partially open questions and open-ended questions scattered among them. The closed questions require respondents to make choices among several responses, which ensure uniformity in response (Neuman et al. 2003). Closed questions are often criticised for the fact that they force respondents to select a response which was provided by the researcher (Rea et al. 2014). To overcome this problem, this study also included several partially open questions and open-ended questions. The partially open responses in the form of ‘others’ or following a relatively general response were provided so that the respondents could provide answers that may not have been included, or provide more specific answers after the general response was given. For example, the questionnaire included a question asking for the type of accommodation in which respondents lived and provided an ‘other’ option for them to select and complete if none of the listed codes suited them. In another question, respondents were asked where they lived before migrating to the destination cities and they were asked to select between two general responses (rural and urban) with an option to provide more specific information, such as the name of the provinces following the general responses. One open-ended question was provided in the end of the questionnaire for the respondents to express their opinions about issues raised in this research, and to avoid biases associated with pre-coded answers. The questionnaire was first designed in English and then translated into Chinese for the participants.

3.6.3 Interview

Walter (2013) claims that qualitative interviewing is used extensively as a key way of exploring social meanings within social science research. This study adopted in-depth face-to-face interview as the primary tool to collect first-hand qualitative data. Although face-to-face interviews are considered less cost-efficient than mail or telephone interviews, it was necessary for this study given that illiterate people or people with relatively low levels of literacy were interviewed. Rather than using pre-set questions, it was necessary here to adopt in-depth interviews, and to use a set of general themes which allowed for additional questions to be asked, so that interviewees could express his or her opinions where appropriate, and explore issues as they were raised. Such an approach allowed the interviewer to identify relevant issues, such as key issues concerning migration and hukou conversion, and to raise questions according to the issues identified.

In total, 12 interviews in Beijing and 10 in Jinzhou were undertaken. The selection of interviewees was random. Most of the interviews were completed in a one-on-one format, however four migrant workers from Jinzhou were interviewed as a small group where they worked in the same factory. Most of the participants were interviewed at their workplace. The length of interviews varied from 20 minutes to two hours depending on their experiences, opinions of migration and their willingness to talk.

The interviews were conducted around eight main themes as shown in Table 3.1. The first two questions aimed to ask interviewees to look back at their histories of migration and consider what they wanted from a migration destination. The third question allowed the interviewer to interpret the meaning of '*settling down*' for migrant workers. The fourth to sixth questions focused on their future migration plans and hukou arrangements. The seventh question explored how smaller cities and towns could become more popular among migrant workers. The last question gave interviewees the chance to provide more information which they considered to be important but was not covered by the interviewer.

Table 3. 1 Interview schedule

-
1. Please outline briefly your experience of migration since 2010, indicating the cities and towns you have been to?
 2. Among all those cities and towns which you mentioned above, which one is your favourite and why?
 3. What do you think “settling down in a place” means? Do you think it is hard to settle down in the current city according to the standards you mentioned before?
 4. What elements do you consider when choosing your next destination in the next five years? Are those elements the same as when you chose the place of your hukou registration?
 5. Do you want to live in this city permanently and register your hukou here?
 6. Do you have a plan of migrating again in the next five years? Where are you going and why? Do you hope to stay there permanently and why?
 7. What aspects of small cities and towns need to be improved to make them more attractive to you?
 8. Please add anything you think are relevant to this city or this research.
-

Source: Migrant workers interview 2017

The questions were first designed in English, then translated into Chinese and conveyed to the interviewees in mandarin. They were provided with a consent form and the interview schedule before the interview. All the interviews were audio-recorded to allow

the researcher to transcribe them later into a written document for further analysis. Descriptions of all interviewees participating in this study are listed in Tables 3.2 and 3.3 for Beijing and Jinzhou respectively. Each interviewee was granted a unique code (de-identified), which compresses the case study abbreviation and a number, which is shown in the text following respective comments.

Table 3. 2 Description of interviewees from Beijing city

Code	Description of interviewees
B1	Uneducated female migrant worker, married, who was 49 years old at the time of interview (2017). She had been employed in Beijing as a sanitation worker. She originally came from a village in Henan province.
B2	Married female migrant worker aged 34 years who ran a restaurant with her family in Beijing. She originally came from a village in Heilongjiang Province.
B3	Female migrant aged 23 years who finished college in Zhengzhou city in Henan province and migrated to Beijing. She was single and was working in the media industry as a clerk at the time of interview. Her hometown was in Henan province
B4	A single female migrant aged 30 years who finished college in Zhengzhou city in Henan province. She had already experienced several cities by the time she was interviewed. The cities she worked in included Baoding city in Hebei Province, Beijing city, Guangzhou city in Guangdong Province in chronological order. She went back to Beijing city in 2013 and has since worked as a clerk in an NGO. Her hometown was in Henan Province
B5	A female migrant aged 55 years at the time of interview. She had stayed in Beijing since 1989, when she was 27 years old. She was running a migrant school which provided primary level education to migrant children. She was financially better off than other migrant workers since she had purchased property in Beijing. Her hometown was in Liaoning province.
B6	A female migrant in her 30s who worked as a teacher in a migrant school.
B7	A female migrant aged 27 years who was married, and she ran a photocopy shop with her family.
B8	Male migrant in his 30s, who worked in administration on a construction site. He had worked in Heilongjiang province, Jilin province, Liaoning province, Beijing city, Hebei province, Shandong province, Henan province, Hubei province, Hunan province, Hainan province, Yunnan province and Shaanxi Province. His hometown was in Heilongjiang Province.
B9	Male migrant aged in his 50s, worked on a construction site. Other places he had worked include Guangzhou city and Shenzhen city in Guangdong province. His hometown was in Henan province.
B10	Male migrant worker aged in his 50s, worked on a construction site. Other places he had worked include Tianjin city, Zhangjiakou city and Shijiazhuang city in Hebei province. He had migrated to Beijing in 1985 but only stayed there intermittently. His hometown was in Hebei Province.
B11	Male migrant aged in his 20s, worked in administration on a construction site. His hometown was in Hebei Province.
B12	Male migrant aged in his 20s, worked in administration on a construction site. His hometown was in Hebei Province. He had purchased a property in Shijiazhuang city in Hebei province.

Source: Migrant workers interview 2017

Table 3. 3 Description of interviewees from Jinzhou city

Code	Description of interviewees
J1	A married male migrant aged in his 50s, worked as a manager in a factory. He had been working in Jinzhou city since 2010. His hometown was in Jinzhou county.
J2	A married male migrant aged 28 years who worked in a factory. He had been working in Jinzhou city since 2013. His hometown was in Zhao county, which is a county under the jurisdiction of Shijiazhuang municipal.
J3	A married male migrant aged 25 years who worked in a factory. He had been to Shandong Province before he migrated to Jinzhou city in 2013. His hometown was in Jinzhou county.
J4	A male migrant aged in his 40s, worked as a manager in a factory. He had already purchased two properties in Shijiazhuang city. His hometown was in Jinzhou county.
J5	A young married female migrant in her 20s. She worked as an administrative clerk at a dental clinic. She had lived in Jinzhou city since 2007. Her hometown was in Jinzhou county.
J6	A young female migrant aged 28 years who ran a kindergarten in Jinzhou city.
J7	A young female migrant aged 18 years who worked as a teacher in a kindergarten. She had been to Jinzhou city, Xinji city, Shijiazhuang city, and Harbin city before she started her current job. Her hometown was in Jinzhou county.
J8	A female migrant kindergarten teacher aged in her 20s. Her hometown was in Jinzhou county.
J9	A married female migrant kindergarten teacher aged in her 20s. She had been to Jinzhou city, Shijiazhuang city, Beijing city, Zhengding city and Kaifeng city before she started her current job. Her hometown was in Jinzhou county.
J10	One divorced male migrant aged in his 50s who worked as a cook and a doorkeeper. His hometown was in Jinzhou county.

Source: Migrant workers interview 2017

3.6.4 Secondary data

The primary qualitative and quantitative data gathered through the survey and interviews was supplemented by secondary contextual information collected from academic literature, government documents, institutional reports, and official data. In this regard, this study

- reviewed academic literature around migration, rural to urban migration in China, policy and urbanisation, hukou reforms, place marketing, residential satisfaction, aspirations, perceptions, and migration-decision making processes;

- identified statistics including the sixth census in China (2010), Beijing Municipal statistics yearbooks (2006-2018), Jinzhou yearbooks (2006-2018), China urban constructive statistical yearbooks (2007-2018), the China city statistical yearbooks (2013-2017) and the Shijiazhuang prefecture statistics yearbook (2016);
- obtained reports including the AMAAP traffic analysis report of China Major cities (2017-2018), DiDi traffic and transportation report of Chinese cities (2017-2018), reports on the competitiveness of Chinese cities, WHO global urban ambient air pollution database (2016); and
- reviewed government and legal documents about the New-Style Urbanisation policy, the point-based hukou system, the compulsory education law (2006), the educational arrangements for migrant children, the overall development plans for the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, the social insurance law (2010), the labour law (1994, 2007), the hukou reform policies and reports, and the housing policies.

Unfortunately, an official data source documenting the *'floating population'* of China — the *China Migrants Dynamic Survey*—which had been conducted annually by the National Health Commission (PRC-NHC) since 2009, could not be accessed. Data was limited to research institutes who had officially applied and were permitted to use it²⁵.

The review of secondary sources enabled this study to understand the concepts, definitions and theories in the field of migration studies, and to become familiar with the research methods and strategies that are usually employed. It also gave an insight into the issues that needed to be addressed in the field.

3.7 Quantitative data analysis

The questionnaires were coded to transform the information to numeric form. A database was built in STATA 11 to store the numeric data. The completed database was thoroughly and carefully checked and cleaned to ensure the accuracy of data.

3.7.1 Place marketing and measuring a city

Okulicz-Kozaryn (2013) argues that many places advertise themselves as 'the best places to live' based on some sort of rating or ranking system, whether those systems focus on

²⁵ Unfortunately, University of Adelaide was not one of those institutes.

objective aspects (e.g. liveability ranking indexes) or subjective dimensions (e.g. citizen satisfaction indexes). Ashworth et al. (1990) point out that such index-systems are often evident in place-marketing research. They believe that as economic competition increases, cities have themselves become *'products'* to be marketed to attract potential *'customers'*. Kotler et al. (1993) believe that the major aims for place marketing is to promote a place's values and images so that potential users are fully aware of its distinctive advantages and are thus being attracted to that place.

Voluntary migration, on the one hand is a process of decision-making by individuals, on the other hand it is a process of place marketing themselves as *'the best choice'* for migration decision-makers. The so-called *'customers'* or *'users'* in this study are rural-urban migrant workers in China. Just as Zenker et al. (2009) stated that the answer to *"where is the best place to live"* depended on what scales had been applied, the answer to *"where is the best place to migrate to"* is also subject to the dimensions employed. The question is: what are the basic dimensions which distinguish places among Chinese migrant workers as desirable migration destinations? According to Zenker et al. (2009), those dimensions should be inclusive, comparable, manageable and specific to the research population.

Based on these three principals, and as indicated in Table 3.4, this study identified seven main dimensions and 18 sub-dimensions for migrant workers to describe a current destination and express aspirations for their ideal migration destination, as well as their hukou (conversion) location.

The economic dimension includes four sub-dimensions, namely wage level, employment opportunities, living costs, and housing prices. Many researchers emphasised wage and employment opportunities as two significant motivations for the migration of migrant workers in China (Hu 2002; Thijs et al. 2005; Démurger et al. 2010; Meng et al. 2010b; Knight et al. 2011; Rabe et al. 2012). Some scholars found that the higher living costs and expensive housing prices in big cities drove migrant workers away (Zang et al. 2015; Liu et al. 2017b; Mohabir et al. 2017; Yang et al. 2018), while other researchers (Wang 2001a; Wang 2010a; Liu et al. 2012; Wu et al. 2013) have argued that some migrant workers, especially the younger ones, were drawn by the big city lifestyle which indicated high living costs, more entertainment and expensive housing.

Table 3. 4 Dimensions applied for the analysis to describe places, explain satisfaction and aspirations

Main dimensions	Sub-dimensions
Economic factors	Wage level
	Employment opportunities
	Living costs
	Housing prices
Geographic factor	Distance to hometown
Social environment	Social networks of migrant workers in the destination city
Infrastructure	Green land layout
	Cultural and recreational facilities and events
	Traffic
Services	Medical services
	Quality of education
	Social insurance schemes
Political-structural factors	Hukou benefits
	Hukou conversion requirements
	Potential for the future development of migrants
Openness to migrant workers	Perceived social status in the destination city
	Perceived income status in the destination city
	Perceived discrimination level in the destination city

Source: Author's own construct 2017

The geographic factor in this study refers mainly to the distance to hometown. Distance has long been identified as a deterrent to migration since Ravenstein's (1885) pioneering work on *The Laws of Migration* (Levy et al. 1974). Many studies on rural-urban migration in China have also emphasised the influences of distance on migration (Levy et al. 1974; Zhang et al. 2011). Carrillo Garcia (2011) argued that smaller urban centres were usually closer to rural villages, while large cities were more distant destinations. Zhang et al. (2011) considered rural-urban migration in China as a trade-off between income and distance.

The social environment in this study refers to the social networks which migrant workers have built up in their destination city. Social networks have been proved by various studies to induce sequential migration both in China and beyond (Banerjee 1983; Taylor 1984; Massey 1987; Massey et al. 1993; Carrillo Garcia 2004; Fan 2011a). Zhao (2003, p. 500) also pointed out:

“Migrant networks can reduce information costs by providing specific job information to potential migrants, reduce psychological costs by providing supportive relationship to migrants in destinations, and reduce the probability of unemployment by providing direct job search assistance from fellow villagers.”

It has also been found that the social networks of migrant workers significantly influence their integration into their destination city (Zhang 2011a; Zhongshan et al. 2013; Zhang et al. 2015), which may further affect their decisions to settle.

The infrastructure and services provided by a city, according to Kavaratzis et al. (2008), were important components of the attractiveness of that city. Xing et al. (2013) believe that they were especially influential in attracting rural migrants. In this study, three sub-dimensions, including the green land layout, the cultural and recreational facilities and events, and the traffic situations, were selected to represent the infrastructure of a city, and another three sub-dimensions, including medical services, education, and social insurance schemes, were employed to describe the social services of a city.

Political-structural factors in this study include hukou benefits, hukou conversion requirements and potential for the future development of migrants. Hukou is a unique system in China which has a profound influence on migration (Young 2013). Hukou benefits and hukou conversion requirements are found to be the two aspects of hukou which significantly regulate migration (Zhang 2018). The perceived potential for development of migrant workers themselves was also included as a sub-dimension of the political-structural dimension. This study hypothesises that migrant workers seek more personal development and may choose a destination which provide them with opportunities to better themselves.

The openness to migrant workers in respective cities in this study is measured by their perceived social status, income status and discrimination levels against them. However, the openness to migrant workers is measured as one variable when this thesis discusses their satisfaction with current city of residence and their aspirations for future migration destinations or hukou conversion locations. Instead of calculating the level of openness of a city based on objective indicators, this study emphasised the subjective perceptions of migrant workers. This study believes that it is their subjective perceptions instead of the objective facts which influence their migration decisions.

It should be noted that some other dimensions²⁶ were included in the questionnaire, however, these dimensions were proved in the analysis to be insignificant, and were therefore not shown in the above table. This process helped this study to screen out meaningful dimensions, and make the measurement manageable.

3.7.2 Statistical techniques

The main techniques used in the analysis of survey and secondary data include summary techniques, data reduction techniques, techniques to identify relationships, and those to establish associations.

Description, summary and comparison are the main aims of descriptive analysis. The characteristics of the two case study cities and the sampled migrant workers in both of them are presented using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, medians and means. Descriptive statistics were also employed to establish the reasons that had brought migrant workers to their current cities of residence, and to summarise the future migration intentions and hukou arrangements of migrant workers. T-tests were also applied to test whether there are significant differences between the migrant workers residing in Beijing and those in Jinzhou, between the ‘residing migrant workers’ and ‘commuting migrant workers’ in Jinzhou, and between other sub-groups with different migrant intentions or hukou conversion intentions. Generally, summary techniques were widely used across the whole analysis of data.

This study employed factor analysis to achieve the aim of data reduction. Kline (2014) argues that factor analysis consists of a number of statistical techniques the aim of which is to simplify complex sets of data. Factor analysis was originally developed by Spearman (1904) with the aim to explore the field, to discover and draw the main constructs or dimensions from a range of aspects. Kline (2014) argued that factor analytic methods can help researchers to define their variables more precisely and help them gain a better understanding of the complex and poorly defined interrelationships among large numbers of imprecisely measured variables. This study applied exploratory factor analysis to synthesis the dimensions which describe aspirations of migrant workers for migration destinations and for hukou registration locations, which are presented in Chapters Six and Seven. As a data reduction technique, it helped in an understanding of the underlying

²⁶ This study initially identified 26 dimensions, based on literature as well as the knowledge which this study had of migrant workers in China.

correlations of proposed aspects of aspirations and enabled the extraction of the main dimensions.

Logistic regression methods are concerned with describing the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables where the dependent variable is discrete, taking on two or more possible values (Hosmer Jr et al. 2013). Binary logistic regressions are applied in this study to examine the decision of migrant workers whether to migrate again or not in the next five years, and their decision whether to convert hukou to their current city of residence in the next five years. Multinomial logistic regression models are used to analyse the choices of migration destinations and the choices of hukou registration locations across the hierarchical urban places and rural villages. The results of binary and multinomial logistic regression models are shown in Chapters Six and Seven.

Correlation was another technique employed in the quantitative data analysis. The main aim of this technique was to establish associations between variables. After the discussion about migration decisions and hukou conversion decisions, this study hoped to further establish associations between those two sets of choices. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is a nonparametric (distribution-free) rank statistic proposed by Charles Spearman as a measure of the strength of an association between two variables (Hauke et al. 2011). It is employed in this study to examine the influences of hukou conversion decisions on the migration decisions, which is discussed in Chapter Seven. It is also used to establish the associations between the administrative ranks and the population sizes of intended migration destinations in Chapter Six, and between the administrative ranks and the population sizes of intended hukou registration locations in Chapter Seven.

The above quantitative analysis methods are used extensively throughout this study and have been supplemented with qualitative evidence provided by documents and interviews to improve the validity of key findings.

3.8 Qualitative data analysis

Willis (2013) has pointed out that the task of qualitative analysis is to 'make meaning' from a rich source of texts. This study collected qualitative data through reviewing documents, as well as through individual interviews. The analysis of secondary documents and primary interview data is detailed below.

3.8.1 Document analysis

This study reviewed and evaluated various documents released by research institutes, government, industries, and media. The text and images contained in these documents can provide background and contextual information, supplement research data, and serve as a means of tracking changes and developments of policies related to this study. Denzin (2017) pointed out that document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative methods as a means of triangulation and cross-reference, to increase the credibility of a study.

The policies related to hukou and migration, especially the New-Style Urbanisation policies, are evolving constantly, with more details being added to the general policy framework. The complex nature of the issue addressed in this study made it necessary to draw on government reports and public documents to describe the context and background. The survey and the interviews undertaken were not comprehensive enough to cover all the aspects of the research topic. The analysis of relevant government policies, plans, and reports; industrial publications; media reports; and non-government organisation reports helped establish background knowledge, assist the formation of research questions such as how hukou influences migration decisions in the New-Style Urbanisation era, and supplement the primary findings with more evidence.

3.8.2 Interview data analysis

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and coded for analysis by theme. This study took a thematic approach in the coding process. The significant concepts and similar experiences related by interviewed migrant workers are coded as themes. Attention was also paid to the areas of disparities of perceptions between those interviewees from Beijing and those from Jinzhou, and among interviewees who held different attitudes towards migration and hukou conversion. Quotations from the interviews were used mainly to compare the experience of migrant workers in metropolitan Beijing and those in small city Jinzhou, and in the formation of the concept 'settling down' from the perspective of migrant workers, as detailed in Chapter Five. They were also used to supplement quantitative data to explain the migration and hukou decisions of migrant workers in Chapters Six and Seven. The interview participants were cited using the interview code and the year of the interview. The analysis of interviews was integrated with documentary evidence and quantitative results to demonstrate key

relationships and concepts concerning inequalities, migration decisions and hukou arrangements.

3.9 Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in line with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. The ethics approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the University of Adelaide. The researcher sought the consent of all participants in the survey and interviews prior to the commencement. A signed written consent form was provided to all participants of this study. The researcher also sought permission from participants in cases where audio recordings were needed. It notified respondents of the voluntary nature of participation, and that they could withdraw from this study at any time.

All participants were surveyed or interviewed in public areas, such as their workplaces, instead of private spaces, to avoid the possibility that respondents and interviewees may have felt uncomfortable to participate in this study. In the case that a few participants were surveyed or interviewed together, the researcher explained the importance of expressing their own opinions to minimise peer influences.

To ensure anonymity, the names of the respondents and other personal information was not collected either during the survey or in the interview. Therefore, individual respondents cannot be identified. The survey data were aggregated, so that no individual can be identified from the analysis of results.

3.10 Limitations

There are Four main limitations associated with this study:

The first limitation of this study concerns the non-probability sampling methods employed due to the absence of a sampling frame. It is implied that the results of this study cannot be generalised to all migrant workers in Beijing or Jinzhou. The selection of samples was not random, which can lead to sample bias. However, this study could still draw conclusions about the survey respondents and interview participants. This study compared the main characteristics between the sampled migrant workers and census data and found no significant differences.

The second limitation is that the migration and hukou conversion intentions measured were limited to five years due to the cross-sectional nature of the data collected in 2017. Therefore, only migration and hukou conversion intentions in the next five years (2017-2022) were considered in this study. Those who intended to migrate within a longer period of time were assumed to have no migration intentions. Intentions to migrate could also vary as background factors change. Those who reported an intention to migrate in the next five years may later change their mind and stay. Those who preferred to migrate to small cities might end up migrating to large cities or returning to their rural hometowns.

In addition, since the survey and interview participants are characterised by lower levels of literacy, it is possible that some participants did not fully understand the survey or interview questions. To overcome this limitation, the researcher conducted interviews and questionnaires in a face-to-face manner so that explanations could be provided if the participants failed to understand any questions. An explanation was also attached to the questionnaire to help survey participants understand complicated concepts, such as the administrative rank of cities.

Last, the survey and interviews were all done in mandarin and then translated into English for analysis and presentation. It is possible that some information drawn from the survey and interviews is lost or misinterpreted in the process of translation. However, the researcher was mindful to avoid this problem by reading and comparing the original and the translated data several times.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the research design employed to meet the research aims and explore the research questions. Considering the research questions and objectives of this study, a mixed methods approach was employed as the most appropriate research design. Beijing was selected as a representation of the big cities in China, while Jinzhou was chosen as a case study of representing the small cities. In terms of data collection, both quantitative and qualitative data, made up primary data collection, that was supplemented by secondary data. This study adopted non-probability methods to draw samples for the survey and interviews. In total, 22 individuals were interviewed with 12 from Beijing and ten from Jinzhou, and there were 643 valid participants surveyed, with 436 from Beijing and 207 from Jinzhou. Among the 207 surveyed respondents from Jinzhou, 60 were '*commuting migrant workers*' and the rest were '*residing migrant workers*'. Seven main

dimensions and 18 sub-dimensions were identified to measure a city as migration destination or hukou (conversion) location.

The main statistical techniques applied in this study are summary and data reduction techniques, Logit-regressions which identify relationships between dependent and independent variables, and correlations which examine associations between variables. This study also employed document analysis and secondary quantitative data to supplement the primary findings, and provide more evidence of trends, policies and population statistics. The use of various methods and techniques in data collection and analysis enabled the researcher to triangulate and increase the validity of the research findings. The application of this study abides by the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Even though trying to avoid bias, this research is still restricted due to the non-probability sampling methods, usage of cross-sectional data, the lower levels of literacy among respondents, and the translation between Chinese and English.

CHAPTER 4: PROFILING THE CITIES OF BEIJING AND JINZHOU

4.1 Introduction

To understand the preference of migrant workers between big and small urban centres, it is necessary to first understand the characteristics of big and small cities. This chapter seeks to provide background and shed some light on the distinction between top and bottom tiers of cities through comparing one top city, Beijing, and one bottom city, Jinzhou. The comparison focuses on the macro-level features of these two cities using secondary data, which include research reports, government and legal documents, censuses and yearbooks. It demonstrates the differences between the two cities in terms of their administrative power, their level of economic development, hukou conversion policies, and the composition of their populations. It also addresses differences in the provision of public services between them, especially social insurances and education. Finally, the practice of relocating ‘*low-end*’ industries in Beijing, and some specific limitations for house and car purchases are also explained. The differences identified between Beijing and Jinzhou are expected to largely influence the settlement experiences of migrant workers in the respective cities, as well as their migration intentions and hukou arrangements in the next five years.

4.2 Distinctive administrative ranks

Beijing, the capital city of China, is known as one of the largest global cities with the highest administrative rank, the most advanced economic development, the most stringent hukou regulations, and the highest density of population. This city is governed as a municipality under the direct administration of the central government with 16 sub-districts, which covers 3,054 urban neighbourhood committees and 3,941 rural committees and occupies a total area of 16410.54 square kilometre (MUBS 2017a; BMG 2018). According to the Chinese Constitution, Beijing is equipped with institutions of legislative, juridical, administrative and military powers (Liu 2018). The local government of Beijing municipality reports directly to the central government of China.

When compared to Beijing, Jinzhou city is much smaller, under-developed and less populated, where hukou regulations are more flexible. The local government of Jinzhou county governs nine official townships (Zhen), one industrial park, two economic development zones, one commune (Xiang), and 224 administrative villages (JRDC 2017).

The Jinzhou (Chengguan) official town generally coincides with the Jinzhou county-level city. The total area under the jurisdiction of Jinzhou county is 619 square kilometre, and 59 square kilometre under the jurisdiction of Jinzhou official town (JRDC 2017). Jinzhou city, as a county-level city, is only equipped with juridical and administrative institutions. According to the *Chinese Constitution*, local governments of a lower level are subordinate to those at of an upper level; it must report to and be led by the upper level government (Liu 2018). The local government of Jinzhou official town reports to the local government of Jinzhou county, which further reports to the local government of Shijiazhuang prefecture. The local government of Shijiazhuang prefecture reports to the local government of Hebei province, which further reports to the central government of China.

Scholars (Fan 2004; Chan 2010a) have mentioned that the fundamental feature of China's urbanisation process is the never-absent influence of government. Chan (2010a) has suggested that China has a top-down configuration of power, with upper-level governments controlling the appointments of key personnel in their subordinate lower-level governments. He has also pointed out that the higher administrative ranks not only reflect political/administrative power, but also influence the distribution of fiscal resources and local economic development (Chan 2010a). This can significantly influence migration trends as the distinctive administrative ranks between the local government of Beijing municipality and the local government of Jinzhou city play a role in the formation of the distinct economy and population situations between these two cities.

4.3 Distinguishing economic development

Wei (2014) has observed that the imbalance in administrative powers echoes the imbalance in economic development and population distribution among cities. The level of economic development in the Beijing municipality significantly outweighs that in the Jinzhou county. The annual GDP of Beijing municipality was equal to around 50 times of that of Jinzhou county, in the period from 2012 to 2016 (JRDC 2013; 2014, 2015, 2016; BMBS 2017a). Wei (2014) argues that many policies and plans that have been advocated by the Chinese government, are mainly to control population growth in big cities, without restricting the economic development of those cities. In addition, those policies were not meant to direct resources, especially financial resources away from those cities to smaller

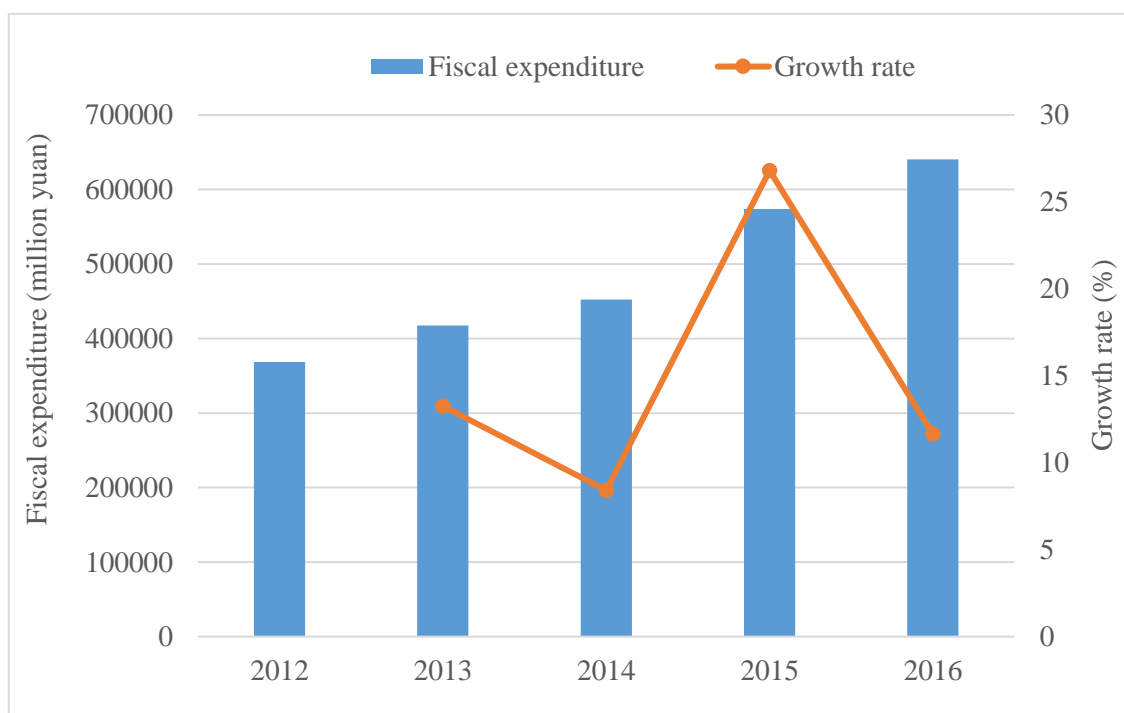
urban centres. In other words, China hoped to control population growth in big cities, but did not want to compromise their economic development. He commented that such policy to drive migrants to smaller urban centres without boosting the development of those cities was '*ignoring the objective law of economics*²⁷' (Wei 2014, p. 5). The dual labour market theory argues that migration derives from the demand for migrant labour that is inherent to the economic structure (Massey et al. 1993). Young (2013) suggests that migrant workers in China tend to move from underdeveloped regions to more developed ones. In this regard, it is unlikely that these policies will curb their migration intentions to go to more developed larger cities if the imbalance in development across tiers of cities remains in place.

Although the New-Style Urbanisation Policy was proposed to achieve coordinated development across various levels of cities and towns, reducing the economic gap between Beijing and Jinzhou in a short period of time seems to be rather unrealistic, especially when the fiscal system favours big cities such as Beijing rather than small county-level cities such as Jinzhou. It is difficult to reverse such an unequal allocation system given that the local government of a lower-level city is subordinate to that of an upper-level city and that its key personnel are appointed and controlled by its upper-level government.

As shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, the annual fiscal expenditure (budget) in Beijing, in the period from 2012 to 2016, greatly outweighed that in Jinzhou. It should be noted that after the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation Policy in 2014, the fiscal expenditure took a jump in both cities. The fiscal allocation to Beijing increased by 27 percent in 2015 and 12 percent in 2016. Accordingly, the fiscal allocation to Jinzhou increased by 20 percent and six percent in respective years. Although the New-Style Urbanisation policy did suggest altering the distribution of resources across tiers of cities by emphasising the leading role of central cities and stimulating small cities and towns, it is evident that the fiscal allocation to county-level cities like Jinzhou has not been improved as much as Beijing since the announcement of that policy in 2014.

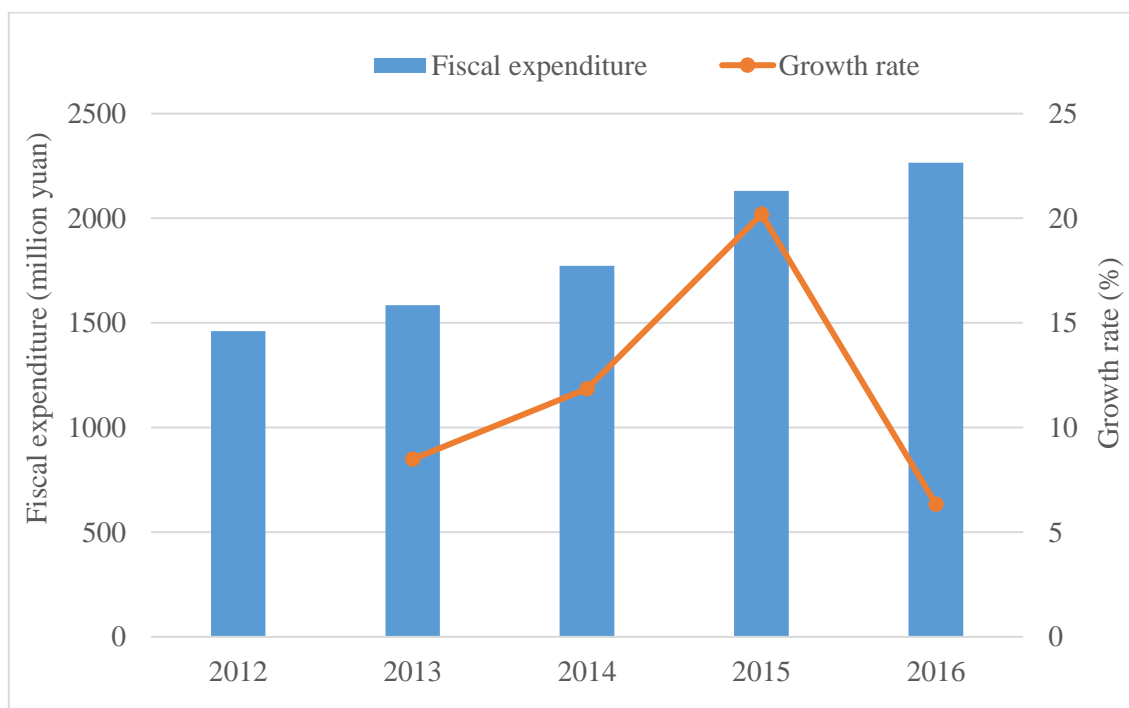
²⁷ The original paper was written in Chinese, the exact words used are “人为控制大城市规模是违背客观规律的”.

Figure 4.1 Fiscal expenditure of Beijing Municipal (budget) and its growth rate, 2012-2016



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (2013, 2014a, 2015, 2016a); Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2017a); National Bureau of Statistics of China (2017a)

Figure 4.2 Fiscal expenditure of Jinzhou County (budget) and its growth rate, 2012-2016



Source: Jinzhou Regional Documentary Committee (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

Limited by fiscal allocation, small cities and towns are expected to lack the ability to create employment opportunities, provide a range of jobs with higher wages, or develop better infrastructure and public services. Of particular note, Wei (2014) argues that in recent years China has proposed to ‘*move financial rights upward and move obligations downward*’ (Caiquan Shangshou, Shiquan Xiayi)²⁸. Moreover, it requires county-level cities and official towns to take responsibility for a whole range of public affairs without granting them more administrative power and financial rights. County-level cities and official towns, situated in the bottom of the urban hierarchy in China, are still faced with serious problems of mobilising resources to develop themselves.

4.4 Different requirements for hukou conversion and changes in benefits

Hukou conversion serves as a way to transform a migrant to a hukou resident making them eligible for a range of hukou benefits. The regulations for hukou conversion in Beijing are quite different from those in Jinzhou. Hukou conversion schemes in Beijing usually require high personal attributes of migrants. Beijing has also applied a point-based hukou system since April 2018 (HRSS Beijing 2018b). According to Zhang (2018, p. 16):

“In the governmental discourse, the points system is an administrative innovation in managing and integrating the ‘floating population’ by ‘scientifically defining the scoring system and quantifying the eligibility of residence-card-holders to acquire local ‘hukou’.”

However, some researchers (Hou 2014; Xie 2014) argue that this approach has also been designed to regulate the population size, attract highly talented migrants, and to influence the behaviour of migrants. Therefore, beside the scoring system and qualifying standards, annual quotas are also set for hukou conversions in most cities which have adopted this system. Those quotas give local governments control over how many ‘new citizens’ they would like to add in their cities to share hukou benefits annually. Zhang (2018, p. 16) points out that the most commonly used criteria in those scoring systems are:

“numerical assessment of age factor, educational qualification, consecutive years of legal employment with social security contribution, and special talents skills.”

