Governing neoliberal authoritarian citizenship: theorizing *hukou* and the changing mobility regime in China

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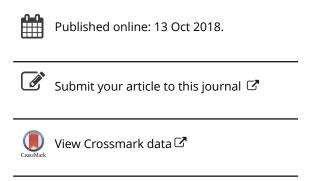Department of Political Science, Université libre de Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

ABSTRACT

Drawing on insights from critical citizenship studies and governmentality studies, this article explores and theorizes the changing mobility regime in China and its centerpiece, the household registration (*hukou*) system, from a global comparative perspective. First, we conceptualize the *hukou* system within the broader problematique of the spatiality of social citizenship and show how it enables processes of boundary-making that are comparable to the policing of the migrant poor in pre-welfare-state Europe and the subordination of international migrant labor in the contemporary world. Second, we argue that the shifting mobility regime envisaged by the current *hukou* reforms and new urbanization, which moves away from the dualistic structure of inclusion/exclusion to a multiplication of legal statuses and boundaries of citizenship, embodies a neoliberal-authoritarian rationality of government. Engaging with the debate on the hybrid governmentalities of post-socialist China, we focus particularly on new techniques of mobility management in China's first-tier cities, whose national positioning resembles that of Northern countries in the global hierarchy of power. Through examples of the point-based system and the strategy of functional dispersal, we demonstrate how these globalizing cities actively engineer a highly polarized mobility regime in their pursuit of generating globally competitive spaces. The article contributes to the critique of methodological nationalism by denaturalizing national citizenship as a pre-given point of departure in examining mobility and socio-spatial boundaries. It also offers new insights into the converging trends of neoliberal authoritarianism and authoritarian neoliberalism in governing the 'glocal' hierarchies of citizenship and mobility.

Introduction

In November 2017, the municipal government of Beijing kicked off a 40-day campaign against illegal rental units and informal residential constructions in response to a fire broke out in the city's southern suburb that killed 19 people. With no or very short notice, thousands of migrants living on the outskirts of Beijing were evicted, forced to return home or left homeless in the freezing winter (Haas 2017). The background to this controversial event described as a 'migrant crackdown' in international media is a wider and far-reaching project of urban transformation called 'functional dispersal'

(*gongneng shujie*), which among other objectives aims at reducing net migration through industrial restructuring and policing the housing market, a strategy first proposed by Beijing and adopted to varied degrees by other Chinese megacities. Functional dispersal and population regulation (*renkou tiaokong*) are some of the latest techniques and discourses of internal migration governance in China, a country that witnesses the largest human migration in the world. The movement of some 245 million people, known as the 'floating population' in the official vocabulary, has been driving the country's unprecedented economic growth and governed by an increasingly complex and variegated system of institutional differentiation. At the core of this mobility regime is the household registration system, also known as *hukou*, which functions as a form of local social citizenship that imposes considerable restrictions regarding access to social insurance, healthcare, education, housing, and other social rights on migrants, or those without local *hukou* status.

Given the pivotal role of household registration has played in the governance of rural-to-urban migration and accordingly in the Chinese model of economic development, there has been an extensive literature on the *hukou* system. Previous research has explicated that household registration not only directly regulates human mobility between urban and rural areas, but also underpins a comprehensive rural-urban dual structure that divides the national space into two 'hierarchically ordered parts: the city and the countryside' (Zhang 2002, 313). Citizenship rights are organized according to different logics in each part and substantial inequality characterized the state-controlled allocation of resources between the two in pre-reform China (Chan and Zhang 1999; Chan 2009). Scholars have also noted that the primary function of the *hukou* system today is no longer to restrict internal migration, but to maintain a differentiated citizenship regime under which millions of rural-urban migrants are allowed to move freely, but are excluded from social welfare rights in their places of residence (Wang 2005; Liu 2007).

However, the existing discussion has not sufficiently addressed the most recent reforms in household registration as well as the new technologies and rationalities of migration governance emerged from them (but see Chan and Wan 2017; Guo and Liang 2017). Following the central government's policy paper on *hukou* reforms (State Council 2014), 31 out of the 32 province-level administrative units have now abolished the distinction between 'agricultural' and 'non-agricultural' types of register, an institutional segregation previously considered blatantly discriminatory. Other proposals made by the central government include introducing the document of residence permit (*juzhuzheng*) as the basis for accessing basic public services; protecting the rights and interests of rural-urban migrants; and adopting points-based schemes for *hukou* acquisition (*jifen luohu*) in large cities. Furthermore, under a multi-tiered plan for *hukou* reform and urbanization, 'extra-large cities' are required to set stringent limits to their population size and encouraged to control net migration by employing a variety of market-oriented means (State Council 2014; Central Committee 2014).

Building on insights from critical citizenship studies and governmentality studies, this article explores and theorizes these changing strategies and rationalities of governing citizenship and mobility in China from a global comparative perspective. Critical scholarship in citizenship studies over the past two decades has significantly expanded the field by approaching citizenship beyond its traditional understandings focused

typically on rights and institutional participation. An inherently ambivalent concept, citizenship has been studied, for example, as insurgent acts through which excluded groups constitute themselves as political subjects (Isin and Nielsen 2008; McNevin 2011), or as a governmental technology which renders 'the global population governable' at the international level and produces the citizen subject as well as his various others within the nation-state (Hindess 1998; Cohen 2009). The latter approach often draws on the Foucauldian notion of governmentality and pays special attention to the forms of power that shape experiences of (non-)citizenship under neoliberal conditions (Hindess 2002; Walsh 2011; Sparke 2006). Although earlier scholarship on Chinese citizenship and internal migration was not particularly interested in the governmentality approach, this has been changing recently after a growing number of observers have turned to the Foucauldian vocabulary to analyze China's post-socialist market reforms (Sigley 2006; Zhang and Ong 2008; Bray and Jeffreys 2016). For instance, Wang and Liu (2018) have offered a reinterpretation of the *hukou* system in terms of governmental technologies, and Gleiss (2016) argues that the discourse on migrant workers since the 2000s has facilitated what she calls socialist-liberal governance.

Situated at the intersection between citizenship studies and the debate on China's hybrid governmentalities (Sigley 2007; Shue and Thornton 2017), the contribution of this article is twofold. First, it conceptualizes the Chinese household registration system within the broader problematique of the spatiality of social citizenship and shows how *hukou* constructs the boundaries of citizenship in ways comparable to the exclusion of the migrant poor in pre-welfare-state Europe and the subordination of international migrant labor in the contemporary world. Second, we argue that the mobility regime anticipated by the current *hukou* reforms and new strategies of urban governance, which indicate a shift from the dualistic urban-rural segregation to a multiplication of legal statuses, boundaries and hierarchies of citizenship, embodies a neoliberal-authoritarian rationality of government. Authoritarianism refers on the one hand to the country's formal political regime and on the other to the forms of governmental practice employed in the policing of migrant populations. Neoliberal governmentality highlights the mobilization of market mechanisms in migration control and indicates the linkage between the differentiated approach to filtering intra-national mobility and the spatial hierarchy of economic development under neoliberal globalization. It is in China's first-tier cities, due to their relative positioning within national and global fields of power,[1] that technologies of governing neoliberal authoritarian citizenship have been most extensively experimented with.

