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Governing Marginality:
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by

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Committee in charge:

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Abstract

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by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

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Since the dawn of China's economic reform in the late 1970s, internal migrants from the rural area have been a major source of labor force that fueled the rapid development in the coastal provinces, firstly in the exporting manufacturing sector and then in the domestic service sector. As the pre-reform legacy of Household Registration (Hukou) System tied their legal residency to their rural birthplace, these rural residents were long been excluded from the urban governance and social service regime. The reproduction of labor force, however, requires these fundamental functions of governmentality. Based on two participant observation field research, one in 2006 and the other in 2016, this project seeks to delineate how the governmental vacuum between the urban local state and the rural migrant laborers have been filled up by different alternative institutional arrangements at different historical moments associated with different political economic settings. In 2006, in the context of exclusive politics and the manufacturing paradigm, the "dormitory labor regime" filled up the governmental vacuum by the factory management serving as a *de facto* local state; in 2016, along with the emerging politics of inclusion and the expansion service sector, what this research calls "neo-corporatism" gradually replaced the previous paradigm with the market-based coalition between the local state and grassroots NGOs.

By contracting social service programs to grassroots NGOs, neo-corporatism claims, and is claimed, to be a "welfarist incorporation." Grassroots NGOs are supposed to contribute their specialties in social services to the incorporation the migrants, whereas they themselves are increasingly relying on the local state for their survival and development. In reality, however, the differentiated governmental logics and varying configurations of community networks complicated the picture. On the one hand, depending on the state logic and officials' incentives, two models of state-NGO coalition building are differentiated. On the other, depending on the occupational makeup of the local informal service market, the migrant communities are organized differently. It is argued, furthermore, the interaction between state-NGO coalition building and community conditions may lead to strikingly different community politics. With these observations, in the end of this dissertation, the promise of neo-corporatism will be re-examined.

Preface

In 2006, before I started my Master's Thesis project in Hengfa Company, a Taiwanese-funded handbag manufacturer located in Guangdong Province, I visited the province's capital city, Guangzhou. I was there to join a group of college student from Hong Kong, who were on a field trip to learn about China's ongoing social transitions. On a hot summer afternoon, therefore, I visited an "urban village" in a newly developed business district of the city. A graduate student, out "tour guide," explained what had been happening in the village—how the farmland of the village had been incorporated into the urban business district while the peasant housing land was still controlled by the village committee; how the peasants, now having lost the farmland, were trying to rent out their houses to make ends meet; and how the traditional ways of life was affected by the urban development. The narrow lanes in the village were quiet and somewhat empty. A few villagers walked by as we talked but they seemed indifferent to intruders like us.

These Hong Kong students then started interviewing the villagers in Cantonese, a language I never exceled. I did not mind being left behind as, after all, that was not the topic I was focused on—inspired by some newly published, groundbreaking work in labor studies, especially Ching Kwan Lee's *Gender and the South China Miracle* and Pun Ngai's *Made in China*, I was planning to find a job in a factory and write a factory ethnography. The villagers of the urban village, all apartment owners who were potentially benefited by urbanization, seemed too remote from the internal migrant workers I wanted to understand.

After half a month, I took a long bus ride from Guangzhou to a township under Dongguan City, and started my factory fieldwork in Hengfa Company. What I did not know was that, after ten years, the urban village that I did not care much about would become the home of tens of thousands of migrant workers. Even more difficult to imagine in 2006 was that, in 2016, I would come back to that village for my dissertation research and eventually give it an academic pseudonym—Indiville.

It was difficult to imagine that I would conduct a fieldwork in Indiville, in part, because it was difficult to imagine how important urban villages would become to migrant workers. Back in the 2000s, scholars interested in China's migrant laborers pictured them as factory workers living in dormitories. The work I just mentioned, *Gender and the South China Miracle* was published in 1998 and *Made in China* was published in 2005. Journalism was catching up even slower—the documentary film *China Blue* was released in 2005 while Leslie Chang's book *Factory Girls* would be published in 2008. The serial suicide at Foxconn and Honda strike in 2010, of course, once again directed the attention of both scholars and the mass media to factory workers.

Things have changed rapidly in ten years. The area outside of Indiville still looked sketchy in 2006, yet nowadays it is already one of the most prosperous business districts of Guangzhou city. The expansion of consumer market and service sector attracted a gargantuan migrant population.

These service workers, whether formally or informally employed, did not have a factory dormitory to live in; instead, they found inexpensive apartment units in urban villages like Indiville. The loosening of population control, partially affected by the 2003 scandal of the death of Sun Zhigang, made relatively long-term urban dwelling possible for migrants. When I entered the field in the end of 2015, factory employment was no longer the first choice of employment for many "second generation migrant workers." Seeing factory jobs as a "dead end," many youngsters rather liked to find a service job with the hope that some day they could start their own small business—salespersons who wanted to start their own retailing business, or waiters/waitresses who wanted to start their own food stand. Service jobs are also more likely to be found in big cities, where the urban lifestyle had been a major reason for migration since Ching Kwan Lee and Pun Ngai's time.

In 2016, I revisited Indiville. The narrow lanes and alleys were no longer quiet and empty. All types of businesses occupied the area around the village entrances and attract clients from both inside and outside the village. Further into the narrow lanes and alleys, there are still shop that mainly did business with migrant tenants. The lanes and alleys were crowded from early morning to past midnight. The public space where the Hong Kong students interviewed original villagers were now occupied by migrants. No longer a relic or reservation of the rustic lifestyle for old-timers, the village now had turned into a modern inner city migrant enclave. Everything I saw in the village was unimaginable ten years ago.

What is even more unexpected, however, is that after ten years, in a completely different setting, what I studied in Hengfa Company was still informing my dissertation research, just in a different way. In Indiville, I started my field work by participating in the community project carried out by an NGO called EnrichLife, which by then had just signed a contract with the local government to operate a social work center nearby the village. Working with EnrichLife, I learned how the local government was trying to use the market-like mechanism of government procurement to not only incorporate grassroots NGOs but also provide services to migrants and hence solve social grievances. Through this emerging social control regime that I called neo-corporatism, grassroots NGOs are supposed to step in and fill up the governance vacuum between the state and migrants.

The vacuum between the state and migrants is a decades-old historical legacy inherited from the collective era. The Household Registration System, or Hukou, served the purpose of population control in the collective era by linking means of social reproduction to a person's birthplace. The reform did not bring much change to this arrangement but, instead, took advantage of it to create a cheap and docile migrant labor force. To maintain social stability and the minimal means of subsistence of the migrants, however, the vacuum of governance always needs to be filled. In the setting of service sector and urban villages, the vacuum is filled up by NGOs; but what about the manufacturing-oriented early reformist era? Who was providing basic social service to Hengfa's migrant workers and regulating them?

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The answer is Hengfa Company itself. After I finished my field work and came back to California, I found my fieldnotes from the MA research. The "dormitory labor regime," a term that Pun Ngai coined and I elaborated, seemed to be a production regime ten years ago but now also revealed its nature of migrant regulation. Similar to the grassroots NGOs I worked with in 2016, Hengfa Company provide basic social services to the migrants and simultaneously regulate them. My previous factory ethnography project and the current community ethnography, in the end, formed a historical analysis of the changing relationship between the state and migrants—or more precisely, the changing non-relationship between the state and migrants and how this non-relationship is filled up by different organizations.

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This dissertation has two major tasks. Firstly, by providing the case study of Hengfa Company as a historical background, it seeks to capture the historical dynamics of this changing "non-relationship." The Introduction defined two major models of migrant control, that is, the dormitory labor regime and neo-corporatism. It also situated the paradigm shift between these two models in the changing Chinese political economy, especially the expansion of service labor market and the loosening of Hukou System. Afterwards, Chapter 1 is a case study of Hengfa Company, which illustrates how the company served as a *de facto* local state when the *de jure* local state was practically absent. The data of Hengfa Company were collected in my 2006 field work on the assembly line of Hengfa. During that five-month fieldwork in a factory of about 3,000 workers, I worked on the assembly line in the day and sleep in the dormitory at night. Besides the participant observation on the shop floor and dormitory, my field interview with the management helped me grasping the state-capital relationship, which was no less crucial to the analysis.

Secondly, based on my field work from 2016 to 2017, it probes into the daily function of neo-corporatism. Besides Indiville and EnrichLife, my fieldwork also include another urban village and the government-sponsored, NGO-operated social program in the village. I call this village "Collectiville" and the NGO Community Connected, or CommConn for short. As such, the second part of this dissertation will be a comparative case study that teases out the discrepant internal logics of neo-corporatism and two of the three main chapters, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, will be a detailed analysis of each village.

At the first glance, these neighborhoods might remind American readers—sometimes Chinese scholars alike—of some particular types of American urban neighborhoods. They are nevertheless different in crucial ways. Unlike the inner-city poor neighborhoods in the US, where the major issues are often related whether the community members work (Whyte 1955) or whether jobs still exist (Wilson 1997), the Chinese "urban villages" are presumably fully employed—after all, migrants came here for employment opportunities in the first place. On the

other hand, the urban villages differ from the American migrant enclaves in that long term settlement seems to be easy in the American case. Despite being Chinese nationals, internal migrants are generally not considered as local residents and institutional barriers to long term urban dwelling are still great in many ways, especially in terms of accessing public education. As a result, the spatial mobility of migrants across migrant communities is always problemized in both academic research and public discourses. The "floating population," as the local governments call them, are seen as highly mobile in spatial terms and hence difficult to regulate. This image of wanderers and outsiders, arguably, has caused' discriminative attitudes from the urban residents and the suppressive measures from the urban local state. When investigated thoroughly, however, these neighborhoods show great internal differences.

For starters, the compositions of migrant networks in these two communities are different. Migrants in Indiville tend to travel by themselves or in small groups of two to four people, while those in Collectiville follow a "chain migration" model, in which people from the same sending hometown move together to the same urban destination. Therefore, migrants in Indiville come from a wide range of sending provinces, whereas migrants in Collectiville are almost solely from the same township in Hubei Province. At the same time, compared with the migrants in Indiville, the Hubei migrants in Collectiville rarely move to other neighborhoods. Instead, many of them are rather semi-permanent migrants who, despite all the difficulties they have experienced, stay in the same place for over ten years. The different ways in which social networks are organized in each community make important differences in terms of the outcomes of state intervention and community politics. The decentralized social networks inside Indiville and the consolidated networks in Collectiville make a sharp contrast on here: whereas the former brings about diverse information and resources through "the strength of weak ties" (Granovetter 1973), the latter's strong ties make the community tight-knit, social trust high, and the members ready-to-mobilize.

But why are there such a high degree of divergence in terms of social relations in these two communities? To answer this question, we can at least partially be benefited by investigating the labor market in each community. While both Indiville and Collectiville are relying on the informal economy, their industrial makeups are different. Indiville is nearby a newly developed commercial district, where most migrants are interactive service workers, self-employed service business owners, or small retailers. Collectiville, by contrast, is located in the city's old production and wholesale cluster. Migrants here are mainly working in the printing industry that stemmed from the demand for wrapping and advertisement. In Indiville's service and retail market, jobs are relatively easy to find while skills are relatively easy to learn. Those who come to Indiville, therefore, often try to start their own business. Market competition, however, may drive them away as they follow new niches in other localities. Collectiville's printing industry, by contrast, in market by critical business secrets guarded by the Hubei migrants and the semi-monopoly status that they enjoy make them stay in the community, which is not only a migrant enclave but also virtually a business association.

INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, in Tunisia, a fruit seller Mohammed Bouazizi died of self-immolation in protest of police harassment (Lee and Kofman 2012; Siegmann and Schiphorst 2016). His death incited a series of mass uprisings in the Arabic World. In a year, the Arabic Spring overthrew the Tunisian government, made some other governments resign, and caused civil wars in a few other countries. In retrospect, scholars often cite Mohammed Bouazizi poignant case as an epitome of a larger, global politics of marginalization/marginality. Mohammed Bouazizi was faced with a double marginalization, by the state on the one hand and by the market on the other. The state's unfair treatment and precarious economic life came across each other when the police harassed an unregistered street fruit seller. The intersectionality between state exclusion and market precarity resonates in the self-immolation case and beyond.

Just a few months later, in June 2011, in Zengcheng, Guangzhou, China, a local policeman approached a street-vending migrant couple from the remote Sichuan Province, allegedly to collect a "protection fee." The police manhandled the pregnant wife, and soon a rumor about the husband being beaten to death became viral among the migrants. Mobilized by some "underground" migrant associations, thousands of Sichuan migrants gathered in the city street, some blocked the nearby freeway, and set vehicles on fire. The protest lasted three days until the police deployed tear gas and armored cars and arrested twenty-five protesters.

The two cases, although similar in many ways, ended strikingly differently. The political turmoil in the Middle East in early 2011 had been alarming to the Chinese government before the Zengcheng Incident happened. When the Zengcheng Incident happened, the state not only responded quickly but also started a series of reforms in the aftermath of the incident. The city mayor openly requested the officials to "learn the lesson of the Zengcheng Incident and improve migrants' sense of belonging" to the city. He also commended officials for doing it through institutional innovations that enhance social management and social services.

A major institutional innovation that emerged in recent years is what this research calls "neo-corporatism." In response to the mobilized civil associations and discontented internal migrants, both the state has been oppressing and excluding for a long time, this innovative regime seeks to incorporate them. Moreover, while both social actors rose alongside the increasing marketization of China's urban society, the Chinese government is also using a market-based approach to resolve these potential political threats. By legalizing previously illicit grassroots NGOs and institutionalizing the decade-old practice of government procurement of social services, the state created a market of social services and became the monopolistic buyer. Moreover, the social services procured are supposed to be delivered to the migrants, leveling up their entitlement of social rights in the city, and incorporating migrants into urban life. By so doing, in theory, the

state will integrate both the civil society and the historically marginalized migrants with institutionalized political infrastructure.

In reality, however, neo-corporatism is a complicated process that involves multiple actors with different interests. The institutionalization of government procurement is faced with a dilemma: should it prioritize accountability and comparability, and hence build a gargantuan, standardized tender and evaluation system? Or should it value local practice and conduct social programs in an *ad hoc* manner? Accordingly, NGOs also need to strategize in terms of what kind of game to participate in: should an NGO go after the standardized tender system where numerous, similar contracts are available, whereas the bureaucratic tender and evaluation procedures might be an obstacle to meaningful community work? Or should it focus on a few particular specialties, waiting until finding the "right" community and the "right" partners in the government? The most complicated, however, would be the migrant communities themselves. In a sense, neo-corporatism rose because the previous regime, which stemmed from the manufacturing paradigm, failed to capture the diversity of the migrant population in the age of informal, small-scale service work. As such, neo-corporatism is by itself an attempt to grasp the complexity of migrants in the age of precarity. But does it succeed, or fail, and why?

To investigate the emergence of neo-corporatism, its function, and its political effects will urge us to re-engage with a number of important issues. For example, China's Hukou System has long been limiting, if not entirely denying, migrants' livelihood in the city. As the system becomes increasingly relaxed, a newly emerged migrant population will call for a new regime of governance. On the other hand, the Chinese authoritarian regime has been developing an array of tactics in response to the rising civil associations. How could we make sense of neo-corporatism in this context? Moreover, the social services procured and delivered under neo-corporatism are, by nature, a form of state-led social improvement scheme, which has been challenged for decades. How are these state-led social intervention programs interacting with different interests, knowledge, and social forces? Lastly, the expansion of an informal or casualized labor market is a significant backdrop of this research. How does it affect the capacity of the state or NGOs to engage migrant communities? Before entering the case studies, it is necessary to review these major issues.

Migrants in the Changing Urban Political Economy

The rise of neo-corporatism needs to be understood as a response to the reorganization of migrants' work and everyday life in the context of the changing urban political economy. Up until the mid-2000s, the majority of China's internal migrants were working in the manufacturing sector and living in factory dormitories. Under the institutional legacy of the Hukou System, the migrants were not seen as citizens in the eyes of the municipal authorities but rather competitors of resources and potential trouble-makers. As a result, there was a vacuum

between migrants and the local state in terms of social provision and governance. Within the manufacturing sector, this vacuum was filled up by the employer—under what was then called "dormitory labor regime," the employer took charge of migrants' means of subsistence and everyday life regulation. As Chapter One will analyze with a case study of Hengfa Luggage and Handbag Co., the company not only provided necessary social services and infrastructure in migrants' life but also enforced its own laws within the factory compound. Outside the reach of the *de jure* local state, the company functioned as a *de facto* local state that took care of a factory town. Moreover, by establishing control over workers' everyday life, the dormitory labor regime integrates the logic of labor reproduction into the logic of commodity production. As a result, the former is designated to serve the interests of the latter. The political and ideological effect in the area of production is necessary in our inquiry to the migrant governance regime, as long as migrant's everyday life arrangements were made in response to the need of the capital.

Things looked very different ten years after. In the urban villages I studied, the regulation of migrants' everyday life was organized not by the capital (which was much less influential in the informal service sector) but by the civil society (which was outlawed ten years ago but encouraged now). Compared with the autonomy that Hengfa enjoyed in relation to the local state, the NGOs I participated in were found to be more deeply incorporated into the state's governance metrics. If the state, the company, and migrants formed a triangular relationship in the case of Hengfa, after ten years, the state, NGOs, and migrants have been integrated into a linear relationship—from the state at top, then NGOs in the middle, and lastly migrants at the bottom. How did it happen? In this section, I will delineate the political-economic backdrop of this historical change in terms of the governmental schema of migrant regulation.

From Command Economy to Liberal Reform

Before the economic reform, China's capital accumulation was achieved mainly through the transfer of surplus between countryside and the cities: in the countryside, to monopolize grain purchase and suppress its price; in the cities, to keep the cost of life low and thus control the wage rate (Selden and Ka 1988). This economic blueprint required both stable labor forces in the countryside and control over population in cities. To prevent people from leaving collective farming and seeking privileged industrial employment in cities, in 1954, the Ministry of Interior and Ministry issued a "Joint Directive to Control Blind Influx of Peasants into Cities," which required recruitment of rural migrants in cities to be regulated by the state (Cheng and Selden 1994). The establishment of the Household Registration (Hukou) System in 1955 further required not only that every citizen of China got registered in his or her birthplace, but also that any change of residence had to be permitted beforehand by the state. In the same year, the government started a long-lasting grain rationing system, which was very soon extended to almost all kinds of food. Also in that year, the "Criteria for the Demarcation of Urban and Rural Areas" claims that urban and rural residents "had different ways of life and were working under different economic conditions," and therefore justified the government's differentiated treatment to different areas. People who were registered to different areas thus were assigned urban or rural

hukou, which were permanent in principle (Chan and Zhang 1999; Cheng and Selden 1994; Solinger 1999). In the collective era, in sum, the hukou system served to regulate, if not simply prohibit, population movement by three major mechanisms: firstly, it defined one's legal rights to move; secondly, it regulated the urban labor market; thirdly, it controlled the material means of subsistence in cities.

In the reform era, many of these restrictions were loosened. The rise of the private sector created jobs that were not controlled by the state, and the private market made food accessible outside of the rationing system. Facing the climbing labor demand that urban labor force couldn't meet, the state started allowing rural hukou holders to live and work in the cities (Solinger 1999). Once rural-urban migration became possible, the grand divide between cities and countryside turned into social segregation within cities. First of all, until 2003, the legal right to stay in cities was not only temporary but also strictly tied to employment. The typical documents required for sojourners in the cities were three: an ID, an employment certificate and a temporary residential card, the last one was practically applied by employers for migrant workers. Sojourners without those documents (sometimes called "three withouts") were facing police harassment, arrests and deportation (Pun 2005; Wu 2010). Secondly, migrants were denied of some "social rights" that the locals enjoyed, such as education, health insurance and pension, as those rights were in practice tied with one's hukou (Zhang 2001; Solinger 1999); thirdly, the infrastructure of the cities were not prepared for the population inflow, and the migrants were denied of resources such as housing, water and electricity (Solinger 1999; Zhang 2001). The denial of rights to freely dwell in the city led to migrants' reliance on the capital, not only for the legal status of residence but also for the protection provided by the factory compounds; at the same time, the exclusion from the urban allocation regime shifted the cost of social reproduction either to the countryside or the company, and hence continued the unequal development between the urban and rural sector.

The dormitory labor regime that I observed at Hengfa arose within a political economy that combined the institutional legacy of the Hukou System and the engagement into a capitalist globalized, flexible mass production model. The economic reform that started in late 1970 has been called a gradual reform, as opposed to the "Big Bang," "cold turkey," or "shock therapy" in the former Soviet Union and East Europe. Less mentioned is that, however, this gradual reform did not merely split and spread the transitional cost over a long period of time and hence buffer the social impact, but instead combined different mechanisms of control and exploitation. During the early reform period, the combination of pre-reform social control and reformist "free market," *laissez faire* state-capital relationship not only put the former peasants, now migrants in a double-disadvantaged position. The latter, as a result, were simultaneously subject to capital's exploitation and relying on it for means of subsistence.

Beyond the Manufacturing Paradigm and Social Exclusion Thesis

In its beginning, the Chinese reform had been marked by the burgeoning manufacturing sector driven by the expanding export processing model and the social exclusion of migrants in the cities. The involvement into the global commodity chain brings the Chinese coastal provinces capital and market for their products; similar to the mechanism Michael Burawoy (1976) found in the US and South Africa, the social exclusion of migrants helped maintaining the physical separation of production and reproduction—while production happens in the coastal provinces the social reproduction of labor remains in the sending rural villages and hence lowered the cost of production. Both a production regime and a migrant regulation regime, the dormitory labor regime offered the company a peculiar role of exploiting and governing migrant workers at the same time. It has allowed the capital to effectively mobilize the gigantic size of labor force at the point of production while regulating them in the realm of labor reproduction. Under this regime, not only a significant proportion of cost remains in the rural area but the proportion that the employer is responsible for is internalized into the financial structure of the company and can be used to suppress real wage when needed—Chapter 1 will further discuss this mechanism of internalization. As a result, for both the capital and the host cities and townships, the regime continuously reproduces a massive, docile labor force whose cost of reproduction is maintain at a minimal level. It will be fair to say, therefore, the dormitory labor regime is the foundation of China's capital accumulation in early reform years.

As the Chinese economy developed and upgraded, however, the success of dormitory labor regime led to its declining significance. The capital accumulation in coastal areas gave rise to an unprecedented urban middle class and burgeoning consumerism; at the same time, the expansion of a manufacturing sector that highly relied on the global market would eventually slow down. In the 2000s, therefore, the Chinese economic development started focused increasingly on the domestic consumer market, which is desperate to fill migrant laborers into another emerging labor market—interpersonal service, retailing, entertainment, and so forth. Wherever migrant workers fill up the labor demand of urban service sector that targets middle class consumers, moreover, the migrants need to be served as well—and this time, these needs are not met by a centralized factory town but rather by a new urban consumer market that targets the migrants themselves. The centralized production base that is located in township and countryside and directly connected to the global commodity chain, therefore, is caught up by a layered, self-generating consumer market located right in the center of cities.

Since the 1990s, the manufacturing employment has been slowly growing, from 21.4% of total employment in 1991 to 30.3% in 2012, followed by a down-turn since 2013. What is rather rapid is the decrease of agricultural employment and the growth of service employment. In 2019, service employment takes almost a half (47.25%) of the employment in China, whereas agriculture and manufacturing are responsible for, respectively, 25.33% and 27.42%.[1] In this era

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[1] Dara source: World Bank.

of a "new economy" driven by the service sector, the manufacturing-centered dormitory labor regime is gradually losing its role in accommodating and regulating the new generation of migrant laborers. The development of the informal service sector in the Chinese metropolises have brought about a gargantuan body of laborers who are not employed in large-scale factories. In other words, employment relationships have been decentralized. Among the growing population of service workers, most are employed in small businesses or self-employed. Even for those who are currently employed in the manufacturing sector, it is far from a lifetime commitment. It is well-documented that manufacturing jobs tend to recruit "sharp eyes and nimble fingers," and after a certain age these workers no longer qualify for the assembly line jobs (Lee 1998; Pun 2005). The young labor force hence seems "disposable," while the non-manufacturing jobs they take after being "disposed" remain understudied. Even in their productive prime, many migrants work in factories in a "hop-on-hop-off" manner. Factory jobs are seen as drudgery, but it also promises stable income; working outside of factories, albeit with less stable income, offers freedom and opportunity of petite entrepreneurship. As such, with the expansion of the informal service sector, the new generation of migrant workers are in general seen as too versatile, if not precarious, for the dormitory labor regime to regulate.

Decentralization also happens on the spatial dimension. The sectoral shift of the urban political economy from manufacturing to service hence calls for a spatial shift: from dormitory politics to community politics. While significant in the western class politics literature (Thompson 1966, Katznelson 1982), the working-class communities are rarely discussed in the context of the Chinese migrant workers. Indeed, one of the effects of the dormitory labor regime is to prevent the working-class community, especially in the modern western sense, from forming (Pun & Smith 2007). Along with the rise of the service sector in the economic realm, migrants were freed from dormitories and entered urban neighborhoods.