Table 4.1 summarises the scoring system which had been implemented in Beijing by 2018. According to this system, some disadvantages of migrants in one aspect could be

²⁸ Written as ‘财权上收，事权下移’ in Chinese

compensated by other aspects to some extent, as long as the summed score reaches a certain point. However, according to Zhang (2018), in general those standards clearly favoured young, talented, well-educated and wealthy applicants. As a result, in Beijing, only a small proportion of migrant workers were qualified to apply for local hukou through this scheme, and even fewer could actually obtain it (depending on the annual quota set). It differs greatly from the optimistic media narrative which praised it as the hope for migrant workers to become ‘*new citizens*’ when it was first revealed (Zhang 2018).

Table 4. 1 Point-based system applied in Beijing, 2018

Standards of assessments	Points scale (positive)	Points scale (negative)
Age	Max. 20	
Education	Min 10.5 – Max. 37	
Innovation and entrepreneurship	Max. 12	
Legal and stable employment	3 points per year	
Residence in suburban areas	Max.6 or 12	
Legal and stable residence	0.5 p.a. for rented home; 1 p.a. for self-owned property	
Amount of taxes paid	Max. 6	
Awards	Max. 20	
Penalty records		Reduce 30 points for each record

Source: (HRSS Beijing 2018b; Zhang 2018)

In 2018, with an annual quota set at 6,000, a total 6,019 migrants were selected from 124,657 applicants to be granted Beijing local hukou through the point-based hukou system, the lowest score being 90.75 (Xinhua Net 2018). It was found that the majority of successful applicants were young and middle-aged migrants who were well-educated, and had stable employment in high-technology companies for a long time (Xinhua Net 2018). Zhang (2018, p. 17) pointed out an irony:

“...while numerous low-income migrant workers are unable to obtain hukou through the scoring system, the sought-after talents, investors and entrepreneurs may not need hukou at all to gain access to social rights and benefits, because municipal governments have also introduced a range of special schemes for the most desirable migrants,²⁹ both internal and international, in their competition over

²⁹ For example, HRSS Beijing issues a special document – work and residence permit (*gongzuo juzhu zheng*), colloquially known as Beijing’s ‘green card’, to qualified high-skilled migrants. People with this document enjoy most of the benefits local hukou-holders have. (Zhang 2018, p. 21)

human and financial capital: an irony analogous to the polarisation of mobility and citizenship on a global scale.”

Unlike Beijing, where the requirements for hukou conversion are set very stringently and selectively based on personal attributes, hukou conversion to Jinzhou city is much easier and straightforward. Individuals who legally and regularly reside in Jinzhou city, who are designated as ‘model workers’ or ‘advanced workers’ by local governments of official towns, cities or higher authorities, and who are identified as ‘migrant workers with significant contributions’, and their spouses, children, parents and parents in law are all eligible to apply for hukou conversion to that city (SPG 2015). The above contrasts in hukou conversion regulations between Beijing and Jinzhou are very typical for big cities and small ones throughout China.

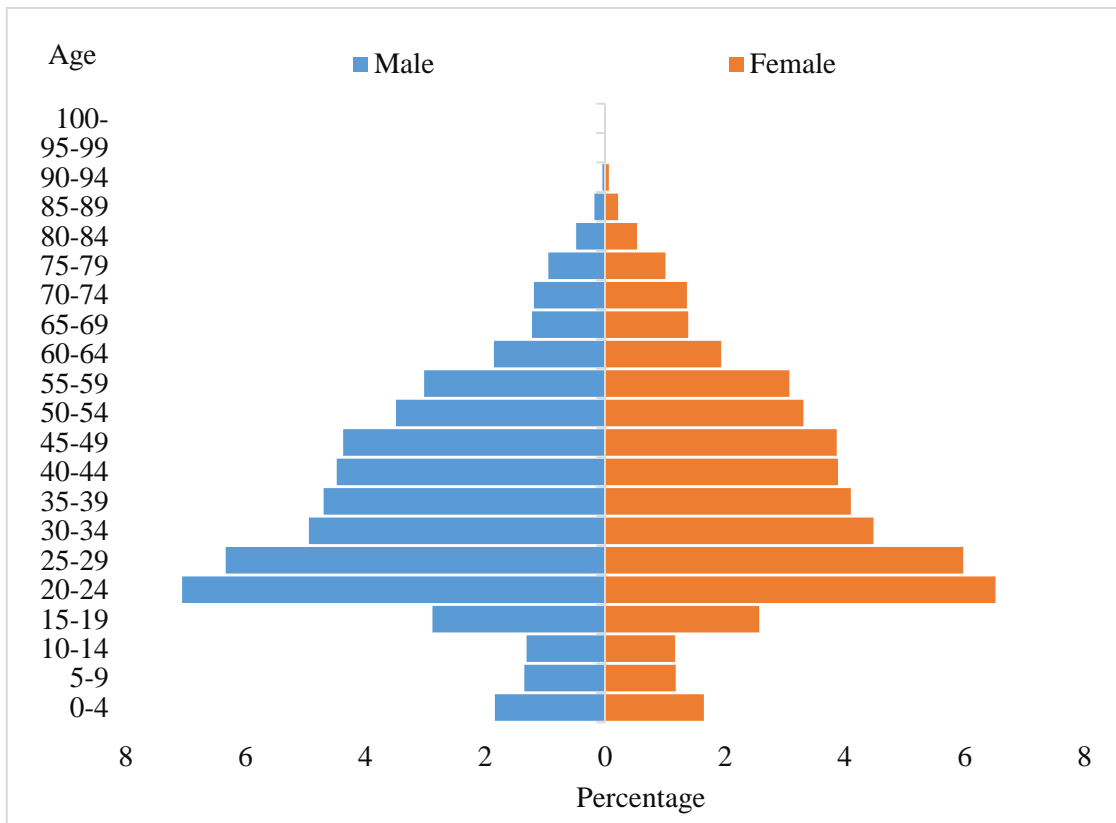
The benefits of hukou conversion in the two cities are also very different. Hukou conversion to Beijing municipality yields great benefits in terms of public services and entitlements to purchase properties or cars, which are otherwise gated. However, hukou conversion to Jinzhou city does not significantly influence one’s accessibility to various social benefits, except that it does make education for migrant children more convenient in the city.

4.5 Distinct population structure and growth trends

Figure 4.3 depicts the age and sex structure of the population³⁰ in the urban districts of Beijing municipality according to the 2010 census. The shape is pyramidal but more like a Christmas tree with the undercutting at the base which indicates the deficit of young persons under 15 years of age. Its sex structure was generally balanced across different age groups. The under-representation of population under 20 years, as was the case for population over 55 years, was matched with an over-representation of working-age population aged between 20 and 55 years, which was especially high for young adult workers in their 20s. This study assumes that this working-age bulge has contributed significantly to the construction and development of Beijing. On the contrary, old people who required frequent medical services or young children who needed education and care, only accounted for a small proportion of the population in Beijing, which is assumed to be a relatively smaller burden on its welfare provision. These are probably some of the advantages which are brought by huge inflows of migrants towards Beijing.

³⁰ This term refers to the whole population in one area at a specific time point (PRC-NBS 2014b).

Figure 4.3 Age-sex structure of population in Beijing municipal districts, 2010

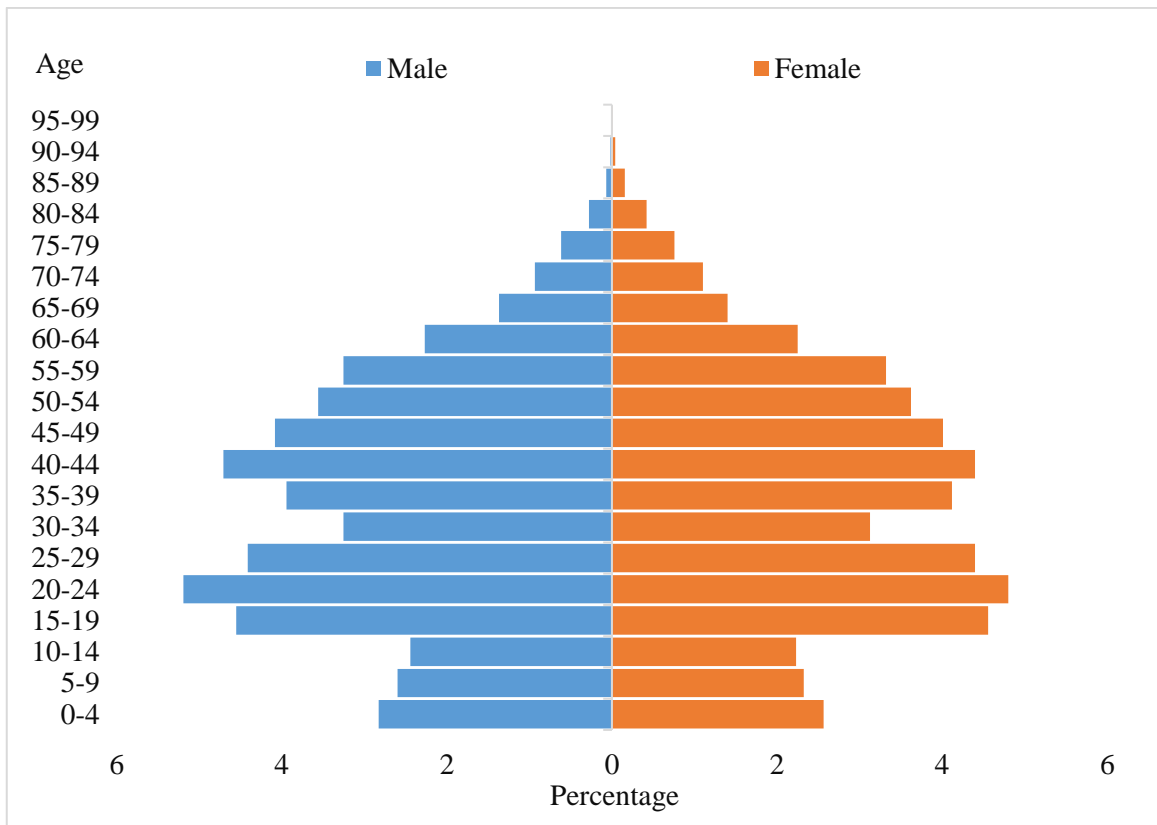


Source: The Sixth National Population Census of China (PRC-NBS2010)

Note: The population shown in this figure is existing population in 16 urban sub-districts of Beijing when the 2010 census was carried out

Figure 4.4 shows the age and sex structure of the population in Jinzhou city according to the 2010 census. Its sex structure was also balanced across different age groups. In comparison to Beijing, teenagers, children and babies under 20 years represented a higher percentage of the population in Jinzhou, which was similar for the population who were 55 years or older, although the undercutting at base also represented a deficit of young children under 15 years of age. Of particular note, young working-age population (between 30 and 39 years) were under-represented in Jinzhou. According to Du et al. (2010), those young workers might have migrated to bigger cities for employment and higher wages in search of more opportunities of personal development. This age structure of Jinzhou city may limit its ability to draw enough revenue from the working-age population to develop itself and provide welfare for the children and old people in its jurisdiction.

Figure 4.4 Age-sex structure of population in Jinzhou city, 2010



Source: The Sixth National Population Census of China (PRC-NBS2010)

Note: The population shown in this figure is existing population in Jinzhou city (Jinzhou Chengguan official town) when the census was carried out

Sun (2015) has commented that rural-urban migration in China has exhibited clear ‘big-city’ preferences, although the hukou conversion requirements in those cities are usually set very high. This indicates that the role of hukou in directing migration in China has decreased somewhat, and that the overall economic development and amenities of specific cities has become more important in the decision-making of migrant workers.

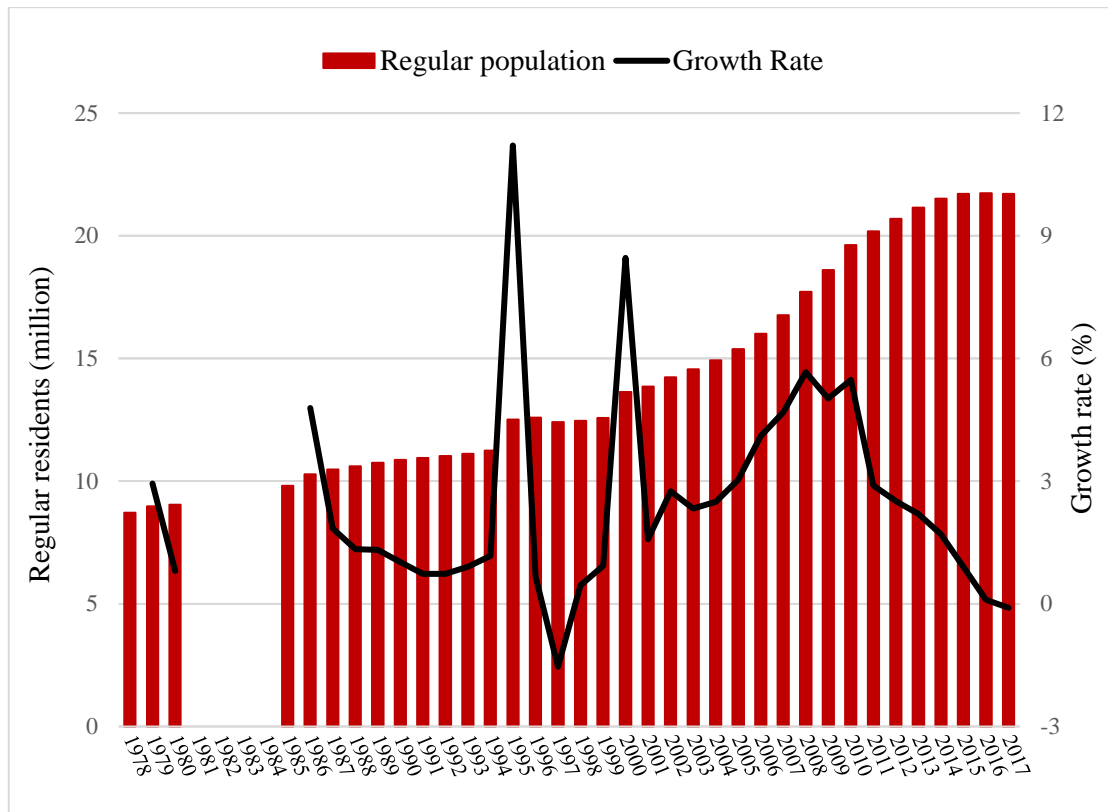
Beijing Municipal Statistical Yearbooks detailed the population structure of Beijing; showing that by the end of 2016, there were 13,629,000 hukou residents³¹ and 21,729,000 regular residents³² in Beijing. Among them, 8,075,000 were non-hukou regular residents or so-called ‘floating population’. Figure 4.5 shows that the number of regular residents in Beijing grew steadily from 1985 to 1995 and escalated from 1998 to 2016. The growth

³¹ As explained in Section 2.3.2, ‘hukou residents’ of an area are the population whose hukou location falls into that area, even if the residents have already migrated to somewhere else physically for the definition of hukou residents

³² As explained in Section 2.3.2, ‘regular residents’ of an area are the population who have stayed in that area for no less than six months, whether with or without local hukou registration.

rate took off in 1995 at 11 percent, then dropped and peaked again in 2000 at eight percent. However, population growth in Beijing appears to have stabilised since 2010, with the growth rate reducing year by year, especially since the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation plan in 2014, dropping to below zero in 2017. Does this mean that the population growth in Beijing has been somewhat controlled? To answer this question, further analysis of migrants in Beijing is needed.

Figure 4.5 Growth of regular residents in Beijing municipality, 1978-2017



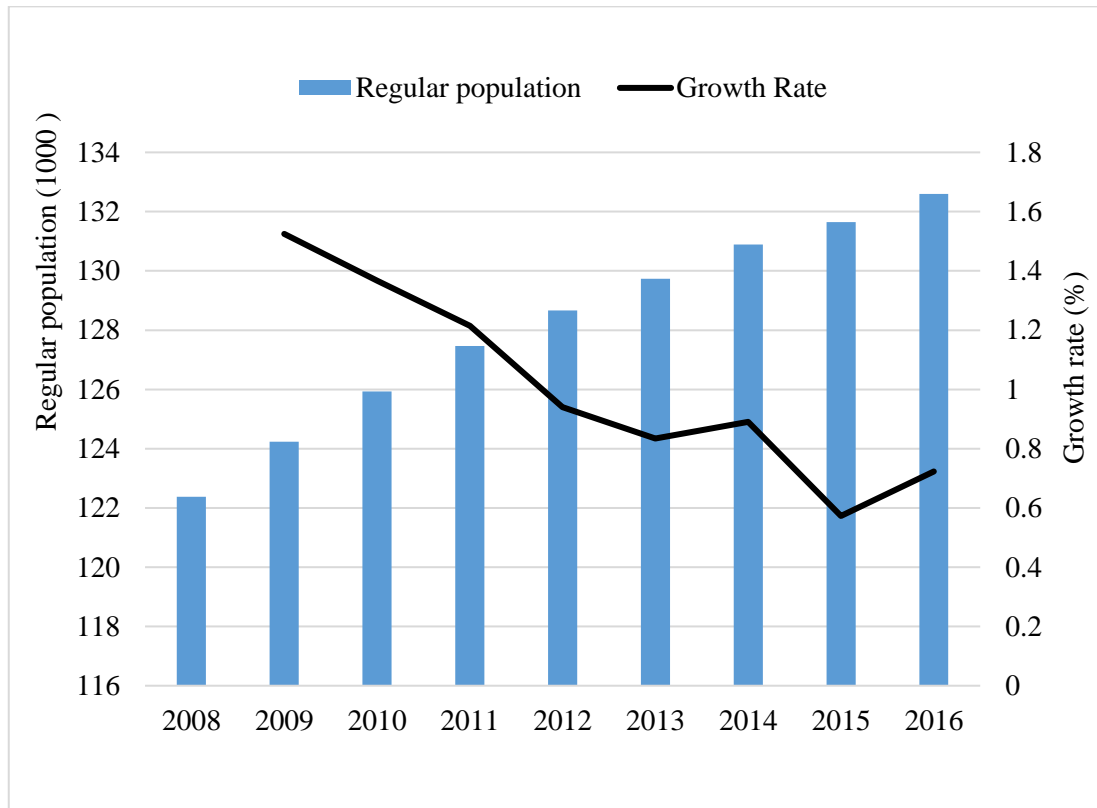
Source: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2006, 2013, 2016b, 2017a)

According to the Jinzhou Yearbook, Jinzhou county had 571,649 regular residents by the end of 2016, with a total of 132,597 individuals residing regularly³³ in Jinzhou city (Jinzhou official town) (JRDC 2017). The number of non-hukou regular residents or rural-urban migrant workers in Jinzhou city was not documented in those yearbooks. Figure 4.6 shows that the regular population in Jinzhou city (Jinzhou official town) increased steadily from 2008 to 2016 with a small growth rate between 0.6 percent and

³³ According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2018), residing regularly in a city means staying in that city for no less than six months, whether with or without local hukou registration.

1.5 percent, with no significant growth indicated for regular residents since the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014.

Figure 4.6 Growth of Regular Residents in Jinzhou City, 2008-2016



Source: Jinzhou Regional Documentary Committee (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017)

4.6 Infrastructure and services

Infrastructure in this study refers to:

“the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions.” (Fulmer 2009, p. 32).

Kavaratzis et al. (2008) argued that public services provided in a city were crucial components of the attractiveness of that city. Xing et al. (2013) further suggested that public services, as a type of urban amenities, were influential in attracting rural migrants. The distinctive administrative ranks, distinguishing economic and fiscal allocation, and polarised population situations between Beijing and Jinzhou, contributed to differences in infrastructure and services between those two cities. Of particular note, the distinctive hukou policies in those two cities regulated the access of migrant workers to infrastructure and services in the respective cities.

4.6.1 Infrastructure and services in Beijing city

Beijing, as the capital of China, has sufficient fiscal allocation to support its development of high-level infrastructure and public services. In 2016, Beijing spent 640,677 million yuan on its public services and infrastructure (BMBS 2017a). According to the Beijing Municipal Statistics Yearbook, the per capita area of green lands or parks for residents was about 16 square metres in 2016. Beijing, in 2016, had 25 public libraries, 21 mass art centres or cultural centres, 331 cultural stations, 18 archiving institutions, and 178 museums (BMBS 2017a). In the same year, those mass art and cultural centres organised 3,417 events and the cultural stations held 3,397 activities. There were 26 local TV channels and 26 radio channels, along with 207 cinemas which showed a total of 2,285,000 film sessions in 2016. As a result, Beijing is well endowed with a wide range of cultural and recreational resources.

The influence of cultural and recreational factors on migration has long been neglected. However, literature shows that recreational and cultural facilities act as tourist attractions in place-marketing processes (Wall et al. 1980; Wu 1994). Various studies have also found that the new-generation of migrant workers³⁴ exhibit higher demands for consumption of goods and services and valued an urban lifestyle (Wang 2001a; Wang 2010a; Liu et al. 2012; Wu et al. 2013). This group of migrants exceeded 100 million and accounted for about 60 percent of total migrant workers in China by 2013 (He et al. 2016b). Therefore, it is logical to hypothesise that the recreational and cultural facilities of a city influence the migration and settlement intentions of migrant workers.

Ma et al. (2018) have ascertained that the richness of medical resources in China also varies across regions and levels of cities, towns and villages. The health expenditure funded by the Beijing municipality government was about 46800 million yuan in 2016 (BMBS 2017a). It was also estimated that, every one thousand regular residents in Beijing by 2016 shared about five certified doctors, five registered nurses and five hospital beds (BMBS 2017a). However, the huge population residing in Beijing is a burden for its infrastructure, especially its traffic. The *AMAP Traffic Analysis Report of China's Major Cities*³⁵ (hereinafter referred to as 'AMAP report') and the *DiDi Report on Traffic of*

³⁴ New-generation of migrant workers refer to migrant workers who were born after the 1980s, also known as the post 1980s migrants (He et al. 2016b).

³⁵ The Traffic Analysis Report of China Major Cities 2017 was jointly released by the Academy of Science of the Ministry of Transport, Aliyun, Tsinghua Tongheng Planning & Design Institute, Bitauto and other data institutions.

*Main Cities in China*³⁶ (hereinafter referred to as ‘DiDi report’) are two trustworthy sources detailing the traffic situations of major Chinese cities using big data (AMAP 2017; DiDi 2018). Beijing, as one of the super-large cities, is ranked the second most congested city at peak times in the AMAP report 2017, and the third most congested city during ordinary transit times in the DiDi report 2017 and 2018 (AMAP 2017; DiDi 2018).

It should also be mentioned that the infrastructure and services which non-hukou residents or migrant workers could access, are different from those available to hukou residents. For those infrastructure and services which are accessible for both hukou and non-hukou residents, it is possible that the non-hukou ones are forced to pay higher fees or receive lower benefits from social insurance schemes. These areas mainly include social insurance schemes and the provision of education for migrant children (further explained in Sections 4.6 and 4.7).

4.6.2 Infrastructure and services in Jinzhou city

Unlike Beijing, Jinzhou has never had as much financial support to develop its infrastructure or provide public services. In 2016, Jinzhou only spent 2266 million yuan on its public services and infrastructure. The per capita area of parks or green land for residents was only 11.42 square metres on average, compared to 16 square metres in Beijing 2016 (JRDC 2017). Jinzhou county also only had one theatre, one public library and one cultural centre by 2016 (JRDC 2017). Only two artistic and cultural events and one exhibition were held there in the same year. In 2016, Jinzhou county possessed only four local TV channels, three cinemas, and four hospitals. The local government of Jinzhou official town only invested 153 million yuan in medical services, compared to 46800 million yuan in Beijing municipality in 2016 (JOTG 2017). Every one thousand regular residents in Jinzhou county shared about two certified doctors, one registered nurse and two hospital beds (JRDC 2017). There were no official data released about the congestion situation that may exist in Jinzhou city. However, according to the AMAP report, bigger cities are usually more congested than smaller ones in China (AMAP 2017).

There appeared to be no big gaps in accessibility to infrastructure or services between hukou and non-hukou residents in Jinzhou city. However, some additional paperwork

³⁶ The DiDi Report on Traffic of Main Cities in China 2017 was released by DiDi. Some data in this report is in collaboration with China Unicom and the Institute of Transportation Engineering of Zhejiang University.

was required for migrant children to obtain education in Jinzhou city, although it was much simpler than in Beijing.

It appears that Beijing is a convenient, crowded, and colourful destination for migrant workers, with advanced infrastructure and services. However, traffic congestion is always a problem in Beijing along with its huge population. In comparison, Jinzhou is a small, less convenient and plain destination, which only had limited amenity and lifestyle options.

4.7 Social insurances

Zhang (2007) commented that social insurance or welfare was regarded as a legal entitlement, rather than a purchasable commodity before the state-sector reform which started in the mid-1990s. Cheng et al. (2013) found that social welfare such as health care and housing provision was the sole preserve of urban (or non-agricultural) hukou holders at that time. They argued that the national state-sector reform replaced the state-led labour and welfare system (known as the ‘iron rice bowl’ of urban residents) with an emerging labour market and a restructured social security system, comprised of contributions from government, enterprises and individuals. Gao et al. (2012) claimed that most social insurance programs in urban China became employment-based and labour contracts became crucial for accessing various types of social insurance since the state-sector reform in mid-1990s.

The Social Endowment Insurance for Urban Employees (SEIUE), the Medical Insurance for Urban Employees (MIUE), the Unemployment Insurance (UI), the Employment Injury Insurance (EII), the Maternity Insurance (MI) and the Housing Accumulation Fund (HAF), normally known as ‘*five one insurance fund*³⁷’ in China, are forms of social welfare which are exclusively associated with urban employment. The *1994 Labour Law*, the *2007 Labour Contract Law* and the *2010 Social Insurance Law* all explicitly stated that employers and employees should sign formal labour contracts, and that employees should participate in the ‘*five one insurance fund*’ schemes, regardless of hukou status or hukou location (NPC 1994, 2007, 2010). However, Kavaratzis et al. (2008) found that the participation ratios in practice were city specific.

³⁷ Wu Xian Yi Jin, written as ‘五險一金’ in Chinese

In addition to the *'five one insurance fund'* schemes which are exclusively limited to employed individuals, several other social insurances cover the residents who are not formally employed or those who do not participate in the *'five one insurance fund'* schemes for various reasons. Some of those insurance schemes are only for residents with a specific hukou status or a certain type of hukou location. The Medical Insurance for Urban Residents (MIUR) (started as a pilot in 2007) and the Social Endowment Insurance for Urban Residents (SEIUR) (started as a pilot in 2011) only cover urban residents (SCC 2007, 2011). The New Rural Cooperative Medical Insurance (NRCMI) (designed in 2002 and started as a pilot in 2003) and the New Rural Social Endowment Insurance (NRSEI) (started as a pilot in 2009) are exclusively limited to rural residents (SCC 2002, 2009). Specific rates of payment and benefits are also place specific.

In January 2016, the State Council of China issued the *Opinion on the Integration of Basic Medical Insurance Systems between Urban and Rural Residents* and required that MIUR and NRCMI be integrated into one insurance: The Integrated Basic Medical Insurance for Rural and Urban Residents (IBMIRU). The integration was based on unifying principals of coverage, financing policy, benefit packages, lists of medicines and services, contract suppliers and fund management in respective jurisdictions (SCC 2016). Jinzhou county, under the administration of Shijiazhuang prefecture, had merged the MIUR and NRCMI in its jurisdiction by the end of 2016 (SPG 2016). Beijing municipal formally adopted IBMIRU and abolished the division between MIUR and NRCMI on 1st January 2018 (BMG 2017b). It should be clarified that the integration is only between rural and urban residents of the same jurisdiction in accordance with hukou location. The application of IBMIR is province or region specific rather than nationwide; thus, spatial variations still exist. The local government of origin instead of the destination is currently held responsible for the provision of health insurances for those migrants who do not qualify for MIUE in destination cities. Usually, the deductible limit rises and the reimbursement rate drops as the level of hospitals rise and if one seeks medical services outside the jurisdiction of hukou location (SPG 2016; ACMI Shijiazhuang 2017; BMG 2017b). The current IBMR policy encourages medication in local and lower level hospitals.

4.8 The education of migrant children

The unequal distribution of education resources also derives from the differences in administrative power and fiscal allocation across cities, towns and villages with different administrative ranks in China. This is a complex system that would be worthy of study itself; however, this study mainly addresses the situation of primary, junior-high and senior-high level education³⁸ to provide context.

Jinzhou county had 81 primary schools and 15 junior-high schools in 2016 (JEB 2016; JRDC 2017). Among them, six public primary schools and two public junior-high schools were in the city area. In the same year, Beijing municipality had 984 primary schools and 341 junior-high schools (BMBS 2017a).

As shown in Table 4.2, Beijing had many more full-time teachers at all levels of education, in comparison to Jinzhou³⁹. On average, about 14 primary school students and every eight high school students (including both junior-high and senior-high schools) shared one teacher in the Beijing municipality. In comparison, about 17 primary school students and every 12 high school students shared one teacher in Jinzhou county. It appeared that school-age children in Beijing enjoyed more educational resources in comparison to their counterparts in Jinzhou. However, not all those resources were necessarily accessible for migrant children residing in the two cities.

Table 4. 2 Number of teachers in Beijing municipality and Jinzhou county, 2016

	Number of teachers in schools			Average number of students instructed by one teacher in schools	
	Primary	Junior-high	Senior-high or equivalent	Primary schools	General high (junior-high & senior-high)
Beijing municipality	51787	21691	51093	14.0	7.9
Jinzhou county	2312	997	861	16.9	12.0

Source: (JRDC 2017) (BMBS 2017a)

Note: The number refers to full-time teachers in Beijing but refers to teachers and staff in Jinzhou.

Pong (2014) argued that the accessibility of education for migrant children in China was designated by both national and local policies. Before 2001, education for migrant

³⁸ Compulsory education in China refers to primary level and junior-high level of education.

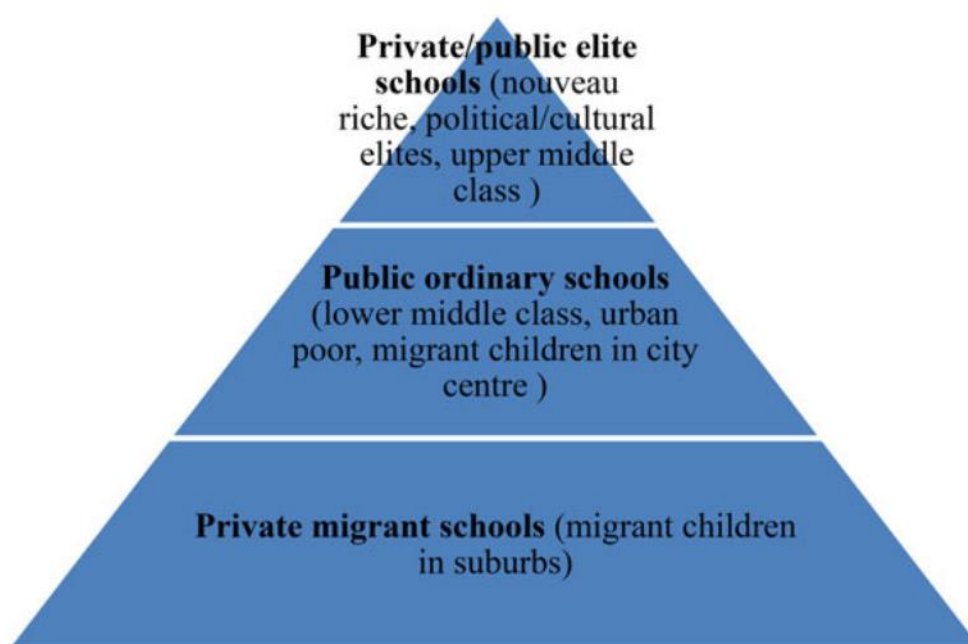
³⁹ Since there was no data of the city level, Beijing municipality (including urban and rural areas) and Jinzhou county (including rural and urban areas) was employed as the level of analysis. Although specific city data was lack, the analysis still reflects the spatial difference between Beijing and Jinzhou.

children in destination cities did not enter the public policy discourse. In 2002, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education (BMCE) issued the *Provisional Regulation for the Compulsory Education of Migrant Children and Juveniles in Beijing*. This regulation held the local government and public schools responsible for the provision of nine years of compulsory education (primary and junior-high school education) to migrant children in Beijing (BMCE 2002). In 2006, a national law regarding the education provision for migrant children was issued. The revised *Compulsory Education Law* stipulated that the local government at the destination was responsible for the provision of equal opportunities of compulsory education for migrant children whose parents or legal guardians worked or lived there (NPC 2006). In 2008, the *Further Arrangements for the Compulsory Education of Migrant Children* was issued by the BMCE and the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Finance (BMBF). It further emphasised equal educational opportunities and conditions between migrant and local children (BMCE & BMBF 2008). Yet, huge gaps were found in practice between the compulsory education provided to local children and that provided to migrant children.

According to Xiong (2015), a dual education system operated in urban China, especially in metropolitan cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. Figure 4.7 shows that this system consists of public schools and private schools which could be divided into three layers: private/public elite schools, public ordinary schools and private migrant schools. Private/public elite schools offer education of the highest quality; public ordinary schools are the lower end of the education hierarchy; private migrant schools are the lowest tier (Xiong 2015).

Liu et al. (2017a) have found that many private migrant schools are regarded as illegal, as they do not meet the basic standards set by the local government for migrant schools. Wang et al. (2011) claim that those schools have faced especially strong criticism due to their inadequate and low-quality teaching facilities and staff, and serious security problems, which usually result in poor education quality. It has also been found that students from private migrant schools performed significantly worse academically than their counterparts from public schools (Chen et al. 2013; Lai et al. 2014).

Figure 4.7 The basic education system in urban China



Source: adapted from Xiong (2015)

Table 4.3 indicates that, according to the *Beijing Municipal Statistics Yearbook 2017*, 14.4 percent of primary school migrant students, 14.8 percent of junior-high school migrant students and 5.4 percent of senior-high school migrant students were studying in private migrant schools by the end of 2016. However, according to Liu et al. (2017a), the actual rate was much higher.

Table 4. 3 Private funded education for non-local residents in Beijing, 2016

	Non-hukou students (N)	Students enrolled in public funded schools (N)	Students enrolled in private funded schools (N)	Students enrolled in private funded schools (%)
Primary	332090	284163	47927	14.4
Junior-high	85316	72692	12624	14.8
Senior-high	11967	11326	641	5.4

Source: Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics (2017a)

Cheng (2017) indicated that private migrant schools thrived and provided an alternative option for migrant children who were rejected by public schools in Beijing, and yet researchers point out that the legitimate existence of those schools in Beijing has been put to the test every few years: migrant schools faced large scale demolition and shutting down crises in 2006, 2011 and 2017 (Cheng 2017; Fei 2017). There were 300 private migrant schools in Beijing in 2006 but only 127 were left in 2014 (Cheng 2017). More

than half of the private migrant schools were closed in those eight years, of those left, 62 were operating without a legitimate licence (New Citizen Program 2015; Chen 2017; Yang 2017).

Although private migrant schools had been shutting down, public schools failed to take up the increased demand in the education of migrant children (Cheng 2017). In 2001, Beijing responded to the *Provisional Regulation for the Compulsory Education of Migrant Children and Juveniles* by allowing migrant children to study in its public schools as temporary students (commonly known in China as ‘Jie Du’)⁴⁰, but only under stringent conditions (BMG 2001). According to Chen et al. (2017), to enrol in a public school as a temporary student, migrant children in Beijing are required to present a considerable amount of paperwork, notoriously known as the ‘five certificates’: temporary residence permit; household registration (hukou) booklet; proof of parental employment; proof of residency; certificate verifying a lack of guardianship in the place of origin.

Since 2014, in which the New-Style Urbanisation policy was issued, requirements for migrant children to attend public schools in big cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, had become even more stringent. Wang (2017) commented that 2014 was the most miserable year for migrant children and their parents. In Beijing, the five certificates were formally specified in the *Certain Comments on Student Admission to Compulsory Education of Beijing*, issued by the BMCE in 2014 (BMCE 2014). It was also stated in the same document that every sub-district of Beijing had the right to develop its own detailed rules for the five certificates and ask for other related documents according to its own circumstances. Thus, many additional terms were added, which made it even harder for migrant children to qualify for public schools.