We advance these arguments by combining conceptual analysis with analyses of relevant policy instruments produced by central and local governments. As Walters and Haahr suggest (2005, 6), these official publications not only inform policies and practices but also, as discourse, constitute social reality (Laclau and Mouffe 2001) and acts of governing themselves through meaning-makings, problematizations and justifications. The term of mobility regime is used here to denote legal and socioeconomic constellations that not only constrain one's 'ability to move in space' (Shamir 2005, 200) but also determine how moving would impact on the mobile subject's relationship with the formal and informal arrangements of rights and opportunities. Throughout the article, we draw a series of comparisons between similar practices of mobility governance across time and space. Internal migration in China has been compared, most

notably, to the apartheid pass system in South Africa (Alexander and Chan 2004), international migration regimes (Solinger 1999; Johnson 2017), labor migration from Mexico to the USA (Roberts 1997), and the free movement of persons within the EU (Kovacheva et al. 2012; Pasquali 2015). We expand on this on both spatial and temporal dimensions by considering internal bordering prior to the era of national social citizenship and the neoliberalization of immigration policies in the contemporary world. The intention is first to denaturalize national citizenship as a pre-given point of departure in examining structures of bordering, othering, and exclusion. Second, through these juxtapositions, we hope to shed light on the 'multiplication of borders' across different geographical scales (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) and especially in the reorientation of mobility governance in China's globalizing cities.

The paper proceeds as follows. We start by reviewing the shifting question of borders and mobility in the formation of national social citizenship. Taking cues from Marshallian (rights-based) and Foucauldian perspectives on the subject, it is noted that the development of national citizenship in the European context rescales the boundary of inclusion/exclusion, yet the multiple differentiations implicated in the governance of the social operate beyond the binary of citizens and foreigners. Section II conceptualizes the Chinese *hukou* system as an apparatus of social citizenship and shows how its modalities of bordering can be compared with the forced exclusion of the migrant poor and the differential inclusion of international labor migration in different historical and geographical settings. The article then examines the emerging mobility/citizenship regime brought about by the *hukou* reform and projects of urbanization in terms of neoliberal authoritarian governmentality. We use examples of the points-based system and functional dispersal to illuminate that first-tier cities, whose national positioning resembles the status of Northern countries in the global hierarchy, employ these techniques of government to produce a highly polarized mobility regime in their pursuit of generating globally competitive spaces.

Citizenship, mobility and the governance of the social

This research approaches citizenship mainly in terms of governmental strategies that differentiate, govern, and at the same time are productive of the subjectivity of those who are governed (Procacci 2004). However, this strategic view does not preclude the understanding of citizenship as insurgent political spaces in which collective struggles are continuously pursued to contest governing structures.[2] The perspective of rights is crucial to analyzing both aspects of the dynamic, as citizenship regimes entail 'regulating the distribution of rights' (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, and Tsianos 2008) and acts of citizenship are oriented toward gaining, creating and enacting rights for the formally excluded. In this light, it is instructive to briefly review T.H. Marshall's rights-based account of social citizenship not only because of its unparalleled influence, but also because it provides a starting point from which one can appraise the relationship among social citizenship, rights and mobility as continuously reshaped in historical processes.

In his seminal essay, T. H. Marshall defines the 'social element' of citizenship as above all the right to 'share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society' (Marshall 1992, 11), and views social rights as the final developmental stage of modern citizenship following

the universalization of civil and political rights within the society he examines. Despite wide-ranging criticisms of this evolutionary narrative (Turner 2009), one of its most important (and under-appreciated) insights is that citizenship is not only a status position endowed with civil, political, and social rights, but also an evolving process. Marshall characterizes the evolvement from feudal and local membership to national citizenship as a 'double process' of geographical fusion and functional separation. Whereas in pre- and early modern times, some forms of civil, political, and social rights were granted based on membership of local communities, the industrial revolution and accompanying political changes would significantly reduce the relevance of local sources of rights and establish separate institutions at the national level 'on which the three elements of citizenship depended' (12–13). The process of geographical fusion, or the nationalization of citizenship rights, highlights the historical contingency that marks the conflation of national borders with the boundaries of social citizenship as we know it today.

It is especially telling to consider how earlier practices of social assistance were widely coupled with restrictions on the free movement of the poor between parishes, communes, or municipalities across Western Europe. In England, the Act of Settlement and Removal of 1662 (the Poor Relief Act) allowed local authorities to remove any persons from outside the parish who 'constituted, or were likely to become a charge on the poor rate' (Walters 2002, 270). Similarly, towns in sixteenth-century Prussia were required to support 'their own poor', and had the autonomy to exclude the migrant poor from establishing municipal membership or *Heimarecht*, which was a precondition for receiving assistance. Even though the Prussian state was eager to facilitate free movement of persons and adopted a legislation in 1842 that weakened municipal autonomy, Prussian towns were still allowed to deny entry to 'persons currently in need of public support', let alone other German states that were more concerned with the potential influx of paupers (Brubaker 1992, 65). Using multinational data on migration and social policy in nineteenth-century Europe, Kalm and Lindvall's study (2016) confirms that the removal of barriers to 'internal' movement coincided with the introduction of welfare institutions and social rights at the national level.[3]

Indeed, as Torpey (1999, 9) reminds us, the term 'internal' only makes sense after the modern territorial state has become the primary locus of authority and national boundaries the most important mechanism of spatial differentiation. The development of national social policy contributed on one hand to the construction of national identity, and on the other hand to the territorial order of citizenship which is no longer concerned with regulating the movement between 'local' communities, but between national states. In Balibar's words, the incorporation of social rights into the legitimacy of the modern state as a solution to displace class antagonisms eventually ties together 'the national' and 'the social', and 'reinforces the modern equation of citizenship and nationality' (2014, 114). Moreover, the institution of national social citizenship not only categorically excludes non-citizens but also operates through producing various normative, administrative, and biopolitical distinctions which cross-cut that between citizens and foreigners (Gonzales and Sigona 2017).

The governmentality approach to social citizenship is particularly productive for analyzing these technologies of categorization and differentiation. It directs our attention from social rights to a wider field of social government, which emerges from the

difficulties and inadequacies in governing citizens as autonomous legal-political subjects in a liberal economy (Procacci 2004). Foucault develops the concept of governmentality within the context of the rise of liberal government in Europe, defining it as the ensemble of the 'institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow' a specific form of power that has population as its target and political economy as 'its principle form of knowledge' (2007, 144). However, governmentality is also understood in a broader sense as an analytical tool interested in the calculative activities, techniques, and forms of knowledge that seek 'to shape conduct by working through the desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs of various actors' (Dean 2010, 18). From this perspective, we can take a strategic view on social citizenship as an aspect of liberal government concerned with the regularities of the population and the specific needs of individual citizens not only as *homo juridicus* but also as living beings. And its institutionalization in the twentieth century is preceded by the discovery of *the social* as a concrete field of political intervention and object of scientific knowledge in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Owens 2013).