The emergence of urban migrant neighborhoods, of course, required not only an economic transition but also a political one—the relaxation of the Hukou System, or the Hukou Reform. Starting from the late 1990s, a series of experimental measures had been set in motion. In 1999, the state started to replace its dual-scheme social welfare program into an employment-based one, which enables at least theoretically migrants to access benefits in the cities (Xu et al. 2011). In 2001, townships opened the door of local hukou to some particular groups of people, such as elderly, children and people with "talent" (by that time defined by college education). In 2003, a similar relaxation happened for people who had been working in the same township for more than seven years (Wang 2010). In large cities, the forced deportation came to an end in 2003 and thus made temporary residence cards and employment certificates practically unnecessary. The linkage between residency and employment was since then broken (Wu 2010). In 2008, the compulsory education system started accommodating migrant children without additional fees (Lan 2014). Many of these measures are incomplete or delayed, and for those that are implemented, the local governments might still have ways of bypassing the requirements of the

central government (Chan and O'Brien 2019). However, minimal improvement has indeed been achieved, at least to the extent that semi-permanent urban dwelling has become possible.

Contradictory to the account made by some scholars (eg. Pun and Smith 2007), therefore, migrant worker communities do exist, just not necessarily for factory workers. Since the 1990s, in middle size cities and coastal metropolises, the locally called "urban villages" provide service workers with affordable housing solutions (Zhou and Logan 1996, Ma and Xiang 1998). Enclaves like them are former rural residential land prior to the expansion of the city. After the expansion of city and land-grab, the landless peasants started building dense apartment buildings on their own residential land; the low rent hence turn these neighborhoods into migrant enclaves (Hao et al. 2011; Wang 2016; Wang et al. 2009; Zhou and Logan 1996). Once the development of the service sector liberated the migrant labor force from factory dormitories, these communities further developed into highly concentrated residential neighborhoods with vibrant informal commercial activities.

In these urban neighborhoods, the relationship between workers' life and the state intervention is changing. As discussed earlier, under the close surveillance of the company, the factory dormitory is a space organized to serve the purpose of production (Pun & Smith 2007; Peng 2011). The politics of reproduction (the power relation that governs workers' off-work life) is hence isolated from state control while subordinated to the politics of production (the power relation in the production process). In the migrant communities, by contrast, migrants' off-work life is freed from the surveillance of the capital while subject to the state intervention. Shifting the focus beyond the factory compounds hence leads to the reconfiguration of labor politics: on the one hand, it means the separation of politics of reproduction from the politics of production; on the other, it means the re-engagement of reproduction politics to the state politics, or social incorporation of migrants into the urban everyday life politics.

These trends, however fragmentary they might be, imply a possibility of incorporation. In many ways, my observation of Indiville and Collectiville tends to agree with this interpretation. A sign of this incorporation, which may call for further incorporation as well, is the observation that migrants are establishing semi-permanent dwelling arrangements in these urban villages. During my fieldwork, I met people who had been there, employed or not, for years; I heard about their siblings or relatives being there for more than a decade; there are stable social networks between migrants, and sometimes between migrants and locals. Also, children were born in the community, and children outfit and toys had become a lucrative business. An informant in Indiville, whose three-year-old played around us when we talked, told me that she certainly missed her hometown from time to time, but, she said, "there is no way to return. We have been so used to the way of living here." An experienced broker in Collectiville, May, proudly showed us a family photo during our interview. The picture was taken at a local park on last year's Mother's Day. More than ten people, all May's family members or relatives, went hiking in that park to celebrate Mother's Day with May's mother. All those family members and relatives, May told us, had been living in Guangzhou for years. As a matter of fact, May herself had helped

some of them settle down in the city. The fact that migrants, unlike their 2000s predecessors, are settling down in the city and realizing semi-permanent dwelling not only suggests that migrants are being socially incorporated into urban life. More importantly, the same fact will urge the local government to practically recognize them as members of the local community.

In the past ten years, the urban political economic landscape has experienced two major changes. The shift of economic paradigm from manufacturing and export processing to domestic market and service work created a huge body of migrant laborers whose employment were significantly decentralized. On the political dimension, the loosening of the Hukou System allowed migrants to settle down in the cities, especially in urban villages such as Indiville and Collectiville. The result of these trends is an increasingly sensible need for the local state to include migrants into its urban governance regime. As will be analyzed in greater detail, a new paradigm has been established to fulfill this need. Under this regime that I call "neo-corporatism," grassroots NGOs replaced private companies to serve the migrants and intervene in their everyday life, yet in a distinctly different way.

Neo-corporatism: Mechanism, Promise, and Reality

Since Tocqueville's classic account on the capacity of civil association to hold tyrannical state power in check (Tocqueville 2009), the relation between associational life and democracy has been taken for granted to the extent that, as Dylan Riley (2010: 2) asserts, it has turned into a "romanticism" that treats civil society as "virtually equivalent to liberal democracy." In the Chinese case, however, things seem to be more complicated than the optimism that used to be held by many scholars and activists. More Specifically, the relationships between the state and civil associations in China has experienced three phases since the market reform. In each phase, marketization has served to bring about new challenges to the state but also new techniques and new ideologies. The transformation of state-society relation, as I found in 2016, ended up with what is conceptualized as neo-corporatism in this book. Below, I will start this section with a brief historical account on how the three-phase development has been interwoven with marketization and merged into a seemingly plausible promise of incorporate both the civil associations and the marginalized migrant population to which both the state these associations claim to serve. This promise has been captured by scholars including Jude Howell (2015), who calls the institutional arrangements I observed as "welfarist incorporation." The promise, however, is not necessarily kept in reality. Aided by the literature about state failure in the realm of social improvement, especially James Scott's (1998) theorization in *Seeing Like a State* and Tania Murray Li's (2005) critique of it, the later part of this book will analyze the divergence of neo-corporatism into two sub-models. I will then point out the limitation of each of them and come back to Howell's claim. These arguments will form a major part of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, and a brief preview will be presented before the end of this introduction.

The Changing Relationship between the State and Civil Associations

For starters, China's "associational revolution" was born with a state-led (Brook and Frolic 1997) nature in the context of state-facilitated market transition (White et al. 1996). In the 1990s, scholars in the West started directing attention to the burgeoning, seemingly non-government organizations such as "sports associations, business associations, academic associations, and groups dedicated (at least in name) to other fields of activity" (Spires 2011), only to find them established by (Economy 2004) and/ or under close supervision of the state (Lu 2007: 175). As one of the forerunners of China's civil associations, private business associations prove this point rather well: despite the "private," "market-oriented" appearance that suggests emerging *autonomy from* socialist state, these organizations are found to be *extensions of* the state that served to regulate the newly emerging private market (Foster 2002; Nevitt 1996; Pearson 1994). Unsurprisingly, these "government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGOs)" are considered "transmission belts" of state control (Shieh 2015). Instead of the Toucquevillian optimism, the notion of corporatism has been a scholarly consensus when conceptualizing this top-down, non-competitive, and non-confrontational associational "revolution" in the early reform era (Chan 1993; Pearson 1994; Unger 1996).

The market reform, however, not only urged the state to create civil associations from within but also prepared the soil for bottom-up organizing from outside. While a highly restricted registration system outlawed efforts to self-organize from below (Saich 2000; Spires 2011; Lu 2007), the 2000s witnessed a growth of grassroots (ie. technically illicit) NGOs, often supported financially by foreign foundations and/ or the growing domestic private sector. In a survey conducted between 2009 and 2011, Anthony Spires and his colleagues found nearly half "grassroots" NGOs either unregistered or registered as private business (Spires et al. 2014: 77); the same survey also reveals that only a quarter of the surveyed organizations received government funding, whereas the rest of them were supported by foreign and domestic individuals, private foundations, or businesses (ibid.: 82). Despite the strict NGO regulations, the Chinese local state coped with the expansion of grassroots NGOs by "opening one eye and closing the other," (Ashley and He 2008), or "no recognition, no banning, no intervention" (Deng 2010). In return for this legal "gray area," NGOs provide social services to the disadvantaged population and help maintain social stability (Deng 2010; Fu 2017; Howell 2015; Hsu 2017; Spires 2011; Teets 2013). Different from the corporatist relationship in early reformist years, civil associations and the state now have established a collaborative relationship (Teets 2013) that Spires (2011) calls "contingent symbiosis" under the condition that the local states successfully conceal information from the central state and that the NGOs comply with the state's political agenda. With these conditions, however, the legal gray area that enables local state and civil associations to coexist is "contingent." To transform this practice into a sustainable scheme, it requires formal recognition of NGOs' legal status and a more efficient way to keep them accountable to the state.

The "contingent symbiotic" relations between the state and grassroots NGOs represents a tactful way of not only absorbing bottom-up social forces but also stabilize the society by providing services to the disadvantaged population. This model, however, is as contingent as its name suggests. While these tactics could come in handy at times, the state doesn't cease envisioning a more profoundly "infrastructural" framework that, at least *as it claims*, should further incorporate both the disprivileged population and civil associations. Neo-corporatism, in this sense, represents the Chinese state's efforts to combine, generalize, and routinize the existing tactics into a larger social engineering schema that I call which includes three major aspects:

(1) *Legalization of grassroots NGOs*: while the state continuously cracks down NGOs which cross the political "red line" (Fu and Distelhorst 2017), now it is also legalizing grassroots NGOs by loosening the registration requirements and encouraging NGOs to register (Hsu and Hasmath 2014). By so doing, the "contingent" tolerance toward unregistered grassroots NGOs is replaced by formal recognition and constant surveillance of registered ones.

(2) *Exertion of market control*: on the one hand, the state has banned foreign financial supports for domestic organization (Chan 2018; Feng 2017; Franceschini and Nessosi 2017; Fu and Distelhorst 2017; Hsu and Hasmath 2018; Hsu and Teets 2016); on the other, by the expansion of government procurement (or *zhengfu goumai*, "government purchase" in Chinese) of social services, it created a market in which registered NGOs compete for government contracts (Cho 2017; Shi 2017: 9). As a result, the "symbiotic" collaboration between local states and NGOs now is institutionalized into a market in which the state not only enjoys monopolistic market power but also keeps the latter accountable through granting and renewing contracts.

(3) *Envisagement of social improvement*: the social services that are being purchased by the government from NGOs are meant to be delivered especially to disprivileged social groups such as internal migrants (Howell 2015; Hsu 2017). Under the name of "equalizing social services" (Li et al. 2017) and "grassroots governance innovation" (Mei and Wang 2017; Shin 2017; Teets et al. 2017), this regime claims to be socially incorporating the population that has been marginalized by marketization; or, in Jude Howell's (2015) words, it is renewing a social contract that used to exist under collective economy (Walder 1986) but has dissolved after the market reform.

By so doing, as the state envisioned, as well as scholars including Howell predicts, two objectives should be reached at the same time: civil associations will remain collaborative and the marginalized, underprivileged social groups will be served and satisfied. Neo-corporatism is hence a convergence of two transformations: one the one hand, by re-incorporating the civil society, the state control over NGOs is transforming from "overt sanctioning" to "tacit sanctioning" (Hsu and Hasmath 2011); on the other, it creates a new discourse that transforms migrants from "being a problem" to "having problems" (Gleiss 2016). Moreover, as government procurement becomes increasingly institutionalized, the sporadic and contingent "tactics" are gradually generalized and routinized into a broader governmental schema.

Neo-corporatism and Market

The rise of the Chinese neo-corporatism, in a way, seems parallel to the historical development of neo-corporatism in the West. On the one hand, the state-established GONGOs in the 1990s have been correctly labelled as "corporatism" by the China scholars (eg. Chan 1993). Whether in the early 20th century Europe or the late 20th century China, the institutional arrangement that, respectively, incorporated social associations into the state or extended the state into social organization have been found to be a "transmission belt" of state control over society (Schimitter 1974; Streeck and Kenworthy 2003: 439; Shieh 2015). Moreover, the prototypical European version and the Chinese Communist version both exercised coercive state power over the social associations that were incorporated from outside of the state or created from within (Streeck and Kenworthy 2003: 446; Hsu and Hasmath 2014). By contrast, the neo-corporatism in contemporary China incarnates a tendency of the state's "sharing public space" with social associations while limiting their power by legalization and institutionalization, which resembles the neo-corporatist practices in post-war advanced capitalist countries (Streeck and Kenworthy: 446). In other words, just like the Western counterpart, the Chinese neo-corporatism stemmed from the diminishing state sovereignty and relatively increasing autonomy of the society (Schmitter 1985: 34).

The comparison between Chinese neo-corporatism and its Western counterpart, nevertheless, gets more interesting when it comes to the role played by the market. Both situated in the context of an increasingly marketized political economy, they show both thematic similarity and subtle yet critical difference. As T. H. Marshall (1964) suggested, through the achievement of collective industrial agreement, the Western neo-corporatism left the class politics for market order and hence excluded it from the realm of state politics (Streeck and Kenworthy: 446); on the other hand, the practice of market (especially the rationalized contract) are no less crucial in the Chinese neo-corporatism—yet here, instead of "leaving class politics or the market," the state actively utilize market mechanisms by creating a new market order *within* the state-society relation and engaging in the market exchange as a monopolistic buyer of the social services that NGOs conduct.

The core of the Chinese neo-corporatism, that is, the public tender of social services for marginalized population, is by itself a commodification of social services. Social services became a commodity, in a strict Polanyian sense, because they are now created to be sold. In NGO staff's daily conversation, services are often called "products," and the topic such as "how could we design our product to better serve the interests of the stakeholders" take place rather frequently. In the language of government officials, the awareness of the logic of market is even more straightforward—the public tender system itself, for example, is officially called "government purchase of services" (Spires 2014). In this market relationship, the state and civil associations become demand and supply side bound by rationalized, legal contract. The competition for the contract and pursuit of its tenure, instead of the served population, becomes the immediate concern of grassroots NGOs. As will be discussed in the following chapters, the

pursuit of contracts eventually aligns NGOs' interests with the local state and creates the consent of the former toward the latter.

Not only that the state-NGO coalition is bound by legal contracts that regulate the relation between two parties as buyers and suppliers, the other objective of the Chinese neo-corporatism is also understood in market terms—providing social services to potentially contentious social groups to maintain social (and more importantly, political) stability is also an exchange. In particular, from the perspective of the state, this exchange also resembles an ideology of market logics. Ching Kwan Lee and Yonghong Zhang (2013), for example, noticed how the Chinese local governments establish a "stability maintenance fund" at every administrative level even before the establishment of neo-corporatism. The money is used not only to reach a settlement with demonstrators when collective actions happen but also to enhance infrastructures and welfare for disadvantaged social groups to prevent their grievances from developing into political challenges. The words of the Chinese officials the authors interviewed have illustrated the market logic in a rather straightforward manner: "buying stability." Later on, when NGOs specialized in social services for these disprivileged groups became legally recognized and the market of government procurement was established, the practice of "buying stability" became more sophisticated while integrated into the Chinese neo-corporatism.

As illustrated by phrases such as "government purchase of service" and "buying stability," the discourse of neo-corporatism heavily relies on the metaphor of market. However inconsistent the institutional arrangements and the consequential practices can be with the ideal type of an impersonal, self-regulated market, the discourses of market remain dominant in the ideology of neo-corporatism. In a way similar to Marx's critique of commodity fetishism, moreover, the discourse of market may obscure the "non-market" elements of neo-corporatism—this regime has always been a part of the state schema of social control; relationships with local officials, or *guanxi*, never stopped being a crucial part in this regime's real-life functioning; and, after all, even the "market" created by this regime has always been far from a market envisioned by neo-classical economist and classical liberalist thinkers.

Promise and Reality of Social Intervention

The purpose of the government procurement of social service, at the end of the day, is to provide social services to internal migrants and hence incorporate them into the urban society. This view is not only held by local officials but also adopted by social scientists. Jude Howell's concept "welfarist incorporation," among others, is an attempt to theorize this policy objective. Putting the state-NGO coalition and social provision to migrant workers in the historical context of market transition, Howell sees the emergence of government procurement of social services as a strategy to redraw the social contract that used to be the foundation of social reproduction of labor in the collective era. Indeed, before the economic reform, China's social regime used to be marked by the cradle-to-grave welfarism implemented through the work-unit system in the urban manufacturing sector (Walder 1986). In the reformist era, alongside with the gradual dissolution

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of the state-owned enterprises, however, this social contract started to lose its significance in terms of social provision and social control (Lee 2007). Within this context, Howell argues, the changing relationship between the state, labor NGOs, and workers shows an institutional shift towards "welfarist incorporation," that is, incorporating workers by providing welfare (Howell 2015).

Based on interviews with local officials and NGOs, Howell's analysis precisely reflects the way officials and NGO staff understand what they are doing. In terms of how the state envisages the agenda and functionality of the new institutional arrangement, my observations are to a great extent in consonance with her arguments. But what about the real effect of this regime in real-world setting? From here, my analysis departs from the state-perspective represented in Howell's account. Aided by my ethnographic fieldwork, I had the chance to directly observe how the social services that the state purchased from NGOs and delivered to migrants were designed and conducted. These observations have become the major source of data in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, where the inconsistent practices and community-level effects of neo-corporatism will be analyzed.

The state's intention of social improvement and the complicated unintended consequences haven been a long-discussed topic in social science. Within this body of literature, James Scott's groundbreaking argument of state failure and Tania Li's response to it are particularly relevant to my analysis. According to Scott (1998), the *high-modern*, authoritarian state schemes that seek to bring about social improvement share a peculiar type of optics, that is, *legibility*. From a top-down perspective, the state tends to impose a standardized order upon the society, which is constituted of spontaneous, complicated, "messy" social practices that will not fit into the standardized and standardizing state optics. The imposition of standardization, therefore, means the exclusion and deprivation of these practices, without which the society will not be able to reproduce itself. This view, logically, foresees state failure and social crisis.

For Tania Li, however, Scott's analysis of how the state arbitrarily over-simplifies the society is by itself an over-simplification. Social improvement schemes, she argues, are not a singular incarnation of the will of an up-there, omnipotent, unitary entity called the state, but rather a multi-layered, multi-actor "field of intervention" that involves diverse, often contradictory, interests and knowledge. As such, instead of the Scott's question about "how have these schemes failed," she urges her readers to ask the one posed by James Ferguson's (1994): "What do these schemes do? What are their messy, contradictory, conjunctural effects?" (Li 2005).

The debate is intriguing but incomplete. Li's critique of Scott convincingly points out an irony of the latter's theorization of the state—just like the state described by himself, Scott's theory was no less a simplification, abstraction, and even exclusion of the complex real-world practices. Outside of the state, as she demonstrated in great detail in her own research, the field of intervention involves numerous actors, knowledge, and interests. More importantly, it is the negotiations between these actors, instead of the unilateral implementation of a fixed, unitary

state schema, that shapes the field (Li 2007). By this critique, Li neutralized the deterministic nature of Scott's state theory and opened up a space of possible outcomes of social interventions—but perhaps too open. The state is not as powerful as Scott envisioned, yet it is more than merely one actor out of many. Especially under authoritarianism, which is Scott main point of observation, it will be rather naïve not to keep the relatively arbitrary state power in mind. In other words, we need to "bring the state back in" to the discussion that is already somewhat too post-structuralist.

The need of "bringing the state back in" is not only relevant to Li but also to Scott himself. While Li criticized Scott's state-centered approach and urged us to look *beyond* the state, she naturally left Scott's notion of the state intact. In her framework, the state could still be seen as a unitary source of power, just not the only one. The unitary and coherent image of the state, however, has been challenged for decades. As Lynne Haney (1996) suggested, the state should be seen as a network of institutions, in which conflicts and contradictions can be observed. What Scott has missed is not only the *beyond* but also the *within*.

Each based on a case study of neo-corporatist social intervention in a particular migrant community, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 speak to this debate through the comparison between two type of state-NGO coalition building. Chapter 2 introduces us to Indiville, where things look more like what James Scott foresees—the state does seek to standardize the public tender system for the sake of transparency and accountability, whereas the standardized tender system limited the capacity and incentives of the NGO partner to engage with community needs. The outcome of this system is a community project that looks good in the eyes of the state yet unnecessary in migrants' life. Chapter 3 tells a story that is quite the opposite. In another migrant community called Collectiville, local officials' career pursuit makes them go beyond the bureaucratic tendency of standardization and seek political performance that distinguishes them from their colleagues. The social programs stemming from this type of political pursuit, moreover, often allow for, if not encouraging, community engagement as performance is more concerned than standardization of tender system or rationalized audit procedures for the state sponsors.

The case of Indiville can be seen as a case of how, in spite of the multi-layered, multi-actor nature of the field of intervention, the state preserves a degree of relative autonomy to carry out its high-modern social agenda as Scott predicts; by contrast, Collectiville shows how different state institutions, or even officials, may lead to outcome strikingly different from what Scott has foreseen. The two cases, moreover, illustrate how the practice of public tender of social services can depart from the "welfarist incorporation" ideals as described by Howell (2015). The practice of neo-corporatism is not only incoherent and self-contradictory but, as either case shows, If we define welfarism as a state effort to decommodify labor by securing means of subsistence (Esping-Andersen 1990), what I observed in either Indiville or Collectiville is not welfarism. As will be further discussed in the following chapters, it rather provides migrants with palliative services at best while leaving the major issues, especially Hukou System, untouched. From this point of view, neo-corporatism is a hegemonic project in a Gramscian sense: the state builds

coalitions in the civil society and claims itself to be representing the interests of the subaltern, regardless of whether the latter's real interests are served (Gramsci 1971).

CHAPTER ONE

From Factory Town to Urban Village: 10 Years of Migrant Governance

In 2006, I was an MA student interested in the labor process in China's then burgeoning manufacturing sector. I was lucky enough to find a job on the assembly line of Hengfa Company, a Taiwanese-funded handbag manufacturer located in Guangdong Province. I heard from a professor that you need to wait for a long time until something happens and reveals the hidden logic of your subjects' everyday life, so I was prepared to be patient.

Then something happened on the second night after my arrival at Hengfa.

That night, several young men entered my dormitory room to rob us. They wanted to "borrow" 50 RMB for gambling, they said, and they "promised to repay us" with their winnings. We tried to convince them that we did not have that amount of money, but they eventually left our room with some money from my roommates. The next day, several victims reported the case to their foreman, who then reported the case to the management. The top manager in charge of non-production affairs, Wang, learned about the situation and told me—"that MA student from Taiwan."

"We have been investigating this case," he told me, "and we decided to *bring in* the local police."

I told him that I was nearly victimized as well, and hence that night, he sent me a text message and asked me to meet him outside. Several people were waiting for me. Wang was the CFO of Hengfa and was also in charge of everything outside of shop floors, including the company's connections with local government; I also saw the "plant manager," who was actually the representative of the local village commune of Huang Village, where Hengfa was located. A short, buff man that I did not recognize turned out to be the head of the local police.

Wang told me that the workers who reported the case ran away when the police came, so now the management needed to find other witnesses. Wang asked me if I could identify either the suspects or locate the victims, but I could not. He thus started discussing a series of criminal procedures with the head of police—what kinds of evidence would qualify, how harshly Wang wanted the suspects to be punished, and how the investigation should proceed.

I excused myself and walked away from the group. However, the conversation among them interested me. It seemed to me that, in that meeting, I witnessed an interaction between *two* local governments, one in a *de facto* sense and one in a *de jure* sense. The company took care of social provisions of the workers, especially the essential needs such as housing, social security, and personal safety as a *de facto* local government. In special occasions such as the robbery case, the *de jure* local government temporarily stepped in upon the request of the company. Moreover, the

former had a huge room to intervene in the ways in which the latter exercised its power—even when it was about the criminal investigation and the juridical process.

The company functioned as a *de facto* local government in workers' everyday life because the *de jure* local government did not. As internal migrants, the workers were politically and socially excluded by the local government, if not victimized. Under the Chinese Hukou regime, they were not considered as local residents but rather competitors for resources or potential social destabilizers. The gap between the migrants' means of subsistence and the provision of the state, therefore, was filled by the company. At Hengfa, besides housing and meal plans, the company also brought in two clinics, a grocery store, a daycare center, an internet cafe, and a basketball court that also held movie nights, all enclosed by Hengfa's tall walls guarded by barbed wire and security guards.

Hengfa was an epitome of what was then called the "dormitory labor regime." In the 1990s and 2000s, China's economic development was driven by coastal provinces' labor-intensive export processing model that highly relied on migrant workers. The coastal provinces, however, were neither capable of nor willing to accommodate these migrants. As a result, the fundamental needs of the social reproduction of labor were met by the company, for which the minimal subsistence of the workers was a requirement for profit-making. Besides keeping workers alive and monitored, it is suggested that this everyday life arrangement also affected workers' labor process. Pun Ngai and her colleagues, in particular, points out how strict labor control was not only applied to the shop floor but also adopted in workers' dormitory life. Established upon a young, mobile, and highly exploitable labor force, this regime takes advantage of the dormitory system to realize quick, flexible extraction of labor in an unpredictable global market (Pun and Smith 2007; Ren and Pun 2006). My own research of Hengfa, by contrast, emphasizes the less despotic and more hegemonic dimension of the same phenomenon. By establishing a physical border between the "ordered inside" and the "chaotic outside," the company implemented and justified its curfew system, which provided an incentive for workers to work assiduously to finish a day's work early (Peng 2011). Whether seen as a coercive means of exploitation or a hegemonic means of concealing it, the dormitory labor regime was considered a labor regime, instead of a governance regime. Yet it *was* a governance regime in that it regulated the everyday life of migrants and provided them with minimal yet indispensable social rights. In the context of advanced capitalist societies, these functions are fulfilled by the state; in the case of China, where internal migrants were not seen as local residents, they became the industrial citizen under the dormitory labor regime.