In 2014, four sub-districts in Beijing required that both parents of migrant children worked formally within those sub-districts and had paid for social insurances for no less than one year to qualify for admission (Liu et al. 2017a). By 2015, the number of sub-districts with such requirements rose to 13. In 2016, all 16 sub-districts and counties under the jurisdiction of Beijing municipality required proof of payment for social insurances (New Citizen Program 2016). Tongzhou sub-district and Chaoyang sub-district required that the parents of migrant children provide property ownership

⁴⁰ Written as ‘借读’ in Chinese

certificates or formal apartment lease contracts within those areas. Some other sub-districts claimed to give priority to children whose parents were home owners within those areas over those whose parents were not (Liu et al. 2017a).

Liu et al. (2017a) assert that a significant number of migrant children do not qualify for the above standards: many migrants were employed seasonally or informally (such as peddlers), and thus did not have an employment permit, let alone the ability to pay for social insurances; many lived in makeshift accommodation and thus could not provide a formal lease contract, let alone proof of purchase of properties. According to the specific policies designed by the BMCE, Liu et al. (2017a) argue that a huge proportion of migrant children would disqualify. In practice, the '*five certificates*' increased to as many as 28 certificates⁴¹ which were mandatory for migrant children to attend public schools in Beijing (Banyuetan 2015).

Chen et al. (2017) have commented that the measures which Beijing took in the last few years, especially since 2014, has further reduced the educational opportunities for migrant children: not only has their access to public schools been narrowed, but private migrant schools have also been gradually closing down. They have argued that the Beijing Municipal Government were exploiting educational policies as a means of population control. They have also hypothesised that many migrants would have to ultimately leave Beijing for the sake of their children's education. However, the mainstream public media has argued that these measures were doomed to fail in their purpose of population control (Banyuetan 2015; Xi 2016; Chen 2017; Wang 2017). The media believes that the strict requirements would only drive the migrant children but not *their parents* away, and that those harsh measures would only result in a boom in the number of '*left-behind*' children.

The under-representation of children in Beijing may be a result of migrant workers leaving their children back in their hometown to take education. The case of migrant-children education in Beijing is not unique. The same situation has also developed in

⁴¹ Here are several examples of certificates required in practice for migrant children to enrol in public schools in Beijing. The first type of certificates are identity certificates of both parents: identity card, residence permit, hukou booklet and the certificate verifying a lack of guardianship in the place of origin. The second type are certificates related to employment of both parents: formal employment contract, social insurance payment history, incumbency certification, formal business licenses of the organisations which the parents were employed and the registered bar code of those organisations. The third type are those certificates related to marriage and reproduction: marriage certificate, reproductive permit and medical birth certificate of the migrant children. The fourth type concerns housing in Beijing: formal lease contract, proof that the rented property paid tax legally, invoice of those taxes paid, invoice of all electricity and water usage payment during the stay, the identity cards of the landlords and their property ownership certificates. (Liu et al. 2017a)

other large cities, under the pressure of population growth control, such as Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The education of migrant children in small cities is another story. After the revision of the *Compulsory Education Law* in 2006, the provision of compulsory education in Jinzhou city has gradually extended to migrant children who resided in that city. Both the *Comments on Student Admission to Compulsory Education* issued by Jinzhou Education Bureau in 2012 and 2013, included migrant children into the realm of public-compulsory-education-provision (JEB 2012, 2013). It has only been since 2014 that the ‘*five certificates*’ were formally specified and required for migrant children whose hukou location was outside Jinzhou county to access public compulsory education in the city area (JEB 2014). The ‘*five certificates*’ there referred to: temporary residence permit; household registration (hukou) booklet; proof of parental employment (either labour contract or business permit); proof of residency (property ownership certificates, property purchase contract or lease); and vaccination certificates (JEB 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). For migrant children whose hukou location falls outside Jinzhou city but within Jinzhou county, only their hukou booklet and property ownership certificate/property purchase contract were required (JEB 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

4.9 Relocation of ‘low-end’ industries and restrictions for property and car purchases in Beijing

Beijing Municipal Government (2017a) also proposed to exploit employment measures to control its population growth and drive migrants away (known as ‘Yi Ye Guan Ren’)⁴² in the New-Style Urbanisation era. Beijing has been removing its ‘*low-end*’ industries in the name of ‘*reducing non-capital functions*’ (BMG 2017a). Those low-end industries to be removed included several manufacturing factories, as well as a few wholesale markets in urban Beijing, in which many rural migrant workers were employed.

Purchasing properties in Beijing is also much harder than it is in Jinzhou; especially when it comes to rural migrant workers. First, home prices in Beijing outweigh those in Jinzhou significantly. The market-oriented reforms in urban land and properties since the 1990s have seen property prices surge across most Chinese cities, with home-purchasing in the metropolitan areas becoming most expensive (Peng et al. 2008; Ahuja et al. 2010; Yu

⁴² Write as ‘以业管人’ in Chinese

2010; Dreger et al. 2013; Li et al. 2013b). Sun et al. (2017) point out a concern that low-and-middle-income households cannot afford to purchase an apartment in or close to those large cities.

“Beijing, the capital city and a megacity of China, has one of the most heated housing markets in the world...Recent housing price-to-income and price-to-rent ratios are at their highest levels in Beijing’s history.”
(Sun et al. 2017, p. 290)

Second, Beijing municipality has implemented Property Purchase Restrictions (PPR) to help cool the housing market (Lu et al. 2012; Sun et al. 2017). The PPR arose as one of China’s harshest interventions to dampen soaring property prices (Sun et al. 2017). In April 2010, the State Council of China published guidelines for direct restrictions on property purchases (SCC 2010). Beijing was one of the first cities to implement the PPR under such guidelines⁴³. In 2010 and 2011, the Beijing Municipal Government published two ‘notices’ and restricted the eligibility to purchase one additional home to those households with a Beijing local hukou, who have no or only one property under their name, or non-hukou households with no properties in Beijing, who could provide evidence of continuous payment of taxes or social insurances for no less than five years (COBMG 2010, 2011). Until October 2019, there were no similar PPR applied to Jinzhou city, indicating a looser policy environment for property purchases than in Beijing.

Not only has property purchases been under strict control, the purchase of cars in Beijing has also been restricted. Yang et al. (2014) argue that the control of vehicle ownership is one of the many tools that Beijing has used to combat traffic congestion. According to Feng et al. (2013), Beijing has adopted a lottery mechanism in allocating a quota among vehicle users since the early 2010s. Yang et al. (2014) point out that the annual quota set for vehicle growth is dependent on the analysis of road capacity, environmental sustainability and projected demand. Only individuals with a local Beijing hukou, or those without local hukou but who have paid for taxes or social insurances continuously for no less than five years, are eligible to enter the lottery (BMG 2010). Individuals who already own vehicles are eliminated from the lottery. This mechanism has directly restricted the number of registered automobiles. In comparison, Jinzhou city, as a small county-level city, has not published any policy to intervene in the ownership of vehicles

⁴³ 33 cities adopted the PPR by the end of March 2011.

by October 2019. Services and infrastructure in Beijing seemed much more '*gated*' than those in Jinzhou, especially towards rural migrant workers.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter compared two case study cities, which was the first step to understand the preferences of migrant workers for big and small cities. Beijing municipality, as the Capital of China, has been equipped with much superior administrative powers, much more preferable policies for its economic development, better resources, very stringent hukou conversion regulations and a much larger population, in comparison to Jinzhou, a county-level small city.

Beijing is characterised as a convenient, crowded, colourful destination for migrant workers, but at the same time '*gated*'. Generally, it has developed better infrastructure concerning urban landscaping, cultural and recreational facilities, and medical resources. However, its traffic is heavily burdened by its huge population. Migrant workers in Beijing are better protected by employment-based insurances and funds than their counterparts in Jinzhou. However, if they do not have local urban hukou, they face stringent restrictions for education of their children, and limited opportunities to purchase a property or car. The practice of relocating '*low-end*' industries in Beijing may also hurt the chances of some low-skilled migrant workers to find employment. Hukou conversion, which allows them to access benefits otherwise gated, are also under strict regulations, and only those migrants who are young, talented, well-educated and wealthy are able to meet the requirements of those regulations.

Jinzhou on the other hand is less crowded and less '*gated*', but at the same time can be seen as limited in employment opportunities and lifestyle options. It may also be not as attractive as Beijing to migrant workers because it lacks medical and educational resources, as well as theatres and other recreational facilities. Its infrastructure is by no means comparable to Beijing. However, it does have better traffic flows given its small population. Migrant workers in Jinzhou faced almost no restrictions in educating their children or purchasing houses or cars. Hukou conversion from rural to urban in Jinzhou city is also much easier to achieve. However, such conversion was found to be of little benefit, which means that many migrant workers may choose to keep their rural hukou.

CHAPTER 5: MIGRANT WORKERS IN BEIJING AND JINZHOU

5.1 Introduction

To understand the preferences of migrant workers for big and small cities, it is necessary to examine the characteristics of these migrant workers who have made different decisions about migration. Such knowledge may also help us understand their future choices of migration. This chapter examines the extent to which migrant workers in Beijing are different from those in Jinzhou in terms of their demographic characteristics, socio-economic status and their settlement experiences. It also addresses the main reasons which motivated them to migrate to their current city of residence. The analysis is based on the survey and interview findings relating to the life experiences of migrant workers in the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou.

This chapter begins by describing the two migrant groups. It is followed by an analysis of the reasons why they had migrated to each of those cities. Several aspects of the settlement experiences of migrant workers in Beijing and those in Jinzhou are explained here, such as employment opportunities, incomes, living costs and savings, distances to their hometown, social networks in destination cities, social insurances, housing issues, the utility of hukou conversion, and the level of openness to migrant workers. Then, it discusses and clarifies the concept of '*settlement*' from the perspective of migrant workers. Lastly, this chapter discusses the satisfaction of migrant workers after migrating to Beijing and Jinzhou respectively.

5.2 Migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou

Research investigating the characteristics of rural-urban migrant workers has tended to primarily focus on larger cities (Tang et al. 2015). As a result, the characteristics of migrant workers in smaller cities and towns have largely been neglected or represented by their counterparts in larger cities. Drawing on the survey and interview data, this section compares the characteristics of migrant workers currently residing in the super-large municipality Beijing to those currently living in the county-level small city Jinzhou.

5.2.1 Geographical boundaries crossed and linkages to rural hometowns

This study surveyed 436 individuals in Beijing and 207 in Jinzhou. All survey respondents in Beijing had relocated and entirely accommodated themselves there.

However, some respondents in Jinzhou were still commuting between their hometown villages and Jinzhou city, although they had taken employment in that city. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to select whether they used accommodation more often in the city or in their hometown villages. Those who chose their rural hometowns (73 respondents) made up 35 percent of the total respondents in Jinzhou. They are included in this study and referred to as '*commuting migrant workers*' since they satisfy the definition of migrant workers adopted in this study (Chapter 2). They either had employment or were seeking employment in Jinzhou city, but in the meantime maintained a strong linkage to their rural hometown villages. In comparison, those migrant workers who stayed more in Jinzhou city and visited their hometown villages less often are otherwise named '*residing migrant workers*', and represented 134 respondents making up two thirds of the total survey respondents in Jinzhou.

The most obvious difference between migrant workers in Beijing and those in Jinzhou was the distance which they had migrated. For an individual to be referred to as a migrant in China, he or she has to cross the boundary of official towns, townships or streets⁴⁴ according to the National Bureau of Statistics (Wei et al. 2013). Carrillo Garcia (2011) argued that migrant workers in big cities were mainly long-distance migrants who had crossed provincial boundaries, while those in small cities and towns were usually short-distance migrants who had come from rural villages in the same county. In her research based on Chinese migrant workers in a northern county-level city, it was found that 46 out of the 57 interviewees were intra-county migrants. She pointed out that short-distance migration and also commuting, were the dominating trends amongst those villagers engaged in non-agricultural employment in county-level cities in China (Carrillo Garcia 2011).

As shown in Table 5.1, in total there were 434 respondents from Beijing, and 165 from Jinzhou, including 105 residing migrant workers and 60 commuting migrant workers, who specified their origin, which allows this study to analyse the boundaries they had crossed. All respondents in Beijing were inter-province migrants, while 68.5 percent of those in Jinzhou were intra-county migrants or commuters, another 30.9 percent came from rural villages outside Jinzhou county but within Hebei province, and only 0.6 percent came from other provinces. It appeared that residing migrant workers in Jinzhou

⁴⁴ Street in China is a geographical and administrative unit

were made up mainly of intra-county (55.2 percent), and inter-county but intra-province (43.8 percent) migrants; while most commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou came from villages in the same county (91.7 percent).

Table 5.1 Categorisation of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou according to boundaries crossed for migration

	Beijing Migrant workers	Jinzhou Migrant workers	Jinzhou	
			Residing migrant workers	Commuting migrant workers
Intra-county (%)	0.0	68.5	55.2	91.7
Inter-county but intra-province (%)	0.0	30.9	43.8	8.3
Inter-province (%)	100.0	0.6	1.0	0.0
Total who specified origin (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total who specified origin (N)	434	165	105	60

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

5.2.2 Personal characteristics

The personal characteristics of migrant workers in Beijing and those in Jinzhou are shown in Table 5.2, with separate columns for residing and commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou. Commuting and residing migrant workers were very similar and showed no significant differences between them. However, personal characteristics of migrant workers in Jinzhou differed significantly from those in Beijing in terms of age, composition of males and females, educational attainment, and the percentage of communist party numbers. Migrant workers in Jinzhou were significantly younger, made up of a higher proportion of females, had lower educational attainment, and a higher representation of communist party members when compared to those in Beijing ($p < 0.1$).

Table 5.2 Personal characteristics of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou

	Beijing migrant workers	Jinzhou migrant workers	Signifi cance	Jinzhou residing migrant workers	Jinzhou commuting migrant workers	Signifi cance	Total
N	436	207		134	73		
Age (mean years)	37.3	30.5	0.0000	30.8	29.9	0.3733	35.1
Females (%)	39.0	55.1	0.0001	53.7	57.5	0.6013	44.2
Educational level							
Junior-high or lower (%)	45.1	64.4	0.0000	62.0	68.5	0.3583	51.3
Senior-high (%)	35.6	23.3	0.0018	23.3	23.3	0.9959	31.7
College or higher (%)	19.2	12.4	0.0329	14.7	8.2	0.1788	17.0
Marriage (%)	82.3	77.3	0.1302	73.9	83.6	0.1132	80.7
Communist party member (%)	13.9	21.5	0.0321	24.0	17.2	0.3221	16.3

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

1) Age and generations

The average age of respondents in Beijing was 37 years, compared to 31 years in Jinzhou. New-generation respondents who were born in or after 1980 made up 60 percent of the total survey participants in Beijing, compared to 88 percent in Jinzhou. It appeared that migrant workers in Jinzhou were significantly younger than their counterparts in Beijing, which was against the common belief that younger migrant workers were more attracted to larger than smaller cities (Guiheux et al. 2010). Such a belief was usually based on the fact that the new-generation of migrant workers exhibited higher demands for material and spiritual enjoyment and as such metropolises could satisfy those demands better than small cities or towns (Wang 2001a; Wang 2010a; Liu et al. 2012; Wu et al. 2013).

This study revealed that migrant workers surveyed in small city Jinzhou had been there for about five years on average, while those in Beijing had been there for about ten years. This accounts for the younger structure of respondents in Jinzhou. In addition, the lack of older migrant workers in Jinzhou could be because many of them had already converted their hukou from rural to urban and had become hukou residents in Jinzhou city after several years of *'floating'*, which left young migrants (without local urban hukou) over-represented in the survey. However, it was much harder for migrant workers to transfer their rural hukou to urban in Beijing, and those who were once young when

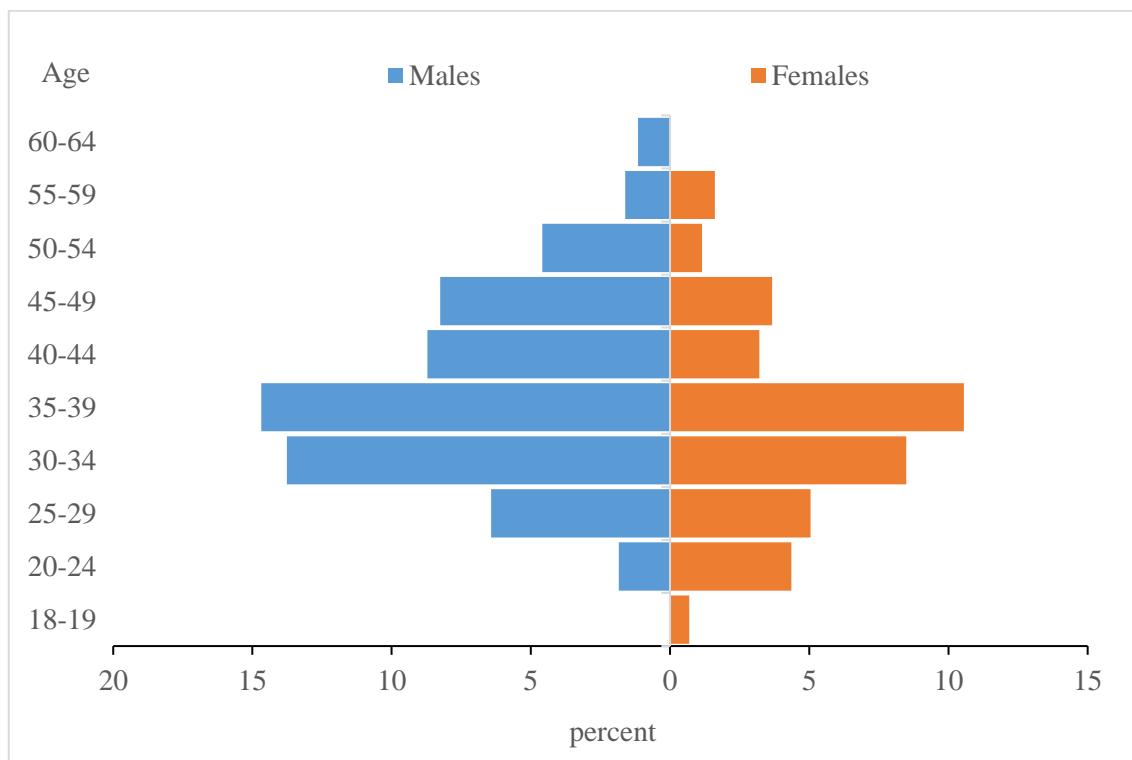
they first arrived, became old after staying there for a long time and kept *'floating'* without converting to local urban hukou.

2) Age and sex structure

Figure 5.1 shows the age and sex structure of survey respondents in Beijing. Migrant workers surveyed in Beijing were predominantly males, accounting for 61 percent of the total sample. Of particular note, males and females in their 30s and 40s made up the highest proportion of survey respondents in Beijing.

The sex structure differed significantly between young migrants aged below 25 years and those who were older. There were more females than males aged below 25 years, however, there were more males than females at older ages. This result is consistent with a study by Fan (2008), which found from 1990 and 2000 censuses that female migrants tended to be younger than male migrants, and that when female migrant workers reach their early 20s, they faced increasing pressure to return to their hometown to get married. It appears in the survey and interviews that males were more open to keep *'floating'* in bigger cities when they grew older in comparison to females, who were more likely to go to smaller urban centres near their hometown villages and settle.

Figure 5.1 Age-sex structure of respondents in Beijing



Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

One single female migrant aged 30 years in Beijing stated:

I came to Beijing once I graduated college in 2009. The places I have been to after that include Baoding city and Guangzhou city, chasing my career as a salesperson. I came back to Beijing in 2013 and started my current job in a non-government organisation. I have lived here during my youth, but I expect to find a place which is more peaceful, with less stress and better natural environment, as I get older. My experiences in big cities are the stepping-stone for me to live a better life in smaller cities. I will consider more about my family and my social relations when I make the decision about where to go next, probably somewhere closer to my hometown village. (Interviewee B4 2017)

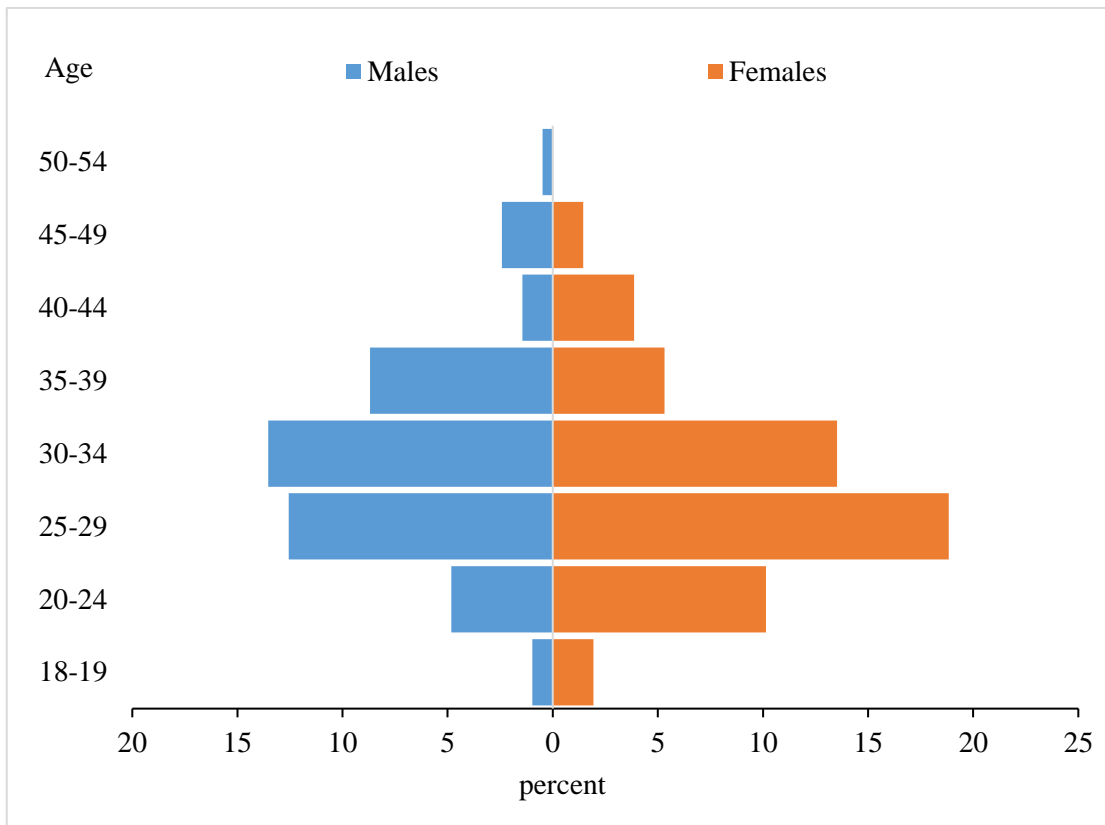
However, another interviewee, a single male who was also in his 30s, expressed a different view:

I have already travelled half the country, including the north-eastern provinces, Beijing, Hebei, Shandong, Henna, Hubei, Hunan, Hainan, Yunnan, and Shanxi provinces, due to my work in the construction industry. I like floating. I will keep floating as long as I am happy with it. (Interviewee B8, 2017)

However, it should be noted that there were some 'rebellious' female migrant workers who ignored the traditional 'inside–outside dichotomy' (Section 2.2.3), and decided to stay in Beijing even though they had exceeded the 'marriage-able age' (Section 2.2.3).

Figure 5.2 shows the age and sex structure of survey respondents in Jinzhou, indicating that there is an imbalance towards more females, who made up 55 percent of the total survey sample. The majority of surveyed migrant workers in Jinzhou were younger than 40 years of age, primarily aged between 25 and 34 years, with only a few older than 40 years. This may be the result of those migrant workers who were older converting their hukou from rural to urban in Jinzhou city, and as such were excluded from the sample.

Figure 5.2 Age-sex structure of respondents in Jinzhou, 2017



Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

It is noted that young female migrants are especially over-represented in Jinzhou. Fan (2008) ascertained that females in China tended to take more responsibility for caring for their family, which may limit the distance they could migrate, while men seemed to be held more responsible for making money and supporting their family financially. These young females staying in Jinzhou city may have chosen to stay close to their hometown to be able to take care of their families while working and sending some remittance back home. However, young males may have migrated to bigger cities to make more money because they do not have as many concerns or responsibilities like their female counterparts for caring for their family. In interviews with migrant workers in Jinzhou, it was found that females were more likely to enjoy the small city lifestyle than males.

One young female interviewee stated:

I like the cosiness of Jinzhou city. I am a very conservative person who gets homesick a lot. I like familiar places and I do not like the ups and downs which you can experience in big cities. I believe lots of girls are like me (Interviewee J9 2017)

3) Marital status

About 84 percent of survey respondents in Beijing and 78 percent in Jinzhou were married. Among those in Jinzhou, 74 percent of residing migrant workers were married, compared to 84 percent of those classified as commuting migrant workers, three quarters of residing migrant workers had school-aged children, compared to 86 percent of the commuting migrant workers.

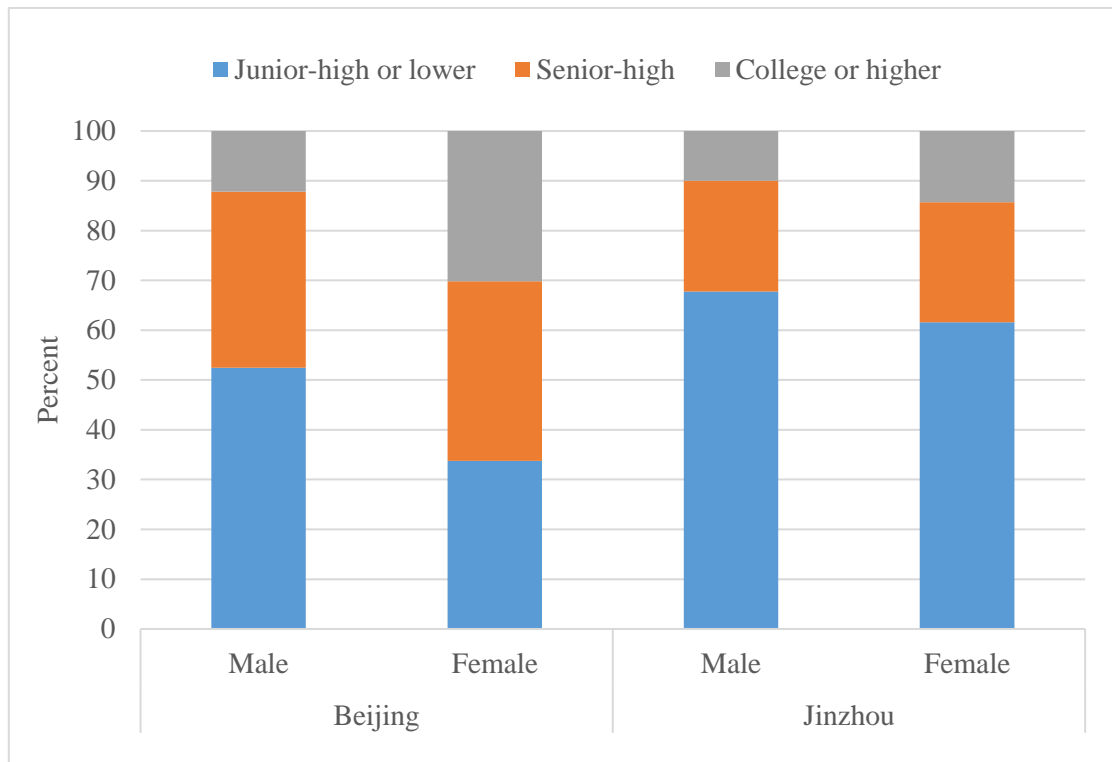
It appeared that marriages between migrant workers and local hukou residents were more common in Jinzhou city in comparison to Beijing according to interviews carried out with migrants. All married interviewees in Beijing were married to another migrant worker or someone from their hometown. However, marriages between migrants who originally came from nearby villages and local hukou residents seemed to be more common in Jinzhou. In this aspect it can be assumed that hukou residents in Jinzhou were more open to migrant workers, compared to those in Beijing.

4) Educational attainment

Respondents in Jinzhou predominantly had junior-high or lower levels of education, accounting for 64 percent of the total sample, with those who finished senior-high school making up 23 percent and those who finished college or higher-levels of education making up only 12 percent. There were no significant differences shown in educational levels between residing and commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou. In comparison, only 45 percent of respondents in Beijing had junior-high or lower levels of education, 36 percent had senior-high level education, and about one fifth had college or higher-level education. In general, migrant workers in Beijing were better educated than their counterparts in Jinzhou. This has long been perceived as common sense but rarely proven by practical studies in recent years. Although migrant workers in Beijing were generally better educated, the majority of them could not meet the requirements for the '*talents project for hukou conversion*' operating among most cities of China, where a college diploma was set as the baseline of '*talents*' (Zhu 2018).

Of particular note, as indicated in Figure 5.3, there was a significant difference in educational levels between males and females, both in Beijing and Jinzhou. Female respondents in Beijing were significantly better educated than their male counterparts, with a much higher percentage of females who finished senior-high, college or higher-level education.

Figure 5.3 Educational level of male and female respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou



Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

A similar pattern was also found in Jinzhou, but it was not as significant as that in Beijing. It is commonly believed that females face more stringent requirements in the workplace, both in China and in most other countries, which may require them to have more educational attainment compared to their male counterparts to obtain similar work. Beijing has a much more competitive labour market than Jinzhou, and therefore, it may also require higher educational levels for female migrant workers than for their male counterparts.

5) Proportion of communist party members

Some 14 percent of respondents in Beijing and 22 percent in Jinzhou were communist party members. Party membership in China has profound meanings. After the foundation of PRC, being included as a communist party member was considered honourable, which may lead to preferable social arrangements and higher social status. However, recently, the influences of party membership in bigger urban centres have decreased, but resumed in smaller cities and especially in rural areas. It is also assumed that communist party members are scarce in small cities, compared to large cities. Even though most migrant workers do not expect to work in a government entity, being a communist party member

may ‘open more doors’ for them or bring them more respect in smaller urban centres and rural areas, but not necessarily so much in large cities.

5.2.3 Experiences of migrant workers

The survey found that about two thirds of commuting and residing migrant workers in Jinzhou taking up urban employment had farmed before. However, commuting migrant workers had on average nine years farming experience, compared to seven years among the residing migrant workers. The relatively longer time spent farming may have restrained their intentions to entirely move to Jinzhou city and encouraged them to commute between the city (where they took employment) and their hometowns villages (where they farm). It can be assumed that many may only intended to supplement and diversify their rural household income by occasional urban employment. For this group of migrant workers, Fan (2008, p. 7) commented:

“Despite the economic gain from migrant work, protecting and taking care of the farmland continues to be a high priority for most peasants.”

It was also found that migrant workers in Beijing were significantly more experienced in terms of urban employment, when compared to those in Jinzhou. Two thirds of surveyed migrant workers in Beijing had been engaged in urban employment for more than ten years, compared to 29 percent in Jinzhou. However, this is not surprising given that the migrant cohort in Jinzhou was much younger than those in Beijing.

It should be noted that three quarters of surveyed migrant workers in Jinzhou migrated there or started commuting between Jinzhou city and their hometown villages after 2010. In comparison, a smaller proportion, about one third of surveyed migrant workers in Beijing had migrated after 2010. Moreover, a considerable 44 percent of surveyed migrant workers in Jinzhou migrated (or started commuting) there after the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014, compared to only 22 percent in Beijing.

There are two possible explanations for the above discrepancy:

- 1) Jinzhou, as a small city, may have become more popular since 2010, especially after 2014, while Beijing had become less popular. It may further imply that the New-Style Urbanisation policy has somewhat achieved its aim to promote

migration to smaller urban centres and restrict the growth of large metropolises like Beijing.

- 2) It is also possible that most rural villagers who migrated to Jinzhou city earlier (before 2011) had converted their hukou from rural to urban and therefore were no longer counted as migrant workers by definition (Chapter 2), which left those who migrated after 2010 over-represented. Migrant workers in Beijing, unlike their counterparts in Jinzhou, were faced with much more stringent requirements for hukou conversion from rural to urban, which restricted the number of those who had converted to urban hukou. In this regard, it was difficult to tell whether the relative popularity of Beijing and Jinzhou had changed since the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014.

In summary, migrant workers in Jinzhou differed from those in Beijing in relation to the distance they had migrated, their age and sex structure, educational attainment, proportion of communist party members, and urban employment experiences. Migrant workers in Beijing usually had crossed provincial boundaries, while those in Jinzhou were more likely to come from villages in the same county or province, of whom many were still commuting between their hometown and Jinzhou city. Respondents in Beijing showed more experience in urban employment, compared to their counterparts in Jinzhou, and they were relatively older, better educated, and predominantly males. In comparison, migrant workers in Jinzhou were younger, less educated, and females were over-represented.

Migrant workers in Jinzhou were further divided into two groups based on the strength of their linkages to their rural hometowns: commuting migrant workers who still visit their hometown villages regularly and residing migrant workers who relocated entirely to Jinzhou city. Commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou showed no significant differences in their personal characteristics from residing migrant workers, except that they seemed to have more farming experience.

Of particular note, it appeared that most survey respondents in Jinzhou migrated there after 2010, while many in Beijing had migrated earlier. However, more proof is needed to establish that the relative popularity of Beijing and Jinzhou as migration destinations has changed. Chapter six will further address the migration intentions of respondents, as well as their choice of migration destination in the next five years.

5.3 Reasons for migration to Beijing and Jinzhou

Survey respondents were asked to choose all that applied to them from a range of reasons indicating why they had migrated to Jinzhou or Beijing. The survey found that about 71 percent of respondents migrated to Beijing or Jinzhou before the announcement of New-style Urbanisation policies in 2014. Therefore, the results mainly represent the reasons for migration before 2014. However, this does not necessarily mean that the New-Style Urbanisation had little influence on migration, but only indicates that it may require some time for a policy to show its effects on migration behaviours (may be a few years), which highlights the importance of examining migration intentions.

Since commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou had not moved there entirely, they were excluded from this discussion. Thus, the comparison was between migrant workers in Beijing and residing migrant workers in Jinzhou.

Table 5.3 shows the most popular reasons⁴⁵, and that almost three quarters of respondents in Beijing and a little less than half in Jinzhou replied that it was ‘employment opportunities’ which brought them there. The next three popular reasons for respondents in Beijing were ‘higher wages’, ‘more potential for my future development’ and ‘social networks’, followed by ‘social welfare’, ‘quality of education’ and ‘infrastructure’ reasons given by more than 15 percent of survey respondents. Although ‘employment opportunities’ was still the first ranked reason given by respondents in Jinzhou, their second favoured response was ‘close to my hometown’, with ‘higher wages’ ranked as the third reason but was only selected by 17 percent compared to 44 percent of respondents in Beijing. Apparently, ‘being close to hometown’ was more important to migrant workers in Jinzhou (38.6 percent) than those in Beijing (15 percent). Jinzhou city appeared to be most attractive to nearby villagers who were reluctant to leave their hometown villages. Other reasons selected by over 15 percent of surveyed migrant workers in Jinzhou include ‘social welfare’ and ‘infrastructure’.

Clearly, economic reasons, such as employment and wages, were central in motivating migration to Beijing and also to Jinzhou, which echoes a wide range of research that economic factors were the main motivations in rural-urban migration in China (Carrillo Garcia 2011). Significantly higher proportions of surveyed migrant workers went to

⁴⁵ Reasons which were chosen by over three percent in two sample cities and with a percentage no less than five in at least one sample city

Jinzhou for its closeness to their hometown villages and its lower living costs, while migrants moving to Beijing were more likely to indicate its development (which is endorsed by government policies) and its potential for their future development.

It is interesting that ten percent of respondents in Beijing perceived the city to be ‘open’ to migrants and gave that as a reason to move, compared to eight percent of respondents in Jinzhou. However, the openness of a city here is after all a subjective evaluation which is influenced by their lived experiences. It should be noted that most of the migration to Beijing happened before 2014, when there were less stringent population control restrictions.