If the domain of civil and political rights is based on the principle of status equality and individual autonomy, then the operation of social citizenship follows the logic of difference to accommodate 'a plurality of needs, capacities and applications' (Edmiston 2017, 265). In the heyday of the post-war welfare state exemplified by Marshall's narrative, administrative practices of categorization and intervention, enabled by statistical, sociological, and economic expertise, to address problems such as unemployment, poverty, and sickness are considered instrumental for the status equality of citizenship,[4] even though racialized exclusions have always been constitutive of liberal welfare regimes (Bhambra and Holmwood 2018). The neoliberal retrenchment of welfare intensifies the logic of difference through various projects of marketization, individualization, and responsibilization (Rose and Miller 1992). The field of social government is reorganized in such a way that certain population groups such as the urban poor, the unemployed, and the welfare recipients are increasingly constructed as 'semi-citizens' (Cohen 2009) and their governance often resorts to authoritarian means (Dean 2002; Hindess 2001).

Thus, the multifaceted structure of inclusion and exclusion of social citizenship does not conform entirely to the dichotomy of citizens and foreigners. On the one hand, long-term legal immigrants in Western liberal states have been differentially *included* in the regime of social rights before given the political right to participate in formal democratic institutions since the 1970s, hence reordering the 'Marshallian triptych' (Guiraudon 2000). The 'allocation of public resources for non-citizens' has become an important object of government in both immigration and welfare policies (Könönen 2018). On the other hand, irregular and temporary migrant workers from the Global South are differentially *excluded* from social citizenship as a combined effect of their precarious legal status and hierarchical power relations in the labor market (Dauvergne and Marsden 2014). Even within regional frameworks of free movement such as the European Union (Zhang and Lillie 2015, Faist 2014), migrant workers may still be vulnerable to exploitation and social exclusion due to structural differences between systems of social protection, informal employment, and cross-border inequalities that motivate migration in the first place.

To summarize, the spatiality of social citizenship is underpinned by institutional, normative, and discursive processes of boundary-making, to which the differentiation and regulation of human mobility is an integral part. This article situates a genealogical inquiry into the mobility regime in China and its centerpiece, the household registration system, within this problematique of the relationship between social citizenship, mobility, and bordering practices. Our analysis demonstrates how the variegated modes of bordering regulating social citizenship and mobility in China parallel some of the processes described above. Before we proceed, however, it seems necessary to note briefly on the Euro-centrism in both citizenship theory and the governmentality literature. Social and political theories by and large take European or 'Western' experiences as their primary, if not only, point of reference, and tend to construe all other histories as 'variations on a master narrative' (Chakrabarty 2000, 27) of European modernity. Challenging the Euro-centric bias promotes us not only to avoid interpreting the development of non-Western modernities as a one-directional story of ready-made models of modernity travelling from the European center to the rest of world (Zhang 2014), but also to caution against framing either the 'West' or the 'non-West' as monolithic and independent entities. Postcolonial critiques have for instance shown that the construction of non-Western societies and colonial subjectivities as the non-liberal or the less human is integral to the modern conception of liberal citizenship (Mezzadra 2006), and that the liberal welfare state has its global origin in colonial and racialized hierarchies (Bhambra and Holmwood 2018). Our method is different, yet shares a similar sensitivity toward problematizing the East/West dichotomy. This involves taking into account the specific historical, socioeconomic and ideological conditions that shape contemporary Chinese experiences of citizenship without exoticizing or essentializing such histories and experiences.

We seek to scrutinize the shifting modes of governing citizenship and internal mobility in contemporary China not only as a case study of 'citizenship in non-Western contexts' (Chung 2017) but also as one that questions both methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism by offering insights into the mechanisms of bordering in the governance of citizenship across different spatial scales and the multiplication of borders under neoliberal globalization. In this regard, the notion of governmentality, despite its European and liberal biases, can be a productive analytical tool when used to study 'combinations and hybrids' without treating notions such as liberalism, authoritarianism, or neoliberalism as discrete, totalizing systems (Walters 2012). Critical scholarship has recently expanded on the concept of authoritarian neoliberalism to analyze undemocratic, coercive, and punitive ways of governing dissenting and marginalized social groups in advanced capitalist societies (e.g. Bruff 2014; Tansel 2017). On the other hand, as to be shown below, China observers have drawn attention to the emergence of neoliberal forms of governance in the authoritarian regime that increasingly governs socio-economic activities through market mechanisms and responsibilizing the individual (Sigley 2006; Bray and Jeffreys 2016). This article highlights that the resonances between authoritarian neoliberal and neoliberal authoritarian regimes are particularly strong in the field of migration control, in which similar combinations of facilitative and coercive techniques of government are employed to filter and channel human mobility.

Hukou as social citizenship and modalities of boundary-making

Any investigations of the mobility regime in contemporary China cannot start without considering the changing functions of the household registration system (*hukou* or *huji*), which is first of all an administrative practice requiring all citizens to be registered with their local *hukou* authority after birth. What distinguishes it from other compulsory administrative registers is that more than a device of civil registration, the Chinese system ties one's official place of registration to their access to public goods and resources, and changing de *jure* place of registration can be difficult, if not impossible, for a large majority of rural-urban migrants and some migrants moving from smaller to bigger cities. Behind the immobility of *hukou* are highly fragmented social security systems (Chen and Turner 2015) that, despite recent efforts toward harmonization (Shi 2012), raise problems of (im)portability not only between rural and urban areas, but also between administrative regions.

Although the *hukou* system as we know it today has its origin in the 1950s, it is worth mentioning that population registration and classification has been practiced in China since ancient times. With varied emphases in different historical periods, household registration continuously served important social and political functions, including military conscription, taxation, local policing, social security, and mobility control, for about two millennia in the centralized bureaucratic empire (Van Glahn 2012). It is beyond the scope of this article to examine *huji* institutions in ancient China, but suffice it to say that the existence of comprehensive systems of population registration, classification and census for exercising social control and promoting the welfare of the population (e.g. providing famine relief) outside the modern Western world (Breckenridge and Szreter 2012) makes it clear that what Foucault has termed technologies of biopower are not exclusively a feature of European modernity. This again calls for a sensitivity to the fact that comparable governmental problems and technologies can emerge from diverse socio-economic and ideological structures.