In 2016, I visited Guangdong Province again. This time, I came to the capital city, Guangzhou. In this southern metropolis, I conducted an 18 month-long ethnographic fieldwork in two "urban villages," a strikingly different setting from Hengfa. There were no walls separating migrants from the locals. There was not a single company that employed and accommodated more than twenty workers. Most migrants rent their own apartments from local residents instead of living in a dormitory, and even if they do, the so-called "dormitory" was often nothing more than an

apartment unit that their employer rented in the village. In principle, employers and local authorities did not collude in any way similar to what Hengfa did with the local police. As a matter of fact, given the "illicit" nature of the informal economy, many employers themselves were avoiding local authorities. In brief, there was no company serving as a *de facto* local government in the two "urban villages" as Hengfa did ten years ago.

What has replaced the company was not the local state, but grassroots social service NGOs. When I was working on Hengfa's shop floor, I was remotely aware of the existence of grassroots labor NGOs. At that time, most of them were not registered and hence by default illicit. Despite the illegal status, they still managed to provide services to workers whenever they were tolerated or overlooked by the local government. Although the latter was then living behind the walls and barbed wire of factory dormitories, many organizations managed to pay weekly or monthly visits to workers as long as their service was considered beneficial in the eyes of the employers. In other words, there were two "red lines," one drawn by the local government and one by the employers. Ten years later, NGOs were no longer illicit; quite the opposite, they were encouraged to officially register themselves and apply for government funding, almost exclusively through the procurement of their social services.

The outcome is a new urban social provision regime that claims to be inclusive or even affirmative, a regime that Jude Howell (2015) calls "welfarist incorporation" whereas I call neo-corporatism. During my stay in Guangzhou, I worked with two NGOs, EnrichLife and CommConn, which were conducting social programs in the two urban villages I studied. EnrichLife was trying to carry out an anti-kidnapping campaign in Indiville, whereas CommConn was giving English lessons to migrants in Collectiville. The following chapters will further compare these social programs to explain why the seemingly promising anti-kidnapping program turned out to be destined to fail whereas the seemingly unrealistic idea of English lessons eventually aligned with the community needs after a series of calibration. While we will probe into the success and failure in the following chapters. Here, in contrast with Hengfa, the commonality between these two NGOs are more important. They were both grassroots NGOs registered at the Municipal Civil Affair Bureau. They both relied on the local government for their financial, political, and operational survival. Moreover, they both provided social services to migrants and both social programs were established based on a contract of government procurement of social services.

Yet the most important might be the fact that both NGOs shared some functions with the local government. The social service center that is contracted to EnrichLife was by itself officially a part of the government; the community education center operated by CommConn, on the other hand, had been organizing community volunteers, promoting government social agenda, and facilitating bottom-up participation of public affairs. As such, although in notably different ways, EnrichLife and CommConn filled up the political vacuum between the local state and migrants that was mainly filled by companies like Hengfa ten years ago.

The declined significance of *dormitory labor regime* and the emergence of *neo-corporatism* reflect the changing urban political economy of China. The temporary residential permit that, unlike what the name suggests, prohibited migrants from freely moving into urban neighborhoods was gradually abolished since 2003, and the expansion of a domestic service sector created a gargantuan labor force employed outside of factories. Compared with its manufacturing counterpart, employment in the service sector was much more decentralized. Massive production organizations such as a 3,000-worker factory never happens in the service sector, especially in the informal sector in which many migrants are employed. All these factors lead to the mushrooming of urban migrant neighborhoods, or urban villages, for which the local state has to find a new way to govern. At the same time, despite the suppression of the central state, strategic collaborations between local states and NGOs have been common at municipal level. Once the manufacturing model of the dormitory labor regime withdrew from the landscape of migrant governance, grassroots NGOs' fulfilling governmental functions was not a surprising outcome.

The changing modes of migrant control, their interaction with the migrant communities, social outcomes, and political effects are the main focus of this research. This chapter will reexamine the dormitory labor regime, while the two following chapters will be addressing two different models of neo-corporation. While the extant literature about this regime tends to focus on its effect in the realm of commodity production and extraction of surplus value, this chapter will rather focus on how it functioned in the realm of reproduction politics. That said, the logic of production is always an underlying rationale that guides the organization of social reproduction under the dormitory labor regime and this chapter will seek to tease out how the two realms interact with each other.

Hengfa Company, 2006

Located in Guangdong Province, Hengfa Luggage and Handbag Co. is a Taiwanese-funded subcontracting manufacturer of handbags and luggage cases. Hengfa had about 3,000 Chinese employees at the time of the field study. Approximately two-thirds of its employees were manual workers, among which 70 percent were female. Most of the employees were internal migrants from outside of Guangdong Province. The workers were quite young, yet obviously older than those employed in other industries such as electronics. In electronics, the assembly line requires "sharp eyes, nimble fingers" but not skills; in the "sewing machine industries" including garment, shoes, and handbags, by contrast, skills are highly valued while taking extended time to acquire. As a result, first-line workers' age ranged from 16 to about 25 years old, whereas in other industries 25 was certainly considered too old. Due to similar reasons, many workers at Hengfa had stayed in the factory longer than those in other industries, too.

Hengfa was registered at the township that has been famous for garment and shoes since the early reformist years. The factory itself was not physically located in the town but in an "industrial park" established by a village under that township. A commonly-used term in those years in the Pearl River Delta, an "industrial park" reminds people of infrastructure invested by the local government, memorandums between the industry, government, and research institutions, and sometimes even special municipal level legislations. In Hengfa's case, however, what was called an "industrial park" was not much more than some plots of farmland rented out to a few factories the same size of Hengfa or even larger. Not only did the village committee not invest in the infrastructure, but Hengfa even needed to build the road that led to its main entrance when it just moved to the "industrial park." A visitor to the factory, oftentimes representing a foreign mid-range international brand name, would pass by fishponds, fruit trees, and vegetable crops along that road.

There were three major factories in this area. Hengfa had 3,000 workers, and the other two had 2,000 and 5,000 respectively. About 10,000 migrant workers were accommodated in the dormitories of these three factories, with the exception of some senior workers with families. For them, Hengfa rented apartments built by the local peasants as family housing. Other than these apartments, some other buildings were used for small businesses that served these 10,000 migrant workers: a few quick bite restaurants for workers, one nicer restaurant for the office staff and lower-level management, and fewer than ten grocery stores and department stores. During lunch hours and in the evenings, there were also food stands and street vendors. These businesses were apparently insufficient to serve the everyday life needs of 10,000 workers, and they did not need to. A major part of a workers' life was spent within the factory compounds that includes the shop floor, dormitory, cafeteria, as well as recreational facilities, compared to which the businesses outside counted only as workers' occasional leisure expenditure. All these facilities were enclosed by a more than seven feet tall wall with barbed wire. One of the two entrances opened only for foreign visitors or trucks, whereas the one for workers' daily use and was under the surveillance of Hengfa's security guards.

Within the factory compound, Hengfa Company often felt like a small kingdom, or more precisely, a *de facto* local government to its employees. The company had its own territory, within which it had relative autonomy, if not sovereignty; within its boundary, it oversaw both the production activities of workers and their social reproduction; also, within this boundary, it enforces social norms and community rules with the semi-legal use of force, that is, its security guards. Below, we will investigate these three major dimensions of Hengfa's role in migrant governance.

Enforcing Border Control

The first thing about the factory compound, which is marked by the enclosement from the outside world, is its border control. Foreign-invested manufacturers in southern China were known for their enclosed, gated, and even militarized factory compounds in the 2000s.

Compared with other factories nearby or in other places, Hengfa's six feet wall was not especially tall, and neither was its barbed wire exceptional. The gate of the factory compound was under strict surveillance by a crew of security guards, while a different group of guards patrolled the compound regularly. The gate opened three times a day: lunch time (12:00-13:00), dinner time (18:00-18:30), and after work hours (20:30-22:30). When the entrance was open, employees needed to scan their employee ID to enter. At 22:30, the curfew started. Anyone who did not make the curfew would be fined and the fine will be automatically deducted from their paycheck at the end of the month.

The separation between inside and outside is not only observed in physical terms. As the vignette in the beginning of this chapter might have shown, the local state also gave the company enough autonomy when it comes to things that occurred within this physical space. Indeed, as will be discussed a bit later, the local government did not intervene in the affairs within the compound partially because the management's good connections with the local officials; yet an even more crucial factor is that, after all, the local government did not know what happened behind the walls. Even when a criminal case happened, the local government would know only when the company decided to share the information and request help. Along with the strict *physical* border control, a *social* and *political* boundary is drawn between the compound that was governed by Hengfa and the outside world that was governed by the state. Within the boundary, the company could remain relatively independent of state intervention.

The walls, guards, and barbed wire exist for many reasons. For factory owners who live in the factory, they often talked about the protection of their own safety. For the management, the gated compound and security guards were also a means of securing company properties: materials, products, or equipment. For labor scholars, the centralization of workers in a space under strict supervision and surveillance is a way of mobilizing labor power in a timely and flexible manner (Pun and Smith 2007; Ren and Pun 2006). Yet fewer people have been paying attention to how the company's border control affects workers' life in a comparatively positive way. Whereas scholars see border control through a more oppressive lens, workers feel safer in the factory. Several years prior to my fieldwork, the police force of local governments in Guangzhou City was reported to have arrested and allegedly tortured to death internal migrant workers without formal documentations. When I was in the field, investigations of the police continued to threaten the workers with no due procedures. As Wang told me, "During the Chinese New Year or other major holidays, the police arrest people and make money from the bail. That's their 'end of year bonus.'" To the migrant workers, the external danger was caused not only by the discrimination of local people or local gangs, but also by the threat from the local government.

By contrast, the company provided the workers with the necessary personal safety. Organized security guards monitor the entire factory compound 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The company even implements its own "juridical procedure" as described earlier. When criminal cases happen, the management allows the security guards to seize the suspects and decide whether the case requires an external juridical process (i.e., the juridical process of the local

government, if the company needs to incarcerate the suspects) or the company itself could deal with it (i.e., if the case requires the issuance of a warning or provision of compensation). As long as the company could separate the factory compound from the dangerous outside world and reinforce social orders inside, the company's border control, both in terms of physical space or social/ political autonomy, would be considered fundamentally beneficial to workers.

The company's border control not only objectively protected the workers, but also instilled a sense of safety and even belonging in workers' experience. Especially interesting is how "inside" and "outside" were understood at Hengfa. When Wang told me about the robbery case, something caught my attention. In our initial conversation about the case, he described the suspects in a rather curious way.

> "Here's some news," he said. "Last night, some *outsiders* (*wai mian de ren*) *sneaked into* (*hun*) the dormitory and robbed some employees."

> "I know. I was almost victimized," I told him. "By the way, they were outsiders?" I wanted to double-check with him if the strange men last night were actually outsiders.

> "No, they are our employees," Wang said. "There might have been some problems with our recruitment procedures because we should have been able to filter the troublesome people out."

Wang used the term "outsiders" when he relayed to me the robbery case. He initially referred to these suspects as "outsiders," yet when I attempted to verify this piece of information, Wang stated that they were rather employees of Hengfa. Our conversation revealed the subtle use of the term "outsider" in Hengfa. Such a term does not merely refer to non-employees of Hengfa or to people who are outside of the factory walls. "Outsiders" also refer to Hengfa employees who are potentially dangerous and hence who, according to Wang, the company is obliged to filter out. In the case that they cannot be easily filtered out, the company must at least identify and evict them. The seemingly self-contradictory use of the term "outsider" was clarified by another case. One day, when I caught a cold and asked for a half-day off, my supervisor took me to the guard office at the factory entrance and had me checked out. When I was filling out my information, my supervisor had a short conversation with the security guards about an attack that occurred within the vicinity several days ago. Someone asked, "Who could have done this? An employee or an outsider?" The other replied, "For sure an outsider. An employee could never be so cruel." In this case, these Hengfa employees identified the "outsiders" based on cruelty.

Both of these cases shed lights on how Hengfa employees categorize the people and space that surround them. When Wang talked about the "outsiders sneaking into our factory and robbing our employees," the "outsiders" turned out to be no less "employees" as the victims and there was no need to distinguish them from other employees. The correct expression might have been "some of our employees robbed some other employees" or alike. If the suspects were considered outsiders just because they "used to be" outside of the company, which should properly translate

Wang's statement, so were all other employees. If a person becomes an insider because of recruitment, so should be the suspects. It does not make sense to have, in a nutshell, a group of people who are both "outsiders" and "employees." Yet in Wang's testimony, the suspects could be both. This statement could be understandable only when the dichotomy of "outsiders" vs. "insiders" was not defined by one's affiliation with Hengfa. Instead, "outsiders" and "insiders" refer to people with opposite moral qualities. During my stay at Hengfa, the workers used the term "outsiders" when referring to people who were unruly, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous. By contrast, the employees, or "insiders," are orderly, familiar with one another, and safe. By this logic, the suspects of the robbery case were outsiders because they commited a crime, whereas technically speaking, as Wang later acknowledged, they were also employees of Hengfa.

Moreover, the spatial category of inside and outside is reinforced in workers' everyday life experience. The conversation about whether a criminal was an employee or an outsider is indeed a case at hand; similarly, after the robbery case, when my roommates expressed the concerns about whether the suspects would come back and "stir up troubles," one of them asserted that we did not need to worry. "What are you scared of? They can only stir up troubles *outside*." This statement, of course, was referring to the company's capacity of border control. Yet sometimes this sense of safe and orderly inside and dangerous chaotic outside could be expressed and reproduced in more dramatic ways. In an early autumn Saturday evening, when workers were sitting outside of the dormitory to drink and chat, the sound of arguments came from the gate of the factory compound. We came to the gate and found some local thugs arguing with the security guards. The curfew time had passed and the thugs wanted the security guards to let a girl in—the girl seemed to be an employee but also a friend of the thugs. The argument soon developed into physical conflicts between a guards and a thug, until the head of security guards came and started talking with the leader of the thugs. The situation was stabilized once they started talking and the thugs left when the local police arrived.

What interested me was what the workers were doing. As an ethnographer, I stayed close to the gate and observed the conflicts the whole time; yet many workers did the same. They moved toward the gate and stayed there, many even brought their beer and snacks. The conflicts felt like an entertaining drama play for them. This atmosphere was strikingly different from how people felt in other situations. Migrants were afraid of thugs and the local police alike, and for the latter case, they often showed an attitude similar to what Alice Goffman (2014) called "on the run." However, in that evening, my coworkers were not afraid of either of them because they were protected by the wall the the security guards. This kind experience may always remind the workers that, in my roommate's words, the bad people "can only stir up trouble outside."

Securing Social Reproduction

The second aspect of Hengfa's function as a *de facto* local state is observed when it provided the means of subsistence to its workers. Not only that housing, food, childcare, and medical care

were made available by the company, Hengfa also offered basic entertainment, such as TV, internet cafe, and sports facilities. These services and infrastructure, while accessible through the government or the consumer market in advanced capitalist societies (as well as for the Chinese urban middle class), are mainly provided by or distributed through the employers in two particular cases, that is, the urban "working units" in the Chinese collective era and the the dormitory labor regime in the early reformist years.

When investigating the Chinese enterprises under different types of ownership, scholars typically are focused on the strikingly different patterns of welfare provision between state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and private enterprises. The conventional wisdom holds that the former provides workers with a range of "cradle-to-grave benefits," from health care and education to social security, whereas the latter provides virtually nothing. Andrew Walder (1986) argues that SOEs have a particular type of labor control and industrial relation, and these features are related to the dual function of the work unit, that is, supervising the production of workers in the workplace and distributing their daily life resources. For private enterprises, company-provided subsistence resources are not extensively discussed. Indeed, the lifetime employment (at least as promised during the establishment of the collective economic model) in SOEs better fits the "from-cradle-to-grave" feature of the micro-welfare state, whereas private enterprises are not quite so. However, it is also true that, faced by the vacuum of social provision left by the SOEs and local governments, workers can only rely on their employers. It is well established that services such as clinic, medical care, child care, housing, and canteen services are commonly provided in SOEs before and after the reform (Gallagher 2005), yet in Hengfa, such services are also provided, at least at a minimal level and sometimes even beyond. The resources Hengfa's workers enjoyed might seem trivial compared with the "industrial aristocrats" at the prime of SOEs, but they certainly exceed what the local state and the township consumer market could possibly offer.

There are two ways of understanding such "benefits." On the one hand, these "benefits" are occasionally considered as benefits by both the employer and the employees, and such benefits exist because of the insufficient provision from the allocation regime of the local state. The company, after all, has to meet the minimum requirements of social reproduction of laborI it wants the workers to work. When queried about the provision of housing, health care, kindergarten, and Internet cafe on the site, Wang immediately and consciously linked those establishments with the state socialist legacy of *hukou* system, stating,

> "They [the workers] applied for ID cards from their [hometown] government… after entering this company, the rest of their needs were taken care of by the company. The company negotiates with the local government to take care of them [the workers]. This practice is traced all the way back to the SOE era, in which SOEs took care of everything from cradle to grave… This idea about benefits exactly started within this framework." (Interview by the author, November 28, 2006)

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The idea of the company as a micro-welfare state originated from the collective era, both historically and ideologically. At the same time, this idea stemmed from the practical needs faced by the workers in coastal areas. Numerous types of resources were allocated through either the local state and the SOE or the market, to which the workers had limited access; thus, the employer needed to step in and deal with the problems of the workers.

> "When it comes to the clinic….for the workers, seeing a doctor outside [of the factory] is quite expensive. Nowadays, hospitals are totally profit-driven. They do not care about what is right or wrong; all they care about is simply making money. If you have no money, hospitals would not care even if you are dying. The entire medical system is so commercialized that even a simple illness could cause a huge financial burden for any worker." (Interview by the author, November 28, 2006)

From the perspective of workers, the provision of housing and other resources is sometimes considered a benefit as well. Workers in Pearl River Delta use the phrase, "*bao chi bao zhu*" (food and housing covered), to describe a factory such as Hengfa that supplies dormitory and canteen services. This phrase is used to evaluate the labor conditions of a company. For instance, when a worker meets a friend or a relative from another factory, he or she might ask two things about the factory: how much the friend could earn every month, and whether the company provided food and housing. This question could be based on the workers' experience of working in coastal provinces. In coastal provinces, finding a place to live is expensive and difficult, sometimes even impossible, because of the workers' low-income level or the local government requirement of residential documentation. If the factory is not a "food and housing covered" one, then the worker would need to spend a significant proportion of his or her wage to rent a place. Based on the phrase, "food and housing covered," housing and food are viewed as benefits.

A second approach to understanding the company's provision of means of subsistence, nevertheless, sees it as internalizing workers' everyday life into the company's internal financial structure. Whereas both the company and workers see housing and food as "benefits" that were "covered" by the company, these offers are not purely benefits as long as workers had to pay. Hengfa charges its workers for three main items: dormitory, utilities, and meal plans. Moreover, the payment was more like a mandatory part of employment. With a few exceptions, workers were all required to live in Hengfa's dormitory; most workers signed up for full meal plans unless they found one particular meal unnecessary (often breakfast for those who would prefer sleeping over breakfast). Workers did not even need to make a payment (or choose not to) because the amount was automatically deducted from their monthly paycheck. Unsurprisingly, the company was a price maker, that is, the company can charge workers comparatively freely while workers did not have much room for negotiating or refusing to use these resources.

The internalization of workers' everyday life costs and expenditures into the company's financial structure implies that the costs of these resources might not always match what workers paid. In the case of "benefits" or "company as a miniature welfare state," the costs should exceed what

employees paid, if they paid any; on the other end of the spectrum, workers also could be overpaying.

Without official accounting documentation, whether the dormitory and utilities fees were under or overpriced would be difficult to tell. Sometimes, however, clues could be uncovered in dramatic yet complicated ways. As my fieldwork neared completion, I left the factory for several days to join a class field trip in Beijing. Upon my return, I realized that the taps in the public bathroom of the dormitory had been replaced by water-saving taps. The water that flowed from the tap was never strong enough to take a shower, and people needed to repeatedly press the button tap to maintain the water flow. The procedure proved to be extremely inconvenient. I asked Wang about the reason for installing the "stupid taps." He said that one month ago, Hengfa paid "excessive" water fees to the local government, which amounted to "100,000 RMB."

The amount seemed hefty. The replacement of all the taps in our dormitory appeared reasonable. However, the problem actually lay in two other numbers: in that month, on my pay stub, Hengfa deducted 180 RMB for dormitory and electricity/water fees; at least 2,000 other workers paid a similar amount. The average water cost generated by each worker, according to Wang, was 50 RMB. Despite the inclusion of dormitory and electricity fees in the deducted amount (180 RMB), charging an extremely marginal electricity fee is a reasonable assumption because the workers are hardly in their dormitory room all day until 10 PM, and the lamps in the rooms are turned off at midnight. The dormitory has no computers, and the two television sets in the canteen are turned on for only two hours a day. Moreover, my prior experience told me that something could be wrong. Before I came to Hengfa, I stayed in a dormitory room in Guangzhou. The dormitory room for 10 Internet-surfing and online game-playing college students in Guangzhou City charged less than 100 RMB for electricity, or 10 RMB per person.

Moreover, as the custodial supervisor told me, the workplace and dormitory had no separate water meters. In other words, the distinction between the water expense of workers and that of the company was vague at best. The amount of 100,000 RMB that Wang mentioned covered both the water used on the shop floor, in dormitories, and in the management building and everywhere on the factory site. The integration of production space and everyday life space consequently integrated the costs of production and everyday life, and the integrated cost was assigned to the workers rather than the company itself in the name of utility fee.

If the above calculation seems complicated and the line between a "fair" and "unfair" charge feels even more blurred after all the inquiry, it is because the internalization of workers' life cost is by itself obscuring the line. Yet however difficult it is to determine whether the company overcharged workers, what remains clear is that it had the power to do so. When the external factors change, the company can adjust the dormitory and utility fees to restore its financial balance. In the fall of 2006, the city where Hengfa was located raised the minimum wage by 116 RMB. In the same month, the charge of meal plans was increased by 80 RMB, whereas the dormitory and utility fees increased by 30 RMB.

Governing Everyday Life

As discussed previously, the wall of the factory compound separated the inside world from outside not only in physical terms but also in social and political sense. The world outside of the wall was potentially unpredictable, dangerous, even though it could also be fun. By contrast, within the wall, life was seen as safe, orderly, and civilized. The assignment of meaning to physical spaces and the maintenance of those meanings, however, requires continuous enforcement of the said order. If the company wants its employees to believe that life is safe within the wall, it has to prevent the "outsiders" from "sneaking into" the factory. Similarly, if the company wants its employees to believe that life within the wall is orderly and civilized, it has to enforce social rules, not merely to maintain a minimal life standard needed for the social reproduction of labor, but also to maintain the moral legitimacy of the company as a *de facto* local state.

In the 2000s, scholars started noticing how the promotion and engineering of people's "human quality," or *suzhi* in Chinese, had become a neoliberal cultural and social agenda of the Chinese state, as a response to globalization and marketization. Roughly equated to civility, self-discipline, and modernity, *suzhi* was observed to be a key of the official discourse at both central and grassroots level, especially regarding the lack of it of the peasantry and the state agenda to promote it among them (Jacka 2009; Kipnis 2007; Yan 2003). One major testimony of this neoliberalist social improvement scheme is Yan Hairong's ethnographic observation of a brokerage/ training center of domestic workers. By encoding the value of well-behaving and self-discipline into domestic workers' subjectivity, the *suzhi* discourse transformed peasants into not only docile working subjects (economic effect) but also civilized modern citizens (social economic) (Yan 2003). Yan's fieldwork, however, is located in a particularly strategic social arena, that is, a domestic work brokerage company that was affiliated with the local government whie responsible for its own financial standing. In this social space, the economic interests and governmental intentions intersected at both institutional and individual levels. Outside of this particular social field, however, how intervention into migrants' life is made possible remains unclear.

Also in the 2000s, the *suzhi* discourse was reported to be utilized in the manufacturing sector. Complaining about migrant workers' lack of *suzhi* and blaming their "peasantness" and "socialistness" for it, the management made the desirable values clear enough on the shop floor: workers should be responsible for themselves and compete with each other, instead of preserving the rural, socialist, collectivist mentality (Pun 2005: 79-80). However, less discussed was the other side of the company's role in this moral enterprise: if the company intends to judge workers based on a set of values, it first had to promote those values. For this reason, Hengfa's management, like many other companies, devoted constant effort in regulating workers' everyday life to maintain a modern, civilized, and respectable lifestyle within the walls of its

compound. By doing so, the company resembles a social improvement scheme often promoted by a developmental state that attempts to transform its citizens in the pursuit of modernity.