Table 5.3 Main reasons for migration to Beijing and Jinzhou (multiple response)

Reasons	Beijing migrant workers	Jinzhou residing migrant workers
Employment opportunities	74.2	45.5
Higher wage	44.2	22.7
Social network	24.7	13.6
More potential for my future development	24.7	14.4
More social welfare for migrant workers	19.1	17.4
Better infrastructure	15.4	17.4
Better education for migrant children	15.7	13.6
Close to my hometown	14.5	38.6
More openness to migrant workers	10.4	8.4
The endorsement of policy for the development of this city	10.1	2.3
Sense of belonging	7.4	9.1
Less pressure at work	4.6	7.6
High attachments to hukou conversion	4.1	0.8
Less competition for employment	2.3	7.6
Lower living cost	1.2	14.4
Low requirements for hukou conversion	0.5	2.3
Lower property purchase prices	0.0	0.0

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Of particular note, however, hukou was not indicated to be a significant influence on migration to Beijing or Jinzhou. Surprisingly, hukou factors were not chosen by a significant number of surveyed migrants and represented less than five percent of respondents both in Beijing and Jinzhou. In comparison to Hukou, migrant workers

seemed to care much more about gains in welfare and the like. It is also surprising that not many respondents migrated to Jinzhou for its lower prices in purchasing properties, and yet it was not because they thought house purchases were not important. A middle-aged male migrant factory manager in Jinzhou argued that, instead of acting as initial attractions, housing and hukou were both *'latter problems'* if migrants ever *'succeed'* and hoped to settle in their destination cities. He stated:

“Hukou and property purchase come after successful careers and sufficient incomes...Why would I want local hukou if I do not have property there? Why would I purchase a property there if I could not make a living? It is unnecessary to talk about either hukou or property purchases before I even know whether I could succeed in this city or not.” (Interviewee J1 2017)

Generally, migrant workers demonstrated that employment and earning money was the stepping-stone to both house purchases and hukou conversions and that most of them were still struggling with employment and money. One young male administrative staff in the construction industry in Beijing argued that hukou would be useless if one could not sustain his or her life in a city through employment and money-making:

“Even if I got the chance to transfer my hukou to Beijing city, I still cannot sustain my life in Beijing with my low income. So, I prefer to keep my hukou in my hometown village forever.” (Interviewee B8 2017)

5.4 Mega city life and small city experience

Carrillo Garcia (2011) has ascertained that the life experiences of migrant workers in small cities and towns have long been overshadowed by those of their counterparts in big cities. This section compares the metropolitan life and the small city experiences of migrant workers from aspects which were identified as common reasons for migration (section 5.3). Although housing and hukou were not selected as reasons for migration to Beijing or Jinzhou by as many respondents as expected, they appeared to be very important aspects of life for every Chinese citizen, and were considered by migrant workers to be important if they ever intended to settle in the future.

5.4.1 Employment opportunities

The survey found that the majority of respondents in Beijing and nearly half of those in Jinzhou had migrated pursuing employment opportunities, and yet the employment environments of the two cities were quite different.

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate employment opportunities in their current city of residence, on a scale from zero to five, where zero and one were coded as ‘scarce’, two and three as only ‘a few’, and, four and five as ‘abundant’. About a quarter of surveyed migrant workers in Beijing stated that those opportunities were ‘abundant’, while 52 percent considered there were ‘a few’, with about one fifth indicating that they were ‘scarce’. In comparison, 18 percent of respondents in Jinzhou stated that employment opportunities were ‘abundant’, while around 60 percent considered there to be ‘a few’, and 22 percent thought they were ‘scarce’. Although migrant workers in Beijing were faced with more work opportunities, these were subject to high competition given the number of migrants there, which may create a lot of pressure for them.

Table 5.4 shows that almost half of the surveyed migrant workers in Jinzhou were hired in manufacturing and about 22 percent were employed in wholesale and retail trade. The other main industries which absorbed migrant workers in Jinzhou were ‘transportation and storage’ (nine percent), ‘tenancy and commercial service’ (six percent), and ‘neighbourhood services, repair and other services’ (five percent). Females there concentrated in ‘wholesale and retail trade’ (35 percent) and ‘manufacturing’ (31 percent), while males were mostly employed in ‘manufacturing’ (62 percent).

In comparison, migrant workers in Beijing were spread among several industries, with about 26 percent hired in ‘construction’, while others were mainly employed in ‘transportation and storage’ (11 percent), ‘wholesale and retail trade’ (11 percent), ‘neighbourhood services, repairs and other services’ (ten percent), ‘accommodation and food service’ (ten percent), ‘education’ (nine percent), and ‘manufacturing’ (six percent). The main industries which employed female migrant workers in Beijing included ‘education’ (19 percent), ‘wholesale and retail trade’ (17 percent) and ‘accommodation and food service’ (13 percent). The main industries which hired male migrant workers were ‘construction’ (39 percent) and ‘transportation and storage’ (13 percent). Overall, around 65 percent of migrant workers in Beijing were employed in the tertiary sector, compared to 54 percent in Jinzhou. This echoes the economic structure of the two cities—

Beijing has a much more diversified economy in comparison to small cities such as Jinzhou, and thus could provide more diverse job opportunities (Section 4.3).

Table 5.4 Industry distribution of male and female respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou

	Beijing			Jinzhou		
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
Primary sector						
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Secondary sector						
Construction	38.9	5.8	25.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Manufacturing	6.7	4.5	5.8	62.4	31.1	45.7
Mining and quarrying/Electricity, gas, steam and water supply	4.2	0.6	2.8	1.1	0.0	0.5
Tertiary sector						
Transportation and storage	13.4	8.3	11.4	16.1	2.8	9.0
Wholesale and retail trade	6.7	16.7	10.6	7.5	34.9	22.1
Neighbourhood services, repairs and other services	9.2	10.3	9.6	2.2	7.5	5.0
Accommodation and food service	7.1	12.8	9.4	2.2	4.7	3.5
Education	2.9	18.6	9.1	0.0	6.6	3.5
Tenancy and commercial service	2.9	7.1	4.6	2.2	8.5	5.5
Information transfer, software and information technology services	1.7	1.3	1.5	5.4	0.9	3.0
Finance and Insurance	2.5	5.1	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Others	3.3	8.3	5.3	1.1	2.8	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: The division of industries is in line with the Standard Industrial Classification Codes (GB/T 4754—2017) (SCC 2017b)

Others include real estate/ scientific research and technical services/ water conservative facilities, environment and infrastructure management/ human health and social work/culture, sports and entertainment/ public administration, social security and social organisations/extraterritorial organisations and bodies.

The survey established that Beijing could provide migrant workers with more employment opportunities, although several manufacturing factories and wholesale markets have been relocated, which were referred to by the local government as low-end

industries, in the name of ‘*reducing non-capital functions*’ (BMG 2017a). Results show that at least a quarter of survey respondents in Beijing were still optimistic about getting employed there in Beijing, as there were many other industries which could employ migrant workers. Those measures taken by the Beijing Municipal Government (2017a) to exploit employment opportunities to control its population growth may not work as well as expected, because manufacturing and wholesale trade only employed 13.4 percent of respondent migrant workers. However, migrant workers in Jinzhou can only get employment in a limited number of industries, and some interviewees in Beijing expressed their concerns about getting employed in similar industries in smaller cities.

A male migrant in his 30s, who worked in administration on a construction site in Beijing, stated:

Small cities have their own advantages...however, it is hard to get employed there. Even if I do get employed, I will be paid much less (than working in Beijing). Construction is not a big business in small cities. Renovation projects in small cities are not comparable (to those in Beijing). Because Beijing has a much bigger economy than those county-level cities (Interviewee B8, 2017)

It appeared that Beijing would stay attractive for migrants with relatively higher levels of education, or those who intended to work in ‘*high-end*’ industries, while it was driving ‘*low-end*’ migrant workers away. However, small cities and towns like Jinzhou may not be able to provide enough employment opportunities for those migrant workers intending to relocate from the bigger cities.

5.4.2 Income

Income has long been identified as one of the most important reasons for migration both in the west and in China (Raimon 1962; Hu 2002; Zhu 2002; Marshall et al. 2003; Thijs et al. 2005; Song 2009; Cheng et al. 2014a). The neoclassical economics theory underlined the influence of absolute income, while the new economics theory of migration emphasised the role of relative income, in motivating migration (Massey et al. 1993; Massey 1999). The survey found that income was the second ranked reason which drove respondents to migrate to Beijing and the third ranked factor which led those to move to Jinzhou.

No significant differences were found in incomes between residing and commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou, indicating that the decisions to reside in Jinzhou city instead of commuting may not significantly increase their incomes. It shows that there might be some other factors, as important as jobs and income, which influenced their decisions to either commute or reside. However, since the residing and commuting migrant workers showed no significant differences in their incomes, they were combined in this section to make comparison with migrant workers in Beijing. Table 5.5 shows the average annual incomes of male and female respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou. It revealed that migrant workers in Beijing earned an annual income of 53,866 yuan on average, compared to 30,310 yuan in Jinzhou, almost double⁴⁶.

Table 5.5 Average annual income (yuan) of male and female respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou, 2016

	Total sample	Beijing	Jinzhou	Significance
Total sample	46497.0	53865.6	30310.3	0.000
Males	51451.1	57223.6	35801.0	0.000
Females	39904.9	48679.9	24996.8	0.000
Significance	0.000	0.051	0.001	-

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Some 30 percent of respondents in Beijing earned more than 60,000 yuan, compared to less than two percent in Jinzhou, while only 15 percent of those in Beijing had incomes lower than 30,000 yuan, compared to 37 percent in Jinzhou.

Of particular note, there were significant income gaps between male and female respondents both in Beijing and in Jinzhou (Table 5.5). Female migrant workers were found to be relatively better educated than males in both cities (Section 5.2.3), however, they seemed to be paid less than their male counterparts on average, indicating potential discrimination against females in the migrant labour market. However, both male and female respondents in Beijing made significantly more money than their counterparts in Jinzhou. Male migrant workers in Beijing made 57,224 yuan on average, while their counterparts in Jinzhou made only 35,801 yuan. By contrast, female migrant workers in Beijing made 48,680 yuan on average, with their counterparts in Jinzhou making only 24,997 yuan.

⁴⁶ However, the living expenses in the two cities were also very different, which will be explained in Section 5.4.3

It was also evident that incomes of survey respondents varied with their educational level. Table 5.6 shows that surveyed migrant workers in Beijing at every educational level were paid significantly more than their counterparts in Jinzhou ($p < 0.01$). Of particular note, in Jinzhou, better educated respondents were paid less than those relatively less educated. A possible explanation is that Jinzhou city, as a small city, could not provide appropriate employment opportunities for those migrants with high educational levels, and therefore, those better educated migrants were forced to take up low-paid jobs instead. If those better educated migrants in bigger cities were to relocate to county-level cities or towns, those small cities would probably have to improve their ability to provide suitable employment opportunities for these migrants with similar wages.

Table 5.6 Average annual income (yuan) of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou by educational level, 2016

	Total sample	Beijing	Jinzhou	Significance
Junior-high or lower	40261.5	46365.8	31105.1	0.0000
Senior-high	49116.7	54832.2	30109.0	0.0001
College or higher	61568.8	69469.6	24852.9	0.0056

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

This study further compared the incomes of migrant workers and those of urban residents in Beijing and Jinzhou. It is usually believed that urban residents earned more than rural-urban migrant workers based on studies in relatively big cities (Song 2009; Wu et al. 2010; Xing 2014). Such a belief was found to be true in Beijing. The per capita average annual disposable income of urban citizens in Beijing in 2016 was 57,275 yuan (BMBS 2017a), about 3,400 yuan more than the average income which migrant worker earned there in the same year. However, the stereotype that migrant workers earned less than local citizens was challenged in the small city and town context. The per capita average annual disposable income of urban citizens in Jinzhou in 2016 was 28,817 yuan (JRDC 2017), about 1,500 yuan less than the average annual income of migrant workers, who appeared to earn more than the urban locals. This study reconsiders the so-called '*disadvantaged situation*' of migrant workers in the small city and town contexts later (further explained in Section 5.5).

5.4.3 Living costs and savings

Liu et al. (2017b) argue that high living costs have been identified as a reason which drives migrants away from big cities. Mohabir et al. (2017) also found that some migrant

workers were reluctant to stay in Shanghai partly due to increased living costs. Tang et al. (2015) hypothesise that urban areas in less developed regions may be attractive to migrant workers due to relatively lower living costs. However, some other studies have found that some migrant workers, especially the new-generation of migrant workers, have higher demands for '*material and spiritual enjoyment*', or the consumption of an urban lifestyle, which indicated higher living costs (Wang 2001a; Wang 2010a; Liu et al. 2012; Wu et al. 2013). Savings or earning remittances are also believed by scholars to be the main aim of migrant workers (Zhu et al. 2012; Li et al. 2013a; Ratha 2016).

The survey found that about 14 percent of migrant workers migrated to Jinzhou for its low living costs. However, the average living costs of respondents in Beijing exceeded those of their counterparts in Jinzhou by almost 1.6 times. Respondents in Beijing spent 29,971 yuan on living expenses on average in 2016, while those in Jinzhou spent 11,538 yuan. Accordingly, surveyed migrant workers in Beijing saved 23,895 yuan on average in 2016, compared to 18,772 yuan in Jinzhou. Moreover, living expenses of respondents in Beijing accounted for about 56 percent of their incomes on average, compared to 38 percent in Jinzhou. It appeared that migrant workers in Beijing were living a life in which they earned higher wages and also spent more every day, indicating a higher level of consumption associated with an urban lifestyle (or higher living costs such as food, housing, and transportation); while those in Jinzhou were earning less but spent a smaller proportion of their income, which indicated lower consumption levels (and lower living costs) compared to those living in Beijing.

5.4.4 Distance to hometown

Distance has long been identified as a substantial deterrent to migration (Levy et al. 1974). The survey found that almost 40 percent of residing migrant workers moved to Jinzhou due to its closeness to their hometown villages. The deterrent of distance has mainly been explained by researchers as the rise in economic costs associated with moving, psychological costs of leaving familiar surroundings, and the lack of information associated with distance (Schwartz 1973; Levy et al. 1974). However, Czaika et al. (2014) argue that advances in transportation and online communication technologies have enlarged the distance and scope of migration. Respondents were asked about the extent to which they thought online communication and phone calls could replace face-to-face communication, and they were required to rate answers on a scale from zero to five.

Those who reported a score of zero, one or two, were coded as agreeing that those ‘new’ ways of communication could replace face-to-face ones; while those who reported a score of three, four or five were coded as disagreeing, and only 45 percent of respondents in this study agreed.

The distance of migration was measured here by the time taken to commute instead of actual distance. This is because two locations of the same distance could be perceived very differently by migrants due to differences in commute times taken, which resulted from geographical variations, as well as differences in the types of transport used. Survey respondents were asked for their current commute time taken to travel from their hometown villages to their city of residence. They were also asked about what they thought an ideal commute time would be between hometown villages and a suitable destination city. It was found that males seemed to be more tolerant of distance than females, both in Jinzhou and Beijing, however, such differences were found to be not statistically significant. The ideal commute time for migrant workers residing in Beijing was about three hours on average, compared to their actual commute time on average of nine hours and 16 minutes. This compared to an average ideal commute time for migrant workers in Jinzhou of about 35 minutes, but their actual commute time was about one hour and 22 minutes. No significant differences were found in the survey between commuting and residing migrant workers in Jinzhou concerning their actual and ideal commute times.

It appeared that both migrant workers in Beijing and those in Jinzhou would prefer a destination closer to their hometown. The fact that they migrated to somewhere which was more distant than their ideal distance to a city for work, implied that the destinations nearby probably did not satisfy their demand for employment opportunities and that they compromised distance to achieve their aspirations for jobs and an urban lifestyle.

5.4.5 Social networks in destination cities

According to Massey et al. (1993, p. 448):

“Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin.”

This study focuses only on the social networks which migrant workers have in their destination cities. In the survey, migrant networks were measured by the number of

people in a high position who were known to migrant workers in their current city. People in a high position in this study specifically refer to three types: employees in the government and public service sectors, administrative staff in enterprises, and entrepreneurs.

Both theoretical and empirical studies from around the world have shown that social networks have a significant impact on sequential migration (Banerjee 1983; Taylor 1984; Massey 1987; Massey et al. 1993; Carrillo Garcia 2004; Fan 2011a). The survey results found that migrant networks were selected by 24.7 percent of respondents in Beijing and 13.6 percent of respondents who were residing migrant workers in Jinzhou, as an attraction for migration to their respective cities (Section 5.3).

In Beijing, surveyed migrant workers knew 10 people in high positions on average, in Jinzhou respondents knew 11, the difference was less significant than expected. However, commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou only knew three persons in high positions on average, compared to 16 known to residing migrant workers. Carrillo Garcia (2011) hypothesised that smaller short-distance urban destinations were likely to exhibit a greater degree of social acceptability and a higher level of social integration due to their geographical closeness and cultural similarities to origin areas. According to the survey data, residing migrant workers in Jinzhou seemed to be better integrated into social life than their counterparts in Beijing. By contrast, commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou kept strong linkages to their origin and thus tended to lack incentives, as well as the time and energy, to form new social ties in Jinzhou city. Their social networks appeared to be even worse than those of migrant workers in Beijing as measured in this study.

The survey found that respondents in Beijing, who migrated relatively longer distance, had poorer social networks than residing migrant workers surveyed in Jinzhou, most of whom only migrated a short distance. However, the divergence was expected to be more significant. This was probably true in the initial stages of rural-urban migration in China, but this has changed because of the flood of migrants to metropolitan cities in the last 30 years. In some megacities, migrants now exceed local residents and have become the majority. In 2017, migrants accounted for 67 percent of the total population in Guangzhou city, 65 percent in Shenzhen city, 40 percent in Shanghai city, and 37 percent in Beijing

city (Xiao 2018). Among those young regular residents⁴⁷ in Beijing (aged between five and 34), migrants made up over half of the population in 2016 (Zuo 2016). Sheng et al. (2017) argued that migrants were rather concentrated in their destination cities and they formed various migrant enclaves. Those enclaves or migrant villages appeared to provide a social bond and support for migrant workers in megacities. However, migrant workers in Beijing seemed to experience more difficulties trying to form new social networks, especially with local residents, as expressed by several interviewees.

A female migrant aged 34 years who ran a small restaurant, told a story about the conflict she once had with a local resident there:

“Those locals look down on us. One day some Beijing local ordered a meal to be delivered and I made an honest mistake. He shouted at me (with a very disrespectful voice) ... They (local residents in Beijing) had no respect for migrants and discriminate against us.” (Interviewee B2 2017)

Such hostility between migrant workers and locals in Beijing made it harder for them to form social networks and integrate into the destination society. As a result, social networks of migrant workers there were greatly limited to fellow migrants. However, similar situations were not found in Jinzhou, which will be explained later (Section 5.5).

5.4.6 Participation in social insurances and funds

Social welfare was selected by over 15 percent of migrant workers, both in Beijing and in Jinzhou (among residing migrant workers), as one of the reasons for their migration (Section 5.3). Social insurances and funds are a huge part of social welfare in China. They can be categorised into two groups: insurances and funds which are linked to formal employment (the ‘five one insurance fund’ schemes), and those which are linked to hukou locations (Section 4.6). Since the hukou of all survey respondents’ hukou was registered in rural villages (which was in line with the definition of migrant workers in this study),

⁴⁷ Defined earlier in Chapter 2 as the population of an area who have stayed there for no less than six months, whether with or without local hukou registration.

only employment-base insurances, and insurance entitlements for rural hukou holders, are discussed here⁴⁸.

Table 5.7 shows participation rates among sampled migrant workers in relation to insurances and funds. Respondents in Beijing exhibited a much higher participation rate across all employment-based insurances and funds, while those in Jinzhou had a much higher participation rate in rural-hukou-based insurances. Employees must participate in the ‘five one fund’ schemes by law (Section 4.6), however, less than half of the survey respondents had participated entirely or partially in those schemes.

Table 5.7 Social insurance and fund participation among respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou (multiple response)

	Beijing (%)	Jinzhou (%)
Employment based insurances and funds		
Housing Accumulation Fund (HAF)	13.3	8.5
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	31.9	16.1
Employment Injury Insurance (EII)	43.5	37.2
Maternity Insurance (MI)	26.9	7.5
Medical Insurance for Urban Employees (MIUE)	23.1	10.1
Social Endowment Insurance for Urban Employees (SEIUE)	24.6	17.6
Hukou based insurances (rural hukou)		
New Rural Cooperative Medical Insurance (NRCMI)/ Integrated Basic Medical Insurance for Rural and Urban Residents (IBMIRU)	57.0	88.4
New Rural Social Endowment Insurance (NRSEI)	20.6	44.2
Any health insurance	75.4	91.0
Any age pension	44.5	59.8

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

It appeared that migrant workers in Beijing were more reluctant to participate in the rural-hukou-based insurances. This may be due to the fact that the deductible limit rises, and the reimbursement rate drops if one seeks medical services outside the jurisdiction of their hukou location. The majority of migrant workers in Beijing had migrated across province borders, which made it less beneficial to utilise NRCMI or IBMIRU. On the contrary, most migrant workers in Jinzhou came from rural villages within the same

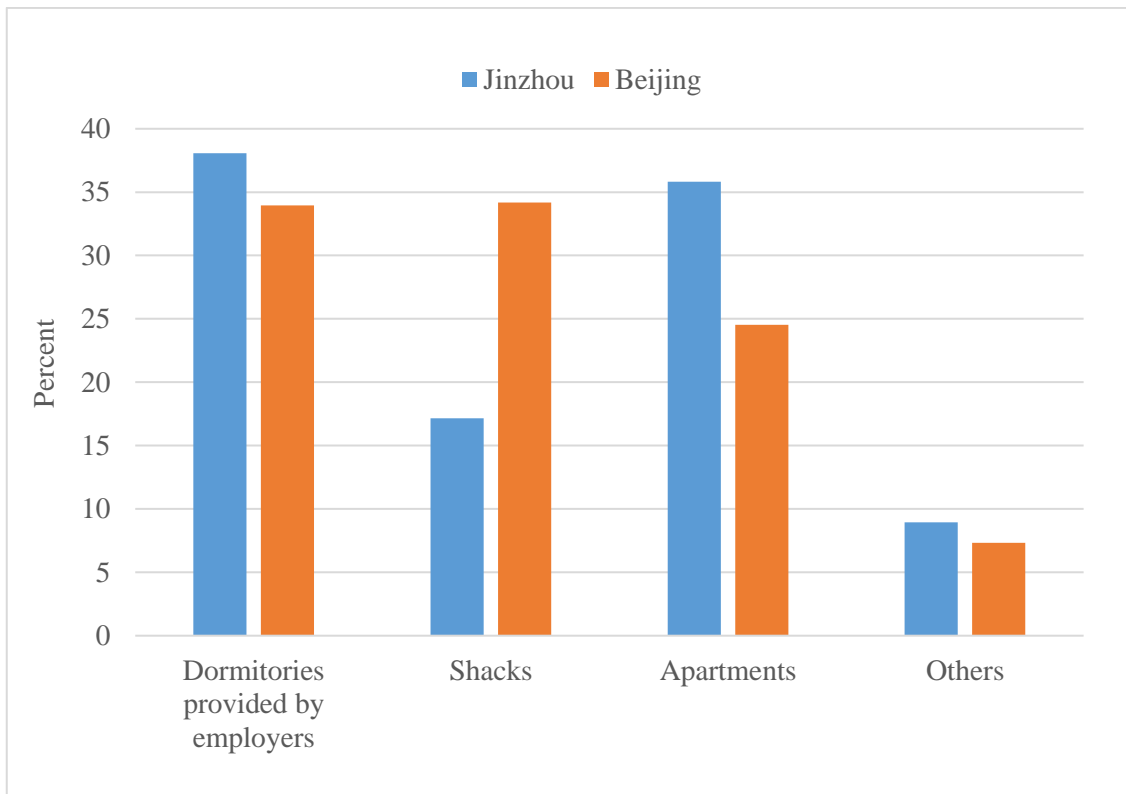
⁴⁸ Although the participation for NRCMI and NRSEI is voluntary for rural residents in China, the Chinese government has strongly pushed the enrolment of the whole rural population, which may explain the relatively high participation rates.

province, in this regard, participating in the NRCMI or IBMIRU was convenient and beneficial to them. Social insurances could also be categorised according to the aims of those insurances. Health insurances include MIUE, NRCMI, or IBMIRU, while those for old-age care include SEIUE and NRSEI. As shown in above Table 5.7, more than 90 percent of surveyed migrant workers in Jinzhou were covered by some type of health insurance and about 60 percent participated in some sort of age pension scheme. In comparison, only 75 percent of surveyed migrant workers in Beijing were covered by at least one type of health insurance and 45 percent participated in some sort of age pension. Migrant workers in Jinzhou seemed to have better cover both by health insurances and age pensions in comparison to those in Beijing. However, as stated in Chapter 4, benefits of the same type of insurance vary from province to province, and that insurances in Beijing usually offer more generous benefits.

5.4.7 Housing experience

Survey respondents did not indicate that ‘cheaper housing prices’ was a main factor which initiated migration (Section 5.3). However, housing conditions, prices and arrangements have been proven to be influential to the settlement decisions of migrant workers after their migration (Yang et al. 2018). This section compares housing experiences between surveyed migrant workers in Beijing and residing migrant workers in Jinzhou. Figure 5.4 shows the accommodation of migrant workers by city, indicating that the highest proportion of migrant workers in Beijing (34 percent) lived in shacks located in so-called *urban villages* (Cheng Zhong Cun), which was much less the case in Jinzhou. Over one third of respondents in both Jinzhou and Beijing resided in dormitories provided by their employers.

Figure 5.4 Accommodation of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou, 2017



Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: This figure only shows the accommodation of surveyed migrant workers in Beijing and residing migrant workers in Jinzhou

It should be noted that, *urban villages*, according to Huang et al. (2015a), were previously administrative villages in suburbs, which had been increasingly engulfed by urban expansion. Zheng et al. (2009) have pointed out that the land on which shacks have been built is still collectively owned by village collectives and allocated to villagers, although the farmland of those villages may have already been acquired by the urban government⁴⁹. They argue that shacks are relatively cheaper to rent compared to urban ‘commodity houses (or apartments)’ because the villagers are not required to pay a land lease fee for using these parcels (Zheng et al. 2009). Zheng et al. (2009, p. 426) refer to this type of accommodation as:

“...they represent a match between migrants’ demand for cheap housing and the supply of low-cost housing in villages encroached upon by urban expansion.”

⁴⁹ To minimise compensation for villagers’ housing and relocation and to ease the process of land acquisition, urban states tend to only acquire farmland and leave the ‘reserved housing plot (Zhaijidi)’ to village collectives.

Unfortunately, Huang et al. (2015a, p. 644) cited Sivam (2003) and Tsenkova (2009), and pointed out that those shacks are usually:

“built defying the minimum standards of housing regulations, and it is often characterised by insecurity of tenure and low standards of or lack of access to basic infrastructure and services...”

Notwithstanding their positive role in housing migrant workers, there has been pressure placed on *urban villages* by the local government of Beijing municipal by demolishing many shacks to reinforce urban renewal policy (COSCC 2014). The habitual residences of 40,718 households, on more than 6,794 hectare of shacks, were demolished in a single year 2017 (COBMG 2017; Geng 2017).

Beside shacks, one third of migrant workers in Beijing had accommodation provided by their employers, with a quarter living in brick dormitories built near factories and around nine percent residing in portable dormitories at construction sites. Dormitories provided by employers are usually cheap or free, but Huang et al. (2015a) point out that they often lack privacy due to their bunk design and therefore, discourage the formation of families. One quarter of migrant workers rented privately in urban commodity apartments. Huang et al. (2015a) ascertain that those apartments are usually built by developers according to government rules, controls, and regulations. They are relatively more expensive, so the majority of migrant workers cannot afford them (Huang et al. 2015a). To lower the cost of renting an apartment, many migrant workers are found to share a room or apartment with other individuals or families (Wang et al. 2010b).

In Beijing, among those respondents who reported ‘other’ accommodation, about three percent lived in non-habitable spaces, which were largely basements or storage rooms that were designed initially for storage and not suitable for human inhabitation. Those spaces are usually found to be an overcrowded warren of underground tunnels and cellars lacking windows and proper ventilation (Huang et al. 2015b). People who live in non-habitable spaces are named *rat tribes* (Yi Zu) by the public (Huang et al. 2015b; Yijie et al. 2015). The *Procedures of Beijing Municipality on the Administration of Safe Use of Civil Defence Projects and Ordinary Basements*, which was issued in July 2011, required that uninhabited basements in Beijing be banned from being rented, set up as hotels, kindergartens, or hospitals, and so forth (BMG 2011 Decree No. 236; Ma). Since 2015, according to Cao (2017), Beijing had sealed up 2,193 basement accommodation sites,

which accounted for about 90 percent of the total basement accommodation sites in Beijing (until 04/05/2017). Around 100,000 basement tenants were evicted (Cao 2017).

The line '*using housing to control population growth*' was written in the Overall Plan of Beijing City (2016-2035) (Beijing Planning and Land Resources Management Committee 2016). The elimination (or waning odds) of obtaining accommodation in shacks and basements resulted in a rise in housing costs for migrant workers and may lead to some migrant workers eventually leaving Beijing city.

The survey found that only six percent of migrant workers in Beijing owned the place where they lived, and the average self-reported value (at the time of survey) was 32,750 yuan per square metre. For those properties rented by migrant workers, the average rent per person per year in Beijing was 15,151 yuan in 2016, with an average living space of around 13 square metres, only about half of the properties were equipped with a kitchen and toilet.

Figure 5.4 indicates that the housing experiences of migrant workers in Jinzhou was another story, with about 38 percent of them living in brick dormitories which were provided by their employers, and none reported that they lived in construction-site portable-dorms, while around 36 percent lived in urban commodity apartments. Only about 17 percent lived in shacks, and no one reported living in non-habitable spaces. Among survey respondents in Jinzhou, about 79 percent replied that they owned the property in which they resided, with an average self-reported market price of 4,029 yuan per square metre. For those properties rented, the average rent per person per year was 6,818 yuan in 2016, with an average living space of about 32 square metres, and about 83 percent of the properties were equipped with a kitchen and toilet.

It appeared that the overall living conditions of migrant workers in Jinzhou surpassed their counterparts in Beijing given that over one third of respondents in Beijing lived in poor-quality shacks, compared to only 17 percent of those in Jinzhou. The average rent per person per year in Beijing was more than two times that in Jinzhou, while their living spaces were less than half of that of their counterparts residing in Jinzhou. The accommodation in which Jinzhou migrant workers lived was also more comfortable and better equipped compared to that in Beijing. Clearly, it was much cheaper to rent or purchase in Jinzhou, but in recent years most migrant workers still could not afford purchasing an apartment in Jinzhou city.

One older male migrant in Jinzhou stated:

I cannot even dream about purchasing an apartment in Jinzhou city. The apartments in this block (his work location) are worth 7000 or 8000 yuan per square metre. I am a doorkeeper and I am also in charge of cooking for the kindergarten kids, but the money I earn cannot keep up with the rise in housing prices in recent years (Interviewee J10 2017).

Therefore, even though the housing prices were cheaper in Jinzhou in comparison to Beijing, it was still very expensive for a migrant worker to purchase a property without help from other family members. Just like one young male migrant in Beijing stated:

I don't think there is a big difference between the housing price-to-income ratio in Beijing and that in a small city. Wherever you are, you cannot afford buying an apartment in the same place. This is true nationwide. What I will do is saving up while working in Beijing and then purchase an apartment in a smaller city. I wouldn't mind migrating to a smaller city, live a more relaxing life and earn less by then. (B12 2017)

A few interviewees, an older female sanitation worker who had purchased an apartment in one county-level city in Henan province through working in Beijing (interviewee B1 2017); two other male administrators, while they were employed in Beijing and living at a construction site, one had bought a property in Harbin city (the capital of Heilongjiang province), and the other in Shijiazhuang city (the capital of Hebei province) respectively (Interviewee B8 and B12 2017).

Commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou chose to work in the city but live in nearby hometown villages. By doing that, they were able to work in the city and maintain their linkages to their hometown villages. However, this type of accommodation was not an option for migrant workers who worked in inner Beijing urban areas since most of their hometowns were quite distant.

5.4.8 Perception of the utility of hukou conversion

Hukou has long been perceived to have an undisputable influence on migration intentions in China (Chan et al. 1999; Chan 2009). However, hukou was not a high-ranked reason

which had motivated respondents in Beijing or Jinzhou to migrate to their respective cities (section 5.3).

Zhang et al. (2012) argued that local urban hukou in large cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, were more valuable and costly than those in smaller cities and towns. The survey found that about 78 percent of survey respondents in Jinzhou and 72 percent in Beijing perceived that hukou benefits rose with the administrative ranking of cities. Among migrant workers in Beijing, the majority (81 percent) considered that urban Beijing hukou was more beneficial than their rural hukou registered in hometown villages, while only 12 percent considered urban Beijing hukou to be equivalent to their rural hukou in their hometown in terms of benefits, and seven percent perceived it to be more beneficial than urban hukou in Beijing. Over one third of survey participants (38 percent) in Jinzhou considered their rural hukou to be equivalent to urban hukou in that city, while only 36 percent of them thought Jinzhou urban hukou was more beneficial than their rural hukou. However, a quarter, a relatively higher proportion of migrant workers in Jinzhou compared to Beijing, perceived rural hukou to be even more beneficial than urban hukou. Migrant workers in Jinzhou considered it *'not worthy'* or *'useless'* to convert to Jinzhou urban hukou.

One middle-aged migrant factory manager, stated that

It is definitely not hard to convert my rural hukou to Jinzhou city. It is just not smart to lose my land to change for an urban hukou which does not make a big difference to your everyday life. Hukou used to play a role in children's education and in medical services, but now rural kids do not need to pay extra to enrol in city schools. Some subsidies are only applicable for rural students. My rural medical insurance even allows a higher reimbursement rate than the city residents. Why would I convert to urban? (Interviewee J1 2017)

By contrast, respondents in Beijing considered it *'irrelevant'* or *'impossible'* to convert to Beijing urban hukou. One female migrant who ran a migrant school in Beijing (Interviewee B5 2017), and one male migrant construction worker in his 50s (interviewee B10 2017) expressed considerable frustration about never being able to meet the hukou conversion standards in Beijing. The female principal of a migrant school in Beijing, who was a migrant herself, made a comment during the interview:

“They wanted to drive everybody (poor migrants) away from the inner-city area to make room for those rich people. Beijing belongs only to the rich. (Interviewee B5 2017)”

The lack of consideration of hukou when survey respondents chose to migrate to Beijing or to Jinzhou can be explained as follows: migrant workers did consider conversion to Beijing urban hukou as beneficial, however the high requirements for conducting such a conversion seemed unreachable; on the contrary, the requirements for hukou conversion to Jinzhou city were low, however migrant workers did not perceive it to be beneficial.

5.5 Openness to migrant workers

This study revealed that some migrant workers chose Beijing or Jinzhou as their destination because of their openness to migrant workers (Section 5.3). It has not yet been widely and empirically tested whether migrant workers experience a greater degree of social acceptance in smaller short-distance urban destinations than long-distance larger urban centres, or the other way around.

Some scholars have hypothesised that short-distance migration incorporates migrants more readily because it implies closer social, cultural and linguistic proximity between the migrants and the receiving society (Carrillo Garcia 2011). Other research (Luo 2015) indicates that the popular long-distance migration destinations are less judgemental to migrant workers because they are usually comprised largely of migrants. The public media even used the proportion of migrants as an indicator of the openness of cities (Bo Shi Cai Jing 2018). For example, migrants accounted for 37 percent of the total population of Beijing in 2017 (Xiao 2018), compared to less than five percent in Jinzhou city (JRDC 2017). However, a higher proportion of migrants in a population does not necessarily mean less discrimination against them.

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate their income status, social status as well as any discrimination that they may have experienced, on a scale between zero and five. Those who reported zero or one were coded as ‘low’, those who reported two or three as ‘medium’, and those who reported four or five as ‘high’. Table 5.8 shows the above indicators for survey respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou.

No significant differences were found between residing and commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou in terms of the above indicators even though commuting migrants had stated

that they had fewer social connections in the city. About 70 percent of migrant workers in Jinzhou considered their income to be ‘medium’, while around 29 percent considered their income to be ‘low’ in that city. In comparison, only 51 percent of migrant workers in Beijing considered their income to be ‘medium’, while 46 percent, thought their income was ‘low’. Few migrant workers, two percent in Jinzhou and three percent in Beijing, perceived that they earned a high income. In the perception of migrant workers, most of them in Jinzhou belonged to the middle-income class, while about half of them in Beijing classified themselves in the low-income group.