Following a short period of free movement right after the Communist Party took control, the *hukou* system that would create a rigid geographical and socio-legal boundary between urban and rural residents in China was officially instituted by the 1958 Regulation on Household Registration. Under the system, citizens were not only bound to their official place of registration but also assigned to either an agricultural or non-agricultural type of *hukou* and the prospect for rural residents to convert to a non-agricultural *hukou* was strictly limited (Chan 2009). Up until the end of the 1970s, the dualistic registration system was in place to prohibit voluntary, 'unauthorized' migration from the country to the city, and worked in tandem with other institutional arrangements such as welfare provisions based on the work-unit in the city (Bray 2005), the organization of agricultural production through people's communes in the rural area, and the state's monopoly over allocation of goods and resources. The economic reforms since 1978, however, meant that restrictive control over human mobility was no longer in the interest of the incipient socialist market economy. The 1985 Regulation on the Management of Temporary Residents in Cities and Towns allowed rural migrants to reside in cities without possessing a local *hukou*, on the condition that they must apply for a temporary residence permit (*zanzhuzheng*) for any stays longer than 3 months. Further liberalizing policies have been implemented in the

twenty-first century under the initiatives of rural-urban integration and 'new urbaniza-tion' (See Section III). Thus in contrast to the Mao period, the rationality of household registration in post-socialist China is no longer to *restrict*, but to *govern* mobility; it helps maintain and produces social and spatial hierarchies no longer through exclusion, but through differential inclusion.

Building on previous theoretical insights on the subject (Liu 2007; Smart and Lin 2007; Wang 2005), we conceptualize *hukou* in its complex and still transforming role as an apparatus of social citizenship. From the perspective of rights, *hukou* status deter-mines to a large degree one's access to state-sponsored social rights in the Marshallian sense, such as those concerning education, healthcare, housing allowance, and social security. Migrants without local *hukou* would face institutional barriers and, more often than not, demanding requirements to enjoy such rights. The lack of *hukou* status is also associated with informal discriminations in the labor market, undermining the labor rights of migrant workers – especially those in irregular employment – pertaining to working conditions, overtime pay, work-related injuries, and so forth (Smart and Lin 2007; Swider 2016). It is noteworthy that unlike national citizenship, household regis-tration has a much less significant influence over the enjoyment of political rights than its decisive impact on migrants' access to social welfare benefits and public services.[5] From the perspective of governmentality, *hukou* enables extremely elaborate ways of governing the social far beyond the distribution of formal rights, which are above all geared toward achieving 'the right relationship between the population and the state's resources and possibilities' (Foucault 2007, 100). As Wang and Liu (2018) recently argue, the hukou regime(s) assumes a pivotal role in population management and resource allocation through 'a series of governmental technologies' based on classifica-tion and calculation. For instance, restricting rural-to-urban mobility and limiting the rights of non-*hukou* migrants serves the purpose of reducing the cost of urbanization (Chan and Wan 2017). *Hukou*-based policies are also constantly adjusted to meet various governmental goals under different circumstances. In larger cities where stricter control over resources is deemed necessary, limitations are imposed not only on welfare benefits but also on educational opportunities and economic activities such as purchas-ing properties. On the other hand, medium-sized cities faced with problems of over-development in the real estate market might relax *hukou* restrictions to encourage migrants to settle. The system thus not only produces a range of differentiations in all aspects of the socioeconomic life of the citizen at the micro-level, but also plays an indispensable part in facilitating other governmental projects such as industrial restruc-turing, urban transformation, and rural land ownership reforms at the macro-level.

If the construction of social citizenship entails processes of boundary-making, then what kind of borderwork *hukou* does and how does it compare to the multilayered structures of inclusion/exclusion with reference to national citizenship described ear-lier? The spatiality of *hukou* works in ways that both reminiscent of the policing of the migrant poor in pre-welfare-state Europe, and parallel the subordination of interna-tional migrant labor in the Global North nowadays. It configures the spatial order of social citizenship through two intertwined and co-productive forms of power: the state's coercive power and the 'free' operation of market force. Throughout the 1950s, the State Council and several ministries issued more than 10 circulars aiming to prevent the 'blind outflow' (*mangmu wailiu*) of rural laborers, introducing to the Chinese

vocabulary the derogatory term '*mangliu*', which carries a strikingly similar image to the 'floating populations of beggars, vagrants, delinquents, criminals, thieves, murderers, and so on' (Foucault 2007, 34) as a problem of social government in European history. In addition to preventing social unrest, the prohibition of voluntary rural-urban migration in the Mao era served to ensure sufficient resources available to urban industries and stable agricultural production under the socialist planned economy. In the transition to a market economy that requires labour mobility, punitive measures targeting the migrant poor from rural areas in the 1980s and 1990s would be justified more exclusively by concerns of social order (*shehui zhi'an*).[6]

The now-abolished Procedure on the Custody and Repatriation of Beggars and Vagrants in the City,[7] adopted to 'assist, educate and provide shelter for' vagrants and beggars to maintain social order and solidarity in the city (State Council 1982), was exemplary of this penalizing approach. It requested urban authorities to establish the so-called 'reception and repatriation' stations to detain, provide temporary relief to, and repatriate vagrant persons to their original place of household registration. Comparable to the English Poor Relief Act mentioned earlier, the rationale of this administrative procedure is also framed as serving the double purpose of providing poor relief and policing the social boundaries of the local community through expulsion – both aspects treat the assisted and removed as the opposite of the citizen.[8] In the former case, the ruling class would shift their focus away from the mobile poor as a threat to social order to the 'role of the laboring classes as an economic resource' (Rawlings 2001, 61) under the influence of the Industrial Revolution, and the poor law reform in the nineteenth century would lead a 'slow and incomplete' transition from local to national boundaries in 'determining entitlement to welfare' (Feldman 2003, 91). Although the Chinese policy evolved in a similar context characterized by increased economic needs for labor mobility, the preoccupation with social control and stability led instead to further criminalization of migrant populations. A new instrument introduced in 1990 extended the targeted group from vagrants to all migrants without required documents (ID, temporary residence permit, and work permit). The enhanced measure of detention and expulsion, thus, resembled more the contemporary deportation regime in Europe and the USA that criminalizes and dehumanizes undocumented immigrants (De Genova 2002, 2013), frequently subjecting 'undocumented' internal migrants to 'extra-legal brutality' (Han 2010).[9] It was the tragic death of Sun Zhigang, a university graduate who was detained and beat to death in a reception center in Guangzhou, that stirred nation-wide debates about the constitutionality of the procedure and the protection of individual rights, leading to its eventual abolishment in 2003.[10]

Local authorities continued to exercise coercive power on rural migrants through, for instance, raiding street vendors and demolition of informal settlements (Zhang 2001; Swider 2016), despite the official abolition of forced expatriation. However, *hukou* produces and reproduces borders in the socioeconomic order not only through punishing or excluding the migrant body, but more importantly, by including and profiting from it. It is a process of 'inclusion through exclusion' (De Genova 2013) that echoes the exploitation of undocumented and temporary migrant workers in advanced liberal democracies: a mode of subjugation that appears as market practice yet is enabled by illegality and temporariness produced by law. As noted above, the document of temporary resident permit had been a legal source of illegality for Chinese migrant

workers before it was gradually replaced with the supposedly more egalitarian residence permit. This means that migrants without such permits can be vulnerable to everyday police violence, and such vulnerability renders them 'a highly exploitable workforce' (De Genova 2002, 438). But even for legally residing migrant workers, the enormous difficulty in obtaining local *hukou* status and other institutional obstacles[11] force them to work and live as perpetually temporary migrants, inhabiting an in-between space of non-belonging and often separated from families. The differentiated citizenship regime, therefore, produces not only spatial barriers but also temporal disconnections in the life-world of certain mobile populations. In this regard, the predicament of Chinese internal migrants in informal or subcontracted work parallels that of temporary, circular and posted workers moving internationally (Lillie 2012; Strauss and McGrath 2017), who experience deepening precariousness resulted from mutually reinforcing factors of insecure legal status and exploitative market relations.