An example of this pursuit of modernity, civility, and morality was a document issued by Hengfa, titled "Canteen, Living Area and Dormitory Code." Among these rules Hengfa established and enforced, some could be understood as related to production efficiency, whereas others do not seem as relevant to production *per se*. Instead, they rather point to a sense

1. Don't go to the dormitory for opposite-sex unless required by work purpose;

2. Don't stay with non-spouse opposite-sex persons over night;

3. Living or staying outside of the factory compound overnight should be applied for in advance. Unmarried people are not allowed to live or stay outside;

4. After 23:00 everybody should go back to dormitory room to sleep;

5. During the lunch break (12:00-13:00) and after 23:00 everybody should keep quiet so nobody's rest would be bothered;

6. Don't dispose cigarette buds, trash or spit on the ground or floor;

7. Don't gamble in dormitory;

8. Don't excrete in the shower;

9. Don't enter others' room without permission

10. Male workers shouldn't be half-naked in public; Females shouldn't be in pajamas;

11. Clean up dormitory room every month;

12. Personal belongings in dormitory rooms or on beds should be placed orderly and neatly.

Looking at this list, we can hardly believe that every entry on the list is production-related. Some of the entries, such as "Don't stay with non-spouse opposite-sex person overnight," are more similar to a patriarchal, sexually conservative rhetoric. The company apparently considers the average age of workers, between 16 and 20 years, in discharging its responsibility to "teach them what is right or wrong." This practice is likewise evident in other companies. Two prominent ethnographers of southern China factories, Ching Kwan Lee (1998) and Ngai Pun (2005), both observed how male, older managers would talk to female, young workers about how to be effective workers, good (especially responsible) persons, and modern women. Lee and Pun viewed these persuasions as a means of labor control because most of them were related to the working attitude or performance of maiden workers on the shop floor. However, their observations of company control over (and persuasions about) worker behaviors were limited to

occurrences in the workplace. In Hengfa, regulation occurs not only in the workplace and is not limited to production either. The company acts like a *de facto* government by promoting moral and behavior principles and making its "citizens" follow these rules.

These rules are not only announced but are enforced as well. When calling the company a *de facto* local government, or an alternate local state, I use the term "state" in a Weberian sense. Within its enclosed territory, the company enjoys the monopolistic, legitimate use of force, that is, the security guards. With the security guards, the company could enforce its own "laws" by processing penalties within the walls of the factory compound. Anyone caught littering would be fined by the security guards. Female workers who wore clothes that "look like pajamas" might be asked by the guards to go back and put on "more appropriate" outfits. The security guards could even issue tickets in case they need to penalize a violator or enforce the moral and behavior codes of the company. As previously mentioned, the company ensures outsiders are "filtered out" to prevent crimes; similarly, within the factory premises, the company, rather than the local police, is the organization that prevents workers from stealing, engaging in sexual harassment, or initiating violence. The guards have the power to penalize workers not only by issuing tickets to workers for littering, but also in arresting workers for fighting. The guards patrol in shifts to ensure that nobody would loiter after the lights are off and to secure the public safety of the community.

To the extent that the security guards get involved in issues beyond industrial production *per se* and the company implements its rules for the good of workers instead of against them, the line between the company as "dictator of production" and the company as "caretaker of morality" is obscured. During my stay at Hengfa, I did hear workers complaining about the company; to my surprise, while workers sometimes did complain that the regulations were too harsh, at other times they complained the company for not being harsh enough. When a minor crime occurred within the factory compound, workers would blame the company for not being strict enough in its surveillance; when the environment was messy, workers might blame the company for not being draconian enough in its daily life regulation. When a sexual harassment case happened between two workers in an evening, the worker who told me about the case was confused: "how could this happen? It is *supposed* to be safe within the company!" Someone else was upset: "the company is too *soft*! It has to *toughen up*! If the company remains so soft, what will be the difference between the company and outside?"

The night after the robbery case, when I met Wang and the head of the local police, Wang told me, "whenever things like this happen, we need to be tough. We need to knock down those trouble-makers. We cannot let our employees think that the company is weak." That was the second night of my stay at Hengfa and I was a labor scholar. Intuitively, I interpreted Wang's words as an attempt to show some "muscle" to the workers so they will remain docile. It might have been true. However, the company needed to show the workers its "muscle" also for not losing their support. The company, similar to a modern state or any political, ruling entity, is functioning upon a certain degree of legitimacy, or the consent of the governed. To secure and

maintain legitimacy, it is obliged to fulfill its function as the caretaker of workers both materially and morally.

From State Politics to Production Politics

According to the labor process theory, a workplace is not only located in the middle of two levels of political effects but also mediating them: at the macro level, there is what is conceptualized as the "state politics," which shapes the possible configuration of the workplace; at the micro level, the labor process within a particular workplace has its own political and ideological effects, or "production politics" (Burawoy 1979; 1985). This way, the macro level, global, and "structural" factors find their micro level, local, and "individual" expressions but not through a mechanical, input-output relationship between the socializing structural factors and the socialized individuals. Hengfa's role as a *de facto* local state in its workers' life hence could be understood in two subsequent moments. At the level of state politics, the aforementioned practices of the company stem from the disengagement of the local state from both the migrants and the company—for the former as discrimination whereas for the latter as autonomy. At the level of production politics, these practices have helped form a peculiar kind of labor politics that is marked by workers' reliance on and consent toward the company.

The company's role in workers' everyday life, therefore, should be understood within the triangular relationship among the local state, the company, and the workers. The antagonistic relationship between the workers and the local government, as reflected in the refusal of the state to grant them sufficient social rights, has urged the participation of the company in the issue of social rights. The capacity of the company to do so, on the other hand, comes from its autonomy granted by its relationship with the local state.

In the 2000s, the relationship between the local state and migrants was much more antagonistic than nowadays. Not only that the discriminative urban allocation regime excluded migrants who have no local residency (Solinger 1999; Wu 2010), but that the local government could pose substantial threats to workers. The shocking news on the death of Sun Zhigang had not been forgotten by the Chinese society when this study was conducted. Sun was an internal migrant who was arrested on March 17, 2003 in Guangzhou for failing to present valid identity documents (identification card, temporary residence permit, or certificate of employment). Several days later, Sun was found dead in the detention and deportation station (*shou rong qian song zhan*) after he was presumably tortured (Wu 2010). The death of Sun is an example of the incessant threats that migrants receive from the local government, which is personified by the police officers and urban management personals (*cheng shi guan li ren yuan*, or simply *cheng guan*). Pun (2005, pp. 45–46) reported that during the 1990s, the company personnel advised their workers not to leave the factory to avoid being arrested by the police. These threats are not only observed by the company management, but are also acknowledged by the workers

themselves, saying that, "In the eyes of public security, we are less than dogs" (Chan 2001, p. 79).

These observations reflect the distrust of migrant workers toward the local government. The weak or even antagonistic relation between the local state and the workers, furthermore, increases the reliance of the workers on their company. In the robbery case, the workers reported the case to the management rather than to the local government because of the unjust treatment they tend to receive from the local police. After the robbery case had been reported to the management, the company decided to contact the local police force to conduct the investigation. Upon hearing the news, the victims immediately ran away to hide, which reflected their fear of or distrust toward the local police force. This attitude well resembles what Alice Goffman observed in Philadelphian inner city neighborhoods and called "on the run" nearly a decade after (Goffman 2014). Similarly, in the aftermath of the case, while talking about the possible revenge from the robbers, workers mentioned the security guards rather than the local police as a protection. The workers were not confident of the robbers being imprisoned, as in their mind, the police would not do anything just—workers often assumed the police to be corrupted and the gangsters to be working for some powerful person with good connections with government officials. With this assumption, it is more than natural to believe that the police and gangsters are colluding against migrants. By contrast, workers were confident that the security guards would never allow the robbers to enter the company premises again.

On the other hand, to explain the relative autonomy and capacity of the company, we need to examine the other type of relation that is associated with "state politics": the relation between the company and the local state. The company was able to initiate the investigation in the first place and intervene in the juridical process after the local police took over, and it was able to do so as a result of its "good" relationship with the local state.

Similar to the issue on the *hukou* system, the rent-seeking behavior of the local government is not much of a new topic among the China researchers. Ching Kwan Lee, for example, emphasized how corruption enabled FDI manufacturers to bypass the labor code and hence enjoyed a practically *laissez-faire* business environment. The same practice continued to be observed at the time of my fieldwork in 2006. The managers of Hengfa were quite open about how they bribed the local officials to either avoid problems or gain privileges. Wang told me that he had to take care of at least eight local government branches, including the labor department, the fire department, and the police department, and that he had to send these departments money every Lunar New Year and Duanwu Festival as presents from the company. The company also maintains its relation with the local officials by doing business with them or their relatives. At Hengfa, all fire extinguishers in the factory were purchased from the cousin of a local official. A relative of another official owned a photography business, which took the photos on the Temporary Residential Permits for all the 3,000 workers. The cafeteria in the factory was outsourced to a business that was launched by the retired chief of the police department in a

nearby city. Through these seemingly normal business activities, the company established personal connections with different individuals in the local government.

Many previous studies have observed how the rent-seeking behavior between the company and local officials enable the former to isolate their labor process from the latter's intervention (Lee 1998; Chan 2001). These findings are confirmed by the case Hengfa. Before I entered the field, a strike happened at Hengfa and the workers gathered in front of the management dormitory. The company sought help from the subcontractor of its cafeteria, who, as previously mentioned, was the retired chief of the police department in a nearby city. The retired chief of police immediately drove to Hengfa and contacted his former colleagues in the township where Hengfa was located. The police department thus helped Hengfa crush the strike. However, in addition to confirming the observations of how companies take advantage of their government connections to abuse the workers, Hengfa's everyday life governance also tells the opposite side of the story: such a relation between the local state and the company can become positive when the company intends to help its workers with their problems. In the robbery case, the company started the investigation, brought the local police in with an intention to punish the suspects harshly. Wang explicitly told me that the company "wanted these robbers to be imprisoned as long as possible" and for this purpose, "our boss is 'working on' this case from Taiwan and we are 'working on' it from here." He never clarified how the owner of Hengfa and himself were working on that case, but in this context, it goes without saying that "working on" involves utilizing their personal connections with local officials to intervene in how the case was going through the juridical process. At the same time, the factory manager, a local resident with close connections with the communist party cadres, also helped in negotiating with the local police chief.

The dormitory labor regime came into existence as an outcome of these power dynamics between the state and migrants, as well as the state and the company. The local state's discrimination againt migrants, the company's autonomy to protect them, together formed a unique relationship based on reliance between migrants and the company. With or without a benevolent intention, most companies were doing at least a few things similar to Hengfa. To the extent that the Hukou System kept excluding migrants from the urban allocation regime, any company that invested in China in the 2000s would find their workers so unprotected and unregulated that it had to act as a *de facto* local state, otherwise the stability of labor reproduction might be threatened. To the extent that the rent-seeking behaviors of the local state leave the company autonomous, the company would be capable of offering the protection and regulation that usually were provided by the government elsewhere.

These provisions, furthermore, shaped workers' experiences of and attitudes towards the company. The dormitory labor regime has been seen by the extant literature as a means of flexible, exploitative, and intense use of labor, and hence presumably coercive and despotic in the language of labor process theory (Pun and Smith 2007; Ren and Pun 2006). The presumption of coercion, however, may overlook workers' consent towards the company. The dormitory labor regime is, after all, a regime that seeks to secure surplus labor by maximizing the control

over the social reproduction of labor power. Those who started this stream of research did point out this fundamental logic, but what has been missed out ever since was the real experience of the workers. Assuming the workers to be forced to follow the rules established and enforced by the company is not wrong. However, if the Weberian insight still holds true in the case of our *de facto* local state, the use of force always comes with a certain degree of legitimacy. In Michael Burawoy's language, that is to say, a production regime is always a combination of coercion and consent. In the case of Hengfa, the consent came from the fact that the company, in spite of being exploitative, also governed its workers in a positive way, at least as the workers experienced it. The positive experience, and hence consent, were generated alongside with mechanisms of labor control and securing of surplus labor.

The centralization of workers' housing arrangement, for example, has been seen as a way of rapid, flexible mobilization of labor power (Pun and Smith 2007; Ren and Pun 2006). Besides this well established and commonly accepted argument, my 2006 fieldwork also suggests that the curfew system of the factory compound might become an incentive for workers to voluntarily work harder so they can spend leisure time outside (Peng 2011). To emphasize how the company could take advantage of the concentrated pool of labor power, however, does not address how workers perceive this advantage. As Hengfa's case demonstrates, once understood as the "border control" that works as both protection and constraints, workers' attitudes towards the enclosure of factory compounds turns out to be more positive than the literature may imply. In a similar vein, the security crew that guarded the factory entrance and patrolled the compound gave mixed feelings to Hengfa's workers, as they were there both for oppression and protection. Lastly but not least, the internalization of workers' everyday life cost into the company's financial structure, as my findings suggest, may serve to suppress the wage when needed.

Concluding Remark

The scholars of China's labor issues have long been paying attention to the function of dormitories in labor control. Conceptualized as the "dormitory labor regime," the physical and institutional arrangement of dormitories were seen as a part of production politics that help separate and control workers. The social reproduction side of this regime, however, was less discussed. In this chapter, I demonstrated three major dimensions on which the company acted as a *de facto* local state that filled up the gap between non-citizen internal migrants and the exclusive/discriminative *de jure* local state—the company had its own border, provided the workers with minimal yet necessary infrastructure and services, and was regulating migrants' everyday life in a paternalistic manner. These functions resembled not only what the *de jure* local state did to the urban residents but also the function of the state in general. Some of them, such as the border control and social services, are so fundamental and indispensable that the company might be doing so simply because the reproduction of labor power was the prerequisite of commodity production. However, when it comes to the paternalistic everyday life regulation,

the same argument would be more difficult to make. Whatever the reason is, nevertheless, the company seemed to have assumed the function beyond the necessity of production. In other words, the governmental function of the dormitory regime could be partially seen as independent of its production function.

Yet on the other hand, the governmental functions were still conditioned on the needs of production more than anything. Not only that the functions served were still by and large overlapped with necessities of production, but the regime as a whole tends to subject the realm to labor reproduction to the realm of commodity production, as here the institutions of labor reproduction were guided by the objective of securing a stable, mobilizable labor force, as well as surveillance and labor control. The governmental function of the dormitory labor regime, therefore, is still penetrated by the logic of production.

However, with the expansion of the informal service sector and decentralization of the workplace, the company's role has been decreasing in the past decade. Does the decreasing importance of the company mean that the *de jure* local government would resume the function of a *de facto* local government? As implied in the introduction, the answer is yes and no. On the one hand, a new third party emerged as the provider of social services in the place of company—grassroots NGOs. By and large illicit back in 2006, these organizations now not only were allowed to get registered and operate legally but also were offered ample opportunities to receive government funding through government procurement of social service. In 2016, it was not difficult to see NGO staff visit migrant communities, sometimes wearing vests that bore the name of their organizations, to hold community events. Some of these organizations played movies, organized holiday events, or held educational, informational workshops. Some engaged even deeper by creating long term educational programs, recruiting community volunteers, or even organizing town hall meetings. In this sense, what replaced the company is grassroots NGOs, not the local state.

On the other hand, nevertheless, the local government did become more involved in the regulation of migrants' daily life as the NGOs are more deeply incorporated into the administrative function of the local government. In other words, in ten years, two major changes have occurred in terms of the regulation of migrants' everyday life: the function of *de facto* local government is now more often fulfilled by grassroots NGOs and less carried out by companies. Yet more important is the changing relationship between the substitute governing body and the official local state. Whereas the company distanced itself from the local government and exercised its power outside of the state surveillance, the NGOs now are facing deep, yet subtle, state control. We will probe into the new mechanism of social/political incorporation of both NGOs and migrants in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

Indiville: Disengaged Social Programs & Dispersed Migrant Networks

Located in one of Guangzhou's busiest commercial districts, Indiville is surrounded by various types of businesses: when one is at the center of the commercial district, he or she can see luxurious shopping malls and hotels. Once walking down a major city street towards the outskirts of this area, Chanel and Gucci will be replaced by H&M and Nike. If this person turns onto a smaller two-lane street, there are local Chinese brand names. The restaurants are distributed in similar manners. Besides apparel and restaurants, digital products are also a reason for people to visit this area. Many migrants in Indiville, unsurprisingly, are employed in these businesses.

It will nevertheless be an overestimation to say that the migrants who live inside Indiville constitute the majority of employees in the formal economy outside. Although official statistical data are not available, it seems reasonable to assume that most migrant workers do not have the cultural capital required by the luxurious section of the outside world. The middle-range department stores prefer Cantonese-speaking salespersons and hence are less likely to hire someone from outside of Guangdong Province. What is predominantly occupied by migrants, therefore, are the Chinese brand names or brandless retailing businesses on the smaller streets.

Moreover, a significant portion of migrants in Indiville are not employed in businesses outside. Instead, they work in the informal economy located within the village. The composition of businesses in the village is more complicated than outside. There certainly are apparel and shoes, restaurants and food stands, hair salons and barber shops, massage parlors, and pedicure studios, which by and large resemble what is available outside. However, there are also things that can be found only in the village, such as appliances and furniture. Businesses within the village tend to be unlicensed, less expensive, and with lower qualities. They are also smaller in scale, predominantly self-employed. A business run by its self-employed owner with help from one or two employees is considered a well-off one. Stores closer to the village entrance or located on the major village streets still have urban lower-middle-class customers, and they hence slightly resemble the stores outside in terms of appearance, quality, and pricing. Yet the rest of them are hiding in the wandering dark lanes which connect the major streets and the residential area. The city people rarely bother or dare to enter these lanes and patronize these businesses, so the customers here are predominantly migrants who live in Indiville.

The multilayered, heterogeneous composition of economic life in Indiville also causes a more heterogeneous composition of social relations. As business scales are small and workplaces are decentralized, a sense of collectivity is rarely found in either objective or subjective sense. Unlike those who work in factories, where new job openings always allow workers to migrate in

larger groups, migrants in Indiville rarely have the chance to travel with their hometown friends, find the same job, and work together. They often make new friends in the city, but not as often do so with their coworkers or even fellow migrants from the same village. The service and retailing market in Indiville is quite saturated with competition, usually between people in the same trade but also between those in the same workplace, especially haircut and massage. As a result, making friends with coworkers is not always a good idea. The hometown network, friendships, and workplace social relations are hence rarely overlapped for migrants in Indiville.

The diversity of migrants and dispersion of their social networks pose a challenge for the local government, which attempts to govern the migrants, as well as the NGOs which seek to serve them. The latter is presumably feeling the most heat. Starting from the spring of 2016, I spent eight months at a social service center operated by an NGO called EnrichLife, where I witnessed its staff's struggle. The center was located nearby Indiville and, partially for that reason, had a team specialized in internal migrant service. Despite its proximity and commitment, the center eventually failed to deliver services to Indiville in any meaningful way. Why is it the case? Before looking at the challenges posed by the economy and demography of Indiville, I will start with the social service center itself.

EnrichLife, 2016

In the spring of 2016, I attended a gathering of scholars and labor activists in Guangzhou. I just started working at a government-sponsored, NGO-operated social work center located near Indiville and my new friends were interested in knowing what we did to help the rural-urban migrants. We were about to launch a kidnapping prevention project, I told them. Almost without thinking, they asked me if there were many kidnapping cases in that neighborhood—an assumption that seemed reasonable given not only the fact that we were starting this program but also the general impression that these migrant neighborhoods had relatively high crime rates. "There is none," I answered and found it bitterly amusing to surprise them, "and that is the problem."

While it might be fun to talk about launching a kidnapping prevention project in a neighborhood where no kidnapping cases have been reported, undertaking such a task was not. At that time, my colleagues at the social work center were struggling desperately to get this unlikely job done. Despite our efforts, we never figured out how to prevent kidnapping in a place where it had never happened in the first place. As time went by, I witnessed how the enthusiasm of my coworkers transformed into frustration, which partially caused the team leader Fei to quit the program eventually.

The social work center that I worked with, or Integrated Family Service Center (IFSC) as formally named, was officially affiliated with the Street Office (an administrative level under district government and above the neighborhood committee) while practically outsourced to an NGO named EnrichLife. In the city of Guangzhou, there are more than 160 Street Offices and

each one is required to have at least one IFSC program. Among the more than 160 centers in the city, EnrichLife was contracted to operate three of them, including the one located near Indiville.

Before being introduced to the NGO by a Chinese sociologist, I had been conducting fieldwork in Indiville for months. Once I joined the center, I was arranged to work with Fei, the leader of the community development and migrant services team. The day I met Fei, a program director at EnrichLife's headquarters called Yang walked me to the IFSC center. Knowing that I came to Guangzhou to study the life of rural migrants, Yang was interested in my work and it did not take long before we were discussing a research project he wanted to conduct in Indiville. The way Yang envisioned it, this project was supposed to be an inductive/explorative community study on the migrant population, their everyday life needs, and how services can be delivered to them more efficiently.

Fei joined our discussion once we arrived at the center but remained silent the whole time, which caused me some worries that she might not be open to my studying the topic as Yang suggested. Having that concerned in mind, I chose to meet her outside the center the next time we met—an arrangement that hopefully would make her feel comfortable about commenting on Yang's plan. As it turned out, she did want to conduct a community study but was merely envisioning the research project differently. For her, the community study should be a part of their midterm report submitted to external auditors, mostly university professors hired by the municipal Civil Affairs Bureau. In particular, this research will be used to justify a kidnapping prevention program they were about to launch. "Why kidnapping prevention?" I asked, just like how I would be asked by my friends a month later, "are there many kidnapping cases in Indiville?"

Fei did not know and that became the first thing our research had to find out. We had to conduct a kidnapping prevention project not because kidnapping was a problem in the community but because before EnrichLife signed the contract of this IFSC, this project was already written in its proposal to the government. Fei was assigned to this task without knowing whether the community needed it and how to design the project, but she had to prove that kidnapping was a significant problem in the community and find out a way to prevent it. For this purpose, we decided to request criminal records from the local police and agreed to focus the research project on variables that could be related potentially to preventing kidnappings, such as residents' occupations, family structures, and daily routines.

The second version of our research plan, although strikingly different from what Yang envisioned, seemed to be promising as well. However, after a couple of days, Fei visited the police department and brought back the "bad news": there had not been a kidnapping case reported in the neighborhood for years. The midterm report became even more challenging. According to our contract with the Civil Affairs Bureau, we should conduct a kidnapping prevention project; yet for the external auditors from the Social Work Association, this project needed to be justified by data. The data we obtained from the police, however, did not justify the project. Frustrated, I asked Fei if we could replace kidnapping prevention with an alternative

community project. It would be even more difficult, she said. Our social-science-minded auditors would accept a change of proposal only under the condition that the new one was supported by solid research data and by "solid," they meant large-sized, representative samples.

In other words, to propose a new community project, we were expected to conduct a community study that resembled the research project that Yang envisioned in the first place: it should be representative, inductive, and explorative. It should help us design a project that stemmed from the community's needs. There was only one problem: when Yang discussed the research plan with me, he did not relate the research to the midterm report of the center. For front-line staff like Fei, the research was useful only if it could be completed by May so they could finish the report in June. Conducting a community survey in less than three months was by itself challenging, more so designing a new community project based on the identified community needs. Fei's team was caught between two options and neither one was ideal: she could conduct a community study that was unlikely to be completed on time in the hope that it would lead to a community project that made sense or stick with the existing project that did not make sense but could yield some outputs on their report. The team chose the latter. During summer vacation, another group of social workers at the IFSC was planning to organize a drama play event for some urban middle-class children from the nearby area, and Fei's team convinced their colleagues to work the kidnapping prevention theme into their script. The drama play was expected to be well-attended by the relatives and friends of the children who performed. The experts who would audit the center in June would learn about the upcoming drama play summer camp as a way of raising community awareness of the issue of kidnapping and when they come back by the end of the year, they would learn that many people attended the event and it was a success, at least on paper.

Pursuit of Legibility and the Art of Paperwork

The dilemma faced by EnrichLife's social work center resonates with a decades-old topic in social science, especially development studies—the efficacy of social improvement programs and state failure. For starters, James Scott's (1998) groundbreaking research on the state optics and the consequent, almost fated failure of social improvement programs points to the intrinsic relationship between the state's pursuit of legibility and the exclusion of tacit local knowledge and spontaneous social practices from its social improvement schemes. Legibility, as Scott describes, stands for a high-modern governmental vision that seeks to make everything visible through the standardization of the social life of the governed. Social life, nevertheless, always contains elements that could not fit in the top-down, standardized governmental framework. The standardization of social life, as such, always means depriving some social practices that are necessary for the functioning of it, as well as the inevitable crisis stemming from the deprivation.

Social improvement schemes, however, tend to be more complicated in terms of the various actors involved and the diverse, often conflicting interests and knowledge of the actors. In response to James Scott, Tania Murry Li (2005) points out the multi-layered, multi-actor nature

of social improvement schemes—the state, NGOs, intellectuals, as well as the governed ordinary people upon whom the social improvement programs are imposed, all have their own interests and agency in the shaping of the programs. Aware of the coexistence of various actors in what she calls a "field of intervention," Li's framework is open to social interactions or even struggles, symbolic or even material (Li 2007). Recognizing the complexity within the formation of social improvement schemes, this inductive theorization sees it as an open-ended social process in which multiple forces interplay with one another, instead of Scott's relatively deductive, deterministic perspective. It is less clear, however, how this open-ended process is led toward a certain trajectory. Is there a particular way in which the interactions and competitions among political, social, and economic actors are shaped and hence, in a language Li's approach implicitly avoids, the outcome of competition is "determined"?

In other words, instead of describing the multi-layered, multi-actor social process, can we explain it? Are there rules within the "field of intervention," as Pierre Bourdieu, the theorist of social fields, has suggested when bringing this concept to the horizon of social theories? To answer this question, this research argues in a way similar to Bourdieu, is to tease out the power relations and techniques of domination between layer and layer, actor and actor, while recognizing the relative autonomy of each of them. By observing how the interactions between the state, NGOs, and the migrants are conditioned and by what mechanisms, this research seeks to provide a meso-level explanation that bridges the deterministic theory of an abstract, decisive state and the open-ended theory of concrete, autonomous actors.