Table 5.8 Perceived income status, social status and discrimination of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou

	Income status		Social status		Discrimination against migrant workers	
	Beijing	Jinzhou	Beijing	Jinzhou	Beijing	Jinzhou
Low (%)	45.8	28.6	42.5	24.6	17.2	37.9
Medium (%)	51.2	69.5	51.3	67.5	38.5	52.7
High (%)	3.0	2.0	6.2	7.9	44.3	9.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

In line with income status, migrant workers in Jinzhou also showed relatively higher perceived social status compared to those in Beijing (Table 5.8). About 68 percent of respondents in Jinzhou considered their social status to be ‘medium’, while one quarter thought their social status was ‘low’. In comparison, a smaller proportion of migrant workers in Beijing (51 percent) considered their social status to be ‘medium’ and a bigger fraction of them (43 percent) thought that their social status was ‘low’. Only a very small share of migrant workers in Beijing (six percent) and Jinzhou (eight percent) perceived that their social status was high.

As indicated in Table 5.8, there also seemed to be more discrimination against migrant workers in Beijing than in Jinzhou. About 44 percent of respondents in Beijing thought discrimination against them was high, compared to only nine percent of their counterparts in Jinzhou. A high 38 percent of surveyed migrant workers in Jinzhou considered that discrimination was low, but only 17 percent in Beijing did so. Generally speaking, migrant workers in Jinzhou city, although they make up a smaller proportion of the

resident population, exhibited relatively higher income and social status, and experienced less discrimination than their counterparts in Beijing.

Of particular note, the impressions of survey participants about the relationship between the administrative rank of destination cities and discrimination experienced by migrants were mixed. The survey found that 71 percent of respondents in Jinzhou and 54 percent of those in Beijing thought that there was more discrimination against migrant workers in cities with a higher administrative rank. Only four percent of respondents in Jinzhou and about one fifth in Beijing thought the opposite. Besides, about a quarter of respondents in both cities thought that discrimination against migrant workers was not related to the administrative rank of cities.

5.6 An interpretation of ‘settlement’ from migrant workers

Most studies have treated settlement in the rural-urban migration context in China as residence in certain locations and corresponding hukou conversion (Tang et al. 2018). However, such explanations of settlement have been disputed for being too narrow, because the voice of migrant workers themselves were neglected (Connelly et al. 2011). This study hopes to extract key dimensions from the interviews to gauge the meaning of ‘settlement’ from the perspective of migrant workers.

The interviews established that the highest ranked aspect of ‘*settlement*’ was stable employment that provided sufficient income, which was proposed by nine out of 22 interviewees; while property purchase was mentioned by seven interviewees and ranked second; local hukou and social networks were emphasised by three interviewees respectively as the third component; marriage/family formation was also mentioned by two interviewees.

Internal migration in China is highly regulated by the hukou system, however, the survey found that hukou was not a significant factor which led or precluded migrant workers to migrate to either Beijing or Jinzhou. Interviewees of this study still considered hukou to be an important ‘later issue’ after they decided to settle, but they expressed mixed opinions about the relationship between hukou and migration, which will be explained later (Chapter Seven).

The survey found that employment opportunities and higher wages were identified as the two main reasons why migrant workers had migrated to Beijing and Jinzhou. Stable

employment which could provide sufficient income was emphasised by interviewees as the first-ranked and base component of ‘*settlement*’ for migrant workers. The interviewed migrant workers advocating this idea included both older and younger generations, both females and males, and both those residing in Beijing and Jinzhou. It was also found from the interviews that migrant workers usually linked employment and income to property purchases. Some argued that employment and income were more important than property purchases for them to ‘*settle*’.

For example, one better-educated migrant in Beijing, who had experienced several cities after finishing college in Henan province, argued:

“Employment and property purchases are the most important components of settlement. But I myself value employment more than housing. I think if you have a highly paid job, your career takes off, and you have many social networks in the destination societies, you count as settled down.” (Interviewee B4 2017)

Some others, however, emphasised that owning a property in the city of residence was the major component of ‘*settlement*’, both in Beijing and Jinzhou. Many interviewees linked the purchase of property to the concept of ‘having a home’ or being able (materially) to form a family.

As a 40 years old male in Jinzhou stated:

“There is an old Chinese saying ‘An Ju Le Ye’⁵⁰. ‘An’ means stable and worryless. ‘Ju’ refers to houses. ‘Le’ means enjoyable and satisfiable. ‘Ye’ refers to career and employment. Having a stable property is put before having a satisfied career in that saying. I can only devote myself to my career after I solve the accommodation problem, where I do not need to worry about where I will go back to after a full day of work. No matter where you go, however good your career is, it counts as floating unless you have your own property. My home is wherever my property is located.” (Interviewee J4 2017)

Except for employment, income, and property purchases, it is claimed by migrant workers on other grounds that ‘*settlement*’ was not simply a concept of material

⁵⁰ Written as ‘安居乐业’ in Chinese

dimensions (J1 B3 2017). Employment, income and house-purchase alone did not seem to be enough to explain the concept of settlement.

One young female migrant in Beijing stated that:

*Beijing is where I work for money, but my life is still in my rural hometown. Where I work can be detached from where I settle.
(Interviewee B3 2017)*

One young female migrant teacher who worked in a kindergarten in Jinzhou (Interviewee J7 2017) and a single female migrant who worked in the media industry in Beijing (Interviewee B3 2007) emphasised marriage or the willingness to form a family as an important component of settlement. Another genre of interviewees emphasised human interactions instead of the material side of settlement.

A young male administrative worker on a construction site stated:

“One thing I perceive as important in defining the concept of ‘settlement’ is forming your own stable circle of friends in the destination society, as in how many friends you have there. If you have that (friends and social networks), neither house nor hukou is going to be a problem.” (Interviewee B8 2017)

Although it was demonstrated that the quality of social networks for migrant workers in Beijing was not significantly different from those of their counterparts in Jinzhou, it is interesting that only interviewees from Beijing mentioned the importance of social networks. Since most migrant workers in Jinzhou came from nearby villages, they may not have broken their social ties in their hometown villages entirely, and it may also be easier for them to form new social ties given the similarity and closeness between origin and destination. However, migrant workers in Beijing have usually migrated long distances which made it harder for them to either maintain social ties with their hometown villages or form new ones in the destination societies.

All the above proposed components of settlement could be summarised as the yearning for stability and a secure life without worrying. Employment and income are necessary for migrant workers to achieve a sustainable economic life in destination cities so that they will not be forced to leave due to a lack of money. Purchasing a house enables them to be more stable so that they will not have to leave if they cannot afford the rent or the

landlord stops the lease. Forming stable social networks, getting married or reuniting family in destination cities also provides them with emotional support and helps them settle socially. Conducting hukou conversion to their current city of residence, or otherwise keeping their rural hukou, are both decisions made to improve the stability of their respective lives and those of their families.

‘Settlement’ from the perspective of migrant workers in the Chinese context appears not to be limited to residence or hukou conversion. It is multidimensional, whereby migrant workers get employed with sufficient income to purchase a property, have their own circle of friends, form families or bring families to the city where they reside. In other words, settlement is a stage after migration, in which migrant workers are generally satisfied with their new city of residence, and were intending to stay permanently and convert their hukou to that city. This study hypothesises that migrant workers may relocate if their current city of residence failed to satisfy their life aspirations, or they cannot achieve hukou conversion in cities like Beijing with strict hukou regulations.

5.7 Migrant worker satisfaction with Beijing and Jinzhou

Researchers have argued that the satisfaction of migrant workers with their current city of residence, impacts on their settlement intentions (Speare 1974; Bach et al. 1977; Lu 1998; De Jong et al. 2002; Bozek et al. 2012; Zenker et al. 2013). The survey asked respondents to report changes in their quality of life after migrating to Beijing and Jinzhou. Since commuting migrant workers in Jinzhou had not integrated into their destination city entirely, they were excluded from the analysis. It was found that half of (residing) migrant workers in Jinzhou (51 percent) reported that their quality of life had remained the same, compared to 35 percent in Beijing. Moreover, some 44 percent of respondents in Jinzhou thought their quality of life had improved compared to a higher 58 percent in Beijing. Only five percent of migrant workers in Jinzhou and seven percent in Beijing considered their quality of life had declined after migration. Overall, respondents in Beijing perceived that their quality of life had improved more significantly than those in Jinzhou.

Respondents were asked to rate their general level of satisfaction with their current city on a scale from zero (not satisfied) to five (satisfied). The average score rated by (residing) migrant workers in Jinzhou was 3.0 out of five, while in Beijing it was 2.6. In general, it appears that migrant workers in Jinzhou were more satisfied than their counterparts in

Beijing. In Jinzhou, no significant differences in satisfaction was found between those born before 1980 and the young ones born in 1980 or after. However, in general, females (3.2) appeared to be more satisfied than males (2.7). In Beijing, no significant differences in satisfaction were found between generations or between females and males.

Survey respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction level with several dimensions associated with their destination cities on a scale from zero (not satisfied) to five (satisfied). A score lower than 2.5 was coded as dissatisfied, otherwise satisfied. The results are shown in Table 5.9. Both respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou were dissatisfied with their wages, living costs, housing prices, and the lack of openness to migrant workers in their city of residence, with those in Beijing significantly less satisfied with housing prices and openness to migrant workers ($p < 0.1$).

The survey found that Jinzhou migrant workers were dissatisfied with medical services, while Beijing migrant workers also expressed dissatisfaction with their social networks, the benefits of Beijing local urban hukou and the requirements for hukou conversion. In comparison to Beijing, the relative advantages of Jinzhou city perceived by its migrant workers as a destination include its closeness to their hometown, better traffic, better social networks, more openness to migrant workers, smaller gap between benefits associated with local urban hukou and rural hukou, and easier to convert rural hukou to local urban hukou. In comparison to Jinzhou, the relative advantages of Beijing perceived by its migrant workers, were its infrastructure (excluding traffic) and the range of services provided, and its potential for their future development.

Table 5.9 Satisfaction level of residing migrant respondents with Beijing and Jinzhou by selected dimensions (mean score)

	Beijing	Jinzhou	Significance
Economic			
Wage	2.3	2.4	0.3737
Employment opportunities	2.8	2.8	0.8959
Living cost	2.4	2.4	0.8055
Housing price	2.0	2.4	0.0246
Distance to hometown			
	2.5	3.1	0.0000
Social networks			
	2.4	2.8	0.0046
City infrastructure			
Green land layout	3.5	2.7	0.0000
Cultural and recreational facilities and events	3.5	2.7	0.0000
Traffic	2.6	3.0	0.0074
City services			
Medical services	3.0	2.2	0.0000
Quality of education	3.2	2.8	0.0045
Social insurance schemes	2.9	2.8	0.4549
Openness to migrant workers			
	2.3	2.4	0.0000
Political-structural factors			
Hukou benefits	2.0	2.5	0.0006
Hukou conversion requirements	1.5	2.7	0.0000
Potential for future development	3.6	2.8	0.0000

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: Satisfaction level is rated on a scale from zero (not satisfied) to five (satisfied)

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter examined migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou, which provides possible explanations for their preferences for big and small cities. Migrant workers in Beijing, when compared to those in Jinzhou, were generally better educated, more experienced in urban employment, predominantly made up of males, and older than those in Jinzhou. The majority of them had been living in Beijing longer than those currently residing in Jinzhou.

The survey found that migrant workers in Beijing had more employment opportunities which were also more diversified, but while they enjoyed higher wages, they also had higher living costs. Migrant workers in Beijing and those in Jinzhou claimed that they

would like to live somewhere closer to their hometown if everything else stayed unchanged, however, they compromised on distance to find employment. Migrant workers in Beijing had better cover for employment-based insurances, while their counterparts in Jinzhou were better covered by insurances provided for rural-hukou holders. In general, migrant workers in Jinzhou had more comfortable accommodation at a much lower cost than their counterparts in Beijing. However, purchasing an apartment in Jinzhou city still seemed to be out of reach for average migrant workers. Conducting hukou conversion to Beijing was perceived to be more beneficial than doing so in Jinzhou. Of particular note, Jinzhou urban hukou was perceived to be less beneficial than rural hukou by more than half of the respondents.

‘Settlement’, in the perception of migrant workers was found not to be limited to residence or hukou conversion. It is multidimensional and relates to stable employment, income, residence, as well as the social and family life of migrant workers in their destination cities. More migrant workers claimed that their quality of life had improved after migrating to Beijing than was the case for those in Jinzhou. However, migrant workers who chose Jinzhou were more satisfied with their lives than those in Beijing. This paradox is likely to be a result of the sex structure of migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou, and the gendered social conventions for rural villagers. Migrant workers in Beijing were significantly more satisfied with its infrastructure and services, and its potential for their future development, while those in Jinzhou were happier with its closeness to their hometown, their social networks, the openness to migrant workers, traffic, and hukou regulations.

CHAPTER 6: MIGRATION INTENTIONS OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

6.1 Introduction

This study examines the preferences of migrant workers for big and small cities through their migration intentions. The discussion of migration intentions in China is more complicated than the western scenario due to the existence of the hukou system. This chapter seeks to examine future migration intentions of migrant workers who currently reside in the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou. It aims to identify the main factors which motivate their future migration and influence their selection of destinations between different administrative levels of cities, towns and villages. It seeks to establish the popularity of small cities and towns as migration destinations for migrant workers in the next five years. The next chapter will explore the relationship between their migration decisions and hukou arrangements.

This chapter presents the survey and interview findings relating to the intentions of respondents to migrate in the next five years. It begins by describing and categorising the migration intentions of survey respondents. Migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou are categorised as migrants or stayers based on whether they reported intentions to relocate again in the next five years. Those intending to migrate and provided specific destinations, are further categorised according to their destination choices, which are divided into rural and urban, with urban destinations disaggregated by administrative rank. The main factors which led to their choices are also discussed in relation to their demographic characteristics, socio-economic status, and satisfaction with their current city, as well as their migration destination aspirations. It should be noted that the migration intentions discussed here are secondary ones as migrant workers identified in this study had already migrated from their rural hometown to urban areas, and were defined as those working in urban areas whose hukou was still registered in rural villages.

6.2 Migration intentions in the next five years

Migration research has demonstrated that migration intentions influence migration behaviours (Gordon et al. 1995; Böheim et al. 2002). In China, migration intentions are usually treated as simple binary variables to stay or to leave in the studies of rural-urban migrant workers (Cai et al. 2008b; Yue et al. 2010; Fan 2011a; Wang et al. 2013; Hao et

al. 2015; Tang et al. 2015; Zang et al. 2015). Researchers have studied the differences in migration intentions between migrant workers, and have found that those in bigger cities had higher aspirations to settle than their counterparts in smaller cities and towns (Sun 2015; Tang et al. 2015). However, for migrant workers intending to move, those studies failed to investigate where they were intending to go, and also did not obtain their preferences for big or small cities. Earlier research (Butler 1970; Morrison 1972) have asserted that the questions of who moves and why they move should be treated separately from the question of where they move to. In fact, most migration studies have been carried out in line with such an assertion (Fafchamps et al. 2008; Tabor et al. 2015; Wang et al. 2015c).

Table 6.1 shows that 38.8 percent of respondents in Jinzhou intended to relocate in the next five years, compared to 46.4 percent in Beijing. The majority of those respondents provided a destination, with only 2.1 percent in Jinzhou and 3.1 percent in Beijing unable to do so. It meant that a higher proportion of respondents in Jinzhou compared to Beijing intended to stay.

Table 6. 1 Migration intentions of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou in the next five years

		Beijing (N=420)	Jinzhou (N=196)
Intended stayers (%)		53.6	61.2
Intended migrants (%)	With specified destinations (%)	43.3	36.7
	Without specified destinations (%)	3.1	2.1
Total (%)		100.0	100.0

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

A 2006 survey in Beijing reported that 47.1 percent of migrant workers in Beijing wished to stay (Hu 2007), which is slightly less than the 53.6 percent of surveyed migrant workers in this study intending to do so. It can be assumed that the enthusiasm of migrant workers to stay in Beijing has not been compromised significantly by the restrictions put on population growth and hukou conversion, which have been implemented as part of the New-Style Urbanisation policy.

For those who reported an intention to migrate in the next five years, and provided a specified choice of destination, their choices are categorised into rural and urban and by administrative rank as indicated in Table 6.2. It is important to note that cities with higher

administrative ranks are also those with larger populations and better economic conditions (Wei 2014; PRC-NBS 2016b; Ni 2016). This study examined the correlation between the administrative ranks and the population sizes of chosen migration destinations using Spearman's rank-order correlation test. It revealed that the administrative ranks are highly and positively correlated with the population sizes of the chosen destinations, with a correlation coefficient over 0.9 ($p < 0.01$). In other words, those migrant workers who intended to migrate to destinations with higher administrative ranks are also choosing destinations with larger populations. Therefore, this study uses the administrative rank to represent the population size of chosen migration destinations. Administrative ranks are employed here as the main dimension due to the fact that they represent the unequal distribution of population and resources among Chinese cities.

Table 6. 2 Choice of migration destination by respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou intending to move in the next five years

	Beijing	Jinzhou
<i>Total: Respondents intending to migrate by destinations (N)</i>	182	72
Rural and Urban		
Rural destinations (%)	20.3	9.7
Urban destinations (%)	79.7	90.3
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
<i>Total: Respondents intending to migrate to urban destinations in the next five years (N)</i>	145	65
Administrative ranks		
Official town and county-level city (%)	26.9	18.5
Prefecture-level city (%)	35.9	32.3
Vice-provincial-level city (%)	24.8	13.8
Municipality (%)	12.4	35.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: Respondents in Jinzhou include both residing and commuting migrant workers who intended to relocate in the next five years

In terms of rural and urban destinations, it was found that the vast majority of migrant workers intending to relocate, both in Jinzhou (90 percent) and Beijing (80 percent), were considering migrating to another urban destination. This finding shows that urban life was more attractive to migrant workers in comparison to returning to rural life. A slightly higher proportion of respondents in Jinzhou intended to continue residing in urban areas after leaving their current city of residence, in comparison to their counterparts in Beijing,

which may be due to their higher level of satisfaction living in Jinzhou. One fifth of respondents intending to relocate from Beijing were likely to select a rural destination compared to about one in ten in Jinzhou. In total, 73 out of the 207 respondents in Jinzhou were commuting migrant workers who kept a strong linkage with their hometown villages, however, only seven of them intended to return to rural life in the next five years.

Among urban destinations, surveyed migrant workers in Jinzhou preferred municipalities, though only slightly higher proportion than those who mentioned a prefecture-level city, while those in Beijing preferred prefecture-level cities and county-level cities and towns. It was interesting that prefecture-level cities were attractive to respondents relocating from both Beijing and Jinzhou, with about one third of respondents in both cities selecting them. Prefecture-level cities have the advantages of both small and large cities, and avoid some of their disadvantages. They are similar to county-level cities and towns in one way, and to municipalities in another, therefore, migrant workers from both Beijing and Jinzhou would find it relatively easy to adjust. It may also be because these cities can provide migrant workers with better employment opportunities and wages than county-level cities and towns, and have a greater openness to migrants than municipalities, which would make them attractive for migrant workers relocating from both big and small cities.

Among respondents who intended to relocate, about 81.5 percent in Jinzhou chose to move up the 'chain', while 73.1 percent in Beijing chose to move down. It implies that those migrant workers who chose to relocate might dislike some characteristics of their current city, which may also be present in other cities of the same administrative level, as a result, they appeared to be more likely to migrate to cities with a different administrative ranking. In further analysis of the choices of migration destination, this study focuses on municipalities, prefecture-level cities, and county-level cities and official towns.

6.3 Personal characteristics, satisfaction and migration intentions in the next five years

This section addresses the question of who intends to relocate and why. It discusses the migration intentions of survey respondents in the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou focusing mainly on their personal characteristics and their satisfaction with their current cities of

residence. As demonstrated earlier, the two cities are distinctive from each other, and migrant workers in each exhibit different characteristics.

The existing literature has indicated that the demographic characteristics and the socio-economic status of decision-makers significantly influences their choices to migrate again (Yue et al. 2010; Zhu et al. 2010; Connelly et al. 2011; Hu et al. 2011). Zhu et al. (2010) found that females who were young, single and better educated were more likely to settle down in their destination cities. Connelly et al. (2011) analysed the influence of age and marital status of migrants on their migration intentions. Hu et al. (2011) found that age influenced migration intentions with an inverse U-shaped pattern, and that highly educated and experienced migrant workers were more likely to settle permanently in their destination cities with a corresponding hukou registration. Yue et al. (2010) found that settlement intentions of migrant workers exhibited different patterns between generations.

Tang and Feng (2012) have argued that the characteristics of the city of residence are also most likely to influence migration intentions. They suggest that the strength of migration intentions vary among migrants living in different level cities mainly due to their unequal development. Moreover, Liao et al. (2019) argue that urban amenities influence the quality of life of migrant workers and their settlement intentions. This study focuses upon their subjective perceptions of the objective characteristics of their current city of residence, to explain their settlement intentions. One genre of place-marketing literature used the satisfaction level to represent the subjective perception of the characteristics of cities, and therefore, provided a subjective tool to measure the attraction of those cities to migrants. Many scholars highlighted dissatisfaction with current city of residence as a significant motive to migrate (Bach et al. 1977; Lu 1998; De Jong et al. 2002; Bozek et al. 2012). Dustmann et al. (2014) found that the degree of satisfaction with various local amenities (including schools, education systems, health care systems, air quality, and security) substantially affected relocation intentions. The existing literature related to city amenities, satisfaction, and migration intentions has tend to be related to other countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa (Liao et al. 2019).

Few studies in China have addressed the role of migrants' dissatisfaction with their current city of residence in motivating migration because migrant workers in China have long been seen as passive recipients of institutional arrangements (for example the '*deportation*' policies before 2003, and the stringent hukou regulations until today), and

their subjective initiatives in such decisions have been largely neglected. However, Chinese citizens are no longer obliged to reside in their hukou location, and they have gained more flexibility in relocating, especially after the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014. It is possible that their satisfaction with their city of residence affects their decision to either migrate again in the next five years or to stay. The analysis of migration intentions of survey respondents (Section 6.2) also indicated that migrant workers who intended to leave Beijing or Jinzhou were reluctant to relocate to a similar city, which may indicate a dissatisfaction with certain aspects of either the large or small cities in which they have lived.

Table 6.3 summarises the demographic, socio-economic and political characteristics of survey respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou, and their satisfaction with where they currently live. The two groups are further differentiated by their migration intentions in the next five years. Some indicators shown in Table 6.3 are explained as follows:

- 1) The income shown is an average number and it is self-reported for 2016.
- 2) The score of social networks is calculated by adding up the numbers of people in high positions known to respondents in their current cities.
- 3) The score of perceived social status is self-rated by respondents on a scale from zero to five, where a higher score indicates higher perceived social status in their city of residence.
- 4) The score of perceived income status is self-rated by respondents on a scale from zero to five, where a higher score indicates higher perceived income status in their city of residence.
- 5) The satisfaction level is also self-rated by respondents on a scale from zero to five, where a higher score indicates a higher level of satisfaction with their current city of residence.
- 6) The scores shown in the table, of social networks, perceived social status, perceived income status, and satisfaction level, are all mean rank scores.

Table 6.3 shows significant differences in personal characteristics and satisfaction levels between migrant workers intending to migrate and those intending to stay both in Beijing

and Jinzhou. Those intending to stay in Jinzhou, in comparison to those with intentions to migrate, were slightly older, with higher perceived social status, a higher proportion of females and married respondents ($p < 0.1$). Their educational levels and incomes were also shown to be slightly lower than those who intended to leave, although the differences were not statistically significant. Those intending to stay in Beijing also differed ($p < 0.1$) from those intending to migrant, including: a higher percentage of females, a higher percentage of respondents who finished college or higher levels of education, with relatively higher perceived income and social status. They are also shown to be relatively older, and more likely to be single, and had better social networks, compared to those intending to leave, although those differences were not statistically significant.

Table 6. 3 Characteristics of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou intending to migrate and those staying in next five years

	Migration intentions of migrant workers in Beijing			Migration intentions of Migrant workers in Jinzhou		
	Stayers (N =225)	Migrants (N =195)	Significance	Stayers (N=120)	Migrants (N =76)	Significance
Demographic factors						
Age (mean years)	37.7	36.6	0.2231	31.1	29.5	0.0896
Female (%)	47.1	29.7	0.0003	64.2	38.2	0.0003
Socio-economic & political status						
Junior high or lower (%)	43.0	48.2	0.2872	65.5	63.2	0.7398
Senior high (%)	33.9	36.4	0.5989	24.1	21.1	0.6211
College or higher (%)	23.1	15.4	0.0482	10.3	15.8	0.2670
Married (%)	80.4	84.6	0.2642	82.5	72.4	0.0930
Communist party member (%)	13.5	14.1	0.8788	23.9	16.9	0.3101
Income (mean yuan)	56,032.7	52,410.6	0.4101	30,422.7	30,611.3	0.9583
Score of social networks	14.9	4.3	0.1692	16.7	4.4	0.3917
Score of perceived income status	1.9	1.5	0.0002	2.1	1.9	0.2866
Score of perceived social status	2.1	1.5	0.0000	2.4	1.9	0.0036
Satisfaction level	2.9	2.2	0.0000	3.3	2.8	0.0088

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Of most importance, those migrants intending to stay in both Beijing and Jinzhou indicated significantly higher levels of satisfaction with their respective cities of residence in comparison to those intending to migrate. Thus, this study hypothesises that the satisfaction level with the current city, as well as the above-mentioned personal characteristics, will influence the future migration of migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou.

Surveyed migrant workers intending to leave Beijing in the next five years were likely to be young, single males who had poor social networks, and lower social and income status, and also had lower levels of education and earned a relatively low income, which may have contributed to their dissatisfaction. It is evident that they lacked the ability to make a living in Beijing due to their poor educational levels and low income status. They also appeared to be poorly integrated into Beijing according to their poor social networks. In comparison, those who planned to leave Jinzhou in the next five years were also likely to be young, single males, who had poor social networks, lower social and income status, and therefore dissatisfied with their life, but also who had higher levels of education and earned a relatively high income. It appeared that they were less attached to Jinzhou city and had the ability to make a living elsewhere to better themselves and achieve their life aspirations.

To gain a further perspective on the most salient factors affecting migration intentions in the two distinctive cities, binary logistic regression models were constructed with migration intentions as the dependent variables (1 = intend to migrate again in next five years; 0 = intend to stay in current city in next five years), and with personal characteristics and satisfaction levels as independent variables. When a binary dependent variable is modelled using logistic regression, it is assumed that the logit transformation of the independent variable has a linear relationship with the independent variables (STATA 2010). The numbers displayed following the independent variables under each model are Odds Ratios instead of coefficients, which is common in the interpretation of Logistic regression models. An Odds Ratio (OR) represents the odds that an outcome will occur given a particular exposure, compared to the odds of the outcome occurring in the absence of that exposure (Szumilas 2010). Factors differentiating the intention to migrate or not in the next five years are shown in Table 6.4, with one model including all respondents and two separate models for respondents in Beijing and for those in Jinzhou.

Table 6. 4 Binary logit regression results: migration intentions of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou in the next five years

	Intended migrants vs. intended stayers		
	Total Sample	Beijing	Jinzhou
	OR	OR	OR
Beijing (vs. Jinzhou)	0.68		
Demographic factors			
Age	0.95**	0.95**	0.95
Female (vs. male)	0.38***	0.41***	0.30***
Socio-economic and political status			
Senior high (vs. junior high or lower)	1.11	0.98	1.27
College or higher (vs. junior high or lower)	0.76	0.71	0.77
Married (vs. not married)	0.99	1.39	0.35
Communist party member (vs. not a member)	0.88	0.98	0.57
Income (1000 yuan)	1.00	1.00	0.99
Score of social networks	1.00	0.98	1.00
Score of perceived income status	0.92	0.87	1.17
Score of perceived social status	0.84	0.93	0.75
Satisfaction level			
Constant	50.91***	30.27***	152.93***
N	327	221	106
Prob > chi2	0.000	0.000	0.0104
Pseudo R2	0.1403	0.1601	0.1681
Log likelihood	-191.696	-125.452	-60.871

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: OR (Odds Ratio) = e^b

Significant at 0.1 (*), at 0.05 (**), at 0.01 (***)

As shown in the model for total respondents, although a higher percentage of respondents in Beijing intended to migrate again, they were not significantly more likely to migrate compared to those in Jinzhou after the demographic characteristics and satisfaction levels were controlled for. It is also demonstrated from the total model that younger respondents compared to older ones, males compared to females, are more likely to migrate. Females have been found in several other studies to show more resistance to relocation than males. For example, Tang et al. (2018) found that females were more likely to stay in cities compared to males based on a 2015 survey conducted in Nanjing and Suzhou in the southern part of Jiangsu Province. It was also found from interviews that females

compared to males were more likely to seek settlement than to be classified as ‘floating’ (Section 5.2.3). It was also shown that respondents who were dissatisfied with their city of residence were also more likely to migrate. It could be seen from the separate models for Jinzhou and Beijing cities, that satisfaction levels showed a more significant influence on migration intentions in Jinzhou than in Beijing, indicating that the subjective perceptions of migrant workers in Jinzhou played a bigger role in their migration decisions than in Beijing.

Educational levels, as well as perceived social and income status, were found to be significantly different between respondents intending to migrate and those intending to stay in Beijing, but had no significant influence on migration intentions after other demographic factors and satisfaction levels were controlled for. It is assumed that the association between educational levels of migrant workers in Beijing and their migration intentions was explained by their satisfaction with life in that city, as was the case with their income and social status. For example, migrant workers with lower education and therefore, lower income and social status, were generally less satisfied with their life in Beijing and more likely to migrate to achieve their aspirations for a better life somewhere else.

Marital status and perceived social status, which were shown to be significantly different between respondents intending to migrate and those intending to stay in Jinzhou, appeared to have no significant influence on migration intentions in the Jinzhou model, after other factors were controlled for in the regression. The association between their marital/social status with their migration intentions was likely due to their satisfaction with Jinzhou. Young, single migrant workers in Jinzhou with lower social status were generally less satisfied with their life in Jinzhou and more likely to migrate.

The decision to migrate in the next five years was found to be significantly influenced by the demographic characteristics of migrant workers and dissatisfaction with their current city of residence. However, the effect of their socio-economic or political status on their migration intentions was found to be indirect, and related to dissatisfaction with their current city. The regression result indicated that those migrant workers with relatively lower socio-economic status were not more likely to leave Beijing after other factors were controlled for. This implies that the settlement policies (point-based hukou system) in Beijing which favours the talented, well-educated and wealthy applicants (Zhang 2018),

may not directly inhibit the enthusiasm of other migrant workers who are less-educated or poor to stay in Beijing.

Dissatisfaction with the city of residence was identified in the above regression to have motivated migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou to migrate in the next five years. Table 6.5 shows that respondents who intended to leave Beijing compared to those who intended to stay had significantly lower levels of satisfaction with Beijing in every aspect (except for housing prices, with which both subgroups were dissatisfied) ($p < 0.1$). They were also significantly dissatisfied⁵¹ with their wages, living costs, and social networks, as well as the distance to their hometown villages, traffic congestion, social insurance schemes, level of openness to migrant workers, and the strict hukou regulations (satisfaction level < 2.5 ; $p < 0.1$).

Migrant workers who intended to leave Jinzhou in comparison to those intending to stay, were significantly more dissatisfied with their income and employment opportunities in Jinzhou, its various urban services (education, health, and social insurances), and also the hukou benefits available there (satisfaction level < 2.5 ; $p < 0.1$). Therefore, if Jinzhou city wants to retain its migrant workers, it will need to provide more employment opportunities with better paying jobs; to provide more social services including education for migrant children, medical services, and social insurance schemes.

Employment and income were found to be the two top reasons given by respondents for migrating to Jinzhou in the first place (Section 5.3). They were also mentioned by several interviewees in Jinzhou as major problems that needed to be improved to retain its population.

⁵¹ the score was below 2.5 and lower than the score given by those who intended with statistical significance

Table 6. 5 Satisfaction levels of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou intending to migrate and those staying in the next five years

Scores of Satisfaction level (mean; scale: zero to five)	Migration intentions of migrant workers in Beijing			Migration intentions of Migrant workers in Jinzhou		
	Stayers (N=225)	Migrants (N=195)	Significance	Stayers (N=120)	Migrants (N=76)	Significance
Economic factors						
Wage	2.53	1.98	0.0000	2.67	1.95	0.0001
Employment opportunities	2.95	2.51	0.0011	3.03	2.36	0.0001
Living cost	2.51	2.15	0.0394	2.42	2.15	0.2216
Housing price	2.11	1.89	0.2728	2.29	2.15	0.5722
Distance to hometown	2.73	2.16	0.0002	3.48	2.89	0.0084
Social networks	2.56	2.11	0.0013	3.11	2.53	0.0005
City infrastructure						
Green land layout	3.65	3.31	0.0110	2.94	2.53	0.0309
Cultural and recreational facilities and events	3.61	3.30	0.0304	2.80	2.58	0.2555
Traffic	2.80	2.38	0.0228	3.13	2.62	0.0099
City services						
Medical services	3.25	2.50	0.0000	2.70	2.08	0.0014
Quality of education	3.44	2.83	0.0002	3.12	2.44	0.0001
Social insurance schemes	3.25	2.47	0.0000	3.03	2.41	0.0007
Openness	2.58	1.99	0.0000	3.52	3.43	0.6264
Political-structural factors						
Hukou benefits	2.33	1.59	0.0000	2.70	2.27	0.0243
Hukou conversion requirements	1.79	1.13	0.0001	2.90	2.51	0.0338
Potential of my future development	3.73	3.36	0.0129	3.11	2.63	0.0105

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

One interviewee from Jinzhou, migrant factory manager aged in his 50s, emphasised that the lack of employment opportunities was the most obvious disadvantage of small cities and towns like Jinzhou. He stated:

“One primary aspect of small cities and towns which needs improvement is employment which provides high incomes...If the young generation could earn more in smaller urban centres, I think they would stop migrating to those big cities” (Interviewee J1 2017)

He also pointed out that:

“There are no significant differences in medical services provided to treat minor illnesses between bigger cities and Jinzhou city. It is sometimes even cheaper to treat minor illnesses in Jinzhou compared to bigger cities. But Jinzhou city could not deal with slightly more serious illnesses...Medical services are even worse in small towns and villages...those health centres only deal with emergencies and then send you to a higher level of hospital in bigger cities.” (Interviewee J1 2017)

Another middle-aged migrant worker in Jinzhou argued:

“If small cities hope to retain their population, they need to be allocated better education resources. The teachers in Jinzhou city protested last year because their wages were too low... the education in county-level cities is generally better than that in villages but still not good enough. (I worry about the quality of education when) one teacher was in charge of 70 or 80 children. The doctors and nurses here in Jinzhou city are rude and not skilled enough because they lack a formal complaint or assessment system. County-level cities will be very comfortable to live in if the education and medical services were improved.” (Interviewee J4 2017)

It was noted that, both in Beijing and Jinzhou, respondents who intended to migrate in the next five years were significantly less satisfied with the hukou regulations in respective cities, compared to those who intended to stay. However, those in Jinzhou were likely to be dissatisfied because the requirements for hukou conversion were set too low with few benefits; on the contrary, those in Beijing were dissatisfied because there were many benefits for hukou conversion but the requirements were set too high and unattainable for most of them.

6.4 Profiles of migrant workers with different intended migration destinations in Beijing and Jinzhou

This section provides a detailed profile of those migrant workers who intended to migrate in the next five years and gave preferred destinations. Respondents in Jinzhou and those in Beijing were analysed separately in this section.

6.4.1 Respondents intending to return to hometown villages or migrate to small cities or towns in the next five years

Table 6.6 details some selected characteristics of respondents in Beijing by their intended destinations in the next five years. It was found that prefecture-level cities, county-level cities and official towns, and rural hometown villages were the three top-ranked destinations for migrant workers intending to leave Beijing in the next five years. It is indicated in the table that the educational level, income, social networks, as well as their perceived social and income status, differs greatly between the respondents with different city preferences and those intending to return to rural villages.