The emergence of neoliberal authoritarian citizenship

Growing societal discontent with *hukou* segregation, the increasing salience of rural-urban migrants (*nongmingong*) as a governmental problem as well as the national strategy of integrated urban-rural development inaugurated in 2006 have all generated enormous pressures to reform the *hukou* system. Several provinces started to gradually abolish the distinction between agricultural and non-agricultural types of registration in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and began to loosen the requirements for obtaining local *hukou* in migrant-receiving cities. More recently, a series of policy directives have been adopted by the central government to consolidate and broaden these reforms, including most notably the 2014 Opinions on Further Promoting Reform of the Household Registration System, the National Plan for New Urbanization (2014–2020), the 2016 Action Plan for Promoting 100 Million Migrants to Acquire Local *Hukou* in Cities, and the Interim Regulation on Residence Permits that entered into force from 1 January 2016.

Key policy changes set out in these instruments can be summarized as follows. First, the classification of agricultural and non-agricultural types of *hukou* is to be abolished nation-wide, and a unified household registration system shall be established to administer urban and rural residents.[12] Second, the document of residence permit shall replace temporary resident permit and serve as the institutional basis for legally residing migrants to enjoy basic public services. As for 'other rights such as education benefits, employment assistance, housing, elder care, social welfare and social assistance', the central government envisages 'gradually achieving equality' between immigrant residence-card-holders and local *hukou*-holders depending on length of residence and years of participation in the social security scheme (State Council 2014). Third, the government formulates a multi-tiered, differentiated approach to reforming *hukou* policies (*chabiehua luohu*) in cities of different sizes (see Table 1). Finally, the notion of human-centered urbanization is framed as a guiding normative principle, which emphasizes equalizing access to public services and promoting the 'urbanization/citizenization' (*shiminhua*)[13] of migrant workers at the individual level (Central Committee 2014).

The changing regime of governing internal (and international) mobility must be contextualized within the larger transformation in the 'socialist art of government'

Table 1. A differentiated approach to hukou acquisition (*chabiehua luohu*). Source: State Council (2014).

City size (based on urban population)	*Hukou* policy principles
Extra-large cities (over 5 million)	'Strictly control population size'; 'establish and improve point-based systems for *hukou* acquisition'.
Large cities (1 to 5 million)	'Set reasonable requirements for *hukou* acquisition'. 'The required minimum time period for contributing to the social security scheme should not exceed 5 years'. 'Can also introduce point-based systems'.
Medium-sized cities (500 thousand to 1 million)	'Loosen up requirements for *hukou* acquisition gradually and in good order'. 'The required minimum time period for contributing to the social security scheme should not exceed 3 years'.
Towns and small cities (county-level cities)	'*Hukou* acquisition should be open to all those with legal and stable residence'.

(Sigley 2006) China has been experimenting with in the past few decades. As the expanding literature on Chinese governmentalities has demonstrated, China's post-socialist reform is not only about historical shifts from centralized planned economy to the so-called socialist market economy, but also about fundamentally rethinking the style of government, reconfiguring the relationship between state and society, and reshaping the subjectivity of the individual as self-responsible, autonomous, and entrepreneurial citizens (Zhang and Ong 2008; Bray and Jeffreys 2016). In other words, the dictatorial and centralized ways of ruling in Maoist China are gradually shifted toward governing through 'market mechanisms and the individual profit motive' (Dutton and Hindess 2016, 18), which necessitates legal protection of such mechanisms and personal autonomy. However, as Sigley argues, this does not mean that the role of the government is weakened, but only shifted away from direct intervention to 'using the legal system, macro levers and administrative commands only where absolutely necessary' (2006, 502). He hence describes the political rationality as a 'hybrid socialist-neoliberal' one that is at once 'authoritarian in a familiar political and technocratic sense' and (neo)liberal in the sense of governing certain subjects 'through their own autonomy' (504).

Admittedly, the concept of neoliberalism itself has been accused of being inconsistent or inaccurate, especially in the field of China studies (Kipnis 2007). Focusing on state-market relations and political economic structures, we could follow Jessop in understanding neoliberalism as a multifaceted reorientation of liberalism that pursues both an economic project organized around the liberalization of market transactions within and beyond state borders, and a political one seeking to re-engineer state intervention toward 'forms of governance that are purportedly more suited to a market-driven economy' (Jessop 2002, 454). The governmentality approach grasps neoliberalism as a rationality of government beyond institutional practices, and turns to a wider array of processes, subjectivities, and sensibilities aimed to ensure that 'competitive mechanisms can play a regulatory role' (Foucault 2008, 145) in all aspects of social relations. While these approaches differ in emphases and methods, we hold that both underline how the exercise of political power has been remodeled, rather than diminished, to better channel market forces and compensate for their inadequacies.

Acknowledging that projects of neoliberalization take diverse forms and are unevenly articulated in different political constellations (Ong 2006), we certainly do

Table 2. Points systems in Beijing, Shanghai, and Australia as of May 2018.

Beijing		Shanghai		Australia (skilled independent)	
Age	Max. 20	Age	Max. 30	Age	Max. 30
Education	Min. 10.5 – Max. 37	Education	Min. 50 – Max. 110	Education	Min. 10 – Max. 20
Innovation and entrepreneurship	Max. 12	Professional skills	Min. 15 – Max. 140	Language ability	20
Legal and stable employment	3 points per year	Employment (social security contribution)	3 points per year	Skilled employment	Max. 20 (for 8–10 years of employment in AU)
Residence in suburban areas	Max. 6 or 12	Residence in suburban areas	Min. 10 – Max. 20	Study in Regional Australia	5
Legal and stable residence	0.5 p.a. for rented-home; 1 p.a. for self-owned property	Partner's status	4 points per year, Max. 40	Partner qualifications	5
Amount of taxes paid	Max. 6	Entrepreneurial talent	120	Australian study Requirements	5
Awards	Max. 20	Shortage occupation	30	Specialist education qualification	5
Other	Penalty points	Other	E.g. investment	Other	E.g. community language
Pass mark	Dependent on annual quota	**Pass mark**	120	**Pass mark**	60

Source: Beijing Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security, http://www.bjrbj.gov.cn/jflh/jf_zcwj/201804/t20180410_72083.html. Shanghai Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security, https://jzzjf.12333sh.gov.cn/jzzjf/pingfen/zc2.jsp. Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/visa-1/189-. Note that all schemes have additional requirements not included in the table. The sequence of items has been adjusted to foreground commonalities. In Australia, the pass mark refers to the minimal score for visa application. In Shanghai, the pass mark ensures the applicant's eligibility for certain social rights, not for hukou itself. In both Beijing and Shanghai, the prerequisites for hukou application include having paid into social security for 7 consecutive years.