My approach to the reconciliation between the determinism of Scott and the voluntarism of Li hence shall start with the mechanism of state control over the civil society, which has as well been going through some fundamental changes in the case of China. Hsu and Hasmath (2011) has correctly observed how the Chinese state's control over NGOs switched, in the context of economic liberalization, from "overt sanctioning" to "tacit sanctioning." The latter, according to the authors, involves three distinct but related aspects: *(1) the state creates and maintains the relationship; (2) select organizations and groups are granted the privilege to mediate interests on behalf of their constituents to the state; and (3) these organizations and groups must adhere to the rules and regulations established by the state* (p. 522). But how exactly do these rules and regulations are sanctioned and then penetrate the daily function of NGOs? And how should we make sense of these measures in the context of economic liberation? To further identify the distinct features of the reemergence of corporatism, this research investigates the pivotal mechanism through which the state keeps NGOs under control, particularly the contracting of government-sponsored social service programs. With the rationalized, marketized spirit of this mechanism, this research argues, the re-emerging corporatism is fundamentally different from the old corporatism and should be seen as what it calls "neo-corporatism."

It should be noted, however, that government procurement of social services and the contracting of social programs do not work the same way across the board. Instead, there are two major models of procurement operating in Guangzhou (and quite likely the whole Southern China).

From here, we can start approaching different ways in which the state, the social service NGOs and the migrants are interacting in Indiville and Collectiville.

Logic of legibility and one-size-fit-all contracting

The first model of coalition building between the state and NGOs can be called a "state deployment" model, of which EnrichLife's social work center makes an example. This model is also a handy case to testify James Scott's arguments about legibility and standardization. As mentioned earlier, the IFSC is a permanent social work center associated with the city government at the Street Office level. An administrative level below the district level and above neighborhood committees, the city has more than 160 Street Offices and more than 160 IFSCs, all under the supervision of the city's Civil Affairs Bureau. The Civil Affairs Bureau designed a highly centralized, formalized, and standardized public tender system to keep this gargantuan number of facilities transparent and accountable to itself. According to this system, all the IFSC centers are open for all social work NGOs in the city to apply. When applying for the government contract, the basic format of application materials is identical across centers. Once awarded a contract, the contracted NGOs are subject to midterm and annual evaluations and for those that pass the evaluation, the contract can be renewed no more than two times. Meanwhile, those that fail in the annual evaluation will lose the opportunity for contract tenure. When the currently contracted NGO loses the contract for the next year, the center will again be available for public tender. This model of state-NGO coalition building, because of its top-down, pre-established, and universalistic nature is called in this research "state deployment."

In theory, this system should keep the contracted NGOs accountable to the contracting local officialdom. In practice, however, it also unintentionally creates two problems for NGOs' work process in pursuing IFSC contracts. On the one hand, while NGOs can apply for every possible IFSC contract in the city, when and where an opening will be available is unpredictable. On the other, when one center is available for public tender, the NGO has very limited time to study the served neighborhoods. The decision to refuse the renewal of a contract is based on the annual assessment, which happens close to the end of the contract. However, once the decision is made, the newly contracted NGO has to fill the office immediately after the previously contracted one moves out. As a result, the public tender procedures, starting from the announcement of tender notice and ending with the awarding of the contract, can take no longer than two months. Given the unpredictability, it is unlikely that an NGO can investigate the served communities before a center is open to tender. Given the time pressure, it is unlikely that an NGO can do so after the tender is announced.

The unpredictability and time pressure might be a problem for NGOs who want to learn about the served community by the time of a public tender, but with the highly standardized tender procedures, the lack of community engagement does not affect the likelihood of winning a contract. Before a public tender is announced, an experienced NGO should already know what their tender document will look like. A typical tender document includes two major parts: the

"business review," which evaluates an NGO's corporate governance and competence of social services in general terms, and the "technical review," which evaluates the number of individuals the NGO commits to serve and events it promises to hold as well as the NGO's capacity to design and implement its proposed projects. As to the measurements of those attributes, three things should be noted. First, they are publicly available in the tender notice and specifically broken down into items with assigned points out of 100 and thus, an NGO does not need to do much more than providing information on the highly specified items when preparing the tender document. Second, when the point system is applied to individual IFSC tenders, most measurements (80 out of 100 points) remain unaltered, although the order or phrasing may change. Third, these measurements pertain mainly to the attributes of the NGO, such as the number and credentials of its staff or the quality control procedures, instead of the characteristics of the served community. In other words, while when and where a center will be available for public tender is enormously unpredictable, what is required for the tender hardly changes across centers. As a result, NGOs can develop their template tender document and use them for every tender. If any revision is needed, the revision refers mainly to updating the NGO's profile and copyediting the material to fit the specific order and phrasing of a particular tender notice.

The art of paperwork

Even with the template, however, the tender document still needs updates and modifications each time when a center is open. In this standardized public tender system, obtaining an IFSC contract is dependent on this type of "art of paperwork." Two types of labor are needed for a successful tender document. The first is "archival work," which requires an NGO to keep track of all the required materials, from public event records, media exposures, to human resources records. In addition to keeping records up to date in various categories specified by the tender notice, this type of work also requires the staff to collect copies of supporting documents constantly.

The "editorial work" is no less crucial. As long as the public tender is open to numerous NGOs and the standardized procedures lowered the barriers to entry, whoever review the tender documents are assumed to be reading a large number of proposals in a short period of time. Moreover, the standardized point system of evaluation requires the reviewers to search for items listed in the rubrics. To make sure that the required items are properly found with minimal effort and hence thereviews could award points effortlessly, the document needs to be edited with a range of editorial tricks. In terms of the organization of the document, the NGO staff who prepare the document should strictly follow the format provided by the tender notice. To help the reviewers locate the items they are after, an informative yet succinct table of content is needed. Within each section of the document, various markers may help the reviewers and hence should be used properly—the use of topic sentences, bullet points, highlights, font and underlines, to the text color.

These techniques represent NGO staff's effort to create legibility while responding to the state's requirements, which are established by and organized around the principle of legibility in the

first place. Not only that the state pursues legibility by imposing a standardizing optics upon the NGOs from a top-down perspective, but the NGOs also seek to provide legibility to the state by closely following the standardized style when writing their proposals. Whereas this type of "voluntary servitude" was not treated seriously by Scott or Li—Scott's theoretical formulation does not include non-state power in the first place and Li emphasizes the autonomy of NGOs over the control of the state, this topic has nevertheless been approached by the Marxist social theories. Antonio Gramsci started this stream of discussion by attributing civil society's subordination to the state, or hegemony, to the cultural configuration of "common sense" (Gramsci 1992). Departing from this cultural perspective, Louis Althusser pointed to the "materiality of ideology"—the material base of social life determines the social institutions, which shapes practices, which forms experience (Althusser 1972). These two conceptualizations, later on, merged into Michael Burawoy's analysis of how the labor process, while producing material goods, also produces/reproduces human experiences (Burawoy 1979; 1985). In Burawoy's factory ethnography, the work process is understood as a game that contains certain rules about the goal, the ways to achieve it, and the rewards of achievement. Once the goal is aligned with the interests of the capital, workers would pursue those interests as if those interests were their own interests. From this perspective, while NGOs do enjoy relative autonomy, they can still voluntarily subject themselves to the state power once they are put in a game that aligns their interests with the interests of the state.

Just like how the standardized and standardizing tender system tends to deprive NGOs of incentives to engage with the local conditions, the same happens to the standardized tender documents. A decisive factor in the establishment of the state-NGO coalition, the paperwork of tender documents is isolated from the local context of the served community. In terms of the "product" that the NGO offers, the technical review evaluates quantitatively the number and credentials of social workers, the number of individuals to serve, and the numbers of events to hold, whereas the qualitative content of service and events remain insignificant. An NGO seeking IFSC contracts has neither the capacity nor the incentives to ensure that the project it proposes is necessary and feasible in the local context. What is necessary is not much more than a project that makes sense in appearance. The kidnapping prevention project was proposed in this manner. For those not familiar with the migrant community, the project seemed plausible for two reasons. First, in 2016, the Guangzhou Police Department was devoting itself to fighting against phone/internet fraud and kidnapping/human trafficking. As such, the kidnapping project looked legitimate in the eyes of government officials. Second, the general impression of migrant communities is associated with crimes and conducting this project appeared to be feasible in the eyes of EnrichLife's headquarter. Both the policy priority of the state and the presupposition of the NGO, but not the local condition of the migrant community, were factored into the justification of the kidnapping prevention project. Located near a prosperous commercial district, as mentioned above, most of the migrants living in Indiville are either self-employed shop-keepers or service workers employed by businesses nearby. In the former case, parents usually take their children to the store when working; in fact, many stores are separated from the owner's

apartment only by a door. In the latter case, the predominantly female service workers usually came to Indiville alone while their husbands sought manufacturing employment elsewhere. Working long hours, oftentimes from noon to late evening, migrant service workers tend to leave their children in their rural hometown. As such, a closer observation of the family life in Indiville will conclude that children are well-attended with a low risk of kidnapping. The "surprising" finding of no kidnapping cases, once juxtaposed with the occupational makeup of migrants and their family life arrangements, should not have been surprising. The general impression of high crime rates might apply to Indiville, but the crimes do not include kidnapping. During my stay in Indiville, many media reports or police warnings on crimes committed in the village were made. However, most of them are impulsive physical abuses or petit theft.

The stereotype of kidnapping risk was proven invalid only after EnrichLife signed the contract, according to which it had to conduct a project justifiable only on paper. If an NGO's major task before securing a contract was to fit in with the standardized tender procedures on paperwork, now the new task is to make their community services fit in with what they proposed—still on paperwork. There is no way to decrease kidnapping risk objectively when it is already a perfect zero. But a summer camp with children's stage play could still show that the NGO is at least "doing something" related to it. As long as the script is related to kidnapping prevention, the stage play counts as a kidnapping prevention event. Therefore, a project that is justifiable only on paper could turn into a promise that is fulfilled on paper.

Inside the Village: Divergence, Mobility, and Conflicts

It turned out to be a challenge for EnrichLife and its staff to probe into the community condition and come up with a service plan that genuinely fits the needs of migrants living in Indiville. In the previous section, a number of stakeholders are mentioned: headquarter staff, first-line staff, the officials, and the external auditors, but none of them seems to have the intention and capacity to grasp the local condition of Indiville, or the authority to write up a service plan in accordance with that knowledge. Headquarter staff does not work in the village, their struggle with paperwork traps first-line staff. Auditors are not obliged to know the local condition at all. For the local officials, whereas they are supposed to know their residents, the migrants are not considered residents. In a way, the vacuum between local officials and migrants is presupposed when NGOs were brought in.

That said, the failure of EnrichLife is not only a sole result of its own inefficacy of grasping the local knowledge. The village itself, as I gradually learned, is difficult to probe into even if any of the aforementioned actors has made an effort. The multi-layered, heterogeneous economic life complicates the composition of Indiville's inhabitants, making the community a social space full of complexity and conflicts.

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, most migrants who live in Indiville are working in the informal, arguably precarious, service sector. When it comes to precarious work, moreover, the literature tends to treat these workers as homogeneous and exchangeable, at least to the extent that their laboring can be flexible, deskilled, and easy to control. The first hand observation of Indiville's informal service work, however, will reveal different dynamics. As it turns out, the migrants who work in this community are rather heterogeneous and full of internal conflicts.

Diverse Job Arrangements

As briefly described in the beginning of this chapter, the businesses around Indiville and within it, , have roughly four tiers: luxurious foreign brand names, domestic brand names, non-brand-name retailers outside of the village, and informal business within the village. It should be noted that within Indiville, and Collectiville as well, all businesses are supposed to be informal, or more precisely, unregistered at the Commerce Bureau. According to the Commerce Bureau, the application for a business registration should include a business address, and a photocopy of the property title needs to be attached. The land within urban villages, however, usually do not come with a property title. These former rural housing land was collectively owned by the production team and practically assigned to each household. Even after the surrounding farmland was possessed by the municipal government, these housing plots have never been formally incorporated into the city. As a result, property titles (which are for privately owned houses) are not available for buildings and shops in the village.

Among these businesses, the luxurious foreign brand names rarely employ rural migrants not only because of the number and size of those businesses, but also because of the cultural capital required for these jobs. Domestic brand names, including those having stores in the nearby mid-range department stores, are more available to migrants except for that they usually require fluent Cantonese, as the Cantonese-speaking Guangzhou locals constituted the majority of the customer body for this tier of businesses. Still, those migrants who come from other cities and townships of Guangdong Province usually would have a chance here. Non-brand-name retailers, as well as the underground economy within the village, mainly employed migrants.

Migrants are both the employees and customers of these businesses. Yet as a rule of thumb, people usually do not patronize the business they work for, or those which belong to the same tier. Instead, they tend to patronize those which are at least one tier below their employers—for example, a sales person at a luxurious brand is more likely to shop at the domestic brand name. There are certainly exceptions—such as that hair stylists who work in a salon do not go to more inexpensive barber shops. The business hours of these stores, therefore, are affected by their tier. Among the same type of businesses, those which belong to a lower tier tend to have longer business hours, as they want to wait until their customers leave work.

Different types of businesses, on the other hand, have different business hours. Electronics repairs usually close earlier than others. Then there were electronics retailers and department stores. Outfits and shoes close later. Restaurants are usually the latest. As the informal businesses in the village close later than those outside, the food stands within the village are the latest to close.

People who are doing different jobs, as a result, can live everyday life on very different schedules. In Indiville, there are grocery sellers who wake up before dawn, salespersons who start work at ten, second shift service workers who start in the afternoon, and some food stand owners who open even a bit later. An urban village such as Indiville, therefore, is very different from a factory dormitory, or even E. P. Thompson's working-class community, where workers start and finish work at about the same time. In that kind of setting, the simultaneity of workers' schedules made it possible for workers to build strong social ties based on shared experiences. In Indiville, it is much more difficult to achieve this type of solidarity.

Indeed, the formation of working-class identity is a rather long-term issue. In the short term, the lack of simultaneity has direct impacts on the feasibility of community organizing, which, of course, also affects the formation of identity in the long term. During my stay in Guangzhou, I often heard social workers and community organizers talking about how difficult it was to hold a community event in a neighborhood with such a diverse occupational makeup. When a community organizer tried to explain the failure of her former organization, she abruptly started complaining about this issue: "how can you do anything in that community? You cannot even find a right time that most people can come to our event!"

Finding out a right time to hold an event, however challenging it might be, was certainly not the only problem social workers and community organizers faced. Occupations also have impacts on migrants' family life and hence their everyday life needs. As mentioned earlier, the failure of EnrichLife's kidnapping prevention program partially stemmed from this issue: the self-employed shop-keepers usually take their children to work and many even live in the store; the service workers, on the other hand, usually came to Indiville alone while their husbands sought manufacturing employment elsewhere and their children stayed in the rural hometown. The particular features of one's work, from the nature of job, hours, to the gender ratio of a labor market, had significant impacts on people's decision about family: whether to move with the family, how to take care of children, and what would be needed in this particular situation.

Decentralized Social Relations

The relationship between social networks and migration have been an extensively discussed topic in the migration literature. In many cases, workplace relationships, friendships, and hometown networks are of particular significance. In Indiville and Collectiville, however, what makes major differences in community life and community politics is rather the relationship between these relations. When we compare Indiville and Collectiville, one thing that draws

special attention is the way these three types of relationships separate from or overlap with one another. In Indiville, workplace, friendship, and hometown networks tend to be independent from each other, whereas in Collectiville, they are more overlapped. As will be argued in greater detail, the different ways in which these relationships are organized may not only affect how social programs are carried out in migrants' everyday life but also lead to different community politics at the neighborhood level.

One classic example of how social networks affect migration is the concept of "chain migration" has drawn an image of how migrants tend to move to locations where preexisting social networks could help them with adapting to the host society. As a result, migrants from the same sending location settle down in the same receiving location and form an enclave. Since the 1990s, scholars have also found similar patterns: whether in factory or suburban migrant communities, first comers took late comer migrants to the cities and helped them find jobs, housing, and other necessary resources (Pun 1999; Solinger 1999; Zhang 2001). The chain migration model, however, does not apply to Indiville. Most migrants living in Indiville have traveled by themselves or in small groups of two or three people. In general, they did not expect to meet people from their hometown (or *laoxiang* in Chinese) here when they departed. In the same vein, they usually do not plan to bring their laoxiang to Indiville either.

This pattern might be explained by the fact that, as discussed earlier, most migrants in Indiville were employed by small-scale businesses in the informal service sector. For those who work in a factory (eg. Pun 1999) or smaller yet still around mid-size workshops (Hu 2018; Solinger 1999; Zhang 2001), bringing *laoxiang* to the city was feasible because they knew there were likely to be job openings where they work. In the case of mid-size workshops, the owners might be the ones who brought late-comers to the city—in this case, the migration, accommodation, and production are combined into a paternalist regime. In Indiville, by contrast, it is more difficult to promise someone a job when travelling together. Most businesses employ one or two persons, including many brand-name apparel and shoes stores on the city street. For a migrant who works for a business this size, it is virtually impossible to introduce a *laoxiang* or friend to his or her own employer. As a result, in Indiville, the hometown network is rarely as important in migrants' life as it is elsewhere. Instead, people are more likely to make friends with those from different provinces.

In some types of service work, such as massage and haircut, a workers' income is directly linked to the number of customers he or she helped. Larger businesses might still have some minimum monthly payment, but in smaller places oftentimes the employees simply split what the customer paid with the employer. The number of customers, however, is a zero-sum-game between coworkers. As the number of customers matter so much for the workers, how to prevent them from competing over clients would become a serious issue.

To avoid conflict, massage and haircut have adopted virtually the same kind of system to make sure clients are assigned to workers in a fair way. Firstly, of course, in both haircut and massage,

it is very common that a customer may have a hairstylist or massage therapist that he or she is familiar with and trusts. In that case, if a client names the therapist or stylist he or she wants to patronize and nobody will have objection towards it. Secondly, in the other cases, if the client does not name a stylist or therapist, the latter will decide who "gets" a client by a simple rotation. The conventional is seemingly straightforward. As long as an employee is not serving a customer at the point when the next customer comes in, he or she can be considered a possible candidate to serve that customer.

But problems happen when a worker is serving a customer while another customer comes in and asks for the same worker. When this happens, other workers have two options. The first option is to have the client wait until the worker finishes with the current client. The second option is to let the next one on the rotation to serve the client. Each of these two options makes sense, but which is more justifiable one depends on different worker's interests. For the worker that is asked for, the first option is better; for the next one on the rotation, the second option is preferred. How to decide whether to make the clients wait, or ask them to receive services from other workers? The general answer is that it depends on the time the clients need to wait. If the preferred worker will be available in less then ten to fifteen minutes, usually the client will be asked to wait; if it is longer than thirty minutes, it will make sense to recommend a different stylist or therapist. If it is between fifteen and thirty minutes, however, things might not be that clear and conflicts can happen when different workers have different judgements about what the threshold should be. Because of these potential conflicts, coworkers are not as likely to become friends.

Indeed, hair stylists and massage therapists belong to a peculiar category of work. The skills involved and the social bond built in the process of giving and receiving services make it possible to build up strong relationships with returning clients, which is also encouraged by the employers, who usually take a share of whatever the stylists or therapists earn. These factors are hardly applicable to other service jobs and conflicts are not generated in the same manner. However, other migrants in Indiville, such as the small business owners, may face a different type of potential conflicts. In particular, those in the same type of businesses are potential competitors with each other. For restaurants and small retailers, those who are selling similar products on the same street are by default competing with one another. A DVD shop owner told me that when he started his business, he found a *laoxiang* who was doing the same business in a different neighborhood and learned the business from that person. Those *laoxiang* who were at Indiville, he said, would not be willing to teach him anyway, no matter how close they were. As a matter of fact, many years ago, when he was trying to start a wholesale business, his in law/ laoxiang refused to help him. Since then, he learned the lesson to "ask the right person the right thing."

In sum, due to the small scale and highly competitive nature of informal service work in Indiville, the hometown network, workplace social relations, and friendships are more likely to be separate than overlapped. In a migrant enclave where chain migration serves as the major mechanism of migration, such as Collectiville, these social relations are supposed to be more

overlapped and hence more consolidated at the community level; in Indiville, however, the people's social ties are more diverse, dispersed, and decentralized.

Diverged Mobility: Floaters vs Sojourners

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the diversity of work arrangements in Indiville's informal service economy and, as a result, the diversity of life situations of migrants. However, the heterogeneity of informal work is not limited to the types of works and working conditions. In the long term, even starting with similar jobs, migrants in Indiville eventually showed diverged career paths and differentiated occupational and spatial mobility. These differences not only lead to a more decentralized, less stable community life; at some points, it can even cause antagonism within the community or even families.

Similar to Elijah Anderson's (2000) groundbreaking work on the American inner city poor neighborhoods, in Indiville, two different types of career trajectories are found, each associated with a particular lifestyle. More importantly, these trajectories will also lead to different mechanisms of decision making when it comes to staying in the village or moving elsewhere. To capture the spatial mobility of these two groups, I call them "floaters" and "sojourners." Whereas "floaters" resemble what Anderson summarized as "street" value orientation, "sojourners" are more similar to his "decent" families.

Floaters usually find jobs in entry-level, interactive service work, and with only very few exceptions, it is very rare for them to achieve management positions or petite-entrepreneurship. But the most remarkable should be the fact that they often change their jobs and residence in a seemingly "irrational" manner, such as quitting jobs even before receiving the first month's payment or giving up a more stable employment for an uncertain job search in remote locations. Some kept moving back and forth between comparatively stable factory jobs and street life; some others seemed unable to decide if she wanted to work in the city at all and move unceasingly between hometown and the city.

The low occupational mobility and high spatial mobility, on the one hand, could be explained by the precarization of the labor market. Indeed, in China, especially within the informal labor market, migrants could easily lose jobs if their employers want to fire them; however, because of a long term labor shortage, many employers do not want to fire their employees and instead take measures to prevent them from quitting. By contrast, many "floaters" quit their jobs in a relatively voluntary way. The street life of "floaters," ironically, serves as both social safety net and life destabilizer—a "floater" usually comes from a modest family background, and oftentimes they started working in the cities at young ages because their family's economic stance required them to do so. However, working in the city could be costly before one starts making money: transportation, housing, food...these young adults could not receive much help from their parents and had to rely on the street life circle, in which most people are from similar backgrounds. The obligation to help is reciprocal, so if a person receives some support from the

group, he or she is supposed to pay back the favor when others need it. This kind of payback, however, is not only a financial burden but also destabilizer of one's long term career plan. The reliance on this street network and the career disruption may eventually form a vicious cycle, which makes both the career life and social life of "floaters" extremely unstable. Once career disruption is taken for granted, some "floaters" even intentionally avoid long term employment and take underpaid part-time jobs only because they do not expect. Some other "floaters" end up taking illegal jobs, such as sex work or drug dealing, as those jobs allow them to earn a significant amount of money before next career disruption.

By contrast, "sojourners" tend to be older and from relatively wealthier backgrounds, at least resourceful enough to support their urban market adventures. As a result, whereas often starting with similar jobs as "floaters," they could avoid the vicious cycle of street life and career disruption and save money for petite entrepreneurship. Some of them could even use family resources to invest in micro or small businesses. Whereas "floaters'" street circle emphasizes reciprocity, nuclear families tend to support "sojourners" unconditionally; whereas favors in street culture request timely responses, which often cause career disruption, families usually allow for later payback, if needed at all. Therefore, "sojourners" could "take their time" when matching skills, the market opportunities, and career prospects. Yet there is rarely a "happily ever after" in the business stories of "sojourner." In an unregulated, low-end consumer market with low barriers to entry, they often find the market either saturated soon or fluctuating often. Therefore, they need to change their business (and probably migrate) more often than they want to. Still, they experience changes of jobs in a strikingly different way from the "floaters," as the former do so to catch up with market niches instead of responding to life crises. Therefore, changing jobs incarnates a positive virtue for "sojourners."

At the end of the day, both "floaters" and "sojourners" are both highly mobile in spatial terms, which makes the community life less stable. More importantly, there is an intrinsic tension between the value orientation they represent. Rapid changes of jobs and living on daily payment not only make the life of "floaters" more insecure and hence further destabilize their career life, a vicious cycle indeed, but also make "sojourners" consider them as irresponsible for their own life; what is rather curious is that when "sojourners" change jobs, it would be considered a positive virtue. Moreover, in the case when "floaters" get involved in illegal jobs, the comments about irresponsibility turns into criticisms about moral shortcomings. Irresponsibility and immorality, moreover, implies undeserving. The contrast between the lifestyle of "floaters" and that of others thus resembles the tension between "street vs. decent orientation" described by Elijah Anderson (1999).

Mismatch, Conflicts, and Mobility

Later on in the next chapter, we will compare and contrast how social relations are organized in Indiville to how they are organized in Collectiville. It is hoped that the uniqueness of Indiville will be further explored then, but even before we take that comparative perspective, a few

characteristics of social life in Indiville should be clear by now. More importantly, these characteristics of social life can be attributed to the different economic structure in different villages. On the other hand, they also condition community politics by shaping the opportunity structure of mobilization and negotiation.

One factor that contributes to Indiville's decentralized social relations is the differentiated life tempo in the service sector. Unlike industrial production which requires that workers enter and leave the shop floor at exactly the same time, service work utilizes labor power according to different functions of social life and hence have different peak time—apparel and dining, for example, always have different busy hours. Moreover, as the same type of businesses are broken down into different tiers, the work hours may get further diversified. Migrants who live in Indiville, therefore, live on markedly different daily schedules. When I hung out with migrants here, sometimes I could hear people complain that neighbors and even roommates do not see each other long enough to build meaningful relationships with each other. A girl, for example, told me that she did not have a chance to make a friend after three months of living in Indiville: "friend? I don't have friends...I don't even know any people in this village...oh wait," she laughed, "I know my landlord!"