Table 6. 6 Selected characteristics of respondents in Beijing by intended destination in the next five years

	Migrant workers in Beijing intending to relocate	Selected destinations		
		Rural villages	County-level cities and official town	Prefecture-level cities
N	195	37	39	52
Age (mean)	36.6	36.7	36.8	36.4
Female (%)	29.7	21.6	33.3	30.8
Junior high or lower (%)	48.2	48.6	51.3	48.1
Senior high (%)	36.4	43.2	35.9	36.5
College or higher (%)	15.4	8.1	12.8	15.4
Married (%)	84.6	91.9	100.0	78.8
Communist party member (%)	14.1	14.3	30.8	14.0
Income (mean yuan)	52,410.6	37193.9	56162.2	58802.0
Score of social networks	4.3	3.2	5.1	4.4
Score of perceived income status	1.5	1.1	1.7	1.5
Score of perceived social status	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.8

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

About one fifth of respondents⁵² intending to relocate from Beijing chose to return to rural villages in the next five years. They had the lowest perceived social and income status and earned the least annual income on average, which was only 37193.9 yuan, compared to 56162.2 yuan for those intending to migrate to county-level cities or towns, and 58802.0 yuan for those intending to migrate to prefecture-level cities. The percentage

⁵² Only refer to those who intended to relocate in the next five years and provided specific destination.

of females intending to go back to rural villages was also much lower in comparison to the representation of females going to cities. Among the 58 female respondents in Beijing intending to migrate in the next five years, only 14 percent chose to return to rural villages, compared to 22 percent who preferred to go to county-level cities, and 28 percent who intended to relocate to prefecture-level cities, with over one third selecting vice-provincial cities or municipalities.

Respondents in Beijing intending to return to rural villages also showed lower levels of education compared to the other two groups. Respondents who finished college or higher-level education made up 15.4 percent of those migrant workers intending to relocate to prefecture-level cities from Beijing, 12.8 percent of those intending to relocate to county-level cities or official towns, and only 8.1 percent of those intending to return to rural villages. Their social networks in Beijing were also poor, knowing only 3.2 persons in high positions on average, in comparison to 4.3 among all those in Beijing intending to relocate. It appeared that those respondents in Beijing intending to return to rural villages were likely to be males who had the lowest incomes, lowest social and income status, lowest educational attainment, and poorest social networks.

One fifth of surveyed migrant workers⁵³ intending to relocate from Beijing preferred to go to county-level cities or official towns in the next five years. It was interesting that they were all married and comprised disproportionately more communist party members. It appeared that communist party members in Beijing preferred county-level cities and official towns. A possible explanation is that they may be better respected there than in Beijing (Section 5.2.2). Those seeking county-level cities and towns generally had higher income, higher perceived income and social status, and better social networks, than those returning to villages. They earned an income of 56,162.2 yuan on average in 2016, while the average income of migrant workers in Beijing who intended to relocate was only 52,410.6 yuan. It can be assumed that this group of migrant workers had made enough money in Beijing for them to sustain a good life in smaller cities. They appear to have found it hard to integrate into the city of Beijing, and had already formed families (all married) and were looking to relocate to smaller cities to settle with the money which they had earned in Beijing.

⁵³ Only refer to those who intended to relocate in the next five years and provided specific destination.

A female migrant worker aged 30 years, who was employed as a clerk in an NGO, stated:

My experiences in big cities are the stepping-stone for me to live a better life in smaller cities. (Interviewee B4 2017)

About a quarter of respondents in Beijing⁵⁴ intending to relocate chose to go to prefecture-level cities, and they were generally better educated, and earned high incomes.

6.4.2 Respondents intending to migrate to municipalities from Jinzhou

Table 6.7 shows selected characteristics of migrant workers in Jinzhou by their intended destinations in the next five years, with municipalities, prefecture-level cities, and county-level cities and official towns ranked as the top three destinations (Section 6.2).

Table 6. 7 Selected characteristics of respondents in Jinzhou by intended destination in the next five years

	Total migrant workers in Jinzhou intending to relocate	Selected destinations		
		County-level cities and official towns	Prefecture-level cities	Municipalities
N	76	12	21	32
Age (mean)	29.5	31.0	28.3	30.1
Female (%)	38.2	50.0	52.4	28.1
Junior high or lower (%)	63.2	75.0	61.9	59.4
Senior high (%)	21.1	16.7	14.3	21.9
College or higher (%)	15.8	8.3	23.8	18.8
Married (%)	72.4	91.7	71.4	59.4
Communist party member (%)	16.9	11.1	11.8	26.9
Income (mean yuan)	30,611.3	30,181.8	33,177.8	29,877.4
Score of social networks	4.4	3.0	3.3	6.0
Score of perceived income status	1.9	1.9	2.2	1.8
Score of perceived social status	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.9

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

About 42 percent of surveyed migrant workers⁵⁵ intending to relocate from Jinzhou, the largest proportion intended to migrate to municipalities in the next five years. They were predominantly males, with a relatively low percentage married. Among the 47 male respondents in Jinzhou intending to relocate, almost half (49 percent) chose to go to

⁵⁴ Only refer to those who intended to relocate in the next five years and provided specific destination.

⁵⁵ Only refer to those who intended to relocate in the next five years and provided specific destination.

municipalities, compared to 21 percent who preferred prefecture-level cities, and 13 percent who preferred county-level cities, with 17 percent selecting other destinations. Among the 21 single respondents in Jinzhou intending to migrate, 62 percent chose to go to municipalities, compared to 29 percent who preferred prefecture-level cities, and five percent county-level cities, with four percent selecting other destinations.

On average, respondents intending to migrate to municipalities knew six people in high positions in Jinzhou, about twice the number known to those who intended to migrate either to prefecture-level cities or county-level cities or official towns. It appeared that single males who had good social networks in Jinzhou were most likely to migrate to municipalities in the next five years.

About 28 percent of respondents in Jinzhou⁵⁶ intending to relocate, chose to migrate to prefecture-level cities in the next five years. On average, this group of migrant workers were young and better educated who earned the highest incomes. These cities appeared to be a popular choice of migration destination among migrant workers both in Beijing and Jinzhou in the next five years. They seemed to be most attractive to those better educated migrant workers who earned higher incomes. This, again, may be due to the fact that prefecture-level cities have the advantages of both large and small cities, and not as many disadvantages.

6.5 Demographic characteristics, aspirations and choice of destination

This section seeks to answer the question of where the survey respondents intended to move in the next five years and why. It focuses upon migrant workers who indicated preferences for municipalities, prefecture-level cities, county-level cities and towns. Responses from migrant workers in Jinzhou and Beijing were combined for analysis here to ensure sufficient numbers of respondents. The discussion emphasises the association between demographic characteristics, the socio-economic and political status of intended migrants and their aspirations for respective destinations.

6.5.1 Characteristics of migrant workers by intended destinations

Literature has addressed settlement intentions of migrants across different levels of cities, and found that the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of those who

⁵⁶ Only refer to those who intended to relocate in the next five years and provided specific destination.

intended to settle vary significantly for different cities (Sun 2015; Tang et al. 2015). Sun (2015) discovered that migrants born in the 1970s showed stronger intentions to settle in big cities in comparison to older generations, however a similar trend was not found in medium or small cities. Tang et al. (2015) explored migrant settlement intentions with separate models for larger cities and smaller urban centres. He emphasised the influence of socio-demographic factors, and found that age, educational attainment and income were significant in the model for larger cities, but not significant for the general model. Therefore, this study hypothesises that the demographic characteristics, socio-economic and political status of respondents will influence their choices of destination if they relocate in the next five years.

Migration destinations are categorised as rural and urban, and urban destinations are disaggregated by administrative rank. The two most popular intended destinations for respondents in Jinzhou were municipalities and prefecture level cities, while in Beijing county-level cities or official towns, and prefecture-level cities were most popular (Section 6.2). Therefore, this section focuses on a comparison between county-level cities, prefecture-level cities, and municipalities.

Table 6.8 shows that respondents who chose urban destinations in comparison to those preferring rural destinations, were more likely to be young, female, single, better educated, with better social networks, higher income, and higher perceived income status and social status. They were predominantly respondents from Beijing and more likely to be communist party members. By contrast, those who intended to migrate to an alternative urban destination are more likely to be older, married males, who were less educated, earned low incomes, had poor social networks, whose social and income status was also low.

It was also found that respondents who intended to migrate to lower-level cities were likely to be older, female, married, and less educated, and those who intended to migrate to higher-level cities with better economic development, tended to be younger, with a lower percentages of females, and more likely to be well-educated respondents, as they generally could obtain more employment opportunities and higher wages, and better infrastructure and services there.

Table 6.8 Selected characteristics of respondents by intended destination in the next five years

	Rural	Urban	Administrative rank		
			official towns and county-level cities	prefecture-level cities	Metropolises
N	44	210	51	73	41
Beijing (%)	84.1	69.0	76.5	71.2	43.9
Demographic factors					
Age (mean years)	35.6	34.3	35.4	34.1	32.2
Female (%)	20.5	34.8	37.3	37.0	34.1
Socio-economic & political status					
Junior high or lower (%)	54.5	51.9	56.9	52.1	53.7
Senior high (%)	38.6	29.5	31.4	30.1	22.0
College or higher (%)	6.8	18.6	11.8	17.8	24.4
Married (%)	93.2	78.1	98.0	76.7	53.7
Communist party member (%)	12.1	16.5	25.7	13.3	15.6
Income (mean yuan)	36135.0	49019.7	50,208.3	51,917.9	38,597.4
Score of social networks	3.2	4.7	4.5	4.0	3.7
Score of perceived income status	1.2	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.7
Score of perceived social status	1.4	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.6

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: Scores of social networks, social status and income status have been introduced earlier in Section 6.3.

6.5.2 Destination aspirations of migrant workers

Willis (1974, p. 1) has pointed out:

“The genesis of migration lies in dissatisfaction with the contemporary environment. Disparity of opportunity provides the main motive force behind migration, whether this is to enjoy levels of living in terms of income or the physical or social environment.”

The survey found that migrant workers who were generally dissatisfied were more likely to migrate to an alternative location, and that those who intended to migrate in comparison to those who intended to stay, both in Beijing and Jinzhou, were less satisfied

with both the economic aspects (such as income and employment opportunities) and the amenities (such as social services and hukou benefits). Therefore, this study hypothesises that dissatisfied migrant workers in the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou will search for an alternative destination which best satisfies their aspirations for both economic and non-economic aspects. Such aspirations could be for economic opportunities, better amenities or simply living somewhere closer to their hometown.

To measure the destination aspirations of survey respondents, 16 specific aspects were selected (Section 3.7.1). It was necessary to get a smaller set of dimensions from the above aspects in order to enable further analysis, so they were synthesised into four main dimensions (using *exploratory factor analysis* method), as shown in Table 6.9.

Factor loadings (as indicated in Table 6.9) are the weights and correlations between each aspect and the synthesised dimension. The higher the load of an aspect for a synthesised dimension the more relevant it is in defining that dimension. Only loadings over 0.4 were presented in the table for simplicity. For example, the synthesised dimension '*infrastructure and services*' was mostly defined by aspects of 'social networks', 'green land layout', 'cultural and recreational facilities and events' and 'traffic', 'medical services', 'quality of education', and 'social insurance schemes'. Those four dimensions explain about 63 percent of the total variance of the original 16 aspects. The four synthesised dimensions are defined in accordance to the loadings of 16 aspects as below:

- 1) ***Infrastructure and services***: The aspiration for better infrastructure including green land, cultural and recreational facilities and events, and traffic, and for quality services including health, education and beneficial social insurance schemes;
- 2) ***Integration, affiliation and personal development***: The aspiration for maintaining the linkage with hometown and integrating into destination urban societies, and for better personal development;
- 3) ***Employment and income***: The aspiration for better employment and income;
- 4) ***Consumption of an urban lifestyle***: The aspiration for high consumption of goods and services, which implies high living costs and expensive housing.

Table 6. 9 Factor analysis of dimensions of destination aspirations

Aspects of destination aspirations	Scores of dimensions of destination aspirations			
	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4
	Infrastructure & services	Integration & affiliations	Employment & income	Consumption of an urban lifestyle
Wage			0.81	
Employment opportunities			0.84	
Living cost				0.75
Housing price				0.74
Distance to hometown		0.56		
Social networks	0.46	0.42	0.40	
Green land layout	0.64			
Cultural & recreational facilities & events	0.72			
Traffic	0.59			
Medical services	0.76			
Quality of education	0.68			
Social insurance schemes	0.69			
Openness to migrant workers		0.51		
Hukou benefits		0.81		
Hukou conversion requirements		0.85		
Potential of future development		0.56		
Percent of Total Variance	21.05	17.16	13.83	11.18

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: the item factor loading criteria is .40

Method is Principal-component factors

Rotation is orthogonal varimax (Kaiser off)

Based on the factor analysis, the scores for each synthesised dimension and for every respondent were predicted. Table 6.10 shows the comparison of scores on each dimension of destination aspirations between subgroups with different choices of migration destination.

Respondents who chose prefecture-level cities as their preferred destination showed the highest aspirations for urban infrastructure and services, and for integration, affiliation and personal development, compared to those who chose to return to rural villages, or those intending to migrate to municipalities, or county-level cities and towns. It was found that, in the perception of most migrant workers, the discrimination against them would rise with the increased administrative rank of the destination cities (Section 5.5). Therefore, although municipalities may have better infrastructure and services compared to prefecture-level cities in general, migrant workers may perceive that they would have

better access to urban infrastructure and services in prefecture-level cities. Living in prefecture-level cities also allows migrant workers to retain their linkages to hometown villages, and to better integrate into the destination society in comparison to living in municipalities, which also allow them to have more opportunities for personal development than in county-level cities or towns. This group of respondents also seemed to be relatively better educated and had higher incomes in their current city of residence (Section 6.4.2). This means that they had the ability to seek such aspirations in prefecture-level cities.

Table 6. 10 Synthesised destination aspiration dimensions of respondents by destination in the next five years

Aspirations	Rural	Urban	Significance	county-level cities or official towns	Prefecture-level cities	Municipalities
N	20	156		27	58	33
Infrastructure & services	-0.4	0.0	0.0979	-0.015	0.144	0.009
Integration, affiliation & personal development	-0.4	0.0	0.0543	-0.324	0.174	0.035
Employment & income	0.3	0.0	0.3910	-0.003	-0.063	-0.289
Consumption of an urban lifestyle	-0.3	0.0	0.3459	0.118	-0.010	0.271

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Respondents who chose municipalities showed the highest aspirations for the consumption of an urban lifestyle, compared to those who chose to return to rural villages, or those intending to migrate to prefecture-level, or county-level cities and towns. It was found that municipalities in comparison to all other potential destinations, could provide migrant workers with a more satisfying urban lifestyle, although they were exposed to high living costs and expensive housing (Section 5.4.3 and 5.4.7). This group of migrant workers were more likely to be single males who had high educational levels, however, had relatively low incomes and social status in their current city of residence (Section 6.4.2 and 6.5.1).

6.5.3 Factors influencing the choices of intended migration destinations

To extract the most salient factors which influence migrant workers to select either rural or urban destinations and the respective levels of cities, one binary logistic regression model and one multinomial logit model were constructed. The dependent variable of the

first model is a binary variable, which has two levels: urban and rural. The second model used the administrative ranks of selected destinations as the dependent variable. Demographic characteristics, socio-economic and political status, and the synthesised dimensions of destination aspirations were included in both the binary and the multinomial logit models as independent variables. This section focuses upon respondents' preferences for rural and urban destinations, and between three levels of cities.

Table 6.11 shows that in the binary logit model, respondents who had higher aspirations for the consumption of an urban lifestyle were more likely to choose an urban destination, instead of returning to rural villages. They also tended to have better social networks and higher incomes, which is consistent with their higher consumption patterns and their ability to pay for such a lifestyle.

No significant destination preference for rural or urban exists between migrant workers from Beijing and those from Jinzhou. However, they exhibited different preferences for cities with different administrative ranks. Instead of migrating to another city ranked the same as their current city of residence, respondents were more likely to choose one ranked differently. Respondents in Beijing were significantly more likely to select county-level cities and official towns, and prefecture-level cities, in comparison to municipalities. On the contrary, respondents in Jinzhou were significantly more likely to select municipalities over either county-level cities and official towns or prefecture-level cities. Interestingly, it appears that migrant workers in Jinzhou wanted to '*climb up the ladder*', while those in Beijing wanted to descend.

Respondents in Jinzhou imagined that their life in municipalities would be colourful and fun (Chapter Five), while those in Beijing had realised how hard it was to settle in municipalities, and therefore, wanted to relocate. It could also be because respondents who intended to relocate are those who were less satisfied with their current city of residence (Section 6.3), and thus hoped to migrate to another urban destination which was different from their current location to better meet their aspirations and improve their chances of a better life. It is also possible that most migrant workers never planned to settle in Beijing, as they only intended to experience the metropolitan lifestyle for a short time while they were young.

Table 6. 11 Binary and multinomial logit regression results: Choices of migration destinations in next five years

	Urban vs. rural	Prefecture vs. county/town	Municipality vs. county/town	Municipality vs. prefecture
	Coef.	Coef.	Coef.	Coef.
Beijing (vs. Jinzhou)	0.22	2.23	0.03**	0.01***
Demographic factors				
Age	1.00	0.90	0.90	1.00
Gender	3.00	0.20	0.27	1.35
Socio-economic & political factors				
Senior high (vs. junior high or lower)	0.25	0.61	9.97	14.88**
College or higher (vs. junior high or lower)	0.55	0.55	1.49	2.72
Married (vs. not married)	1.49	0.00	0.00	0.10*
Communist party member (vs. not a member)	1.22	0.09*	0.15	1.65
Income (1000 yuan)	1.04*	1.00	1.00	1.00
Score of social networks	1.22*	1.00	1.11	1.00
Score of income status	1.49	0.82	1.11	1.35
Score of social status	1.00	0.82	0.45	0.61*
Destination aspirations				
Infrastructure & services	1.49	2.23	2.23	1.00
Integration, affiliations & personal development	1.82	3.32**	2.46	0.74
Employment & income	0.50	1.22	0.50	0.41*
Consumption of an urban lifestyle	4.95***	0.61	1.82	3.00**
N	106		72.00	
LR chi2(18)	28.47		49.18	
Prob > chi2	0.02		0.02	
Pseudo R2	0.36		0.33	
Log likelihood	-25.22		-48.85	

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: OR (Odds Ratio) = e^b

Significant at 0.1 (*), at 0.05 (**), at 0.01 (***)

The Odds Ratio of constants were not shown for simplicity

Demographic factors (including age and sex) were found to be insignificant in both models. However, the socio-economic and political status appeared to significantly affect the choice between rural and urban destinations, and also between cities with different administrative ranks.

Married respondents in comparison to single ones were found to be more likely to choose prefecture-level cities over municipalities. Respondents with higher educational attainment also preferred municipalities in comparison to prefecture-level cities. This echoes the ‘talent migration’ policies, in which educational attainment is key to qualifying as ‘talents’. Municipalities are by far the cities which are most likely to provide the most attractive terms to talented migrants, and are shown as such in the multinomial logit model to be espousing talents. It reveals that even though policies were not overly effective in driving the low-end migrant workers away from metropolitan cities such as Beijing, they did draw talented migrant workers who would otherwise go elsewhere. Besides, high-technology and most advanced industries usually concentrate in municipalities, which provide more employment opportunities in a wide range of jobs for migrant workers with relatively high educational attainment.

For example, a young female college graduate stated:

Beijing has got different industries from county-level cities. I majored in media and in film and video production. It is not possible to find a job matching my major in county-level cities. The industries in Beijing are comprehensive and complete. They can provide employment opportunities for individuals in about all majors. (Interviewee B3, 2017)

It appeared that respondents with high social status preferred to go to prefecture-level cities when compared to municipalities. It should be noted that as a disadvantaged group in urban societies in general, those migrant workers with higher perceived social status are not comparable to the local elites in municipalities. It was shown in the multinomial logit model that the respondents who chose to go to prefecture-level cities were more likely to be from Beijing and had relatively high perceived social status. By choosing prefecture-level cities, which are slightly less competitive than Beijing, they may be able to sustain their social status and continue to enjoy similar urban lifestyles.

The communist party members among respondents intended to go to county-level cities or towns when compared to prefecture-level cities. Communist party members are commonly found in larger cities, however, they are scarce in smaller urban centres. They are also more likely to be better respected in smaller urban centres than larger ones (Section 5.2.2). Therefore, migrant workers who are communist party members may gain

advantages to survive and thrive in smaller urban centres, which will be lost if they choose to go to higher-level cities.

The three levels of cities exhibited different attractions to migrant workers. Connelly et al. (2011) argue that costs and consumption opportunities were important factors that both encourage and discourage potential settlement in Chinese cities. Municipalities in comparison to prefecture-level cities, are more likely to be chosen by those respondents who appear to enjoy the consumption of an urban lifestyle and do not mind high living costs associated with their patterns of consumption. However, it can be assumed that this group of migrant workers may not want to settle permanently in municipalities, and that many only go there temporarily for the experience. They were also more likely to be young, single, males relocating from Jinzhou, who have lower aspirations for employment and income compared to those who chose prefecture-level cities. Fan (2008) found that males compared to females were less bounded by family responsibilities, and therefore, they may be granted more flexibility in their choices of migration destinations, especially when young and single. However, Fan (2008) argued that females were less mobile and tended to only migrate for a short distance so that they still could take care of their families.

Some migrant workers in small cities who hoped to go to big cities, were simply drawn to their urban lifestyle, but did not consider the affordability of such a lifestyle, because they did not consider sustaining their lives there. In a way, this group of migrant workers were more like ‘tourists’ instead of ‘settlers’, who were only seeking a change in lifestyle for a short period before settling down with a family. It is expected that they would probably migrate again once they could not afford life in municipalities or they had more family responsibilities.

A young male factory worker in Jinzhou stated:

“I do desire to go to big cities, but just for the experience, because I am still young, my parents are not too old yet, so there is less holding me back. But I do not think I will succeed in those cities. it requires a lot to make a living there. I will probably think more realistically when my parents become older and need my care. I will have to come back then.” (Interviewee J3 2017)

Prefecture-level cities in comparison to municipalities, are more attractive to those respondents who emphasise employment opportunities and income. They tend to be migrant workers intending to relocate from Beijing, who were relatively less educated, married, but with higher social status. They probably found it hard to sustain their social status in Beijing due to their lower educational attainment and hoped to relocate to prefecture-level cities to find higher-paid jobs to support their family.

Prefecture-level cities in comparison to county-level cities, tended to be more attractive to those respondents who had higher aspirations for integrating into urban life, for maintaining their affiliation to rural hometowns and for personal development, and those who cared more about their future development.

For migrant workers, small cities and towns are the type of destinations which allow them to stay in contact with their relatives and friends in their rural hometowns. However, their development in those cities is also limited and prefecture-level cities, as destinations with a slightly higher administrative rank, are more likely to provide them with a better chance of personal development, without significantly compromising their affiliations with their hometown villages.

For migrant workers as a group, their preferences of migration destination are a trade-off between enjoyment, integration, affiliations and personal development, employment and income, instead of a sole pursuit of one aspiration. County-level cities appear to have no advantage in meeting any of the four dimensions of aspirations in comparison to either prefecture-level cities or municipalities and therefore, fail to attract more advantaged migrant workers.

Interestingly, the aspirations for infrastructure and services are shown to be not significant in the multinomial logit model, revealing that the unequal development of infrastructure and services between these differently ranked cities did not significantly influence the destination choices of migrant workers. This may be because the infrastructure and services which migrant workers obtain without converting to local urban hukou are not that different across cities, although the infrastructure and services which the urban locals enjoy could be quite different. Migrant workers in big cities seem to only have access to limited infrastructure and services (Chapter Four and Five), which may not be superior to those which they could access in smaller cities.

6.6 Small cities and towns as migration destinations in the next five years

It can be concluded from the findings above that small cities and towns are not an attractive destination for migrant workers, especially not for those more advantaged ones who had higher educational attainment, better social networks, and could attain higher incomes. On the contrary, small cities and towns seemed more like a '*sanctuary*' for those relatively disadvantaged migrant workers intending to relocate from bigger cities. Although some interviewees believed that small cities and towns had improved greatly since the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014, their main disadvantages appeared to be unchanged (until 2017).

The lack of employment opportunities which would provide better paid jobs were the most obvious disadvantage of small cities and towns. The survey found that employment and wages were two highly ranked reasons which motivated respondents to migrate to Beijing and Jinzhou (Section 5.3). However, in regard to migration intentions, dissatisfaction with employment opportunities and income in Jinzhou appeared to be a significant reason for respondents intending to move away from Jinzhou (Section 6.3). It was interesting that employment and better income were identified as the main influential factors for migrant workers in considering various cities to relocate in the next five years (Section 6.5). Medical services and education were also mentioned by interviewees in Jinzhou as aspects to be improved to retain the population in small cities and towns (Section 6.3).

Small cities and towns were seen to lack the ability to create jobs and provide high wages. In fact, this echoes the reasons for policy change in China in the late 1990s, when the Chinese government changed its emphasis on development away from small towns to bigger cities. Researchers and policy makers disputed the ability of smaller urban centres to boost local industry, trade, job creation and tax revenue (Carrillo Garcia 2011).

The current hierarchical urban system limits the ability of small cities and towns to create employment opportunities, to provide high wages, or to develop their infrastructure and services. In China, the administrative rank of cities not only reflects political/administrative power, but is also important in the distribution of resources (especially fiscal resources) and chances for local development (Chan 2010a; Wei 2014).

Wei (2014) points out that China proposed to move financial rights upward and move obligations downward in the process of financial reform of recent years. He claims that the unequal structure has made county-level cities and official towns responsible for a whole range of public affairs, but were only granted limited administrative power and financial rights. Therefore, small cities and towns cannot provide adequate services or develop facilities to attract migrant workers with higher educational attainment, better social networks or those who have been earning high wages in bigger cities. To ameliorate the problems, there must be systematic changes within the hierarchical urban system, which has limited the development of county-level cities and towns for some time.

Although the New-style Urbanisation policy has been proposed to '*stimulate small towns in a focused manner*' (SCC 2014a Chapter Twelve), such stimulation has seemed to be mainly focusing on the rather '*non-core matters*' such as afforestation, improvement of the natural and built environment.

A migrant manager in his 50s who worked in a factory in Jinzhou, stated:

"...the afforestation in Jinzhou city has improved greatly in the last a few years..." (Interviewee J1 2017)

Another young male factory worker added:

"...The roads have been improved so that Jinzhou now has much better traffic than some bigger cities...The natural and built environment has also been improved." (Interviewee J3 2017)

There appears to have been a clear detachment between what migrant workers consider to be most important to retain the advantaged migrants (employment, income, medical services and education), and what have been improved in smaller cities and towns like Jinzhou (afforestation, improvement of natural and built environment) since the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014. As a result, small cities and towns are still not a preferred migration destination for migrant workers in China intending to relocate in the future, especially not for those who have higher educational attainment and seek better paid jobs.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the migration intentions of respondents from the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou in the next five years to understand their preferences for big or small cities. It was found that more than half of the respondents in Beijing (53.6 percent) and Jinzhou (61.2 percent) intended to stay. The decisions to relocate are influenced by the characteristics of migrant workers, and their perceived quality of life within their cities of residence. Males compared to females, younger respondents versus older ones were more likely to migrate in the next five years. Those respondents who were less satisfied with their current city of residence were also more likely to relocate.

The choice of migration destination appears to be determined by an evaluation of where they can best use resources to achieve their aspirations, improve their social status and boost the quality of their life. Only 20 percent of respondents intending to relocate from Beijing, and ten percent from Jinzhou, chose to return to rural villages in the next five years. Urban destinations generally were found to be more attractive to migrant workers with higher incomes and better social networks, while prefecture-level cities, municipalities, county-level cities and towns were found to be the main preferred destinations.

Among respondents in Beijing intending to relocate to an alternative urban destination, 35.9 percent chose prefecture-level cities, and 26.9 percent chose county-level cities or official towns, compared to 12.4 percent choosing municipalities. Among respondents in Jinzhou intending to relocate to an alternative urban destination, 35.4 percent chose municipalities, and 32.3 percent chose prefecture-level cities, with 18.5 percent choosing county-level cities or official towns. Prefecture-level cities seemed to be popular both for advantaged migrant workers who intended to relocate from Beijing, and also for those who intended to leave Jinzhou in the next five years. Migrant workers who seek an urban lifestyle with higher levels of consumption are more likely to migrate to municipalities. Small cities and towns are not preferred by advantaged migrant workers with high educational attainment and incomes, mainly because they lack the ability to create jobs, provide high incomes or develop their infrastructure and services. The disadvantages of small cities and towns for attracting migrant workers lie in the hierarchical urban system, which have limited resources, especially financial resources allocated to them.

CHAPTER 7: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUKOU AND MIGRATION INTENTIONS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

7.1 Introduction

This study aimed to understand the role of hukou in shaping migrants' preference for big and small cities. In the New-Style Urbanisation era, migrant workers have been granted more flexibility in migration choices after several rounds of hukou reforms. This chapter, based on the survey and interview findings, seeks to examine the future hukou arrangements of respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou, and compare their intentions to convert hukou in line with their migration decisions.

Migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou were categorised by whether they reported an intention to convert their hukou from rural to urban to match their current cities of residence in the next five years. Those respondents who were considering other locations to register their hukou were further categorised according to their choice of location. These locations were first divided into rural (retaining rural hukou) and urban (converting to urban hukou in an alternative city or town), with a further disaggregation according to their administrative rank. Selected demographic characteristics of migrant workers, their socio-economic and political status, their satisfaction with their current city of residence and hukou location aspirations, were emphasised in the analysis and discussion which follows.

7.2 Hukou conversion intentions

Before the hukou reforms, one's hukou location was usually the same as his or her actual location. Therefore, migration usually involved a process of one's hukou conversion, as migrating without hukou conversion was deemed illegal (before 2003). However, several rounds of hukou reforms have now made it possible for Chinese citizens to live and work outside their hukou locations legally, although many cannot enjoy the same entitlements as the local urban hukou residents. Researchers (Wang et al. 2006; Cai et al. 2008a) have argued that the settlement decisions of migrant workers need to be understood in the context of the Chinese social and transitional context and in relation to institutional constraints. Tang et al. (2018) suggest that for rural migrant workers in China, the intention to settle in a city inherently implies two separate decisions: (1) to obtain a local urban hukou in that city and (2) to reside in the city permanently. They point out that the

two decisions do not necessarily conform with each other, and argue that the influence of hukou on migration decisions has diminished somewhat, and that urban hukou is no longer considered to be superior to rural hukou (Tang et al. 2018). Some others suggest that the attractiveness of urban hukou varies across Chinese cities of different tiers (Chen et al. 2016a), and yet these studies have not addressed the situation after the implementation of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014. Thus, it is necessary to research the hukou conversion intentions when explaining migration intentions in this new policy era of New-Style Urbanisation.

On the basis of the survey data, Table 7.1 shows the distribution of respondents with and without hukou conversion intentions to their current city of residence, and for those preferring to register their hukou in an alternative location. Only about one fifth of respondents in Beijing and 17 percent in Jinzhou intended to convert their rural hukou to their respective cities of residence, with 67 percent in Beijing and 61 percent in Jinzhou providing a specific alternative location, while 13 percent of respondents in Beijing and 22 percent in Jinzhou failed to nominate a location.

Table 7. 1 Hukou conversion intentions of respondents to match current cities of residence in the next five years

		Beijing (N=436)	Jinzhou (N=207)
Hukou conversion intentions to current cities (%)		20.4	16.9
No hukou conversion intentions to current cities	With specific locations intended for hukou registration (%)	66.6	60.8
	Without specific locations intended for hukou conversion (%)	13.1	22.2
Total (%)		100.0	100.0

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Chen et al. (2016a) found that migrant workers in larger cities had stronger intentions for hukou conversion in comparison to their counterparts in small cities. The survey also found that a relatively higher percentage of migrant workers in Beijing intended to convert their hukou to match their current city of residence than in Jinzhou, a much smaller city. Given that Beijing has top-level welfare benefits attached to its urban hukou, it was expected to be even higher. It appeared that their lack of enthusiasm for obtaining urban hukou in Beijing was due to the strict requirements operating there for hukou conversion.

A female interviewee who had lived in Beijing for almost 30 years without local urban hukou and had been longing to get it, stated:

“I am in my 50s now, which may have already exceeded the age limits for point-based hukou conversion. I have always wanted to convert my hukou to Beijing and become a ‘true citizen’ of the capital but have not succeeded in almost last 20 years.....I do not think I will succeed in the next five years either.” (Interviewee B5 2017)

This study found that a considerable proportion of those migrant workers who did not plan to obtain urban hukou in their cities of residence hoped to convert hukou in other urban locations. Table 7.2 shows that half of the respondents from Jinzhou and two thirds from Beijing intended to convert their hukou to an alternative urban location. Alternatively, half from Jinzhou and one third from Beijing claimed that they intended to retain their rural hukou. Overall respondents from Beijing exhibited stronger intentions to convert their hukou from rural to urban in comparison to their counterparts in Jinzhou.

It is interesting that a considerable proportion of migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou chose to retain their rural hukou. Studies have found that the retention of rural landholding was a key deterrent for migrant workers obtaining urban hukou to match their current cities of residence (Mullan et al. 2011; Hao et al. 2015; Xie et al. 2016; Tang et al. 2018).

As a young male migrant aged 28 years from Jinzhou stated:

I do not want to convert my hukou from rural to urban, because I do not want to give up my rural land. (Interviewee J2, 2017)

Table 7.2 shows that county-level cities or official towns, among all urban locations, were selected by the largest number of surveyed migrant workers to convert their hukou. However, it was found that the popularity of urban locations for hukou conversion decreased with increased administrative rank. Among those migrant workers who sought to convert their hukou to an alternative urban location, only 11 percent in Beijing and eight percent in Jinzhou chose municipalities, and a low percentage favoured vice-provincial cities (17 percent in Beijing and 11 percent in Jinzhou), in comparison, about 37 percent in Beijing and 44 percent in Jinzhou selected official towns or county-level cities, and about one third in Beijing and Jinzhou chose prefecture-level cities.

Table 7. 2 Hukou conversion intentions of respondents to alternative locations by the next five years

	Beijing	Jinzhou
<i>Total: Respondents reported no intention to convert to current cities of residence but provided preferable locations for hukou registration (N)</i>	290	126
Rural and Urban		
Retain hukou in rural locations (%)	34.1	50.0
Obtain urban hukou in alternative locations (%)	65.9	50.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0
<i>Total: Respondents reported intentions to convert their hukou to urban in alternative cities or towns (N)</i>	191	63
Administrative Ranks		
Official town and county-level city (%)	36.6	44.4
Prefecture-level city (%)	35.1	36.5
Vice-provincial-level city (%)	17.3	11.1
Municipality (%)	11.0	7.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

The strength of hukou conversion intentions echo the strict regulations of hukou conversion across different levels of cities as detailed in the New-Style Urbanisation policies, it appeared that the stricter the hukou conversion requirements the weaker the hukou conversion intentions. For the convenience of analysis, the potential urban locations are roughly categorised into three groups as county-level cities or official towns, prefecture-level cities, and vice-provincial or higher-level cities.

7.3 Personal characteristics, satisfaction and hukou conversion intentions

The hukou aspect of settlement intentions have been less studied than intentions about relocating. Little research has focused on the influence of the satisfaction levels of migrant workers with their current city of residence and their hukou conversion intentions. The survey found that levels of satisfaction in both Beijing and Jinzhou affected the relocation intentions of migrant workers in the next five years (Section 6.3). Tao et al. (2015a) has ascertained that studies analysing hukou conversion intentions usually only emphasise the institutional constraints and neglect the fact that migrant workers were enabling/active agents instead of passive recipients. However, it is possible that qualified migrant applicants may not apply for hukou conversion if they were dissatisfied with

their current city. This section examines the influence of satisfaction with their city of residence on hukou conversion decisions of migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou.

For respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou, Table 7.3 presents a comparison of key demographic characteristics, selected socio-economic and political status, and includes satisfaction levels for those with intentions to convert hukou to current locations and those with no intentions. No significant differences in demographic characteristics, socio-economic or political status, or satisfaction levels were found between the two sub-groups in Jinzhou. However, it was found to be significantly different between those considering converting their hukou and those not doing so in Beijing. Those intending to convert their hukou from rural to urban in Beijing had significantly higher educational attainment, better social networks, and higher social and income status, in comparison to those not intending to do so ($p < 0.1$). They were also more likely to be single and more satisfied with life in Beijing ($p < 0.1$).

According to the New-style Urbanisation policies, there are almost no existing barriers for migrant workers in Jinzhou to conduct hukou conversion there. One is eligible for hukou conversion if they or their family members reside or are engaged in stable employment (SPG 2015). Although it was simple and easy to convert a rural hukou to urban in Jinzhou city, there were no apparent benefits to do so. The survey found that the majority of migrant workers in Jinzhou considered the urban hukou to be equivalent or inferior to their rural hukou (Section 5.4.8). The survey findings suggest that the demographic, socio-economic and political characteristics of migrant workers do not influence their decisions about hukou conversion when it is perceived to have no benefits.