not intend to use the term as a totalizing model for explaining the profound political, economic, and societal changes in contemporary China, whose economic model is rooted in state capitalism and political culture Leninist-authoritarianism. However, it is useful to be reminded that 'governmentality does not exist in a pure form anywhere', but comprises hybrids of different techniques and rationalities (Walters 2012). As noted earlier, the deployment of disciplinary and authoritarian forms of power on individuals and groups who are considered lacking in some of the essential qualities of the self-governing citizen has been characteristic of liberal government. The field of border and migration governance is a paradigmatic example of the 'illiberal' side of liberal states (Guild, Groenendijk, and Carrera 2009), epitomized by the militarization of sovereign borders and criminalization of migrants across the territory. On the other hand, however, it also relies increasingly on the logic of market veridiction and embraces the mobility rights of transnational elites (Rajas 2015). Against this background, we argue that the new techniques and discourses of governing mobility and citizenship in China embody a neoliberal-authoritarian rationality and share close affinities with the 'neoliberal nexus' in the international governance of migration (Sparke 2006). The emerging mobility/citizenship regime emphasizes protection of individual rights on one hand, and introduces dense stratifications that seek to facilitate the mobility of the privileged few and immobilize or displace – no longer directly through administrative commands but through the market – others. In the remainder of the paper, we illustrate this by first outlining three key characteristics of the evolving mobility regime, and then focusing specifically on two instruments of mobility government in neoliberal authoritarian cities: the point-based system and the projects of 'functional dispersal' (*gongneng shujie*).

First, discursive and policy changes at both national and local levels have been geared toward protecting the 'legal rights and interests' (*hefa quanyi*) of migrants and providing them with equalized public services (*jundenghua fuwu*), which is a continuation and consolidation of the political discourse on 'service-oriented government' (*fuwuxing zhengfu*) and defending the rights of migrant workers that has emerged since the 2000s (General Office 2003; State Council 2006; Gleiss 2016). It is illuminating to consider how this contrasts with the justification of mobility control offered by the Minister of Public Security in the 1950s:

> Some of the provisions in the Regulation [on household registration] are restrictive,… but they are made according to our coordinated national plan and for the good of 600 million people. Their purpose is to protect the political rights and economic interests of the people as a whole.…. The freedoms enshrined in the Constitution are freedoms with guidance, not anarchism; they are freedoms of the populace in general, not the absolute personal freedom of the few. (Luo 1958)

If the socialist-authoritarian reason of government requests the sacrifice of personal rights and freedoms for the sake of order and prosperity of society as a whole, then the (neo)liberal-authoritarian rationality claims to enhance the rights and protect the autonomy of the individual so long as it does not undermine the order, prosperity, and 'resources' of the community (city, province, national society). This is consistent with the growing recognition of the value of mobility in a market society and the 'rising salience of conceptions of self-development' in post-reform China (Woodman and Guo

2017; Young 2013; Nyíri 2011). In fact, strengthening migrants' rights is now considered indispensable for 'achieving social justice, eliminating social risks', and advancing 'social harmony' (Central Committee 2014). The replacement of temporary residence permit, which was widely considered discriminatory, with the more 'egalitarian' sounding residence permit[14] and linking the latter to accessing basic public services is the most important administrative reform in this regard. Although recent studies note that discrepancies exist between the rhetoric of the central government and persisting discriminatory practices in local implementations (Zhang and Li 2016), the expansion of social rights proposed in the policy directives of the central government has never meant to be universal or unconditional in the first place. Rather, the reform plan allows local governments to impose an array of restrictions on the enjoyment of local social citizenship according to the 'level of socioeconomic development' and 'the hosting capacity of the city' (State Council 2014). In a way parallel to the differential incorporation of non-citizens into European welfare states (Kofman 2005; Könönen 2018), the structure of inclusion and exclusion previously defined by *hukou* is substituted with a *continuum* of statuses, associated with varied degrees of social citizenship, contingent on years of residence, income, educational attainment, quantified contribution to society, and so on. The selective and differential expansion of rights thus serves as a technique of government that renders social citizenship a 'reward' (Woodman and Guo 2017) to be 'earned' by 'deserving' migrants.

Also constitutive of this further stratified regime of social citizenship is the anticipated 'urbanization/citizenization' of rural migrants themselves. In the strategy paper on new urbanization, transforming rural migrants into urbanites (*shimin*) is both a policy goal that municipal governments should achieve by, for example, providing them with equalized services, and an objective of personal development expected of rural migrants themselves: they must 'improve their capability to integrate into urban society' (Central Committee 2014). The discourse of human improvement, exemplified by the much-discussed notion of '*suzhi*' or human quality (Yang 2003; Kipnis 2007), thus both reinforces the hierarchical relationship between urbanites (the full-fledged citizen) and rural migrants (the semi-citizen who needs improvement), and promises a more open and inclusive city conditioned upon migrants' successful self-development.

Second, the differentiated approach to *hukou* acquisition (Table 1) not only multiplies the boundaries of rights *within* the urban space, but also deepens the hierarchy of mobility *between* cities with difference sizes, powers, and resources. The urbanization policy in China has always been preoccupied with controlling the city size (Chan and Wan 2017) and contributed to what Lim (2014) calls an 'uneven economic-geographical development'. As Lim explicates, China's economic policy in the 1990s was guided by a geographical theory that delineated the state spatiality into three hierarchically organized zones – the eastern, central and western (230). The coastal area gained the highest priority in integrating into the global economy and benefited immensely from the mobility of disenfranchised migrants as other fastest-growing economies in the world (McNevin 2011). As regional disparities widen, however, the mobility regime needs to be adjusted not only to address the tensions arising from economic inequalities but also to accommodate new conditions and facilitate new goals of urban development. Whereas labor-intensive manufacturing industries are moving westwards to inner cities, first-tier megacities in the coastal zone strive to move up global value chains and

engineer their respective visions of global cities. The *hukou* reforms at national and local levels respond to these new conditions and reinforce pre-existing mobility disparities between cities in different 'tiers'. While restrictions on *hukou* acquisition and access to social citizenship are being relaxed in medium and large cities, the so-called extra-large cities are introducing even more polarized mobility regimes by utilizing varied techniques of urban governance beyond to *hukou*.[15]

Third, like many other policy fields in the post-reform era, one of the overall principles of new urbanization is formulated as 'market-led and government-guided' (*shichang zhudao, zhengfu yindao*) – or 'insisting on the determinative role of the market in the allocation of resources and improving the functions of the government', a phrase first introduced in the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in 2013. The same rhetoric has been adopted by municipal governments in their respective plans for population regulation (*renkou tiaokong*) – a politically neutral term for migration control. The modus operandi is that market has its own objective laws (*shichang guilü*) which must be respected, and it is the function of the government to *make* market play its 'determinate' role by actively creating necessary institutional preconditions.[16] The authoritarian goal of internal migration control is, therefore, to be achieved by mobilizing market laws, which nonetheless must be put into work through government-sponsored projects of urban restructuring. The entanglement of authoritarian and neoliberal forms of techniques and rationales is most evident in first-tier cities that implement the most selective migration policies. Let us now turn to two examples of these new techniques.