Besides the decentralizing effect of differentiated daily life schedules, workplace or business dynamics of service work also make social life trickier than elsewhere. Whether you are a service worker such as a hairstylist or a massage therapist, or a small business owner who sells a particular product on the street, it is difficult to avoid business competition with coworkers or fellow sellers. Unlike in many other occupational settings, where coworkers tend to make friends easily due to similar life schedules and shared experiences, service workers at Indiville often find themselves having potential conflicts with one another, especially with those who do the same jobs. When we take spatial mobility into consideration, the social life at Indiville seems more precarious, needless to say the conflicting culture orientations between "floaters" and "sojourners." In sum, migrants in Indiville often find their social relations with others trickier than it could be in many other locations.

It is not saying that people do not make friends in Indiville. They do. Yet they do not do so more in pairs than in groups. In many places, including Collectiville, the occupational network, hometown network, and friend circle are overlapped; in Indiville, they are rather separate. The result is not necessarily that migrants here make fewer social connections, but certainly that they are making more weak ties than strong ties. Indeed, a "sojourner" unhesitantly expressed the importance of "the strength of weak ties" (Granovetter 1973) in Indiville. Friendship is like, this self-employed hairstylist told me, "imagine that you are travelling through mountains and across rivers. When you are traveling through mountains, you need to have a woodcutter friend to guide you; but when you are at the river bank the woodcutter is no longer needed. Now you need a fisherman friend to take you across the river."

The Politics of Self-help

When Fei and I were still struggling to carry out the IFSC's unlikely kidnapping prevention program, as an ethnographer who did know a few migrants from the village, I tried to approach some migrant friends and listen to them. The responses, although inspiring for a researcher, were discouraging for a community organizer. Firstly, they never heard of the IFSC. Secondly, after I explained what the IFSC was and what we were planning to do at that time, they were indifferent. They did not think kidnapping was a problem—they themselves did not bring their children to the city and did not believe people would do that in general. My friends were a group of massage therapists and, suffering from the stigma attached to their occupation, they did not think that people would choose to bring kids to the city unless they had no choice. The conversation stopped when I, after some unrewarding effort, realized that the more I tried to emphasize how eager our team was to serve the community, the more I was making a case of how clueless we were to the community's needs. When Fei and I were tearing our hair out to find a way to prevent the kidnapping cases that were unlikely to happen anyway, migrants in Indiville were unaware of what we were doing. As a matter of fact, many of them were not aware of the existence of EnrichLife and its IFSC, which was right across one of the busiest city streets from the community and fifty feet away from the shopping center that everyone in the village knew.

In spite of the effort made by Fei and her team, and probably the NGOs that were contracted to run the IFSC before EnrichLife as well, people in Indiville barely knew that there was a social service center across the street. It was the outcome of multiple factors. On the one hand, as demonstrated above, the IFSC system was by default disengaged from the local knowledge and local practices of migrant communities. The public tender system standardizes the procedures of both the granting and tenure of IFSC contracts because it wants to make these procedures "fair" and "efficient," rather than providing contract-seeking NGOs with incentives to engage with community conditions. The proposal of a kidnapping prevention program was only a relatively dramatic example of what can be systematically caused by the institutional logics. On the other hand, even if the IFSC was able to approach the migrants in Indiville, just like what I did, there was no guarantee that any things would be significantly better. After all, even if the organization was capable of engaging with the local conditions, it does not mean that there was a singular, coherent "condition" waiting for the center's intervention. Any social improvement schema needs to ask this question: what if there has never been a major problem of the community, but rather a compilation of self-contradictory interests stemming from an array of social positions and value orientation?

The state-sponsored, NGO-operated social improvement programs, therefore, are faced with double challenges in communities like Indiville. The disengagement of the IFSC system from the local community, together with the decentralized community itself, created a vacuum that seems impenetrable. The irony of the IFSC system is that the more the state seeks to establish a systematic way to intervene in migrants' community life, the more frustrating the outcome

becomes. At the same time, the dispersed social relations in migrants' life also make it seemingly impossible to grasp the local conditions.

The villagers, however, developed their own ways to adapt to the urban environment and cope with challenges in a precarious life. The heterogeneous, dispersed social relations make it difficult to organize, mobilize, and incorporate the community members into the new state governmental schema, and the vacuum is more likely to remain after the intervention of the state-NGO coalition, if not widen. The same heterogeneity and dispersion of social relations in Indiville, however, also brings heterogeneous information and resources. What Granovetter (1973) called "the strength of weak ties," or what the aforementioned hairstylist tried to capture by the fable of woodcutter and fisherman, turn out to be the major mechanism of incorporating migrants into urban society.

Relational Work and Social Relations in the Community

If we re-examine the discussion about social networks in Indiville from the perspective of "the strength of weak ties," we will realize that the factors that prevent a coherent, consolidated community from forming, by diversifying migrants' life experience and social relations, also diversified the information and resources circulated in those networks. These heterogeneous information and resources, in turn, help migrants navigating the challenging urban life.

One thing that distinguishes service work from manufacturing is that when performing service work, a worker is constantly making new relationships with people. A worker on the assembly line works together with a basically fixed group of people, with whom he or she shares a relatively unchanged relationship, to transform materials into various physical forms. A service worker, by contrast, works on people. Instead of transforming the physical status of things, he or she transforms something on humans—mood, or a mental status in general, was one of the earliest examples named by scholars, as well as the theorization of emotional labor (Hockschild 1979). Many early research on service work, however, are focused on services provided in a short period of time and to a large body of anonymous customers. The flight attendants in Arlie Hockschild's research did not expect to meet the passengers again in the future—they actually might, but they did not need to make this assumption. What they created did not need to last beyond the duration of the flight. For many other types of service work, the duration can be significantly shorter, to the extent that the encounter between workers and customers was measured by seconds and the quick, standardized nature of interaction became a unique characteristic of service work in the post-industrial, consumer society (Leidner 1993).

For some other types of work that also focus on creating mental status as a product, the relations between the two parties can last much longer. The idea of "relational labor" or "relational work" have been widely applied to various areas of broadly defined service work, from entertainment (Baym 2015), fashion (Mears 2015), to luxurious hotel (Sherman 2007). For this type of service work, relation building either is a part of the service provided or increases the attachment of

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customers. Many types of work in Indiville share this characteristic. Hairstylists and massage therapists, as discussed above, heavily rely on returning clients for their income. During the time when service is provided, moreover, chatting is often an important part. People talk about a hairstylist as a poor chatter so "his skills are good but talking to him is not an enjoyable experience," or a therapist as a good chatter so "I visit the massage parlor where she works not really because I have pain or stress...I just wanna relax and talk to someone." Yet not only stylists or therapists need to talk to customers. Owners of the ma-and-pa stores within the village usually assume their customers to be neighbors living nearby, so they talk with them as if they are making friends; other types of retailers such as apparel, shoes, or entertainment, share market information with their customers and simultaneously learn from them. For many of them, giving out information to some customers (so the customers see them as experts) and gathering information from some other customers (so they will have new things to share with others) are more crucial to their business than to people outside would think.

During this kind of chatting, people tend to talk about real life topics associated with immediate material interests. Many like to talk about jobs and market opportunities. For those who are selling or buying apparel or shoes, the current trends of fashion is certainly the to-go topic. People also share information about what recently happened in the village or in the city, especially with ma-and-pa store owners. The owners themselves are good sources of information as well, not only because they hear things from customers, but also because they sit behind the counter that is facing the street all day long. Life in Indiville is, therefore, marked by frequent, quick encounters with acquaintances or "the familiar strangers." As the previous section argues, workplace network, hometown network and friendship circle are not as overlapped as many other communities, and strong ties seem to be playing less significant roles in Indivillle; yet also in Indiville, due to the nature of service work, people constantly build weak ties with one another.

Diversified Information and Resources

Yet people in Indiville do not merely build "weak tie" relationships with one another and share information with them. More importantly, the information they share is heterogeneous to the extent that many life issues can be covered. As such, in spite of the governmental vacuum between migrants and the local state, many people, especially business owners, find out ways to improve your life opportunities without a particular organization bridging migrants to the local state or other urban formal institutions.

The heterogeneity of information and resources stems from the diversity of work in the informal service sector. On the one hand, as analyzed earlier, service workers differ from manufacturing workers in that many of them patronize other service businesses on a regular basis. It is also discussed that as a principle, people tend to patronize the businesses at a lower tier from the businesses for which they work. When mentioned earlier, this consumption pattern was responsible for widely different everyday life schedules of workers. From the perspective of

information and resources, however, the relationship between customers and service providers is extended across tiers of businesses and hence different social strata of migrant workers. When hanging out with my friends in the village, I often hear testimonies such as "someone's friend is working at a karaoke, where that friend met a manager at a big company that has business relationship with this government branch, from where the manager heard that the government is about to implement this policy." This kind of hearsay, if not purely rumors, are often difficult to testify and often hard to believe. Yet they are indeed forming migrants' sense of how the outside world functions. Moreover, when it comes to the urban lifestyle or consumer culture, these channels of information are certainly shaping migrants' knowledge of living in the city. People can easily name the shopping malls nearby the village even if those places were too expensive for them; at the same time, they are also familiar with bars and restaurants that are several subway stops away from Indiville and suit their budget style.

The diverse information, nevertheless, also comes from face-to-face, reciprocal exchanges between people who have different skills and knowledge. Unlike Collectiville, where most migrants are doing the same job, Indiville's wide range of occupations allow migrants to exchange various information depending on each other's profession and related skills. [Pseudonym], for example, was a kindergarten teacher before moving to Indiville with her husband. After moving to the neighborhood, she started her toy shop here so that she could take care of her two years old son while working in the store. Not only that her prior work experience equipped her with knowledge of child rearing and early childhood education, but her motherhood made her relatable to other young mothers with kids of similar age. Another benefit of running a toy shop is the opportunity for her son to make friends with a few customers' children. Everyday, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, when children left school and mothers had not started grocery shopping and cooking, mothers and their children would hang out in the toy shop. Before long, Bei earned the reputation to be an expert of early childhood education, and people started bringing their questions to her. As time went by, the relationship between Bei and other mothers developed not only as a business owner and her customers but also as friends. When other mothers brought their child-rearing questions to her, they also helped her out on other life issues. Ran, whose son was the best friend of Bei's son, gave Bei advice about electronics such as smartphones and tablets because she and her husband were both doing related businesses. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the information regarding early childhood education would be coming from a strikingly different source in the case of Collectiville. In Indiville, by contrast, people spontaneously and organically (exactly in Durkheim's sense) come together and exchange what they know about adapting to the city and improving life quality.

The Politics of Self-help

In spite of the governmental vacuum, therefore, migrants in Indiville managed to incorporate themselves into the urban society by participating in a diverse, dispersed social network and accessing heterogeneous information to improve their life opportunity in the city. By so doing, people acquire practical knowledge and resources necessary for adapting to the new

environment. What has been left empty by the exclusionist legacy is filled up by a complicated and widespread network in which individuals exchange information and resources in a reciprocal manner and on a daily basis.

But this "politics of self-help" does not merely help fill up the governmental vacuum and support migrants' social reproduction. With the information and resources accessed through this network, migrants also manage to respond to the state when the latter is potentially a threat to them. When it comes to the forcefully imposed state actions, James Scott himself has made even more observations on the other side—the subordinary people, in spite of the authoritarian imposition of the state, always seek to respond to the latter in their own ways, either resisting, escaping, or bypassing (Scott 1987; 1992; 2010). In the case of Indiville's rural migrants the strategies of dealing with the state are learned from and formed within the heterogeneous networks.

One major issue migrants, especially those who are running small businesses, often have with the local government is the business license. Businesses in Indiville, just like in any other urban village, are technically illegal. An urban village is a neighborhood built on former housing land of a rural village, and the land has never been fully incorporated into the urban land regime. As a result, unlike urban, commercial-use land, the land (and the buildings on it) in urban villages cannot be transferred on the market and a property title is in principle unavailable for them. To register a business, however, requires a business address and a photocopy of the property title associated with that address. Without such a photocopy, all businesses in the village are subject to the threats of the commercial bureau or the police. When I was in the field, every now and then, the police would come to some businesses that they thought to be more vulnerable and "enforce the law." They would knock the door (the owners might have locked the door when they heard that the police were in the village) or threaten the owner to open, enter the store, and confiscate furniture or anything that can cost the business owners a great deal.

At the first glance, it may seem to be simply another example of local government bureaucrats seeking bribery. What I observed at Indiville was nevertheless more complicated than that. When Chu, a cosmetic seller and former massage parlor owner, had her parlor closed by the police for the first time, she thought about bribing but was clueless about how to do so. First, she asked her friends if any of them had similar experience, but they either had no such experience or used to have someone dealing with it on their behalf. Those who used to have a friend helping them then promised her to ask their friends. This kind of "friends" in Indiville, however, are not necessarily "close friends" that are always accessible, so for a while Chu did not get any words from her friends—they are, after all, what Granovetter (1973) called "weak ties." Chu thought that the police crackdown might not happen too soon, so she reopened after several days. The crackdown did happen again, and this time the police cut her electricity and told her never try to reopen. Chu was confused. She thought that the police just wanted bribery but nobody asked her for anything. Now that she could not open her parlor, she just stayed in her friend's place and went to karaoke whenever a friend is throwing a party. Her landlord, who had a relative in the government,

promised her to check out what was going wrong. The landlord then came back and told her that it's the chief of police who demanded the crackdown and the officer in charge of this area had nothing to do with it.

When things seemed to be the most hopeless, a friend that promised to ask around for her came back and introduced Chu to a man in the village security force. She never fully understood why this man could help her out, but she met him and agreed to pay him 1,000 RMB a month. Then she reopened with no harassment from the police or commercial bureau. It has never been clear, for Chu or for me either, how this thing eventually worked out—yet maybe that is exactly the point. In a diverse and dispersed network where everybody possesses different knowledge, one does not need to know how things work to make it work. Chu might never understand how to settle the case of her parlor with the police chief or the commercial bureau, but she did not need to know. In a network like that of Indiville's she might just ask around and try everything, wishing that a person in her network happened to have the answer to her issue. And for many issues, in a diverse and dispersed network, things actually did work out.

This practice of self-help, however, is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, with it, migrants do not need to understand how the system works to make it work; on the other hand, migrants in Indiville do constantly show the lack of a sense of how the state works as a system. From time to time, I witness how people keep "asking around" without seeking systematic solution. Compared with their counterparts in Collectiville, people in Indiville rarely ask how the state and other institutions are working, to the extent that when some resources are available through those institutions, they do not always accept. When my friend Zhang's father was diagnosed with cancer and hospitalized, Fei the social worker at EnrichLife tried to introduce some government emergency program to her. Zhang refused to check out the webpage of the emergency assistance program because, in her experience, "those things on the internet are never reliable." Similarly, when Dian tried to find a different job, she had a difficult time digesting the idea that the Municipal Labor Bureau was subsidizing occupational training of cosmetics, medicure, or pedicure. Compared to the collective bargaining that happens in Collectiville, migrants in Indiville do not show as much sense of how to "make the system work for them."

Concluding Remarks

Indiville's community politics is marked by the interpersonal exchange of information and resources through dispersed and diverse social relations. Compared with the community politics in Collectiville, it is more individualistic, decentralized, and disengaged from the state.

On the one hand, the "politics of self-help" is a result of the failure of state-sponsored social programs to engage with the community conditions. The state agenda of establishing a universalistic social service schema by standardizing the public tender system, as James Scott may suggest, reincarnates a pursuit of legibility. The fact that there are always multiple players

in the building of this schema, as Tania Li argues against Scott, does not impede this pursuit—quite the contrary, the neo-corporatist coalition established through marketized means of public tender has incorporated NGOs that are pursuing government contracts. Instead of following the Toucquvillian thesis to form a civil society that keeps the authoritarian state power at bay, NGOs compete with each other by aligning their organizational goals with the government's interests. By doing so, the state ideology of legibility incarnated in the tender system penetrates NGO's daily work, that is, what I have called "the art of paperwork." The exclusion of local knowledge and local practices that James Scott predicts, therefore, penetrates the multi-layered "field of intervention," which has been suggested by Tania Li. From Bourdievian perspective, the fundamental rules within the field of intervention, defined by the material interests incarnated in the tender system, have paved the road to this voluntary alignment of NGO's interests with that of the state; at the same time, Michael Burawoy's labor process theory may shed light on how the staff participate in the "art of paperwork" and voluntarily pursue the state-prescribed legibility. The pursuit of legibility, in turn, leads to the disengagement of social programs from the community.

On the other hand, the migrant community has its own unique logics of social life, which tend to flee away from the grasp of the state's up-there, all-seeing vision. James Scott foresees this impenetrability, yet he seems to attribute it to a spontaneous, thing-in-itself order. In spite of Scott's epistemological presupposition, this research sees the "spontaneous" order as stemming from a material base, that is, the economic life of migrants in Indiville. The multi-layered, diverse informal service sector in Indiville is accompanied by a social life that, as will be found in the next chapter, strikingly different from that of Collectiville. The differentiated work schedule, the local market or workplace competition, and the decentralization of social networks all contribute to the complexity and heterogeneity of social relations in Indiville. Stemming from these social relations, moreover, are various life situations that can hardly be reduced to a singular social issue and solved by a unitary social improvement scheme. In the case of EnrichLife's kidnapping prevention project, the reason why kidnapping cases were surprisingly rare—in fact, there was none—was closely associated with the work arrangements in the community. Migrants in the village are either moving with their families because their family life and work are inseparable or living alone in the city because the labor market they participate in does not allow them to relocate with families. In other cases, this type of decentralized social relations makes community work more difficult than in those communities where relatively consolidated social relations enable community organizers to mobilize community members—this point will be made clearer in Chapter 3.

The disengagement of social programs from the community, as well as the decentralization of social relations in it, leave the governmental vacuum between migrants and the state unfilled. However, another seemingly "spontaneous" order also stems from the absence of the state and the dispersed weak ties. Weak ties, after all, have their strength (Granovetter 1973). While laying down no favorable conditions for collective mobilization, which is the case of Collectiville, the

heterogeneous social networks in Indiville help migrants solve their life issues in the city through person-to-person exchange of information and resources. When the state threatens migrants' livelihood, the "politics of self-help" further enables them to flee away from the reach of the state. The more they distance themselves from the state, so are they distancing themselves from the state-sponsored resources. As a result, they may increasingly rely on their individualistic solutions. Whether this individualism means an anarchical liberation or self-marginalization is a difficult topic that deserves much discussion; it is possible, however, that we can return to this topic after probing into Collectiville's community politics, which, as soon will be found, is strikingly different from what we see in Indiville.

CHAPTER THREE

Collectiville: Engaged Social Programs & Consolidated Hometown Ties

About an hour of bus ride from Indiville, Collectiville is located in an old suburban area that, after the economic reform, gradually developed into a production and wholesale cluster. The wholesale sector put forward growing demand for wrapping, catalog, and advertisement, and hence the printing industry started mushrooming in the area in the 1990s. According to the old-timers, the printing industry used to include everything from small copy shops to printing plants, but the large-scale plants moved out later because of the cost of land and the district government's decreasing tolerance to the pollution they produced.

Still, a visitor to Collectiville can gain a clear impression of its printing industry right away. On the community's main street, copy shops are not only numerous but also occupying the most noticeable locations. Being printing experts themselves and eager to assure their clientele so, print shop owners bring their A-game to the posters outside of their stores: neon colors, special fonts, and complicated patterns extract the attention of the most absent-minded passersby. Yet the most impressive thing should be a banner that reads, "we can print on anything except for the air."

Similar to their Indiville counterpart, however, the majority of migrants at Collectiville are not to be found in the formally registered copy shops. Instead, most migrants here are self-employed, unregistered print-job brokers, or in their own words, "order runners." In the beginning, these brokers took printing orders from the traders who came to the wholesale centers. Many traders come from other provinces or even overseas, and when they need some urgent printing services such as new business cards, these brokers will take the orders, find a printing plant to get the order printed, and meet up with the client again with the orders. Experienced brokers will visit local businesses, build long-term relationships with the owners, and regularly take orders of catalogs, posters, banners, or desk calendars that businesses like to give their customers during the new year.

At first glance, brokerage seems to be a simple job. The knowledge involved in the trade, as demonstrated below, turns out to be more complicated than outsiders imagine. As such, the control over knowledge gives current brokers a market advantage. Over the years, they passed down this knowledge to newcomers from the same hometown, and eventually, Collectiville became a migrant enclave with a single sending hometown, a township in Hubei Province. Quite the contrary to Indiville's dispersed, heterogeneous social networks, Collectiville is homogeneous in terms of migrants' occupations and hometown origins.

As a result, migrants in Collectiville are more likely to organize themselves. A sense of collectivity and community rules not only help prevent business competitions in migrants' economic life but also increase their potential for political mobilization. The local officials have always been aware of this potential, especially after the Zengcheng Incident. Whereas the Guangzhou cadredom, in general, called for stricter surveillance and policing, a creative-minded official that oversaw Collectiville decided to do something different. This local party secretary, Zhou, believed that more contact and interaction between migrants and locals would soothe the potential conflicts and benefit both. Since then, Zhou has been actively reaching out to migrant community leaders and collaborating with them in solving disputes between officialdom and migrants. In 2013, Zhou brought in a community education NGO named Community Connected, or CommConn for short, and introduced the NGO staff to the community leader, Kong.

When I arrived in Collectiville in 2016, CommConn had already established a solid foundation among the migrants. The consolidated social relations between migrants certainly made a difference, but CommConn's capacity of community engagement also comes from its flexibility in aligning services plans with community conditions. In the following section, I will start exploring CommConn's community education program by examining the first project I heard about after I joined them, an English class. When I first heard about it, it sounded even less convincing than EnrichLife's anti-kidnapping campaign; in a couple of months, however, this program proved to be a success.

Community Connected, 2016

By the end of summer 2016, I had gradually been drifting away from the front-line operations at the IFSC because things stopped happening there. At the same time, I found myself becoming increasingly involved in a different social program in another corner of the city, the community education program run by a community organizing NGO called Community Connected, or CommConn in short. When I first visited CommConn, I heard of an English class that the NGO was organizing for the migrants in Collectiville. Recalling the failure of the kidnapping prevention project, I wondered whether this would be another project that failed to meet the community needs—given the modest educational background of the migrant population, an English class sounded even less realistic. Contrary to what I was thinking, the community education project in Collectiville turned out to be more successful than the kidnapping prevention project in Indiville.

The community education center run by CommConn is a one-story office space with a conference room for up to 100 people, a small multi-purpose room, and three compact offices. It also has a classroom for its early childhood education program, yet that classroom is only for the children enrolled in the program. The full-time staff of CommConn changed over time, but it was usually six to eight people, a team larger than the community development team that Fei led

(five people) but much smaller than the entire staff at the IFSC (22–23 people). At first glance, the space seemed too large for such a small team, but after several days of working in the office, I found that space was fully utilized. Migrants living in Collectivlle stopped by frequently for the preparation of activities that they wanted to hold at the center. Bureaucrats from the Neighborhood Committee came to discuss events that CommConn and the local government co-organized. Some migrants used this place as a public space—there was even one time when about ten people came in to mediate a couple's domestic disputes. The husband and other men gathered in one corner of the conference room while the wife and other women sat in another, so the men and women could talk to the couple separately. They then met together to solve the issues the couple had, with some CommConn staff joining the discussion. Yet more often than not these activities happened altogether: working on community activities, hanging out with each other, and sometimes gossiping while trying to help with others' personal and family affairs. Different from the IFSC office, to which non-staff has no access, CommConn's community education center is open to community members and their daily work often had community members involved. Since the establishment of the program in 2014, CommConn has built a close connection with the migrant community and both the staff and the migrants found each other to be approachable and relatable.

The English class that CommConn offered in Collectiville was an outcome of the close relationship between CommConn and the migrant community. In early 2016, a migrant, May, came to the office. Just like many other migrants in Collectiville, she was a print-job broker who takes print orders like business cards, catalogs, and posters from small businesses. In recent years, an increasing number of African and Middle Eastern traders have started coming to the wholesale cluster near Collectiville and May wanted to grab the chance to do business with them. Thus, May and her fellow migrants came together to discuss the necessity of an entry-level business English class. Although the staff at CommConn never thought about an English class, May made a case about its necessity; more importantly, she had already recruited a few students.

The secretary-general of CommConn, Wen, was convinced and started putting together a course from scratch. With a middle-aged, modestly educated student body, this English course must be entirely different from those offered by the existing for-profit language institutions. The students did not need a conventional curriculum that started from the basics and improved general proficiency, but easy-to-learn, ready-to-use conversation skills immediately applicable to their business. Therefore, the search of a teacher included two main criteria. First, they had to have experience with non-conventional students. Second, the lessons had to be tailored to meet migrants' demands. Wen and her colleagues found an English teacher from an adult education institution who had spent her whole career teaching middle-aged returning students. More importantly, they explained the community situation and the nature of print-job brokerage in great detail to her.