Table 7. 3 Characteristics of respondents with and without hukou conversion intentions to current city in the next five years

	Beijing:			Jinzhou:		
	No	Yes	Significance	No	Yes	Significance
N	89	347		35	172	
Demographic factors						
Age (mean years)	37.6	36.0	0.1426	30.8	28.9	0.1059
Female (%)	37.8	43.8	0.2961	54.7	57.1	0.7883
Social-economic & political status						
Junior high or lower (%)	49.4	27.9	0.0003	64.1	65.7	0.8545
Senior high (%)	34.7	39.5	0.4016	24.0	20.0	0.617
College or higher (%)	15.9	32.6	0.0004	12.0	14.3	0.7077
Married (%)	84.4	74.2	0.0233	77.9	74.3	0.643
Communist party member (%)	13.2	16.4	0.484	23.1	14.3	0.3076
Income (mean yuan)	52416.9	59268.7	0.1914	30901.9	27409.7	0.443
Score of social networks (mean)	4.7	27.8	0.0077	13.2	2.7	0.5598
Score of perceived income status (mean)	1.6	1.9	0.0414	2.0	2.0	0.9813
Score of perceived social status (mean)	1.7	2.2	0.003	2.2	2.3	0.6526
Satisfaction level	2.5	3.0	0.0001	3.1	3.0	0.7347

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: The income was self-reported for year 2016; the score of social networks was calculated by adding up the numbers of people in high positions which respondents know in their current cities; the score of perceived social status was self-rated by respondents on a scale from zero to five, with a higher score indicating a higher perceived social status in the city of residence; the score of perceived income status was self-rated by respondents on a scale from zero to five, with a higher score indicating a higher perceived income status in the city of residence; the satisfaction level was also self-rated by respondents on a scale from zero to five, with a higher score indicating higher level of satisfaction with the city of residence. The scores relating to social networks, perceived social status, perceived income status, and satisfaction level are mean rank scores.

No significant differences were found in the survey between those who had school-aged children and those who did not, in relation to their hukou conversion intentions in Jinzhou, however, in the interview, a male migrant aged 28 years in Jinzhou said that by having school-aged children it was necessary to obtain urban hukou:

I do not want to convert my hukou from rural to urban...If there is anything that will change my mind, it is probably the education of my

children. Obtaining an urban hukou is still more convenient for kids to take education in Jinzhou city. (Interviewee J2 2017)

Another male migrant interviewee aged in his 50s stated:

I do not want to convert my hukou to Jinzhou city. It is of no use to me. Obtaining urban hukou to Jinzhou city is only useful for making it easier for my kids to attend schools (in Jinzhou city in the stage of compulsory education). But my kids have already entered high schools (which does not belong to the compulsory education in China). (Interviewee J1 2017)

It appeared that the only advantage that Jinzhou urban hukou had over rural hukou was the convenience for migrant children to undertake urban education. This is consistent with the findings of Chen et al. (2016a), who argued that children's education was the main driving force for rural-urban hukou conversion. This was not found to be the case for Beijing. Some socio-economic factors were shown to be more influential for those converting hukou to Beijing, as hukou conversion was perceived to have many advantages. Respondents with intentions to convert their rural hukou to urban in Beijing significantly differed from those without such intentions. They were more likely to be single, well-educated, with better social networks, as well as higher income status and social status, in comparison to those without hukou conversion intentions. They were also significantly more satisfied with Beijing in comparison to those who did not intend to convert their hukou.

Respondents with college or higher levels of education made up about one third of those respondents with hukou conversion intentions to Beijing city, and only about 16 percent of those without any intention to do so. Those respondents with intentions to convert their hukou to Beijing on average knew 28 persons in high positions there, while those without such intentions only knew about five persons in high positions.

The results indicate that only those migrant workers who were relatively better educated, with better social networks, and exhibited higher income and social status intended to convert their rural hukou to urban in Beijing, even though urban hukou in Beijing was perceived by migrant workers in general as one of the most beneficial types of urban hukou in China. This tendency is in line with the highly selective hukou conversion requirements in Beijing. It indicates that these requirements may deter those migrant

workers who were less educated, who lacked social networks, or who had lower social and income status, from even considering hukou conversion. However, it remains unknown whether even the relatively advantaged migrant workers can obtain urban hukou because Beijing has the right to adjust its quota and draw only a small portion from all qualified applicants for hukou conversion through its point-based hukou system. For example, with the annual quota set at 6000 in Beijing for 2018, only less than five percent of applicants were granted the chance of hukou conversion.

The decision of migrant workers in Beijing to convert to urban hukou depends not only on the selective requirements of hukou conversion, but also is dependent upon their satisfaction with life in Beijing. The survey results indicated that migrant workers in Beijing were probably only willing to convert if they were satisfied with the city and those dissatisfied might not apply for hukou conversion even if they qualified for hukou conversion according to the imposed point-based hukou system.

A binary logit regression model was conducted to identify salient factors influencing the choice of hukou conversion in Beijing using a binary dependent variable (1 = with intention to convert hukou to current city; 0 = without intention to convert hukou to current city), and the independent variables including demographic, socio-economic and political characteristics, and also satisfaction levels with the current city. The regression model made it possible to examine the influences of one variable while other variables were controlled for.

As shown in Table 7.4, the educational level, social networks and satisfaction levels significantly influenced the intentions of migrant workers to conduct hukou conversion in Beijing. Better educated respondents and those with more social networks had stronger intentions to convert their rural hukou to urban. Increases in levels of satisfaction also significantly increased intentions for hukou conversion. The urban hukou in Beijing was perceived to be much more beneficial and superior to rural hukou for the majority of survey respondents in Beijing (Section 5.4.8). This corresponds with the high requirements for hukou conversion in Beijing which were designed to attract young, talented, well-educated and wealthy applicants (Zhang 2018). As a result, only the migrants who had good education and social networks expressed intentions to convert to Beijing urban hukou.

Table 7. 4 Binary logit regression result: hukou conversion intentions of respondents in Beijing in the next five years

	Respondents with hukou conversion intentions vs. those without such intentions in Beijing
	OR
Demographic factors	
Age	0.98
Female (vs. male)	1.39
Socio-economic and political status	
Senior high (vs. junior high or lower)	1.95
College or higher (vs. junior high or lower)	2.41*
Married (vs. not married)	1.43
Communist party member (vs. not a member)	0.96
Income (1000 yuan)	1.00
Score of social networks	1.02*
Score of perceived income status	1.03
Score of perceived social status	0.93
Satisfaction level	1.45**
Constant	0.09**
N	224
Prob > chi2	0.0095
Pseudo R2	0.0988
Log likelihood	-113.52

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: OR (Odds Ratio) = e^b

Significant at 0.1 (*), at 0.05 (**), at 0.01 (***)

The satisfaction levels of migrant workers with their current city of residence (Beijing) were still shown to be significant for hukou conversion after the demographic, socio-economic and political characteristics were controlled for. It revealed that whether migrant workers intended to transfer to urban hukou depended on their satisfaction level with Beijing if little difference was evident concerning their demographic, socio-economic and political characteristics. Among migrant workers who qualified for hukou conversion in Beijing, only those who were more satisfied were likely to apply in the next five years.

A clear detachment existed between those respondents who intended to stay in Beijing and those who intended to convert hukou there. The survey found that whether migrant workers decided to leave Beijing or not was mainly based on their demographic characteristics, and that older migrant workers in comparison to younger ones, females

in comparison to males, were more likely to stay in Beijing in the next five years (Section 6.3). However, whether these migrant workers intended to convert their hukou to Beijing was determined by their socio-economic status, particularly educational attainment and social networks. Those better educated migrants who intended to stay in Beijing and convert their hukou generally had higher levels of satisfaction. This meant that they were also evaluating their life in Beijing, while Beijing specified its requirements for preferable migrants and ‘*new citizens*⁵⁷’.

7.4 Personal characteristics, aspirations and choice of hukou conversion locations

This section discusses hukou arrangements of those respondents who were not willing to convert hukou to their current cities of residence. Respondents from Jinzhou and those from Beijing were aggregated for the analysis presented here to ensure a sufficient number of respondents. It distinguishes respondents intending to retain their rural hukou from those intending to convert to urban hukou in other cities or towns, according to different administrative ranks.

7.4.1 Characteristics of migrant workers with different intended hukou registration locations

The settlement intentions of migrants across different levels of cities have received considerable research attention, but there is less about the hukou conversion intentions across the hierarchical urban system in China. For respondents intending to register their hukou elsewhere, Table 7.5 displays the detailed categorisation of locations for hukou registration and their respective demographic, socio-economic and political characteristics. Locations can be roughly grouped as rural and urban, with urban locations disaggregated by administrative rank. The definitions of the score of social networks, the score of perceived social status and the score of perceived income status have been introduced earlier (Section 7.3).

The survey found that respondents who intended to convert hukou from rural to urban were more likely to be migrant workers in Beijing. They also exhibited a higher proportion of better educated respondents, a lower percentage of married respondents, and had better social networks and much higher income, in comparison to respondents who decided to keep their rural registration. As the administrative rank of their chosen

⁵⁷ Those who are officially granted local urban hukou in Beijing.

location increased, the percentage of migrant workers from Beijing also increased. An increase in administrative rank also induced a high representation of those who had finished college or higher level of education, while a drop in the percentage of those who had lower levels of education. The percentage of female respondents also dropped in line with an increase in administrative rank, which indicated less enthusiasm among females to transfer their hukou to cities with higher administrative ranks.

Table 7. 5 Selected characteristics of respondents intending to register hukou elsewhere in the next five years

	Rural	Urban	Administrative ranks		
			official towns and county-level cities	prefecture-level cities	Vice-Provincial or higher
N	162	254	98	90	66
Beijing (%)	61.1	75.2	71.4	74.4	81.8
Demographic factors					
Age	36.0	35.2	34.6	35.5	35.7
Female (%)	40.1	40.6	49.0	36.7	33.3
Socio-economic and political status					
Junior high or lower (%)	63.8	46.5	50.0	48.9	37.9
Senior high (%)	28.1	32.3	36.7	32.2	25.8
College or higher (%)	8.1	21.3	13.3	18.9	36.4
Married (%)	85.8	79.1	85.7	77.8	71.2
Communist party member (%)	17.9	13.9	12.2	16.7	12.7
Income (yuan)	37572.3	52748.1	47296.6	58837.8	51866.7
Score of social networks	2.8	11.7	3.3	3.9	31.4
Score of perceived income status	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.8
Score of perceived social status	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

It should be noted that the average age of respondents did not show any significant difference across the three subgroups. However, the percentage of married respondents dropped as the administrative rank increased, showing that single respondents were more likely to seek hukou registration in higher-level urban centres. In addition, the quality of

social networks increased dramatically as the administrative ranks increased, particularly for those who preferred vice-provincial cities or municipalities compared to prefecture-level cities, suggesting that social networks might be crucial for migrant workers to obtain urban hukou in those higher-level cities. Interestingly, respondents who chose prefecture-level cities showed the highest average income and the highest percentage of communist party members. This might indicate that urban hukou in prefecture-level cities was the best available choice for communist party members or those migrant workers with relatively higher incomes without high educational achievements.

7.4.2 Hukou location aspirations of migrant workers with different intended hukou registration locations

The aspirations one has for an ideal migration destination is very likely to be different from one's aspirations for a hukou registration location. This study argues that migrant workers have been actively adapting to various hukou policies across different levels of urban centres and rural villages. This section employs hukou location aspirations as the tool to identify relative advantages of certain cities in attracting migrant workers to convert their hukou. Similar to the aspects of migration destination aspirations, the hukou location aspirations have also been synthesised through exploratory factor analysis into three main dimensions as shown in Table 7.6.

As mentioned earlier (in Section 6.5.2), factor loadings (as indicated by numbers in Table 7.6) are the weights and correlations between each aspect and the synthesised dimension. The higher the load of an aspect for a synthesised dimension the more relevant it is in defining that dimension. Only loadings over 0.4 were presented in the table for simplicity. Those three dimensions explain about 61 percent of the total variance of the original 16 aspects. The three synthesised dimensions are defined in accordance to the loadings of 16 aspects as indicated below:

- 1) ***Infrastructure and services:*** The aspiration for better infrastructure including green land, cultural and recreational facilities, events, traffic, and for quality services including health, education, and beneficial social insurance schemes;
- 2) ***Integration, affiliation and personal development:*** The aspiration for maintaining linkages with hometown and integrating into destination urban societies, and for better personal development;

- 3) *Employment, income and consumption of an urban lifestyle*: The aspiration for better employment and income, and for higher-level consumption of an expensive urban lifestyle.

Table 7. 6 Factor analysis of dimensions of hukou location aspirations

Aspects of hukou location destinations	Scores of dimensions of destination aspirations		
	Infrastructure and services	Employment, income and consumption of an urban lifestyle	Integration, affiliation and personal development
Wage		0.7628	
Employment opportunities		0.7134	
Living cost		0.8601	
Housing price		0.8046	
Distance to hometown			0.4545
Social networks	0.5348		0.4275
Green land layout	0.6419		
Cultural & recreational facilities & events	0.6367		
Traffic	0.6163		
Medical services	0.8085		
Quality of education	0.7154		
Social insurance schemes	0.7744		
Openness to migrant workers			0.4696
Hukou benefits			0.8555
Hukou conversion requirements			0.8447
Potential of future development			0.6103
Percent of Total Variance	0.2441	0.1936	0.1742

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: the item factor loading criteria is .40

Method is Principal-component factors

Rotation is orthogonal varimax (Kaiser off)

Table 7.7 shows a comparison of scores on each dimension of hukou location aspirations between respondents with different intended hukou registration locations. These locations are categorised as rural and urban, with urban grouped in accordance with administrative ranks. In comparison to those who chose to keep their rural registration, respondents who chose an urban location displayed significantly higher aspirations ($p < 0.05$) for urban infrastructure including green land, less traffic congestion, cultural and recreational facilities, and for quality services such as health, education and beneficial social insurance schemes. Among the three levels of urban location,

respondents who intended to convert their hukou to prefecture-level cities exhibited the highest aspirations for facilities and services entitled for hukou residents, while those who intended to convert their hukou to vice-provincial cities or municipalities were likely to have the highest aspirations for employment opportunities, income and consumption of an urban lifestyle with high living costs and expensive housing. They also had the highest aspirations for integrating into urban life, maintaining their linkages to their rural hometown, and improving their personal development.

Table 7. 7 Comparison of synthesised hukou location aspiration variables by chosen locations

	Rural and urban			Administration levels		
	Rural	Urban	Level of Significance	County-level cities/towns	Prefecture-level cities	Vice-provincial cities/municipalities
N	75	159		89	48	116
Infrastructure and services	-0.20	0.10	0.0326	0.08	0.16	-0.01
Employment, income and consumption of an urban lifestyle	-0.12	0.03	0.2836	0.01	-0.04	0.09
Integration, affiliation and personal development	-0.25	-0.06	0.2017	0.00	-0.13	0.18

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

7.4.3 Factors influencing the choice of intended hukou registration locations

To examine the choice of hukou locations among those respondents who reported that they had no intention to transfer hukou to their current city of residence, Table 7.8 shows the results of one binary logit model distinguishing urban locations from rural places, and one multinomial logit model distinguishing three levels of urban locations in accordance with administrative ranks and compared to rural villages. The regression model made it possible to examine the influences of one variable while other variables were controlled for.

Table 7. 8 Binary and Multinomial logit regression results: explaining intended hukou registration locations in next five years

	Urban vs. rural	County city/ town vs. rural	Prefecture vs. rural	Vice-provincial /municipality vs. rural
	OR	OR	OR	OR
Beijing (vs. Jinzhou)	0.80	1.99	0.44	0.45
Demographic variables				
Age	1.05	1.04	1.05	1.04
Gender	1.92	3.13*	1.22	2.32
Socio-economic & political status				
Senior high (vs. junior high or lower)	1.86	1.25	1.48	12.43***
College or higher (vs. junior high or lower)	9.58***	3.13	5.64*	102.51***
Married (vs. not married)	1.25	2.20	1.02	0.68
Communist party member (vs. not a member)	0.92	1.62	0.94	0.37
Income (1000 yuan)	1.01*	1.01	1.01*	1.00
Score of social networks	1.11*	1.07	1.06	1.26***
Score of income status	0.87	0.92	0.74	1.03
Score of social status	0.82	0.83	0.84	0.81
Hukou location aspirations				
Infrastructure and services	1.60**	1.97**	1.55	1.43
Employment, income and consumption	1.35	1.17	1.21	2.18**
Integration, affiliation and personal development	1.79**	2.08**	1.72*	1.67
Constant	0.18	0.02**	0.14	0.02**
N	137		137	
LR chi2(18)	38.71		79.85	
Prob > chi2	0.0004		0.0004	
Pseudo R2	0.2197		0.2136	
Log likelihood	-68.740673		-147.01413	

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Note: OR (Odds Ratio) = e^b

Significant at 0.1 (*), at 0.05 (**), at 0.01 (***)

Among the personal characteristics, socio-economic factors, including educational levels, social networks and income, had a significant influence on whether respondents intended to transfer their rural hukou to urban. The more highly educated migrants with better social networks and higher incomes are more likely to convert their hukou from rural to

urban. Chen et al. (2016a) have argued that rural villagers and migrant workers became less enthusiastic about converting their rural hukou to urban in recent years, due to the respective value changes that have occurred in rural and urban hukou. This study found that urban hukou is still generally attractive to those rural workers with more knowledge, more social resources and better economic conditions. Those who finished college, or a higher level of education compared to those who only finished junior-high or a lower level of education, were about 8.58 times more likely to convert their hukou to urban. Such intentions of migrant workers increase by 11 percent with one additional person they knew in high positions. Similarly, a rise of 1000 yuan in their annual income resulted in an increase of one percent in their intentions to gain urban hukou.

Females compared to males showed stronger intentions to convert their hukou from rural villages to county-level cities or official towns, but there was no significant difference evident between males and females for any other higher-level cities. As stated earlier (Section 5.2.3), females were more likely to enjoy the small city lifestyle. It may also be because rural women in China had more family responsibilities than men, according to *'the inside–outside dichotomy'*⁵⁸ (Mann 2000; Fan 2008), and were more likely to work closer to their hometown villages.

It was interesting that age and marital status showed no significant influence either on hukou conversion from rural to urban, or on the choice of urban locations of different administrative ranks. However, socio-economic factors including educational attainment, income and social networks played a more significant role in choices relating to hukou conversion across various urban places.

Educational achievement was by far the most influential variable for the choice of hukou registration locations. Migrant workers who finished college or higher levels of education in comparison to those who finished junior-high school or lower were 4.6 times more likely to convert to prefecture-level cities, and 101.5 times more likely to convert to vice-provincial or higher-level cities. However, it appeared that vice-provincial cities and municipalities were more attractive for those migrant workers who finished college or higher-level education. Those who finished senior-high school in comparison to those who finished junior-high school or lower were also 11.43 times more likely to convert to vice-provincial cities or municipalities. Although not as significant as the role of

⁵⁸ Please refer to Section 2.2.3

educational attainment, social networks and income were also shown to be influential for hukou conversion to prefecture-level cities, vice-provincial level cities or municipalities.

Respondents with better social networks showed stronger intentions to convert to vice-provincial level cities or municipalities. As shown in the regression model, those who planned to transfer their hukou to lower levels of urban centre showed higher aspirations for maintaining their rural linkages, which were not found among those who planned to convert to municipalities or vice-provincial cities. In this regard, migrants with better social networks or had the ability to establish such social networks, were more likely to convert to municipalities or vice-provincial cities since they probably had weaker intentions to maintain their social ties with their hometown villages.

Respondents with higher incomes expressed slightly stronger intentions to convert to prefecture-level cities than to lower-level or higher-level cities. Migrant workers are a disadvantaged group in most urban societies, and those migrant workers with higher incomes are generally not comparable to the local elites in vice-provincial cities or municipalities, which may be why they did not intend to convert their hukou to those cities. It should also be noted in the regression that this group of migrant workers also had significantly higher aspirations for their future development. Such aspirations accompanied by relatively higher income led them to choose prefecture-level cities over county-level cities.

The results indicated that urban hukou associated with prefecture-level cities was more attractive to richer and better educated migrant workers seeking to transfer their hukou from rural to urban, while urban hukou in vice-provincial level cities and municipalities was more attractive to better educated migrant workers with more social networks. However, urban hukou in county-level cities or official towns appeared to be not attractive to either richer, better-educated migrant workers, or those who had good social networks. This is probably because urban hukou in county-level cities was not beneficial enough to attract those more advantaged migrant workers, who had the choice to convert hukou in higher-level cities.

The three types of aspirations for hukou conversion locations were also found to influence migrants' locational choices for hukou registration. Migrant workers who had higher aspirations for infrastructure and services, and for integration, affiliation and personal development, were significantly more likely to transfer their hukou from rural to urban.

Infrastructure here is deemed as the natural environment and the layout of a city, its traffic, cultural and recreational facilities as well as events, medical services, quality of education, and the provision of social insurance schemes.

Respondents with high aspirations for integration, affiliation and personal development are those who wanted to both maintain linkages with their hometown and integrate into urban life socially and institutionally. They also emphasised their desire for future personal development. This group of migrant workers also showed preferences for urban hukou, especially in county-level or prefecture-level cities, compared to rural hukou.

Respondents seeking employment opportunities, high incomes and an urban lifestyle with high living costs and expensive housing, showed a stronger intention to transfer their hukou to vice-provincial cities or municipalities. Those cities could provide migrant workers with relatively higher wages, but also required them to adapt to the more expensive lifestyle there. For example, living costs and annual rents of migrant workers in Beijing were more than twice those in Jinzhou (Section 5.4.3 and 5.4.7).

Urban hukou in prefecture-level cities was attractive to better educated and richer migrant workers because those cities allowed them to integrate more easily into urban life and maintain linkages with their rural hometowns, while still providing some potential for their personal development. Urban hukou at the highest level of cities (vice-provincial cities and municipalities) was especially attractive to better educated migrant workers with good social networks for hukou conversion because those cities could provide them with higher incomes and high consumption associated with an improved urban lifestyle. However, urban hukou in county-level cities and official towns did not show any impressive advantage except that it could allow migrant workers to access urban infrastructure and services more conveniently, which were generally more attractive to females than males.

Hukou arrangements of migrant workers in the next five years were shaped by their varied aspirations, as well as by hukou policies. It is essential to both include the policy factor and the aspirations of migrant workers to explain intended changes in their hukou arrangements.

7.5 Influence of hukou on migration and settlement in the next five years

The survey found that the correlation between intentions to stay in their current city and intentions to convert hukou to match their residence was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) but rather weak, with a spearman's correlation coefficient of 0.3. This indicated that the decisions to stay were only weakly related to the decision to convert hukou to their city of residence. The proportion of respondents who intended to stay in their current cities in the next five years was much higher than the percentage who intended to conduct hukou conversion to their respective cities. The above findings are consistent with a few other studies. Chen et al. (2016a) analysed the *China Migrants Dynamic Survey* (2010-2012) and found that while the majority of rural migrants had strong intentions to stay in cities, only a small proportion of them were willing to convert their hukou there. The Development Research Centre of the State council carried out a study involving more than seven thousand migrant workers in 20 cities, and found that over 90 percent of them had intentions to stay in cities, but only a very small proportion hoped to give up their farming land and housing parcel in exchange for urban hukou (DRCSC 2011).

This study also found that there were different reasons behind the migration and hukou conversion choices. Whether one decided to stay in their current city was influenced by their gender and age, and their satisfaction with their current city, while hukou conversion decisions appeared to be an evaluation of hukou benefits and conversion requirements. If conversion was evaluated and deemed beneficial, it was then dependent on the hukou regulations, their socio-economic status, as well as the satisfaction levels of migrant workers.

For those who reported an intention to leave their current city of residence and also sought to register their hukou elsewhere, there is also a clear detachment between one's choice of migration destination and his or her choice of hukou registration location. The choice of hukou location and the choice of migration destination displayed a statistically significant but rather weak correlation with a spearman's correlation coefficient of 0.4 ($p < 0.01$). It was found that the choices of respondents for migration destinations were diversified, with those advantaged migrant workers with higher income, education levels, or social networks preferring prefecture-level cities or municipalities in comparison to small cities and towns, or rural villages. However, most of them intended to retain their rural hukou or transfer their hukou to county-level cities and towns. There was only a

small proportion of respondents intending to convert their hukou to higher-level cities compared to those who intended to migrate to these cities. They appeared to have higher achievements either in education, income or social networks, which echoed the selective standards for hukou conversion there.

The choices of survey respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou relating to their future residence and hukou (conversion) locations are shown in Table 7.13. About half of the respondents in this study intended to register their hukou at locations with the same administrative rank as their destination, while about 43 percent intended to register their hukou at locations with lower administrative ranks than their next place of residence, with less than 10 percent intending to register their hukou somewhere with higher administrative ranking than their chosen destination.

Table 7. 9 Hukou-migration strategies of respondents in next five years

Administrative ranks	N	Percent
Hukou location=place of residence	254	48.6
Hukou location< place of residence	224	42.8
Hukou location> place of residence	45	8.6
Total	523	100.0

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Two salient points can be drawn from the pairing of the chosen migration destination of respondents and their preferred hukou registration location: first, the phenomenon of a detachment between one's hukou location and one's actual location will continue in the next five years in China; the second, it is a prevailing trend for one to live in a higher-level place with one's hukou registered at the same level or a lower-level location, while it is rare for one to register one's hukou at a higher-level city but stay in a lower-level city (or town or village). This indicates that the hierarchical requirements for hukou registration among hierarchical cities only tend to restrain hukou conversion intentions to larger cities, but did not play a significant role stopping migration to those cities. To combat big city preferences of migrant workers, there needs to be changes in resource allocation across tiers of cities and improvements, especially in employment and income, infrastructure and services in small cities and towns (Section 6.6).

One crucial fact which has reduced the influence of hukou on migration is that migrant workers nowadays can access gated urban resources through alternative ways other than obtaining local urban hukou, which used to be the only way. For example, migrant

workers are usually found to link employment and income to property-purchases and compare the importance of employment and income to the benefits of hukou.

A young female migrant worked in Jinzhou, who was in her 20s, stated:

“Employment is the most important component of settlement in my perception. You could only afford purchasing a property when your income and your employment is stable. Social securities and the purchase of a house are all more closely linked to employment now than to hukou. Once you get stable employment and your own property to live in at the destination society, you are settled there” (Interviewee J5 2007)

Another interviewee, a middle-aged male migrant, who was a manager working in a factory in Jinzhou city, and had already purchased two properties in Shijiazhuang city, stated:

“Hukou is not that important anymore these days in house purchases. Migrant workers are enabled with the right of property purchasing after participating and contributing to the social insurances for several years without local urban hukou.” (Interviewee J4 2017)

Some others argued that local urban hukou itself was not enough to help migrant workers improve their lives. For example, unlike the pre-reform era (before the 1980s), when hukou residents in Beijing were allocated with properties, obtaining local urban hukou in Beijing in the New-Style Urbanisation era only gives migrant workers permission to purchase properties. Whether one could actually obtain a property depends on many factors including hukou, employment, social insurances, income, property purchase policies, social networks, the property market and so on. Local urban hukou is useless in purchasing a property if migrants cannot afford the price or are restricted by other property purchasing policies. One female sanitation worker in Beijing commented:

“Local urban hukou is useless if you could not find a job or you could not afford to purchase a property. Even if you have obtained urban hukou in Beijing, what could you depend on if you do not have a job or property?” (Interviewee B1 2017)

Besides, many migrant workers interviewed in this study expressed their concerns about losing their rural hukou entitlements, for example, their farming land and housing parcel (Section 5.4.8 and 7.2). However, some interviewees in Beijing believed that the local urban hukou was symbolic, representing the acceptance given to migrants by the hosting city, and it still should be included as one dimension of the meaning of 'settlement', even though it was no longer closely linked to any visible benefits as it once was. One older female who had lived in Beijing for almost 20 years, had a successful career and had purchased properties there stated:

"I still do not consider that I have settled down in Beijing entirely. I am floating until today. Even though I have purchased houses here I still feel like an outsider. My house is located in Fangshan sub-district of Beijing, which does not allow me to convert my hukou. I am in my 50s now, which has already exceeded the age limits for point-based hukou conversion. I have always wanted to convert my hukou to Beijing and become a 'true citizen' of the capital but could not succeed."
(Interviewee B5 2017)

7.6 Conclusion

One important aim of this study was to examine the role which hukou plays in migrants' preferences for big and small urban centres. This chapter introduced the hukou conversion intentions of respondents from the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou. Only those types of urban hukou which were more beneficial than rural hukou, provided migrants with incentives to conduct hukou conversion. Urban hukou in Jinzhou city was perceived to be unprofitable, therefore it was not attractive to migrant workers living there. On the other hand, the more lucrative hukou conversion in Beijing provided incentives for those migrant workers with high educational attainment and better social networks, to convert their hukou. Similarly, among those migrant workers who intended to register their hukou outside their cities of residence, vice-provincial cities and municipalities were most attractive to better educated migrant workers with more social networks to pursue a lifestyle with higher earnings and higher living costs. However, most of the less advantaged ones reported intentions to retain their rural hukou (34.1 percent in Beijing and 50 percent in Jinzhou), or to convert their rural hukou to urban in county-level or prefecture-level cities.

Prefecture-level cities were attractive to those respondents with relatively high educational attainment and higher incomes, because migrant workers were able to integrate into urban life, while maintaining the rural linkages and enjoying more opportunities for personal development; County-level cities and towns were more attractive to females for the infrastructure, services provided and the potential for integration, affiliation and also for personal development. It was found that females, who were traditionally expected to take more family responsibilities than males in rural China, were more likely to choose to stay near their hometown.

In general, urban hukou is still attractive to better educated migrant workers with relatively high incomes and better social networks because it allows them to enjoy the urban infrastructure and services, enables them to integrate into urban life, and can offer more potential for their personal development. It is noted that the decisions to stay in the next five years are only weakly related to the decisions of hukou conversion; the choice of migration destination was also found to be only weakly related to the choice of hukou registration locations. The decisions of rural migrant workers to convert rural hukou to urban were largely due to the fact that urban hukou allows them to enjoy the otherwise gated urban infrastructure and services that imply more potential for their personal development. The choice to migrate to an alternative urban destination instead of going back to rural hometowns, however, is driven by the desire of migrant workers to live a more enjoyable urban lifestyle.

In the New-Style Urbanisation era, the hierarchical hukou conversion regulations among different administrative level cities, appeared to only restrain hukou conversion to larger cities, but did not play a significant role in restraining migration to those cities. The influence of gaining local urban hukou on migration have decreased due to two important facts: local urban hukou is no longer an irreplaceable component to access key urban benefits and resources; local urban hukou itself was found to be not enough to improve the quality of life for many migrants. Besides, many migrant workers did not want to give up their rural hukou because it usually requires them to give up their farming land and housing parcel. However, hukou still seems to be an important component of settlement for migrant workers in China and is an important 'later issue' if they ever decide to settle down permanently in a city.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the results of this work and addresses the overall objective of this study. It seeks to understand the preferences of migrant workers for big and small cities at a time when the Chinese Government attempts to redirect migrants away from large cities to smaller ones. Beijing was selected as a case study to represent the large cities, while Jinzhou represented the small ones in China. In order to establish the big and small city preferences of migrant workers in these cities, this study examined their settlement experiences in their respective city of residence, and discussed their migration intentions, as well as their hukou arrangements, in the next five years. It adopted a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative techniques to collect and analyse data. The analysis has drawn upon primary data including a survey of 436 respondents in Beijing and 207 in Jinzhou, and in-depth interviews with 12 migrant workers in Beijing and ten in Jinzhou. Secondary data was also used to provide useful background information from government, research institutes and public media.

8.2 Major findings

To achieve the overall aim of this study, it was essential to establish the differences between migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou, and to understand why they had migrated to these cities. It was also necessary to identify factors which were likely to influence their migration decisions in the next five years, especially in relation to their hukou registration and location. An aim was to establish the popularity of small cities and towns as a migration destination for migrant workers.

8.2.1 Migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou

Migrant workers in Beijing were found to be significantly different to those in Jinzhou in relation to age and sex structure, educational attainment, social networks, and their urban experience which varied by time spent in the two cities or elsewhere.

Migrant workers in Beijing usually had crossed provincial boundaries and migrated longer distances, while those in Jinzhou came mainly from nearby villages and had migrated a short distance. Migrant workers in Jinzhou could be further divided into

commuting and residing migrant workers based on the strength of their linkages with their rural hometowns: commuting migrant workers, who made up 35 percent of respondents, commuted between their hometown villages and the city, while residing migrant workers, accounting for 65 percent of respondents, had relocated entirely to Jinzhou city. By contrast, all surveyed migrant workers in Beijing were living there, and they had more experience in urban employment, and were relatively older, better educated, and predominantly males. The majority of those surveyed in Beijing migrated there before 2011, while most migrant workers in Jinzhou moved there more recently. Some of those differences are due to the distinctive hukou conversion regulations applied in the two cities. The relaxed hukou conversion requirements in Jinzhou, are likely to have enabled many migrant workers to convert their rural hukou to urban after several years of ‘floating’, which left young and less-experienced migrants overrepresented in the survey. Alternatively, it was much harder for migrant workers to transfer their rural hukou to urban in Beijing, and they became older and more experienced with urban life over time, and kept their ‘floating’ status, because urban hukou was too difficult for them to obtain.

Beijing is a destination which is more exciting and colourful, but also crowded, and ‘gated’. In comparison, Jinzhou is less crowded and less ‘gated’, but it can be seen as limited in amenity and lifestyle options. Migrant workers in Beijing had more employment opportunities which were also more diversified, in comparison to their counterparts in Jinzhou. They enjoyed higher wages but had to suffer higher living costs and housing prices. In general, migrant workers in Jinzhou had more affordable accommodation, which was also more comfortable, compared to what those in Beijing experienced. House and car purchases were also under more stringent restrictions in Beijing than Jinzhou. The social networks of respondents in Jinzhou were also found to be better than those of their counterparts in Beijing. In other words, migrant workers in Jinzhou appeared to be better socially integrated than in Beijing.

Hukou conversion in Jinzhou was perceived by most migrant workers living there to be worthless, although there were few regulations. On the contrary, hukou conversion in Beijing had stringent restrictions but was perceived by most respondents to be beneficial. Generally, in the perception of migrant workers in Jinzhou, there was more openness to them in that city, compared to their counterparts in Beijing.

In comparison to those in Jinzhou, more migrant workers in Beijing claimed that their quality of life had improved after their migration. However, migrant workers in Jinzhou were generally more satisfied with their lives than those in Beijing, where they were significantly more satisfied with the infrastructure and services provided for them, as well as the prospects for their future development in the bigger city. However, migrant workers in Jinzhou were significantly more satisfied with the closeness to their hometown, openness to migrant workers, hukou regulations, and their social networks.

8.2.2 Main factors motivating migrant workers to move to their current city of residence

Employment opportunities and higher wages were selected by respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou as the two main reasons which motivated their migration to their current cities of residence, which indicated that economic factors were central to the migration of rural-urban migrant workers. About 74 percent of respondents in Beijing and 46 percent in Jinzhou reported that employment opportunities were an important reason for them to migrate to their current city of residence, and around 44 percent in Beijing and 23 percent in Jinzhou migrated for higher wages. Social welfare and infrastructure were also popular reasons for migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou.

Jinzhou city showed a significant advantage in attracting rural villagers from nearby, as about 39 percent of respondents in Jinzhou migrated there for its closeness to their hometown villages, which clearly provided opportunities for them to be engaged in non-agricultural employment to supplement their household incomes. A higher proportion of migrant workers had migrated to Jinzhou due to its lower living costs, while respondents in Beijing were attracted to the better economic development and potential for their personal development in that city.

Surprisingly, hukou factors and property purchase prices were not chosen by many respondents either in Beijing or Jinzhou. It is evident that migrant workers thought of hukou and housing issues as *'later problems'* if they ever decide to settle down.

8.2.3 Factors influencing migration intentions and the choice of destinations in the next five years

It was found that more than half of the survey respondents, both in Beijing and Jinzhou, intended to stay in their respective city of residence in the next five years, and only 46.4

percent of respondents in Beijing and 38.8 percent in Jinzhou decided to migrate elsewhere. For those who reported an intention to migrate, most of them intended to go to an alternative urban destination instead of returning to rural villages, with popular choices being municipalities (12.4 percent in Beijing and 35.4 percent in Jinzhou), prefecture-level cities (35.9 percent in Beijing and 32.3 percent in Jinzhou) and county-level cities or towns (26.9 percent in Beijing and 18.5 in Jinzhou).