Quantifying deservingness: the points system and the competitive city-region

The point-based system for the acquisition of *hukou* or equivalent socioeconomic rights has now been introduced in all first-tier megacities and some of the smaller cities fulfilling the criteria set out in the Opinions (State Council 2014). 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*' (Tianjin 2015). It is not only intended to serve the purpose of regulating (*tiaokong*) the size of population in megacities, which have all set their respective 'population caps', but also deemed beneficial for cities to 'attract talents', 'optimize population structure', and 'influencing the behavioral patterns of migrants'[17] (Hou 2014; Xie 2014). Table 2 summarizes the scoring systems implemented in the two cities where migration policies are most selective, Beijing and Shanghai, and highlights their affinities with a representative point-based system for immigrant admission in the international arena.

Although the details of criteria and degrees of selectivity differ, all existing points systems introduced in first-tier cities unequivocally favor the young, the talented, the well-educated, and the rich. The most commonly used criteria for evaluating individual 'deservingness' of social citizenship are numerical assessments of age factor, educational qualification, consecutive years of legal employment with social security contribution, and special talents and skills. Resembling point-based immigrant admission policies adopted in a growing number of Western countries and beyond, these numerical systems of evaluation are representative of market-driven 'calculative practices' seeking to optimize

the population – a term deployed by municipal governments themselves – by 'ranking, ordering and selective migrants and promoting skills, competitiveness and economic benefits as institutional goals' (Walsh 2011, 862). Quantifying citizenship is also a political strategy to depoliticize – to transform questions of international or subnational inequalities, border justice and social rights into 'technical, professional or administrative matters to be resolved' (Rose and Miller 1992, 197) by sophisticated and ostensibly objective numerical models.

Walsh contends that the points system in Australian and Canadian immigration policies reflects the states' active responses to global neoliberal restructuring by providing technical filters for 'accumulating human, financial and cultural capital' (2011, 869). Similarly, and following Schiller and Çağlar's theory of locality, varying degrees of migrant selectivity in Chinese cities must be understood in relation to their 'relative positioning within intersections of hierarchical fields of power' (2009, 188). On the one hand, the scalar positioning of first-tier cities within national spatiality mirrors the status of Northern countries in the global economy, which gives them privileges and incentives to implement strict internal migration policy. On the other hand, they aspire to move up in global hierarchies and become China's first global cities. If points systems in smaller cities do play a role in integrating migrants into urban life (Gao and Yang 2018), then the higher the city is positioned in the hierarchical fields of political, economic and cultural power, the more explicitly oriented toward skills, wealth and competitiveness its migration policy is. As a result, in contrast to the optimistic media narrative that praised the points system as a 'beam of sunshine for migrant workers' when it was first revealed (Wu 2013), the actual number of applicants who obtain *hukou* via the scheme in first-tier cities is less than a tiny fraction of the migrant population – around 0.06% per year in Shanghai and 0.08% in Guangzhou (People's Daily 2016). Ironically, 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,[18] both internal and international, in their competition over human and financial capital: an irony analogous to the polarization of mobility and citizenship on a global scale.

'Functional dispersal' and market-mediated displacement

Facilitating the mobility of those deemed valuable for strengthening the competitiveness of the city-region is at the expense of excluding migrants and migrant spaces that are considered useless or even detrimental for the projects of urban restructuring. In the latest edition of their master plans, Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou have produced their own imaginaries of global city and claimed to achieve the goal of population regulation by improving the quality (*suzhi*) of the population and optimizing its structure. Concrete measures include boosting the knowledge economy, expanding the employment of 'high-caliber talents' and gradually phasing out 'low-end labor-intensive' industries (Shanghai 2018, 23). While socialist urban planning in earlier periods emphasized state-enforced methods such as demolition, repatriation and the illegalization of migrants, migration control in the neoliberal authoritarian city is now

focused more on market-based mechanisms such as industrial restructuring and regulating the housing market.

The concept of 'functional dispersal' (*gongneng shujie*) – first proposed by Beijing in 2010 and now also adopted by other cities in the discourse and practice of urban governance – is exemplary of this strategy. The buzzword means to remove functions, sectors, and industries that do not conform to the city's development goal, and thereby to achieve 'orderly migration and appropriate geographical distribution of the population' (Beijing 2010). It later on became incorporated into the development strategy of the Jing-Jin-Ji megaregion announced in 2015, calling for the transfer of so-called 'non-capital functions' from Beijing to adjacent cities and regions. With respect to migration control, the core principle according to the municipal government of Beijing is 'managing population size by regulating industries and the housing market' (*yiye kongren, yifang guanren*, Beijing 2017). District governments launched a series of campaigns in 2016 and managed to 'disperse', a euphemism of 'remove', at least 158 thousand migrants and low-income residents by shutting down 'low-end' manufacturing factories, eliminating street-level businesses, and cracking down the 'illegal rental market' (Beijing News 2016). Functional dispersal is, therefore, effectively 'dispersing' mechanisms of migration control from the administrative to the social-economic field, aiming at the dual objective of 'upgrading' the structure of both urban economy and human capital.

These projects of urban renewal resonate with the rise of 'gentrification as a global urban strategy' in many parts of the world that encompasses multiple forms of exclusion, dispossession, and authoritarian practices (Smith 2002). Yet in Chinese megacities, the neoliberal-authoritarian nexus is expressly associated with internal migration control and the idea of population 'optimization'. It is noteworthy that the combination of coercive and market-based approaches to 'population regulation' takes varied forms in different cities. For instance, at the center of political power, urban governance in Beijing exhibits a strong authoritarian character and has been engaged more in direct governmental interventions as the campaigns described above indicate, even though they no longer explicitly illegalize migrant bodies as previous practices of detention and repatriation did. The process of gentrification in Shenzhen, an economic center with a large number of migrant workers in the manufacturing industry, has been shaped mainly by urban redevelopment projects (Liu et al. 2018).[19] However, a common rationale is discernable in the governance of first-tier cities that actively imagines and fabricates a purified neoliberal urban space centered on financial and high-technology sectors and up-scale residency, while seeking to remove or invisibilize low-skilled sectors and persons.

Just like the patterns of differential inclusion destabilize the binary of citizenship and non-citizenship in other settings (Gonzales and Sigona 2017), the polarized regime of mobility and social citizenship in China's globalizing cities blurs the boundary between domestic migrants and local *hukou*-holders, and between international and internal mobility. On the one hand, special schemes to ensure that 'high-caliber talents' enjoy access to rights and privileges related to housing, education and pension have been tabled to attract both domestic *and* international migrants (e.g. Beijing 2018). On the other hand, not only internal migrants in low-income sectors, but also marginalized urban residents *and* racialized international migrants (Wilczak 2018) are being deprived of the right to the city through projects of 'functional dispersal' in the name of safety, urban beautification, and global competitiveness. This draws attention to the

flexibilization and multiplication of borders in the governance of citizenship and mobility that rescales and interlaces the urban and the global.