When I started participating in the lessons as a teaching assistant, I was surprised by the extent to which the class materials were customized in accordance with the immediate needs of May and

her fellow migrant brokers. During the first class meeting, after going through some basics including grammatical rules and sentence structures, the teacher gave students a conversation script, explained it to them, and provided some related vocabulary (such as different times of a day and different days in a week). The students then are put into groups to practice the script:

> Broker: Good morning [afternoon/ evening] sir [madam], how can I help you?
>
> Client: Hi, I would like to have some business cards printed. Can you help me?
>
> Broker: Sure. Do you have a sample of it?
>
> Client: Here it is. How much will it cost?
>
> Broker: It will be [amount of money] including a deposit of [amount of money].
>
> Client: Great. When can I get them?
>
> Broker: By this Monday [Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday].

By the end of that class, some students already built confidence about doing business in English, but even more of them felt not ready. The teaching assistants took notes on the students' progress and feedback and found that many students were reluctant to speak because they were worried about their accent. Luckily, another NGO in the city happened to be organizing an international volunteer program that invited college students from other countries to volunteer in China during their summer vacation. They heard about our English class and offered to help. The second half of our course was redesigned to include a section to speak with foreign volunteers. Our migrant students and their foreign students enjoyed the opportunity to get to know each other and the topic of conversation eventually changed from the written business conversation scripts to more open-ended discussion questions: "describe where you are from," "tell me about your job," and so forth. At the end of the course, some migrant students invited their conversation partners to karaoke, which in the local context always involved a lot of drinking and dancing, and the event turned into a farewell party with laughter and tears.

Put on an Exhibition and the Art of Showcase

The partnership between EnrichLife and the local state was established through a highly institutionalized and standardized public tender system. Standardization makes the system convenient for NGOs when they seek state sponsorship, whereas the limited tenure of contract, the uncertainty of contract openings, and the wide range of possible spots that NGOs can apply discourage them from engaging with a particular community before entering into a contract of an IFSC. Moreover, to increase the likelihood to pass the annual evaluation, EnrichLife was urged to make the original infeasible proposal happen on paper, instead of drafting a feasible one from scratch. This "state deployment" model testifies the legibility thesis of James Scott so far as the

standardized public tender system pursues transparency and compatibility between centers over the unquantifiable, incommensurable local practices. Moreover, the tender system also interpelled the voluntary servitude of NGOs and their staff when they participated in the game of the "art of paperwork." The embracing attitude of NGOs and staff toward the state-imposed legibility, as such, reconciles the autonomous civil society and the authoritarian state. The analysis of how consent is generated between NGO staff and the authoritarian state, moreover, speaks to Tania Li's critique of Scott—Li accurately represented the field of intervention as a multi-layered structure with multiple, autonomous actors, yet within some particular institutional settings, the autonomy of civil associations could be dissolved in the marketized means of state control.

Tania Li's critique of Scott is an attempt to shift the focus, as her title clearly pointed out, "beyond the state" (Li 2005). Her fieldwork witnessed a wide range of shareholders in the determination of how a social improvement scheme is formed and how, as a result, the outcome of this scheme could be much more complicated than what Scott envisioned. Chapter 2 is a reexamination of this thesis. The state, however, is not a unitary entity that either imposes its arbitrary authoritarian power on the society (as Scott suggests) or subject to contestation from it (as Li suggests). Instead, the state has been a "network of differentiated institutions" with differentiated rules in the first place. Speaking to the precedented feminist literature that tended to see the state as a macro-level, singular, and unitary entity that functioned at the, Lynne Haney (1996) proposed an institutional-level analysis that probed into the differentiated institutional logics of various state institutions. Studying the state-gender regime at the institutional level, Haney's institutional ethnography challenges the feminist theorization of an abstract, uniform state that implement an unitary ideology when governing the society. This critique, I will argue, as insightful when speaking to Scott's theory of state as in its original dialogue with the feminist scholarship. As will be demonstrated below, Scott's state theory causes doubts not only when we consider the multiplicity of actors in the construction of the field of intervention (his theoretical prediction is actually testified by the case of Indiville, which takes the multiplicity seriously) but also when we ask: is it acceptable, especially when we approach the the functioning of the state from a bottom-up perspective, to assume the state as a coherent entity which follows a unitary and universal logic of governance?

Collectiville provides us a case that not only departs from Indiville as an empirical case study but, more importantly, offers theoretical insights beyond Scott's vision of a uniform, abstract state. In our examination of the process through which CommConn managed to establish its community education program in Collectiville, the case would reveal a set of logics distinctly different from the "high-modern" legibility as described by Scott. Instead of the pursuit of legibility, the state in this case rather encourages political exhibition of local officials before their higher-ups; instead of following standardized procedures and format to perform the "art of paperwork," NGOs like CommConn engage in a more dramaturgical game of the "art of showcase."

Logic of exhibition and one-of-a-kind delegating

Unlike EnrichLife, CommConn managed to pursue state sponsorship outside of the IFSC model and hence the process of establishing a state-NGO coalition is less standardized, if at all, and more complicated. As will be discussed further, the complexity and uncertainty of the process mark decisively the contrast between the two ways in which state-NGO partnership is achieved. To begin with, the government contract of IFSCs is made through an institutionalized and formalized public tender system. By contrast, other government procurement contracts, such as the community education program that CommConn is undergoing, are composed of negotiations between individual NGOs and particular but not predetermined government organs. The best way to distinguish the two models might be by using Wen's statement: "in the case of IFSCs, there are already IFSC centers available and the NGO just needs to apply for it; in our case, we have to create a program and 'sell' it to government officials." In this model, which I call "grassroots advocacy," NGOs have no pre-existing slots to fill in. Instead, they have to design their projects before earning sponsorship from some particular government officials. Hence, to convince officials that the proposed project is necessary and feasible, the NGO has to show a degree of knowledge of the community in which it proposes to conduct their project. In this process, an NGO needs to build connections with different groups of people, from the community members to officials in different government organizations at different levels. When it is necessary, connections with other institutions or individuals will also be required. The complexity and uncertainty make it much more difficult for an NGO to even launch a social program, but for whichever NGO can manage to go through this process, a more consolidated coalition between the state, the NGO, and the community would be already formed when the project starts.

Behind the "grassroots advocacy" model, a type of state optics is to be discovered. At the micro-level, the abstract state might be imposing its standardizing agenda of legibility upon civil society and the governed population, yet within the state, various branches and individual officials might be telling a different story. Not only do different state branches have their own particular goals and functions, the officials also have their own incentives beyond imposing an all-seeing gaze upon the governed people. On the one hand, the functional division of labor within the state (as a "network of institutions," as Laney suggests) prescribes different governmental objectives to each government branch; on the other hand, instead of seeing the governed population , the officials seek to "be seen" by the higher-level officials. Within an authoritarian state, where offices are appointed from above instead of being elected from below, lower-level officials' promotion depends solely on the recognition of the higher-level cadredom. The pursuit of "being seen" is hence intrinsic to the political career of a Chinese local official.

More importantly, by "being seen," it doesn't mean that officials want to be seen in a way similar to how their colleagues are seen. Instead, they need to be seen as profoundly different

from their colleagues. The type of being-seen optic that the officials seek to realize between them and the state (or to be more specific, the part of the state above them), therefore, is fundamentally different from Scott's notion of legibility and should be called "conspicuity" or "exhibition." The major characteristics of this type of optics is not to make everything visible and comparable with each other, but for an individual official or an institution to earn the recognition from the state, while others in similar positions should remain invisible. Desiring to stand out in front of the state, officials seek to establish unique, "model" social programs as an exhibition of "good governance."

Based on this logic, officials would be open to the opportunities to collaborate with NGOs, while some even actively seek them. As such, a coalition could be built before the time the center was established. In the case of CommConn, first, CommConn approached the district-level government branch in charge of internal migrant affairs. Seeking to prove its own merits and necessity, the bureau encourages "institutional innovation" in terms of migrant population management and service in the city. CommConn's general proposal of improving migrant well-being and grassroots governance by providing community education was a good fit for this purpose. Second, although the district-level officials were willing to support CommConn both financially and politically, CommConn had to find its site to start the program. Wen and her colleague found a street-office level party secretary Zhou, who has been devoting himself to building a more harmonious relationship between migrants and locals. In 2011, after the Zengcheng Incident, the local party cadredom in Guangzhou became aware of the political risk of migrant grievances. A creative-minded local political leader, Zhou decided to do something different from his fellow cadres, instead of reinforcing policing and control, he realized that more contact and interaction between migrants and locals will soothe potential conflicts and be beneficial for the migrants, locals, and the government. Since then, Zhou has been actively reaching out to migrant community leaders and collaborating with them to solve disputes between officialdom and migrants. By the time CommConn visited him, he had already built a strong connection with the migrant community and he was very pleased to see an NGO that could potentially bring many resources from outside. He introduced Wen and her colleagues to community leader Kong. A man in his late 40s, Kong had been in the community for almost 20 years. Long before working with Zhou to solve community issues, he had been helping newcomers settle down, mediating conflicts between migrants, and speaking out to the local officials on behalf of his community. Over the years, his community service and personal charisma helped him develop a political career at the grassroots level: he was elected a district representative and was invited to be a counselor at the neighborhood committee; even the villagers of his hometown have heard of his reputation in the city and wanted him to return to the village and serve as the village head.

Just like Zhou, Kong was pleased to see what CommConn could offer. The community-cadre partnership might help solve issues of administrative nature, but neither Zhou nor Kong had the resources to provide services beyond this point. By contrast, CommConn was well-connected

with educational institutions, outside funders, and corporations interested in philanthropy. With the financial support from both the state and private sector, the political endorsement of Zhou and the ground level collaboration of Kong, CommConn started their preschool program for migrant children, a service that was in great demand, hardly accessible in the community, and required the involvement of migrant families. The success of this project built up the trust of community members toward CommConn and helped the latter recruit students and volunteers for other programs. Once the community members realized that CommConn would stay in the community for a long time and seemed capable of providing a variety of services and lessons, they started making requests such as the aforementioned English course. Seemingly unlikely in the eyes of outsiders, the demand for English lessons was rooted in the local business context, that is, the burgeoning international trade based on petite-entrepreneurship. Unlike the large-scale manufacturing and wholesale businesses that could employ college-educated English-speaking business representatives easily to communicate with foreign traders, print job brokers had to speak English themselves. In other words, the demand for English lessons was specific to the print job brokerage industry. It was a demand so specific to the community context that it was difficult for the state or NGOs to identify. In Collectiville, however, the demand does not need to be found by outside social service agencies: community members like May approached CommConn in groups to discuss their needs, and the center's job was not to identify the demand but to search for external resources to meet community members' needs. However, matching what outside professionals could offer and what the community needs often required more than searching. After finding a teacher, the center also needed to tailor the lessons based on the specific business needs of the print-job brokerage business.

Unlike the state deployment model that pursues standardization and transparency at the cost of unquantifiable local knowledge, the grassroots advocacy model of state-society corporatism starts with an NGO's community engagement. Throughout the development of CommConn, an enormous amount of time was spent determining the local context, identifying community needs, and utilizing this local knowledge to draft service projects from scratch. These projects do not need to be comparable to other projects because under the name of "grassroots governance innovation," they are supposed to be one-of-a-kind and thus cannot be compared with other projects by standardized quantitative measurements. Therefore, in seeking state-sponsorship through this model, NGOs need to *stand out* before the bureaucrats in charge by proving their capacity of engaging the community instead of *fitting in* with a set of pre-existing standards. By the same token, the performance of state-sponsored programs is assessed in a way considerably different from the annual evaluation of the IFSC.

The art of showcase

What the officials like Zhou and Kong expect from CommConn are not the numbers of participants in events that nominally resemble the proposed program objectives; instead, they expect CommConn to be a storytelling political "showcase" of good governance that may enhance their political profile. The showcase can be made in various forms. The internal reports

within the government are certainly of central importance, and the media (especially national newspapers) coverage is often mentioned by NGO staff and officials. Yet the most important showcasing event happens when the community is visited by officials from the provincial and central government. At CommConn, this type of events were treated more seriously than any other event—several days before the visit, local officials and CommConn may hold meetings to prepare, sometimes even rehearse, their presentation to these higher-ups. The entire center is decorated with party flags and greeting banners. The name list of visiting officials is checked multiple times until the last minute and their seats were arranged carefully according to their political positions. On the day of the visit, local officials and CommConn leaders both make presentations to introduce the work of CommConn. Depending on the length of the visit, the visiting officials will be taken to a poster exhibition of previous projects, talk to community members, or observe an event being held that day. They may also take a walking tour in the community and be told that the center organizes migrant volunteers to clean up the environment every month.

This type of event could be understood as a performance in Erving Goffman's sense (Goffman 1959), for which the local officials and the NGO staff need to work together. and tactfully emphasize each other's contribution to the establishment and operation of the program. The visit usually starts with the local officials' presentation about the community's profile, the unique issues it is facing, and how the program becomes a solution to this issue. Then the NGO staff will make a more detailed presentation about how the program works while continuously mentioning how the local officials have helped them carry out the program. The whole event is therefore an exhibition of both parties' political merits before the upper-level officialdom. In this exhibition, emphasizing the other party's contributions and achievements serves two major functions. On the one hand, by doing so, the local officials and NGO staff offer a seemingly more objective third-party testimony of the other party's merits in front of the visitors who are here to evaluate both of them. If either party continuously credits itself for what has been achieved in the community, they may end up sounding boasting; if the testimony comes from another party that has been working closely with them, it should presumably sound more credible.

On the other hand, however, the testimony should not be seen as an objective account when the relationship between local officials and NGOs is taken into consideration. Crediting each other, or "giving face" as Goffman (1955) conceptualized it, is both a cultural rule and a strategic collaboration between officials and NGO staff. Not only that this exchange of face-work benefits both parties, but those who fail to do so could be subject to complaints and criticisms. CommConn's secretary general, Wen, used to complain about an official after a group of officials and scholars from the central government visited Collectiville:

"It is unbelievable. We were at this seminar about government and NGO collaboration and here came this official, with whom we are not familiar. When it was his term to speak, he abruptly started criticizing the topic. 'What does it even mean by government and NGO collaboration?

What we see here is all done by the government!'—How could he say that in front of those people from Beijing?"

What Wen was upset about was not only that the said official unfairly downplayed the contribution of CommConn but, more importantly, that he did so *in front of* the people from Beijing. The seminar that the Beijing officials, the local officials, and CommConn attended was a place where NGO staff and local officials complement each other and share the political credit they collaboratively earn. Violating this rule would cause quarrels from the other party and potentially destabilize the partnership between the local government and the NGO. By contrast, a successful performance may strengthen the relationship between them. During another high-level official visit, the local cadre nicely introduced the cadre from the central government level to CommConn's work and Wen praised how involved the local cadre was in helping the community and how the resources he brought to Collectiville were well-received. After the central-level cadre left, the local cadre stayed in CommConn's office to talk with Wen. They were both excited about the interests the higher-up showed and could not help but describing how the higher-up opened the door of our office and kindly talked with the staff ("he must be very interested in our program") and how he was supposed to leave early but he decided to change his schedule so he could see more (which gave his assistants a hard time rescheduling the meetings later that afternoon, an impressive and amusing scene to see). After exchanging their observations of the visit, they started complimenting each other's performance during it. They both appreciated the good words the other person said about them in front of the higher-level cadre and gladly expressed their gratitude.

The art of showcase, therefore, serves two functions for the NGO staff. On the one hand, it is a performance, or impression management as Goffman (1959) called it, that they put on before the higher-level officials. Yet they do not do so for themselves—instead, they manage to create a desirable impression of the local officials; in return, the officials are supposed to do the same for the NGO. The performance is hence a joint effort between the two parties. On the other hand, as this performance requires the collaboration between the two parties, it also testifies, reassures, and strengthens the relationship between them. That said, a bad performance could also lead to potential conflicts between officials and staff. In this sense, the art of showcase is both a type of impression management and relational work for NGO staff—impression management before higher-level officials and relational work with local officials.

Inside the Village: Community Norms and Market Monopoly

In Indiville, most migrants are employed in the interactive service sector. In Collectiville, the career paths look sharply different. As mentioned before, most people here are "printing brokers," and many of them have been in this business for more than a decade. At first glance, printing brokerage seems simple: finding clients who need to get some print jobs done, taking the

order to a printing plant, then coming back to the client with the printed order. Despite this apparent simplicity, it is not a job that any random migrant can take on. In Collectiville, all the brokers are from two neighboring villages in Hubei Province. In daily language, these migrants refer to one another as laoxiang, namely, "people from the same place."

The broker who came up with the idea of English class, May, is a representative example of how the community and the brokerage market are interwoven. Now in her late 30s, she first came to Guangzhou in 2003 because her sister was here. She brought 1,100 RMB from home, with which she bought a cell phone, printed around 20 business cards, and started her brokerage business. In the beginning, went to different places with her laoxiang: "we went to the garment wholesale center in the morning when the garment folks gathered; in the afternoon, many businessmen came to the freight station, so we went there." When negotiating with clients, she relied on her brother-in-law, whom she calls laoxiang as well: "I just arrived and knew nothing about prices…...so he talked to that client on my behalf." Other laoxiang also helped: when a client asked for a sample of some special products that she had never made, she turned to her laoxiang, one by one, to "borrow" spare samples. She purposely asked for samples made for famous brand names, so her client thought that she was an experienced, successful broker.

May established her work routines by following her laoxiang to the garment wholesale center and the freight station. Some other laoxiang went to office buildings, knocked the door of each business, and gave business cards to them. When a broker got more experience and accumulated more social capital, however, the form of business would change. As May gradually built long-term relationships with clients, she stopped handing out business cards to passersby on the street. Nowadays, some of her clients have been giving orders to her for more than a decade. They treat her like "friends or even family members." They give her presents and take her out for nice meals at traditional holidays. Yet the most touching anecdote is about a personal tragedy of hers. A few years ago, May stopped working for a while after the sudden death of her teenage daughter. When she came back to work, a client told her quietly but emotionally, "I knew what happened to you and I felt so sorry. I didn't say anything to you because there is no right way to say it. It is so good to see that you are getting better." May "couldn't help but cry" in front of that client.

Chain Migration

May's career path, together with her laoxiang's collective control over the market, is a very interesting case of how the development of migrant communities and the creation of a particular fraction of the urban service market can be interlocked. In the past twenty years, the expansion of the Hubei community and the maturation of the printing brokerage market are closely interwoven in Collectiville, and eventually developed into a tight-knit, exclusive community that monopolizes a trade through the control over knowledge and skills.

Different from the individualists, small group migration pattern in Indiville, migrants follow a chain migration model when moving to Collectiville. This difference can even be pointed out by having a meal in the village. For a person who is somewhat familiar with the Chinese food culture, Collectiville looks strikingly different from Indiville. In Indiville, most restaurants are Cantonese or Szechuan style, which are popular among the migrants regardless of provincial origins. In Collectiville, by contrast, the provincial dishes from Hubei are widely served. This person can then conclude that the migrants in Collectiville are predominantly from the same province—in fact, they are from the same township. Since the first group of people moved here and started the printing business in the 1990s, their relatives, neighbors, and fellow villagers have been following their footsteps to settle down here.

Chain migration has been a widespread phenomenon in the migration literature. In China, many scholars have documented how the internal migrants move in groups and ceaselessly arrived in the same urban destination, especially the famous case studies done on the Zhejiang Village near Beijing (Solinger 1999; Xiang 2004; Zhang 2001). Just like Collectiville, Zhejiang Village is associated with a single industry—textile production and wholesale. Beyond Zhejiang Village, chain migration has been seen as the norm in the 1990s. But how about nowadays? As the case of "floaters" and "sojourners" in Indiville may have already illustrated, chain migration is no longer the only way of moving from place to place in China. People can move to a community where they do not have any acquaintance if their laoxiang or friends fail to offer a desirable job in the destination. Even if they move with someone they know, or moving to a location where there are relatives or family members, when they decide that a market has been saturated, they will not hesitate to move to a different location for a better market condition. In this sense, Indiville serves as a case that problematizes or denaturalizes the chain migration model in Collectiville—whereas chain migration might have been the norm in the 1990s, it might no longer be in recent years. What, then, are the incentives for migrants to follow their fellow villagers to the city nowadays?

In the case of Collectiville, chain migration is at least partially dependent on the lucrative print-job brokerage market. When many migrants in Indiville could hardly make 5,000 RMB a month, many brokers in Collectiville could maintain a monthly income of more than 10,000 RMB. The profitability of the trade not only was the initial incentives for Hubei migrants to follow their laoxiang to Guangzhou and settle down in Collectiville but also the reason why they did not move to other locations in the city. further described later, they formed a monopoly in the printing brokerage market and brought in more laoxiang to this trade. As a result, when May came to Guangzhou, the brokerage business was already awaiting her and she seemed to take it for granted. In retrospect, May explained her choice of occupation by the lack of other opportunities: "I became a broker because there is not much to do for a person without much education, like me." Likewise, a graphic designer named Hong was unable to explain how he chose this career: "I didn't choose at all. My laoxiang took me to Guangzhou and taught me how to do this, and that's it."

Yet compared with other groups of migrants, May's "poor family" theory does not fully explain how May and other brokers entered in this trade. What channeled May to the trade is a different type of resources that she utilized but is unaware of—it does not come from her peers or family, but from the migrant community. Remote relatives from extended families or unrelated laoxiang neither provide resources unconditionally with expectations of reciprocal, timely payback (like peers do) nor do the same but without reciprocal responsibility (like families do). Instead, they share knowledge and information. In the next section, we will probe into the basics of the brokerage trade and explore the community-based knowledge-sharing in Collectiville.

The Business Secrets of Brokerage

At first glance, brokerage seems too simple to be a monopolized trade. The knowledge necessary for doing this job, however, turns out to be more complicated than outsiders imagine. As a result, by controlling the knowledge, brokers could enjoy a market advantage based on reducing competition.

The first thing about printing brokerage is to give out a quote that is competitive but also profitable. This requires knowledge about production cost, which varies according to a number of things: the kinds of materials, from paper, plastic, to other kinds of surfaces; the kinds of paints; and the technology involved in the printing process. If the product is complicated enough that the broker cannot design it by him or herself, the design cost certainly needs to be included. For more experienced brokers, especially those who deal with larger orders, the payment methods (e.g., installment vs. cash) are also important. These business secrets are rarely, if ever, shared with outsiders. May learned them from her brother-in-law, but it could have been a laoxiang or a remote relative as well. Another broker, Li, reported how he started his business. He visited a laoxiang with a ten-pack of fine cigarettes. "The two of us sat down face-to-face at his dining table. I put the cigarettes in the middle of the table, with equal distance to each of us. We talked about the tricks of quoting while smoking, one cigarette after one cigarette, for the whole evening." With that laoxiang's help, Li learned the secrets of the trade.

The knowledge of printing plants is no less crucial—different plants have different specialties and rates. The rates, of course, will affect the quote as well. A good broker should even know how busy a plant is at a given time. These types of information are circulated exclusively among Hubei laoxiang, oftentimes during drinking and mahjong games.

The skills of graphic design are no less crucial. For simple orders, especially those clients might use on a daily basis, such as business cards or blank receipts, many clients may give the broker a sample to duplicate. In that case, the broker just needs to bring the sample to the printing plant. Yet there are still way more cases in which the client does not have a ready-to-use design when making an order. Over the years, many brokers learned rudimentary graphic design skills from one another, again, through a community network made of laoxiang. Most experienced brokers, nowadays, could handle simple designs such as a business card. For the complicated designs,

moreover, there are also many professional designers in the community. Nearly ten years ago, a man with this expertise, who is also a Hubei laoxiang, came here and recruited several apprentices, with the condition that after the training, the apprentices needed to pay back by one year's free labor in his design studio. Just like other types of information, knowledge, and skills, this offer is exclusive to Hubei laoxiang. The reason is also quite simple—the teacher was not collecting fees from the students but instead making them promise for free labor after training. This kind of deal could be made, unsurprisingly, only within a tight-knit community with a certain level of social trust. After independence from the old "master," these young pupils started teaching their relatives, friends, and laoxiang. Nowadays, those brokers who also own a copy shop (including May) usually would hire at least one graphic designer, and sometimes even more. While working for these copy shops, these designers also take orders from their friends or relatives who work as independent brokers. For this kind of help, both good relationships and financial rewards are needed.

"Hey man, I don't wanna know about this!"

In Collectiville, migrants share many business secrets about the print-job brokerage trade. When a newcomer arrives, they share the basic tricks of properly quoting to clients; in their everyday life, especially on the drinking table or mahjong table, they exchange information and gossip about printing plants; when graphic design is needed, they also teach each other or help others out. There is, however, one thing that brokers by no means would share—their clientele.

"Stealing" someone else's client by a counteroffer is an inexcusable taboo in this community where virtually everybody is, or at least knows, a broker. The community leader, Kong, a man in his late 40s who has been in Collectiville for almost 20 years, told us that some disputes might occasionally happen when a broker suspects that another broker is trying to obtain information about his or her client and approach the client with a counteroffer.

"But it is very difficult to find evidence for a case of clientele theft. Let's say, for example, you are lining up at the printing plant, holding a sample of a desk calendar in your hands, and waiting to talk to their graphic designer. The person who lined up after you somehow peeked at your sample of the desk calendar. You know, this kind of calendar is for advertisement purposes so there must be your client's company name and contact information. And those words should be noticeable even for someone who was just peeking at it from behind your back. Once that person obtains this information, he or she could approach your clients and make a counteroffer. You find it out, and you are very upset. But how do you prove that? He can always claim that he met this client by accident."