The preferred migration destinations of migrant workers intending to relocate, were shown to be diversified in relation to their personal characteristics, their consideration of their households, their satisfaction and life aspirations. The role of market factors, for example the economic development, the infrastructure and services that a city could provide, also played a major role in attracting migrant workers. However, hukou, the main institutional factor, did not appear to directly affect their choice of destination.

In general, males were more mobile than females, and were more likely to consider long distance migration because they had less family responsibilities. Females, however, were more likely to enjoy a '*cosy and peaceful*' small city lifestyle, and therefore, tended to select smaller urban centres to settle for the convenience of taking care of their families. Prefecture-level cities were shown to be attractive for better educated migrant workers who earned high incomes both in Beijing and Jinzhou, because these cities have the advantages of both large and small cities, with not as many disadvantages. They were found to be more open to migrant workers than municipalities, and could provide them with more employment opportunities and higher paying jobs than small cities and towns. Municipalities, however, were shown to be more likely a destination for those young males who intended to experience the big city lifestyle for a short period and make money. It was also found that many migrant workers in Beijing who had made some money and gained big city experiences, intended to relocate in the next five years to smaller urban centres to settle.

8.2.4 The relationship between hukou arrangements of migrant workers and their migration intentions

The definition of '*migration intention*' is more complicated in the Chinese context due to the existence of its hukou system. This study found that, although the current hukou regulations had restrained the hukou conversion intentions of migrant workers in larger

cities, these regulations did not significantly reduce the intentions of migrant workers to go to them. The detachment between one's hukou and one's actual location is believed to continue in the next five years in China.

In relation to hukou conversion, around 16.9 percent of survey respondents in Jinzhou and 20.4 percent in Beijing intended to transfer their rural hukou to urban to match their current city of residence, with 60.8 percent in Jinzhou and 66.6 percent in Beijing intending to either keep their rural hukou, or to transfer their hukou to an alternative urban location. Among respondents who decided not to transfer their rural hukou to urban in their current city of residence, about half in Jinzhou and 34.1 percent in Beijing chose to retain their rural hukou. For those who intended to choose an alternative urban location to register their hukou (both in Beijing and Jinzhou), the strengths of their hukou conversion intentions echo the stringencies of hukou conversions across cities with different administrative ranks, as detailed in the New-Style Urbanisation policies. The stricter the hukou conversion requirements the weaker their hukou conversion intentions.

There were two main reasons behind the diminishing role of hukou in their migration decision-making: local urban hukou appeared no longer to be an irreplaceable component to access key urban benefits and resources; local urban hukou itself was found to be not enough to improve the quality of life for many migrant workers. Many rural migrants were reluctant to give up their rural hukou in exchange for an urban one because it usually requires them to surrender their farming land and housing parcel. However, hukou still appears to be a crucial component of settlement for migrant workers in China, but was one of those important 'later issues' to be solved if they ever decided to settle in a destination.

8.2.5 Popularity of small cities and towns as migration destinations in the next five years

It was found that small cities and towns were neither preferable migration destinations nor hukou registration locations for migrant workers, especially not for those who were better educated and had the ability to earn higher wages in larger cities. Small cities and towns were more like '*sanctuaries*' for those relatively disadvantaged migrant workers who were forced to relocate from bigger cities or had yet to expand their migration horizons. However, females showed stronger intentions than males to both migrate and

convert their hukou to small cities and towns for the convenience of taking care of their families. Those who had experienced the big city lifestyle in Beijing and were dissatisfied, as well as those who had made enough money were the most likely to move to small cities and towns, or to consider medium cities.

1) Intentions to stay and convert hukou to current city of residence

The survey found that respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou had much weaker hukou conversion intentions than their intentions to stay for the next five years. Table 8.1 shows that most migrant workers perceived urban hukou in Jinzhou as inferior or equivalent to their rural hukou, and therefore, lacked enthusiasm for converting hukou. Those migrant workers who intended to convert their rural hukou to urban in Jinzhou had similar characteristics as those who had no intentions of doing so. Since the requirements for such conversion were very relaxed, the respondents who had intended to convert their hukou were not as selective as those in Beijing. Urban hukou in Jinzhou city was only attractive to those migrant workers who had school-age children, because they could access better education for their children without additional paperwork.

Of particular note, migrant workers in Beijing showed relatively more enthusiasm for hukou conversion to their city of residence in comparison to those in Jinzhou. They perceived that local urban hukou of Beijing was superior to their rural hukou which made it much more attractive. However, the intentions for hukou conversion are still much weaker in comparison to their intentions to stay in Beijing. This is largely due to the stringent hukou conversion regulations which favour young, talented, well-educated and wealthy applicants, and that only a small proportion of migrant workers satisfy such requirements. As a result, only selected migrant workers with high socio-economic status, and those with higher levels of satisfaction, expressed intentions to convert to Beijing urban hukou. In this regard, converting rural hukou to urban in Beijing was much more difficult and selective of personal attributes than simply deciding to stay there in the next five years.

Table 8.1 Hukou conversion intentions to current cities of residence among respondents in Beijing and Jinzhou and their reasons for hukou conversion

City	Who	Why
Beijing	Migrant workers with higher educational attainment and better social networks	Beijing urban hukou was perceived as being superior to rural hukou; The requirements for hukou conversion to Beijing are in favour of young, talented, well-educated and wealthy applicants; High level of satisfaction with Beijing city
Jinzhou	Intentions of hukou conversion is low. They showed similar characteristics to those who did not intend to convert hukou to Jinzhou city; Probably have school-age children	Jinzhou urban hukou was perceived as being equivalent or inferior in comparison to rural hukou; The convenience for education of the next generation is the only benefit of hukou conversion to Jinzhou city

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

2) Choice of migration destination

The choice of migration destination of those migrant workers intending to relocate in the next five years and the respective reasons are shown in Table 8.2. Migrant workers with better social networks and higher incomes preferred urban destinations to rural villages due to their high aspirations for an urban lifestyle which indicates high living costs and more expensive housing.

Communist party members preferred county-level cities or official towns to prefecture-level cities to achieve better personal development and to experience better acceptance to realise their aspirations, while maintaining their affiliations with their rural hometowns. Migrant workers from Beijing, who were married with relatively lower educational attainment, but higher perceived social status, were likely to prefer prefecture-level cities in comparison to municipalities when relocating in the next five years. They usually had lower aspirations for an urban lifestyle, but maintained high aspirations for employment and income.

Table 8.2 Intended destinations and reasons given by respondents who intended to migrate in the next five years

Destinations	Who: demographic, social-economic and political characteristics	Why: the characteristics of destinations described as aspirations
Urban over rural	Migrant workers with better social networks and higher incomes	Higher aspirations for an expensive lifestyle

Selected administrative ranks of urban destinations

Prefer county-level cities or towns to prefecture-level cities	Communist party members	Higher aspirations for integration, affiliation and personal development.
Prefer prefecture-level cities to county-level cities or towns	Non communist party members	Lower aspirations for integration, affiliation and personal development.
Prefer prefecture-level cities to municipalities	Migrant workers from Beijing; married; lower education (junior high or lower in comparison to senior high); higher social status	Higher aspirations for income and employment; lower aspirations for an expensive lifestyle.
Prefer municipalities to prefecture-level cities	Migrant workers from Jinzhou; single; higher level of education (senior high in comparison to junior high or lower); lower social status	Lower aspirations for income and employment; higher aspirations for consumptions.
Prefer municipalities to county-level cities or towns	Migrant workers from Jinzhou;	Hopes for a change in lifestyle; dissatisfaction with characteristics of current city of residence
Prefer county-level cities and towns to municipalities	Migrant workers from Beijing	

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Migrant workers from Jinzhou, who were young, single, males and had higher educational attainment but lower perceived social status, favoured municipalities in comparison to prefecture-level cities. They were found to have high aspirations for an urban experience but relatively low aspirations for employment and income, in comparison to those who chose prefecture-level cities. It was found that this group of migrant workers were relocating for a change of lifestyle but did not consider the

affordability of such a lifestyle, because they tended to only stay for a short period to experience big cities while they were young and not burdened by family responsibilities.

The survey also found that migrant workers who decided to relocate in the next five years had a tendency to seek changes in their lifestyle. This could be largely attributed to the fact that those intending to relocate were more dissatisfied with their current city of residence. In this regard, migrant workers in Beijing preferred county-level cities and towns to municipalities, while those in Jinzhou preferred municipalities to county-level cities or towns, having not yet experienced some of the disadvantages of big cities like those in Beijing.

The survey findings are generally consistent with other studies, whereby researchers have argued that the younger generation of migrant workers chose migration destinations based on more complicated reasons, which could be a trade-off between affordability (employment and income and cost of living) and enjoyment (or lifestyle) (Cheng 2014; Tang et al. 2015). This study found that some migrant workers intended to seek a destination where they could experience a change in lifestyle, and therefore, improve their quality of life and employment opportunities

3) Choice of hukou locations in the next five years

The choices of hukou registration locations reported by migrant workers in Beijing and Jinzhou are shown in Table 8.3. Although recent literature has argued that the attractiveness of urban hukou to migrant workers has dropped, this study found that the better educated migrant workers with good social networks and higher incomes were still interested in obtaining urban hukou, which would allow them to access urban infrastructure and social services more conveniently.

Female respondents were found to be more likely to give up their rural hukou for urban hukou in county-level cities and official towns because this allowed them access to more urban services. It also allowed them to achieve a better chance of personal development, and to integrate into urban life, and at the same time maintain their rural linkages with their families. Respondents also perceived that Prefecture-level cities would allow them to integrate into urban life without giving up their rural linkages, and provide more opportunities for their personal development. Male and female respondents who preferred

prefecture-level cities were likely to be better educated migrant workers with higher incomes.

Table 8.3 Choices of hukou locations and reasons given by respondents who intended to register their hukou elsewhere in the next five years

Conversion	Who: demographic, social-economic and political characteristics	Why: the characteristics of potential locations described by aspiration
To urban locations	Better educated respondents with better social networks and higher income	Higher aspirations for infrastructure and services

Administrative ranks of chosen hukou conversion locations

County-level cities and official towns	Female	Higher aspirations for infrastructure and services; for integration, affiliation and personal development Cosy and peaceful lifestyle Stay close to their families
Prefecture-level cities	Better educated respondents with higher income	Higher aspirations for integration, affiliation and personal development
Vice-provincial level cities or municipalities	Better educated respondents with better social networks	Higher aspiration for employment, income and the consumption of an urban lifestyle

Source: Migrant workers survey 2017

Among migrant workers who resided in the cities of Beijing and Jinzhou, but hoped to relocate and seek hukou registration elsewhere in the next five years, the better educated respondents were more likely to go to municipalities or vice-provincial cities and convert their hukou there. Generally, respondents with higher income and better social networks were more likely to choose urban destinations over rural and convert their rural hukou to urban. Those who had better networks were likely to convert their hukou from rural to vice-provincial cities or municipalities, while those earning high incomes were likely to convert their hukou from rural to prefecture-level cities. Respondents from Beijing in comparison to those from Jinzhou showed preferences for smaller urban centres as migration destinations. However, their intentions for transferring hukou to small cities and towns did not always follow.

It was found that many respondents did not consider settling down in their chosen migration destination permanently. This might be why some respondents chose to go to municipalities for the urban lifestyle without too much consideration of their financial situation. However, when they chose hukou conversion locations, they seemed to be more practical, considering both the institutional constraints and their abilities to sustain their lives there. Hukou conversion usually involves a huge amount of paperwork, and changes the legal entitlement of migrants, and therefore many only do it once in their lifetime or not at all. It was noted in the interviews that many migrants had experienced several cities but had never, or only once, changed their hukou location.

4) Disadvantages of small cities and towns in attracting migrant workers

Most small cities and towns face severe problems in providing employment opportunities and adequate wages for migrant workers. Medical services in these cities, as well as their educational facilities for school-aged children, were also identified as limitations to attracting those relatively advantaged migrants. Such limitations result from the current hierarchical resource distribution system across different tiers of cities, especially from the imbalanced financial allocation. Small cities and towns were put in a disadvantaged position to obtain resources to develop themselves, and moreover, to attract advantaged migrants with better education seeking diversified employment opportunities.

Although China has made some improvements in the development of small cities and towns after the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in 2014, those improvements have been limited to rather '*non-core matters*' such as afforestation, and the natural and built environment, which indicated a clear detachment between what migrant workers were longing for (employment and wages) and what had been improved.

8.3 Limitations

This study has provided useful information regarding the influence of the New-Style Urbanisation policy on the migration intentions of migrant workers in Beijing and those in Jinzhou in the next five years. There are major implications for social and spatial inequalities between tiered cities, between migrant workers and local citizens, and among the migrant workers themselves. The relationship between migration decisions and hukou registration was an important part of the analysis. However, several limitations restricted our understanding of the driving factors which motivated intentions to return to

hometown villages or to migrate to cities with different administrative levels, and by default different hukou requirements.

Due to the absence of a complete sample frame, this study adopted non-probability sampling methods to select respondents from Beijing and Jinzhou, which can lead to sample bias. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised. However, this study provided valuable evidence concerning the preferences of migrant workers between big and small cities as migration destinations and hukou conversion locations, and whether hukou was even a consideration in relation to their move.

Data collected were cross-sectional, while migration decisions and hukou conversion arrangements are likely to form over a period of time, as a result, the migration or settlement intentions, and the hukou conversion intentions documented in this study might not eventuate as being actual behaviour. In addition, those who did not express any migration or hukou conversion intentions when surveyed or interviewed may change their mind later when they have given it serious consideration or their circumstances change.

For various reasons, some important information was not collected or left out in the analysis. The survey questionnaire did not ask directly for the reasons why some respondents planned to leave their current city of residence in the next five years, and therefore the reasons could not be directly compared between Beijing and Jinzhou. Instead, this study tried to analyse the stated reasons which brought them to their current city and their plans for future migration. However, results did not show a strong relationship between why they came and their intentions to leave in the next five years. To follow up this study, it would be useful to include those questions in the questionnaire of any research undertaken in the future.

The New-Style Urbanisation policy covered many aspects of urbanisation in China. However, this study only emphasised two aspects of it: hukou, and the distribution of resources across different tiers of cities; and analysed whether hukou or actual changes in resource distribution were more likely to succeed in combating the big-city preferences of migrant workers in China. Other contents of the New-Style Urbanisation policy, such as its emphasis on environment protection or its idea of ‘people centred’ development, were left out of this analysis.

The New-Style Urbanisation policy is constantly being revised and renewed. More detailed regulations have been added to it since 2017, when the fieldwork was undertaken. However, most regulations added to this policy after 2017 were still mainly addressing the reform of hukou instead of changing the distribution of resources across cities. As summarised before, hukou no longer appears to significantly influence the migration decisions of migrant workers. Therefore, this study advocates a significant change in the hierarchical resource distribution system across tiers of cities.

8.4 Future research

This study has focused upon the determinants of migration and the motivations of migrant workers and left out the consequences/influences of such migration. It has only suggested possible measures to make small cities and towns more attractive for migrant workers, however, it has not addressed any implications for migrant workers, and for the development of small cities and towns, as well as the impact on large cities.

In this regard, future research is needed to examine the results of migration from the perspective of migrant workers and city development. Questions such as: Will the life chances of migrant workers be compromised if they are restrained from going to big cities and pushed to stay in smaller ones? Will this further disadvantage and marginalise them in Chinese society? Is migration into small cities and towns beneficial for their development or a burden on their infrastructure and public services? What types of migrants do small cities and towns need to achieve better development? What are the implications for those larger cities if a large number of migrant workers decide to move to smaller cities? For example, will the pressure on traffic or demand for housing in those large cities be reduced?

This study found that medium-sized cities (usually prefecture-level cities) had more potential than small cities and towns to attract migrant workers and provide them with more employment opportunities. These cities also appeared to be more open to migrant workers than municipalities. Therefore, future research is also needed to examine the possibilities of those medium-sized cities replacing large ones and becoming popular destinations for migrant workers.

8.5 Final word

The survey and interview data indicate that, through the process of migration, migrant workers in China are looking for a destination, which could provide them with ‘stability’ in employment, residence, institutional recognition (local hukou), and social and family life. Although most migrant workers yearn for stability, the current policy for rural-urban migration is relatively unstable, and they appear to be unwelcome in most cities.

China has just experienced the most significant increase in urbanisation where every aspect of the society has changed and keeps changing rapidly. China’s level of urbanisation tripled from under 18 percent in 1978 to almost 55 percent in 2014 and its urban population grew by 558 million (Li et al. 2016b). There have already been several directional changes in policy in terms of whether rural-urban migration should be promoted and whether larger cities or smaller cities and towns should accommodate rural migrants. Developing small cities and towns was advocated by policy-makers in the 1980s (Cannon et al. 1990). However, such policies were changed in the early 1990s and the development of larger cities were favoured in that period, which have attracted large waves of migrants (Carrillo Garcia 2011).

In 2014, the New-Style Urbanisation policy was put forward to combat the big city preferences of migrant workers and more detailed regulations have been added since the fieldwork was undertaken in 2017. For example, the *Specific Tasks of New-Style Urbanisation in 2019* proposed to further reduce hukou conversion restrictions and increase the quota for hukou conversion to super-large cities (National Development and Reform Commission of China 2019). When making decisions about migration or hukou conversion, interviewed migrant workers in this study expressed strong concerns about policy changes.

One older female sanitation worker commented:

“... (*Hukou and migration*) policies are different every year, (therefore) I do not know where to go or to register my hukou in the future.”
(Interviewee B1 2017)

Another young administrative staff at a construction site in Beijing stated:

“(As migrants), nobody is certain about the future direction of (migration and hukou) policies.” (Interviewee B12 2017)

It seems hard to find stability and seek settlement in this rapidly changing society, which is bound by government regulations, even though the hukou system has been relaxed. However, given the findings of this study, migration, with or without hukou conversion, is a process in which migrant workers adapt to such changes and try to achieve their life aspirations. It will be difficult to stop migrant workers from swarming into big cities if those cities have all the preferable resources which migrants seek.

8.6 Conclusion

This study explored the big and small city preferences of migrant workers at a time when the government was trying to direct more of them to move away from big cities. Currently, state policies in China can only influence migration indirectly. This thesis has examined the implementation of the New-Style Urbanisation policy in Beijing and Jinzhou, and focused upon changes in resource distribution between the top and bottom level cities, as well as modifications in the hukou system.

Large cities usually have better economies than smaller ones, and have developed better amenities. As a result, small cities and towns in China do not have enough amenities to mitigate their economic disadvantages to compete for migrants with big cities. Small cities and towns have much to catch up on and are found to be disadvantaged in attracting migrants. This study found that such conditions have not significantly changed several years after the announcement of the New-Style Urbanisation policy.

This study also found that, to improve the attractiveness of small cities and towns to migrant workers, it is necessary for them to create employment opportunities and provide better paying jobs, as well as to upgrade their infrastructure and services. This calls for more resources directed to small cities and towns, as well as financial support within them. However, the current financial system restrains the ability of small cities and towns to do so. In recent years, they have been handed more responsibilities for the provision of various services, while only being given limited authorisation and resources.

What is clear from the findings is that hukou no longer plays a significant role in the migration decisions of migrant workers. The hierarchical hukou system appears to have

only restrained hukou conversion intentions in larger cities, but has not significantly helped in curbing the overwhelming trend of migration to those cities. Therefore, this study suggests that the government needs to rely less on hukou as the ultimate tool of migration control. This thesis has shed some light on the aspirations and choices of migrant workers and constraints on them to convert their rural hukou to urban in big cities, and unless changes are implemented rapidly, much will remain the same in respect to their big and small city preferences.

APPENDIX 1: MIGRANT WORKERS SURVEY 2017 (English translation, originally in Chinese)

Beijing/Jinzhou

ID_____

Instruction: There are two types of questions in this questionnaire: “choice questions” and “gap filling questions”. For “gap filling questions”, please choose the options that suit you the best, and fill the number before that answer in “_____” or blank table cells; for “choice questions”, please choose the option that fit you the best and tick the ”” or the number (text) accordingly. Please be noted that some questions may ask you to choose more than one options.

A. Experience and reasons of floating

A1. When did you first leave the rural place to work in urban areas?

_____(year) _____(month)

A2. When did you first start working in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?

_____(year) _____(month)

A3. Where did you live before coming to this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?

Rural areas Urban areas

Please specify the province, city/ township_____

A4. Why did you leave the place which you mentioned in A3?

The employment opportunities there are scarce

- The competence level for employment there is high
- The job tasks (or farming duties) there are heavy
- The general wage of employment (or the income earned through farming) there is low
- The smog pollution there is heavy
- That place is not very tolerant with rural-urban migrant workers
- The social welfare which I could enjoy there is scarce
- The infrastructure there (e.g. water supply, electricity provision or transportation) is bad
- That place is too far away from my hometown village
- The living cost there is too high (housing not included)
- The housing price is too high there
- I couldn't meet the standards of hukou conversion there
- There is not much benefit attached to the hukou of that place
- The policy support for the development of that place is weak
- I think there is not much potential of future development for me in that place
- I didn't know many people there
- I didn't get a sense of belonging in that place

- I feel inferior to my friends, family members or relatives who stayed in places which I thought as superior
- The quality of education provided to the school-age children of rural-urban migrant workers there was bad
- The chance of getting into universities for rural-urban migrant children through the university-entrance-examination there was small
- Other, please specify _____

A4. Why did you come to this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?

- The employment opportunities here are many
- The competence level for employment there is low
- The job tasks (or farming duties) here are light
- The general wage of employment (or the income earned through farming) here is high
- The smog pollution here is light
- This city is very tolerant with rural-urban migrant workers
- The social welfare which I could enjoy here is much
- The infrastructure here (e.g. water supply, electricity provision or transportation) is good
- This city is relatively close to my hometown village
- The living cost here is low (housing not included)
- The housing price is relatively low here

- I am qualified for hukou conversion here
- There is much benefit attached to the hukou of this city
- The policy support for the development of this city is strong
- I think there is much potential of future development for me in this city
- I know many people here
- I get a sense of belonging here
- I feel proud comparing to my friends, family members or relatives who stayed in places which I think is inferior
- The quality of education provided to the school-age children of rural-urban migrant workers here is good
- The chance of getting into universities for rural-urban migrant children through the university-entrance-examination here is big
- Other, please specify _____

B. Satisfaction with current city

B1. How do you agree with the statement: I am satisfied with my life in this city (Beijing/ Jinzhou)? (Please circle the selected number)

Strongly disagree	→				Strongly agree
0	1	2	3	4	5

B2. Since coming to this city (Beijing/Jinzhou), my satisfaction level with my life has:

risen

dropped

stayed the same

B3. How do you agree with the following statements about your satisfaction with this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)? (Please circle the selected number)

I am satisfied with the following aspects of this city	Strongly disagree —————▶ Strongly agree					
the general wage level	0	1	2	3	4	5
the employment opportunities	0	1	2	3	4	5
The living costs (housing not included)	0	1	2	3	4	5
The housing prices	0	1	2	3	4	5
The living conditions	0	1	2	3	4	5
The overall layout of city	0	1	2	3	4	5
The diversity of shopping opportunities	0	1	2	3	4	5
The amount and layout of factories	0	1	2	3	4	5
The amount and layout of green land and parks	0	1	2	3	4	5
The accessibility of water and gas	0	1	2	3	4	5
The cultural and recreational facilities and events	0	1	2	3	4	5

The medical service	0	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of education	0	1	2	3	4	5
The social security schemes	0	1	2	3	4	5
The traffic condition	0	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of natural environment	0	1	2	3	4	5
The social-networks I got here	0	1	2	3	4	5
The distance to my hometown village	0	1	2	3	4	5
The tolerance with rural-urban migrant worker	0	1	2	3	4	5
The vibe, energy or atmosphere (strengthen of “guanxi” or “ability” in this city)	0	1	2	3	4	5
The pace-of-life	0	1	2	3	4	5
The benefits attached to local hukou	0	1	2	3	4	5
The standards of hukou conversion	0	1	2	3	4	5
The status of this city among all Chinese cities	0	1	2	3	4	5
The level of economic development of this city	0	1	2	3	4	5
The potential of future development of this city	0	1	2	3	4	5

c. Working conditions

C1. Which of the following industry are you currently in?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Currently unemployed | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture, forestry and fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining and quarrying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity, gas, steam and water supply | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale and retail trade | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation and storage | <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation and food service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information transfer, software and information technology services | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenancy and commercial service | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate services | | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific research and technical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water conservative facilities, environment and infrastructure management | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood services, repair and other services | | <input type="checkbox"/> Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human health and social work | <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, sports and entertainment | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public administration, social security and social organisations bodies | | <input type="checkbox"/> Extraterritorial organisations and |

C2. How many hours do you currently work weekly?

_____ hours

C3. How much income did you earn last year (before tax, including subsidies)?

_____ yuan


C4. How much did you save from the income last year?

_____ yuan


C5. What status do you consider of your income among that of all people currently working in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)? (Please circle the selected number)

Very low Very high					
0	1	2	3	4	5

C6. What status do you consider of your income among that of all rural-urban migrant workers in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)? (Please circle the selected number)

Very low  Very high					
0	1	2	3	4	5

C7. How do you consider the amount of suitable employment opportunities for you this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)”?

very few  A lot					
0	1	2	3	4	5

D. Living conditions

D1. What type of property do you currently accommodate in?

- Apartments in the city Chinese bungalow in the city basement in the city
 Dormitory with bunk bed I still live in rural areas Others

D2. Is the property mentioned in D1 owned by you or your family? Yes (please go to D3) No (please go to D4)

D3. If the property mentioned in D1 is owned by you or your family, please evaluate the current price of it: _____ Yuan/m²

D4. If the property mentioned in D1 is not owned by you or your family, please individuate the current yearly rent (if you accommodate for free, please put in 0): _____ Yuan

D5. How large is the property mentioned in D1? _____ m²; **How many people currently reside in it?**

D6. Is there a kitchen in the property mentioned in D1 which you could use? Yes No

D7. Is there a toilet in the property mentioned in D1 which you could use? Yes No

E. Social security

E1. Do you have the following basic social insurance or fund? (multiple selection)


- Housing fund insurance
 Unemployment insurance
 Employment injury insurance
 Maternity insurance
 New rural cooperative medical insurance
 Integrated basic medical insurance for rural and urban residents
 Medical insurance for urban employees
 Medical services at state expenses
 Social endowment insurance for urban employees
 New rural social endowment insurance

F. Natural environment

F1. In recent years, the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region has been attacked by smog pollution for several times. How do you agree with the statement “my health has been damaged by the smog”?

Strongly disagree  Strongly agree					
0	1	2	3	4	5

F2. How do you agree with the statement “the human body could adapt to the smoggy environment”?

Strongly disagree  Strongly agree					
0	1	2	3	4	5

F3. How do you agree with the statement “The smog pollution in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region will be eliminated or eased greatly in future five years (now-2022)”?

Strongly disagree → Strongly agree					
0	1	2	3	4	5

G. Social Network

G1 How many of the following people you know in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)? Among them, how many do you consider would offer to help when you needed it?

I know _____ (please write the number) people who works in the government, party or public affair organisations, among them _____ (please write the number) would help me when I needed.

I know _____ (please write the number) people who works in management positions in enterprises, among them _____ (please write the number) would help me when I needed.

I know _____ (please write the number) people who are entrepreneurs, among them _____ (please write the number) would help me when I needed.

H. Distance to hometown village

H1. The transportation time for me to go back to my hometown village form this city (Beijing/Jinzhou) is about _____ hour(s)

H2. How far away from your hometown village do you consider as the ideal distance of working place? Please describe in transportation time.


_____ hour(s)

H3. How do you agree with the statement “Phone calls and online chats could replace face to face communication with families and friends in hometown village”?


Strongly disagree → Strongly agree					
0	1	2	3	4	5

i. The tolerance to rural-urban migrant workers


I1. How much discrimination is directed to rural-urban migrant workers in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?”?

Very little  Very					
much					
0	1	2	3	4	5

I2. How do you consider your social status among all the people who workers in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?”?

Very low  Very					
high					
0	1	2	3	4	5

I3. How do you consider your social status among all rural-urban migrant workers in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?”?

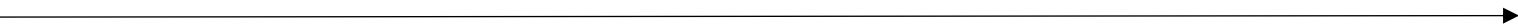
Very low  Very					
high					
0	1	2	3	4	5

j. Vibe and pace

J1. In China, many would address the vibe of a city by its enhancement of “Guanxi” or “Ability”. Between “Guanxi” and “Ability”, which do you consider more crucial for being successful in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?”

- “Guanxi” is the dominant factor
 “Guanxi” is slightly more important than “Ability”
 “Guanxi” and “Ability” are of same importance
 “Ability” is slightly more important than “Guanxi”
 “Ability” is the dominant factor

J2. How do you consider the life pace in this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?”

Very slow  Very fast					
0	1	2	3	4	5

K. The understanding of the “New Style Urbanisation” policy

K1. Have you ever heard about the “New Style Urbanisation” policy?

- Yes (please go to K2) No (please go to L1)

K2. Development of which level of cities, towns or villages do you consider the “New Style Urbanisation” policy underlined?

- rural village official towns county-level city prefecture-level city vice-provincial city Municipality

K2. Hukou conversion to which level of cities, towns or villages do you consider the “New Style Urbanisation” policy supported the strongest?

- rural village official towns county-level city prefecture-level city vice-provincial city Municipality

L. Hukou

L1. Where is your hukou currently registered?

Province/ autonomous region: _____

City/ county/ sub-districts: _____

Official town/ township/ village: _____

L2. What is the type of your current hukou location?

- Rural Urban

L3. Do you have farming experiences?

- Yes, for _____ years No

L4. Comparing the hukou of rural villages and that of county level cities, which do you consider advantaged?

- Rural villages County level cities They are rivals. Both have respectively advantages

L4a. Comparing the hukou of rural villages and that of Municipalities, which do you consider advantaged?

- Rural villages County level cities They are rivals. Both have respectively advantages

L5. How do you consider the benefits attached to hukou of cities with different administrative ranks?

- The higher the administrative rank, the more benefits attached to a city's hukou
 The higher the administrative rank, the less benefits attached to a city's hukou
 The benefits attached to a city's hukou is not relevant to its administrative rank

L6. How do you consider the discriminations against rural-urban migrant workers in cities with different administrative ranks?

- The higher the administrative rank, the more discrimination
 The higher the administrative rank, the less discrimination
 The discrimination is not relevant to a city's administrative rank

[L7, L8 and L9 are only for participants in Beijing]

L7. Do you think you could get Beijing hukou through the current “point-based hukou system” in Beijing?

- Yes (Please go to L8) No (Please go to M1)

M. Migration intentions in future five years (now-2022)

M1. In future five years, do you plan to leave current city to work elsewhere?

- Yes (Please go to M2) No (Please go to M4)

M2. Please describe the place which you plan to go to in future five years from the following aspect.

M2a. Administrative Rank	M2b. Population Size	M2c. Geographic Location	M2d. Geographic Location
---------------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------

		(North-South)	(East-Middle-West)
<input type="checkbox"/> rural village <input type="checkbox"/> official towns <input type="checkbox"/> county-level city <input type="checkbox"/> prefecture-level city <input type="checkbox"/> vice-provincial city <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality	<input type="checkbox"/> rural village <input type="checkbox"/> under 0.5 million <input type="checkbox"/> 0.5 million to 1 million <input type="checkbox"/> 1 million to 5 million <input type="checkbox"/> 5 million to 10 million <input type="checkbox"/> above 10 million	<input type="checkbox"/> south <input type="checkbox"/> north <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't matter	<input type="checkbox"/> east <input type="checkbox"/> middle <input type="checkbox"/> west <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't matter

M3. If you have a specific destination in mind for migration in future five years, please specify:

M4. When you choose a destination of future migration, how important are the following aspects to you? Please write a number (chosen from 0 to 100) in the blank areas following each item.

	Please	Not important at all → Very important 0 1 2.....98 99 100
a	The general level of wage	
b	Good job opportunities	
c	The general price level/ Costs of living	
d	Housing price/ Cost of renting	

e	Living conditions	
f	over-all layout and appearance	
g	A variety of shopping opportunities	
h	Number and distribution of factories	
i	A lot of nature and public green area	
j	water and grid accessibility	
k	A wide range of cultural and recreational facilities and activities	
l	Availability and quality of medical service	
m	Quality of education	
n	Accessibility to social insurance	
o	Good traffic condition	
p	Environment quality (low pollution)	
q	Social networks	
r	Distance to hometown	
s	Openness and tolerance to migrants	
t	The energy and atmosphere	

u	Life pace	
v	Benefit attached to hukou	
w	Standard of getting local urban hukou	
x	The position in the rural-urban system	
y	General economic status of the particular region	
z	Potential of future development	

N. Hukou arrangements in future five years (now-2022)

N1. In future five years, do you plan to convert your hukou to this city (Beijing/Jinzhou)?

Yes (Please go to N2)


No (Please go to N4)

N2. Please describe the place which you plan to convert your hukou to in future five years from the following aspect.

N2a. Administrative Rank	N2b. Population Size	N2c. Geographic Location (North-South)	N2d. Geographic Location (East-Middle-West)
<input type="checkbox"/> rural village <input type="checkbox"/> official towns <input type="checkbox"/> county-level city <input type="checkbox"/> prefecture-level city <input type="checkbox"/> vice-provincial city <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality	<input type="checkbox"/> rural village <input type="checkbox"/> under 0.5 million <input type="checkbox"/> 0.5 million to 1 million <input type="checkbox"/> 1 million to 5 million <input type="checkbox"/> 5 million to 10 million <input type="checkbox"/> above 10 million	<input type="checkbox"/> south <input type="checkbox"/> north <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't matter	<input type="checkbox"/> east <input type="checkbox"/> middle <input type="checkbox"/> west <input type="checkbox"/> doesn't matter

N3. If you have a specific destination in mind for hukou conversion in future five years, please specify:

N4. When you choose a place of future hukou conversion, how important are the following aspects to you? Please write a number (chosen from 0 to 100) in the blank areas following each item.

	Please	Not important at all  Very important 0 1 2.....98 99 100
A	The general level of wage	
B	Good job opportunities	
C	The general price level/ Costs of living	

D	Housing price/ Cost of renting	
E	Living conditions	
F	over-all layout and appearance	
G	A variety of shopping opportunities	
H	Number and distribution of factories	
I	A lot of nature and public green area	
J	water and grid accessibility	
K	A wide range of cultural and recreational facilities and activities	
L	Availability and quality of medical service	
M	Quality of education	
N	Accessibility to social insurance	
O	Good traffic condition	
P	Environment quality (low pollution)	
Q	Social networks	
R	Distance to hometown	
S	Openness and tolerance to migrants	

T	The energy and atmosphere	
U	Life pace	
V	Benefit attached to hukou	
W	Standard of getting local urban hukou	
X	The position in the rural-urban system	
Y	General economic status of the particular region	
Z	Potential of future development	

O. Personal preference

O1. Among the following people, who do you consider the most when choosing a migration destination or a place for hukou conversion?

- My parents Me and my spouse My children My grandchildren

O2. Among the following people, who do you consider most responsible for taking care of the aged people?

- The government Their children Themselves

O3. Among the following people, who do you consider most responsible for taking care of school-aged children (under 18)?

- The government Their parents Their grandparents Themselves

P. Demographic information

P1. Gender Male Female

P2. Year of birth: _____

P3. Marital status

- Currently married (please go to P4)
 Never married (please go to P5)
 Divorced or widowed (please go to P5)

P4. In which year did you get married with your current spouse? _____

P5. How many children under 18 do you have? _____

P6. How many children above 18 do you have? _____

P7. Education

- Never been to school
 Primary school
 Middle school

- Senior high school or equivalent
- College diploma
- Bachelor degree
- Master degree or higher
- other

P8. Political affiliation:

- Communist party member
- Democratic party member
- Non party affiliated

P9. Ethnicity

- Han
- Others

P10 Please recall where you spent the longest of each year from 2010 to 2016 and fill in the following table.

Year	Place
2010	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural village <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area, please specify ()
2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural village <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area, please specify ()
2012	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural village <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area, please specify ()
2013	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural village <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area, please specify ()
2014	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural village <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area, please specify ()
2015	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural village <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area, please specify ()
2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural village <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area, please specify ()

P11. If you have further comments on this survey or would like to withdraw your answers, please write down here or get in contact with the research through email: biqing.li@adelaide.edu.au

The End, Thank You

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