Conclusion

In this article, we have sought to theorize the intra-national mobility regime in China as an effort to denaturalize national citizenship as the predominant point of reference in the study of migration and socio-spatial boundaries, and to shed light on the proliferation, dis-locating and re-locating of borders under neoliberal globalization. First, we conceptualize the household registration system in relation to the spatiality of social citizenship, demonstrating how processes of internal bordering and the conditioning of cross-border mobility enabled by *hukou* can be compared with similar practices of governing the social through disciplining, filtering and facilitating human mobility across time and space. This approach responds to recent calls for overcoming Eurocentrism in citizenship studies and analyzing Chinese citizenship as 'a constitutive part' of modernity (Woodman and Guo 2017) by focusing specifically on the centrality of borders and cross-border mobility to citizenship regimes. Concurring with previous studies that take a comparative perspective (Johnson 2017; Pasquali 2015), this research highlights parallels between the institutions and discourses of internal and international bordering. It illustrates that although the boundaries of social citizenship are contingently monopolized by national borders in certain spatio-temporal contexts, they can be shaped by sub-national (or even supra-national) systems in other settings and constantly reconfigured by changing geographies of rights, belonging, and development.

Second, we argue that the current transformation of this mobility regime envisaged by *hukou* reforms and new strategies of urbanization gives rise to a hybrid form of neoliberal authoritarian citizenship. With the abolishment of rural and urban types of household register, the previously dualistic structure of inclusion/exclusion is replaced with a continuum of statuses and further stratifications of social citizenship. Although the discourse of individual rights has become increasingly salient since the 2000s, the distribution of rights itself functions as a technique of government that produces and legitimate these stratifications. The liberalizing initiative to replace *hukou* with the more easily obtainable residence permit as the basis for enjoying social rights associates the latter instrument with the most basic services and subjects the access to full social citizenship to a range of socioeconomic criteria, which also resembles the differential integration of international immigrants into the national welfare system in liberal states. We have examined in particular the emerging technologies and rationalities of migration government beyond the much-discussed *hukou* system in China's first-tier cities, whose positioning in the national space mirrors that of Northern countries in the global fields of power. Globalizing cities deploy tools such as the point-based system and market-mediated displacement to accelerate the mobility of those deemed beneficial for their pursuit of producing globally competitive space, while excluding the undesirable through both governmental intervention and market mechanisms. Taken together, the article points to the converging trends of neoliberal authoritarianism and authoritarian neoliberalism in governing the 'glocal' hierarchies of citizenship and mobility. While this study has focused on the interface between the changing mobility regime and the

urban space, its relationship with rural land reforms and the possibilities for political contestation point to avenues for future research.

Notes

1. Currently Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen are unofficially known as first-tier cities (*yixian chengshi*) based on their economic powers (Chan and Wan 2017). Note that their political statuses differ from one another, with Beijing holding the highest political power while Shenzhen ranked lower in the administrative hierarchy than the other three. The National Master Plan for Urban System (2005–2020) officially lists Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong as cities with 'global functions'. These can be considered 'top-scale' cities in the sense of Schiller and Çağlar (2009), that is, according to their positioning in the fields of political and/or economic power.
2. There has been a rich literature on the inextricable relationship between citizenship as government and as political contestations. See for instance Nyers and Rygiel (2012), McNevin (2013), and Balibar (2014).
3. Recognizing the historical specificities of national social citizenship by no means indicates that there is an inherent 'paradox' between the welfare state and immigration. Extensive empirical evidence has shown that assuming a simplistic relation between welfare policies and openness for immigration is misleading (Bauböck and Scholten 2016).
4. The arrangements of liberal welfare states differ considerably (Esping-Andersen 1990), and the degree to which welfare institutions contribute to egalitarian citizenship varies.
5. For example, non-*hukou* holders must have paid into the social security scheme for 5 consecutive years in Beijing, subject to many other conditions, to be eligible for applying for public housing, yet migrants can vote in local elections after 1 year of residence. Note that only local People's Congresses are directly elected in China.
6. Zhang (2001) describes a national conference in 1995, at which officials 'urged local governments to put combating migrant-related crime and disorder at the top of their agenda for safeguarding the socialist order' (166). See also Wallace (2014) on the link between the restriction on internal migration and China's regime stability.
7. The procedure is known as *shourong qiansong* in Chinese. '*Shourong*' can also be translated as 'to receive' and 'to provide shelter for'. Note that repatriations were also practiced in pre-reform China, when spontaneous labor migration from rural to urban areas was not allowed.
8. The Chinese language literature typically relates that the procedure was initially designed to fulfill multiple purposes of social assistance, social education, and maintaining social order, but became 'distorted' at the street level. It has been studied as part of the transformation of the social assistance system from a penalizing model to one respecting individual rights (Yu and Tang 2012; Hu 2013).
9. Han (2010) also contends that the discriminatory policing of rural migrant workers can be analyzed in terms of racialization.
10. Sun's tragic death fueled public and academic debates about constitutional rights and freedom of movement, including voices from eminent legal scholars (e.g. Zhang 2004), and helped strengthen the political discourse on protecting migrants' rights that had emerged in the early 2000s (see Section III).
11. Rural migrants might be reluctant to acquire *hukou* in their place of residence for fear of losing land rights or prefer maintaining rural ties for various reasons (Zou 2017).
12. This means that an individual citizen's *hukou* no longer has a classification (agricultural or non-agricultural) on its own, yet does not mean that rural-urban or urban-urban migrants can automatically acquire local *hukou* when moving to a city.
13. The term 'citizen' can be translated as *gongmin* or, less conventionally, *shimin*. Although the literal meaning of *shimin* is urban dwellers, it also implies a particular subjectivity that is modern, autonomous, and aware of his/her rights and obligations.

14. The generalization of *juzhuzheng* is generally perceived in mass media as a positive sign toward equal citizenship (e.g. Beijing Times 2015; CNR 2017).
15. Researchers note that the liberalization of *hukou* policies has also to do with the expropriation of rural and peri-urban land (Andreas and Zhan 2016; Zhang 2018). This is an important aspect that cannot be dealt with here given the limited scope of the paper.
16. See also Lim's (2017) elaboration on how the Chinese state has redefined existing institutions and entrenched its political power through neoliberal restructuring.
17. For a recent critical study of the case of Dongguan, see Guo and Liang (2017).
18. For example, Beijing Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security 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.
19. Redevelopment-induced displacement also exists in Beijing, and interventionist methods are also used in other more 'liberal' cities. China Labor Bulletin (2018) suggests that partly because of the public backlash against forced evictions that took place in Beijing, governments in Guangzhou and Shenzhen 'have taken a softer approach' to displacement lately.

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