As a respected old-timer and a community leader, Kong tried to reconcile many disputes that were brought to him. In the experience of individual brokers, however, cases like this are rare. Avoiding sharing and obtaining clientele information is a well-established social etiquette in the broker community. Li told me that not only that he will not share clientele information with

others, but he will also consciously refuse to learn about the clientele of his laoxiang: "if someone accidentally mentions a client of his, I will say, 'Hey man, I don't wanna know about this!'"

Moreover, the protection of information about clients is also why laoxiang are willing to share business secrets with newcomers. As long as the said newcomer is a member of the laoxiang community, the social norm of the community will prevent him or her from becoming a business competitor. Together with the exclusion of people from outside of the community, two layers of monopoly are found in the brokerage business. On the one hand, the sharing of strategic information is restricted to the community members, so outsiders cannot join the market competition. The business is hence monopolized at the community level. On the other hand, the types of information that can be shared are restricted to those who will not cause competition between community members. The taboo of obtaining information about someone else's clientele prevents brokers from competing for clientele, and the business is hence further monopolized at the level of individual broker–client relationships. Therefore, the market condition the brokers face in Collectiville is strikingly different from the open, highly competitive market in which migrants in Indiville undertake their ceaseless venture.

Consolidated Relations in a Tight-knit Community

The social relations among migrants in Indiville and Collectiville are, as we have already seen, both heavily influenced by the economic life of migrants. However, it is exactly because they both are influenced by the economic features of the village and the surrounding area, as well as the fact that these two communities are so different from each other, the way social relations are organized in Indiville and Collectiville are almost opposite to each other.

In terms of job diversity, for starters, Collectiville is quite the opposite of Indiville. Whereas Indiville seems like a collection of all possible types of interactive service work, people in Collectiville are almost purely working on three types of job: print-job brokers, copy store owners (which often do brokerage as well), and graphic designers. Moreover, not only do these three jobs often overlap with each other, the brokerage business makes an undoubted majority in the village. As a result, job diversity in Collectiville is virtually zero. That means, most migrants in Collectiville share exactly the same work experience and live on very similar (and flexible, given the nature of brokerage job) everyday life schedule. A more consolidated community life could then be established. Indeed, in Collectiville, brokers usually come back to the village around dinner time, and they often have dinner together in some Hubei restaurant. After eating and drinking, some people might move the party to someone's apartment and play poker or mahjong. During drinking and gambling, information about the trade and the market would be shared, which further strengthens the competence of Hubei people in this market.

Another difference between Indiville and Collectiville, in terms of the ways in which social relations are organized, has to do with the conflicts generated in the workplace or among people

in the same trade. Indiville's interpersonal service work, such as hair salon or massage parlor, certainly have made related rules to reduce the conflicts between coworkers due to competition over clients. Retailers, similarly, try to avoid immediate conflicts with potential business competitors. The conflicts, however, can still happen. After all, a key feature of the service work in Indiville is that the businesses are concentrated in a fixed space where customers could patronize either this business or another. As long as a customer of mine could easily change his or her mind and patronize the next provider, the potential conflict will never be ignored. In Collectiville, by contrast, not only that the community norms about non-competition are much more explicit, but also that the brokers are seeking clients in the whole city, whereas the clientele has very limited information about other brokers. As a result, the internal conflicts in these two communities are quite the opposite of each other as well.

The spatial mobility of migrants varies greatly between Indiville and Collectiville, too. The consumer market at Indiville has a very low barrier of entry. It has been good for many migrants there when they try to start their own business, but once they do, the market feels too competitive (also because of the low barrier of entry) and saturated too soon. The petite entrepreneurs in Indiville hence need to migrate again as they have to constantly chase after new market niches. The community-based monopoly of the print-job brokerage in Collectiville, by contrast, allows for above-average profitability for the brokers. As a result, whereas Indiville entrepreneurs' best business strategy is to keep moving, Collectiville's brokers tend to stay on the same job and in the same community for over a decade. With the semi-permanent dwelling pattern in Collectiville, the community is more stabilized.

The result of chain migration and monopolized market is a stabilized, consolidated community network that is made of overlapped laoxiang, relatives, and friendship networks. The overlapping of these social relations, presumably, would further enhance the solidarity within the migrant community. Compared with Indiville, where the social network is marked by diversity, dispersion, and "the strengths of weak ties," Collectiville's social relations show much more homogeneity and solidarity. These strong ties, although not always bringing in new, heterogeneous information, may demonstrate their power in the case of collective bargaining. The formation of community politics at Collectiville, therefore, should look widely different from that of Indiville.

The Politics of Collective Bargaining

In Indiville, the failure of the state-NGO coalition to engage with community conditions and the decentralized social network of migrants leaves a political vacuum between migrants and the local state. The strength of weak ties, however, helps migrants solve issues in life through exchanges of resources and information. To the extent that the social network is diverse, so is the information circulated in the network—not only everyday life issues such as how to choose

childcare or where to find inexpensive, in-style outfits but also how to solve an issue with the government officials and police. I call this type of community politics "politics of self-help." In Collectiville, by contrast, the engagement of CommConn's social programs and the consolidated community network of Hubei laoxiang enable the NGO and the community to collaborate. The collaboration not only filled up the political vacuum between the state and migrants but also reshaped both of them. I call it the "politics of collective bargaining."

Reaching out to the State

Even before the entry of CommConn, which could be seen as the launch of neo-corporatism in Collectiville, the state and migrants had been interacting (and even negotiating) with each other. As a community leader, Kong had been playing a role in this kind of negotiation. Short, strong, and energetic, Kong started building up his reputation as a "good Samaritan" even before he came to the city. Back in the rural village in Hubei, he was renowned for his charitable and helpful personality among his fellow villagers. In the early 2000s, he came to Collectiville right after the first wave of laoxiang settled down here and started taking friends and relatives to the city.

The first wave of laoxiang who moved to Guangzhou were predominantly male breadwinners of their family. After them, the age and gender of Hubei people started diversifying in Collectiville. As the migrant population diversified, the issues between them and the state diversified, too. Kong still remembers the first time he spoke up to the local officials on behalf of his fellow migrants. Back then the one child policy was stricter than nowadays. There was a woman who had a child already but was having a second pregnancy. She was supposed to pay a fine to the government, so the Birth Control Office at the Neighborhood Committee came to her and asked for money. She was okay with being fined, yet the only problem was that she already paid a fine to the Birth Control Office back in the Hubei hometown. Knowing Kong's reputation of helping with the village affairs back at home, this Hubei laoxiang found Kong and asked him to help her out. Kong visited the local Birth Control Office and "reason with them." After all, there were no rules about how to deal with this situation and the outcome of the negotiation, at the end of the day, depended on whether an agreement could be reached between Kong and the local Birth Control Office staff. Experienced with local bureaucrats' mindsets and ways of doing things, Kong had sufficient cultural capital for this negotiation, and his success in settling this case helped him earn a reputation in Collectiville as well as in hometown.

At that point, this kind of negotiation was done in a personal manner. It was more like a person reasoning with another person, rather than collective bargaining, institutionalized negotiation, or even "making the system work for you." What mattered was the social skills, or cultural capital, on one individual. Whether an individual existed in a community, moreover, was contingent. This is, nevertheless, how a connection was first built between the Neighborhood Committee and the Hubei migrants. With this first encounter, both Kong and the local officials realized that it was possible for them to work with each other and make things easier. Little by little, the local

Birth Control Office started collaborating with Kong as a window to the migrants. Whenever the migrants had issues to settle, they came to Kong; whenever the local Birth Control Office wanted to promote policy propaganda to the migrants, they also sought help from Kong. When Kong started sitting behind a desk that was designated for child-birth related issues and had policy promotion brochures on it, his role as a middleman between the local state and the migrants were already semi-institutionalized.

It is worth noting that all these events happened *before* CommConn entered Collectiville. It is not saying Collectiville could be self-organized in the same way I observed in 2016 without the presence of CommConn. The NGO certainly made a difference. But it is important to recognize that even for a relatively well-designed social intervention program, some degree of pre-existing community-level self-organization might be necessary for the program's success. As a matter of fact, the extent to which the community was self-organized was an intrinsic part of CommConn's criteria of site selection when they were doing pilot research for social service plans.

Entry Through the Existing Self-organization

Even before the entry of CommConn, the local state and migrants had already spontaneously started a certain degree of collaboration. Starting with the collaboration between the Birth Control Office, other officials in the local government gradually got to know Kong and learned about his influence among migrants. They therefore approached Kong for his help when they needed to promote some policy agenda within the community. The party secretary at the Street Office, Zhou, saw Kong as a major collaborator that could possibly help him keep migrants under control and enhance his political portfolio.

In a sense, as demonstrated in the previous section, the relationship between the local state and the migrant community should not be attributed to the entry of CommConn. One can tell that just by considering the time order. More importantly, the partnership between the local state and the migrant community is rather the precondition of CommConn's successful entry into Collectiville. When CommConn was looking for a community to start its first community project in Guangzhou, the chairperson of the NGO first searched for local cadres who had a good relationship with her. Being a former government official from another province, [pseudonym] gained the trust from these Guangzhou officials, but not necessarily the migrant community leaders. It is true that [pseudonym] had what it took to immerse into the migrant community— she is a sociable, amicable woman with long term social service experience, and she had done community projects for decades. Yet it did make a difference that CommConn was introduced to Kong by Zhou. When CommConn entered the community, it was of critical importance that the community was already self-organized to a significant extent, and that the NGO was brought in by the community leader that had been building up his reputation for over a decade. With Kong's endorsement, CommConn's staff found themselves almost immediately surrounded by a group of migrants who were ready to answer their questions. From this first "focus group," the staff

learned about one of the most urgent issues of the migrant families—an affordable, high quality early childhood education program.

It is worth repeating that migrants in Collectiville have been following the chain migration model for over two decades. The gender-neutral nature of the brokerage business, moreover, makes it more than reasonably for a couple to move together. Over the years, many couples started nuclear families in Collectiville and nowadays, many families have pre-school age children living with parents in the city. Privately-operated child care programs could usually recruit children from three years old to elementary school, but those under three years old did not have as many options. Having learned about his demand, CommConn put together an early childhood program and started as quickly as they could in the community. The program required the parents to participate in children's daily activities, and hence became the first opportunity for CommConn to approach a group of migrant parents, interacting with them on a daily basis, and try to organize them for other community activities. Once the early childhood education program was launched and parents and children attended the program every day, the existence of the program itself became a source of migrants' trust towards CommConn.

"People might be cynical at first," a staff member recalled, "yet once they saw us launch the program, found that it was really working, and realized that nobody was charged until the very end of the program, they started trusting us."

The NGO's entry and its first attempt to launch a program, however, is extremely crucial. Without the first group of parents who went through the whole program without being charged money, the proof will not be solid enough for many community members. Yet with the help of Kong, CommConn successfully carried out the education program, and then adult writing class, children's summer camp, volunteers program, and a variety of community events. As time went by, migrants in Collectiville gradually learned the nature of CommConn's work and now most people accept the idea of social service in general. This acceptance, by itself, might not seem to be too unique; yet if we juxtapose Collectiville's experience with some Indiville residents' reactions to social assistance programs, it should be clear that this knowledge should not be taken for granted. The development of philanthropy and civil society in China, after all, is a recent phenomenon. For many people, it takes time, efforts, and opportunities to familiarize themselves with these ideas.

Formalizing Negotiation

It is not to say, however, that CommConn simply took advantage of the partnership between the local state and the migrant community without making meaningful differences to how the migrants are incorporated into the urban governance regime. Instead, there are signs that the entry of CommConn had transformed the partnership between the Neighborhood Committee and migrants. Not only that the partnership became more institutionalized, but also more the social relations within the community were consolidated. To put it more precisely, CommConn

transformed the rather spontaneous, contingent, and personal partnership between Kong and officials like Zhou into a more explicit and predictable platform.

Before the entry of CommConn, the partnership between the migrants and the local state was rather personalized and contingent: the entire partnership, as a matter of fact, depended on one man, that is, Kong. While the contact between the migrant community and the local state was real, it was also fragile, as it crucially depended on personal relationships built upon personal characteristics. Kong was indeed a charismatic community leader—he was involved in public affairs back in his hometown, he knew how the government officials worked at the very ground level, and he was enthusiastic about the old-timer communist party ideals. All these characteristics made him amicable and convincing in front of both the local officials and his fellow migrants at Collectiville. Should there not be Kong, some migrants might hold, the relationship between migrants and the Neighborhood Committee would not have been this smooth. His comrade in the local government, Zhou, was somewhat a maverick in the local government as well—after the Zengcheng Incident, when other local Party Secretaries were seeking to tighten migrant regulations, Zhou sought to speak to migrant leaders like Kong. The encounter and collaboration between the two persons was indeed somehow contingent.

Yet when I visited Collectiville, Zhou had already been appointed with another position and moved out of the area. Kong, at the same time, was no longer the only person in charge of the interaction between the government and migrants. The role played by charisma was replaced by CommConn's institutionalized and formalized mechanisms of public discussion and negotiation. In the beginning, a sense of public sphere debate was formed when CommConn entered the community and held a series of workshops to survey community needs; later on, with different types of lessons, from speech to writing, many migrants were equipped with skills of public debate. Brokers are supposed to be eloquent, many believed, and these lesions further transform their eloquence into a public sphere skill-set. When May brought the idea of English class to the staff, she and her fellow migrants were already used to brainstorming, group discussion, negotiation with formal institutions such as the staff at CommConn. When CommConn invited migrants to design the lessons together by after-class feedback, these skills were fully utilized.

At the same time, CommConn even managed to establish a participatory governance platform that allows migrant representatives and local officials to sit down and discuss community development. The public discussion platform had representatives elected from the migrants, and they could hold regular meetings with officials from the Neighborhood Committee. In principal, migrant representatives could come up with their own topics of discussion, and the local officials would answer their questions and sometimes even promise to promote policies or expand infrastructure. One outcome of this platform that was cited frequently by CommConn's management was this one time when the migrant representatives asked the local official if it was possible to build a park, the officials promised to discuss with their colleagues. The feedback from the Neighborhood Committee was positive—the officials wanted to help. Later on, because of the scarcity of space, the park proposal turned into a "micro-park" proposal, then a gardening

area. Yet, for CommConn and the migrant community, it was a successful experience of negotiating with the local government and receiving positive outcomes.

Diversifying and Bridging Resources

Another change that CommConn brought to Collectiville was the diversification of resources available to the community. Compared with Indiville, Collectiville is marked by its highly homogeneous inhabitants. Almost all migrants here are more or less involved in printing, copy, graphic design, and brokerage. As a result, quite the contrary to Indiville, where the strength of weak ties channels heterogeneous external information and resources to individual migrants, Collectiville is homogeneous and enclosed. The strong ties among Collectiville's migrants are good for collective bargaining but not as good for introducing various life-issue-solving information. Even after the rudimentary partnership between the Neighborhood Committee and the migrants was first established, the homogeneity of resources was by and large unchanged. The Neighborhood Committee, which is the grassroots governing body of the Chinese local state, was arguably even more homogeneous and enclosed than the migrant community.

It was probably why, in retrospect, Zhou was taking CommConn seriously and introduced the organization of Kong. Compared with a community leader of a tight-knit migrant enclave or a secretary of a local branch of the Communist Party, an NGO meant a distinctly different set of resources. Over the years, CommConn proved this point. Not only that CommConn found a teacher specialized in adult education, which was crucial given the background of migrants, but even after the class started, CommConn could use its connections to other NGO to enhance students' learning experience. When the students of the English class reported that they were concerned about their accent and whether foreign customers would understand them, CommConn started collaborating with another NGO which was recruiting foreign volunteers to participate in philanthropy projects in China. That NGO happened to be trying to find places for a newly recruited group of volunteers, and the English class seemed to be a proper option for them. Within a week, migrants in the English class started having a conversation session with foreign volunteers.

Besides education institutions and other NGOs, many corporations are also interested in working with CommConn. During my stay at Collectiville, I saw a major international cosmetic company, a four-star hotel, and even a telecommunication company contacting CommConn and offered some resources for CommConn's community development projects. The cosmetics company donated their products for CommConn to use in its cosmetic class; the hotel sponsored a part of children's activities in CommConn's summer camp for left-behind children; the telecommunication company, moreover, promised to improve the infrastructure in the village. If a local community college or university professors have been difficult to contact for either Zhou and Kong, these corporations should be even more beyond their reach. With the entry of

CommConn, however, the resources available to migrants got further diversified as CommConn bridges the migrants to the heterogeneous urban resources.

The Politics of Collective Bargaining

Quite the contrary to Indiville, Collectiville is inhabited by a highly homogeneous population, among which the hometown, workplace, and friendship networks are highly overlapped. The consolidated social relations within the community makes it more likely for migrants to mobilize and form a potential threat to the local state. In other words, migrants in Collectiville have a rather strong associational power, defined as "the various forms of power that result from the formation of collective organizations" by Erik O. Wright (2000).

The Chinese local state has always been aware of the associational power of migrants and the possible threat it could pose. As a matter of fact, the Zengcheng Incident was said to have Sichuan laoxiang organization who work in the nearby factories involved. In another case in Guangzhou, 2016, a cloth wholesale cluster's Chaoshan laoxiang came to the street and threw rocks at the police because some local police were trying to confiscate electronic bikes. In both cases, the major threats to the local state were posed by a group of migrants who lived in the same place, from the same hometown, and do the same kind of job. Collectiville's Hubei brokers fit this description perfectly. Aware of the associational power of migrants in other communities like Collectiville, local officials could have chosen to take suppressive measures to monitor and control the migrants, yet Zhou chose to respond alternatively. Instead of coercive means of migrant regulation, by reaching out to Kong and bringing in CommConn, he launched a new agenda that attempts to incorporate migrants into urban society.

Zhou turned out to be one of the early local officials to participate in a much larger paradigm shift of the use of state power. In the aftermath of the incident, the city mayor openly requested the officials to "learn the lesson of the Zengcheng Incident and improve migrants' sense of belonging" to the city. He also commended officials to do the same through institutional innovations that enhance social management and social services. In particular, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, a series of reforms were launched in three major aspects that fundamentally changed the relationship between the state, the migrants, and grassroots NGOs, of which CommConn's practice became an example. These practices, moreover, turned out to be demanding a degree of associational power of the migrants to begin with. Hubei migrants' solidarity and associational power not only led to Zhou's collaboration with Kong and introduction of CommConn to the community, but the tight-knit social relations within the community also enabled CommConn to engage with the local conditions and carry out its social improvement programs accordingly.

The outcome of this interlocked relationship between the local state, the NGO, and the migrant community is a deeply engaged form of community politics based on collective negotiation.

With its various types of community activities that encourage community members' participation in not only the activities but also the planning of them, CommConn created a public space for migrants in Collectiville to play a role in the public affairs in the village. When the public sphere became expanded and institutionalized into a platform that involved local officials, the governance vacuum between the local state and migrants was at least partially filled. On the one hand, officials use CommConn's community events as an opportunity for policy propaganda; on the other, migrants could elect representatives to present their ideas and interests. Sometimes the representatives would be talking about the issues and affairs inside the community, such as establishing rules about upstairs littering; sometimes they make proposals to the local government and expect to hear back from the officials. It does not mean, however, that they make decisions—the local officials make decisions based on what they think is available or not. Yet in terms of organizing people, crystallizing ideas, and making the historically marginalized population heard, these practices have certainly made significant progress and reduced the distance between the local state and migrants.

The presence of the state in migrants' everyday life is quite conspicuous in Collectiville. Local officials from the Neighborhood Committee visited the community education center all the time and, when they were not too busy, hung out with migrants; in festival events there were usually a session saved for local officials' presentation of policy propaganda. Propaganda it might be, it is also an opportunity for the migrants to interact with officials and familiarize themselves with the style of talking and the logics of thinking of the first-line staff of the Chinese state. To the migrants in Collectiville, as a result, the officialdom appears to be approachable and understandable. It is not a matter of whether this understanding or fathomability are authentic or false. The point is that, for the migrants, there is a sense that the state is understandable and hence there is a possibility that they can "make the system work for them."

This perception of the local state as approachable and understandable, moreover, differs greatly from migrants' attitude towards it in Indiville. As described in Chapter 2, some migrants in Indiville had difficulties recognizing that the government or NGOs might provide resources to them for free. In Collectiville, migrants not only know what resources are available but actively participate in deciding how to use those resources. It is true that the local state has the final say when it comes to conflicting interests between migrants and the state, or migrants and the locals. It is also true that there is no guarantee that the local state will take the migrants' side when conflicts happen. Quite the contrary, there have been incidents in which the local officials felt considerable pressure from the local residents and rejected the proposal of migrants. In a different community, for example, the migrants came together and complained about cell phone signals in the community. With the help of an NGO similar to CommConn, they petitioned the Neighborhood Committee to request the building of more cell sites. The petition was not taken into consideration by the officials, not only because the construction of cell sites involved the telecommunication company and hence cannot be done single-handedly by the Neighborhood, but also that the use of land within the community might result in the complaints of the original

villagers. That said, the connection between migrants and the local state under this regime is still the strongest compared to either Hengfa or Indiville's case.

Concluding Remarks

Collectiville's community politics differs from that of Indiville in that the vacuum governance, which remains in Indiville (if not widened), is sealed up in Collectiville, thanks to both the more engaged government-sponsored social program and the more consolidated social relations of migrants.

On the one hand, the social programs are more engaged with the community context, getting support from the migrant population, and even involving migrants in the planning of their services. The engagement with the community makes CommConn's social program remarkably different from that of EnrichLife. The more personal negotiation between the local officials and the NGO, as well as the bottom-up process of establishing a social program, enables programs such as CommConn's education center to deeply engage in the community context. As a result, the programs tend to better suit the needs of migrants. The comparison between CommConn and EnrichLife's projects made this point fairly clear—while EnrichLife's kidnapping prevention campaign looked plausible, it turned out to be unnecessary for the community; by contrast, CommConn's English class was much needed although it might not make sense at the first glance.

On the other hand, the two communities are organized differently. Social relations in Indiville are more dispersed and diverse weak ties as opposed to the more consolidated strong ties in Collectiville. Whereas migrants in Indiville build widespread, diverse social networks based on weak ties, those in Collectiville tend to be surrounded by strong ties—the major social ties in their life are closely overlapped, from family, friends, people from the same trade, to *laoxiang*. The consolidated network of strong ties, on the one hand, provides the migrants with a more favorable condition for collective actions. Even without real mobilization in a contentious manner, this potential could turn into the community's bargaining power when conflicts happen between it and the state. Moreover, the consolidated social networks are also the soil for the centralization of power in the community. As a result, a few headman-like community leaders such as Kong can represent the community and negotiate with the local state.

As such, the differentiated community politics in these two communities could be understood as the outcomes of the interactions between social programs and the way the migrant community is organized. In Indiville, the disengaged social program leaves the vacuum between the state and migrants unfilled while the migrants themselves survive the precarious urban life by person-to-person exchange of information and resources in heterogeneous social networks; in Collecitiville, by contrast, the engaged social program and the consolidated social ties among migrants merges with each other and, together, bridges the gap between the state and the migrant

community. The two types of community politics, "the politics of self-help" and "the politics of collective bargaining," however, both depart from the original intention of the state. In either case, the community politics work differently from what the neo-corporatist social inclusion agenda claims, that is, a "welfarist incorporation" (Howell 2015). We will compare the abstract claim of neo-corporatism and its reality in the next chapter, which will conclude this dissertation.

CONCLUSION

In 2016, when I was working on the assembly line of Hengfa Company, the social exclusion of internal migrants was still a norm in Chinese coastal cities and townships. The poignant death of Sun Zhigang happened only four years before I entered Hengfa, and in their everyday life, workers still openly expressed their fear of the world outside of the factory, as well as toward the local government. Located in a remote corner of the township, moreover, Hengfa became a major, if not the only, provider of infrastructure and services in migrant workers' everyday life, which was enclosed within the wall of the factory compound. Last but not least, within this enclosed compound, the company served as the enforcer of social rules and guardian of morality. The isolation from the outside world, the distance from the *de jure* local government, and the role of the company as a *de facto* local government make workers more like the citizens of the company and less like the citizens of the local government.

In the Western work and industrial relationship literature, scholars have studied "industrial citizenship." The same concept was applied to China during the collective era and declared to be disappearing after the reform and open policy (Andreas 2019). It is true that many social-political features of the employment relations back from the state-owned enterprise in the collective era are gone, especially the participation of workers in the decision-making process. However, it is also true that workers at Hengfa were treated in a way similar to citizens, or to be more precise, the company was acting as a local government to them. The reliance of workers on the company was not restricted to the economic dimension but also happens in the social and political realm. In other words, if the concept of industrial citizenship could be applied to Hengfa's relationship to its workers, it was a citizenship that contained social rights but not political rights.

Compared with the collective era version, it goes without saying, this variation of industrial citizenship is impaired. The "fall" of industrial citizenship, as Joel Andreas' book title suggests, has undoubtedly happened, as long as the production regime no longer engages in the pursuit of workplace democracy. The idea and practices of industrial citizenship, nevertheless, did not vanish all at once at the point when the market arose. Instead, it partially reincarnated into the mushrooming privately-owned factories. After the "political rights" of industrial citizenship vanished, the "social rights" elements were adopted by private enterprises. The private enterprises did so because they needed to. According to the logic of what Joel Andreas calls "industrial citizenship" or what Andrew Walder calls "neo-traditionalism," the local state was not obliged to provide to or govern the migrants. To maintain a minimal level of subsistence and social order, therefore, the company had to step in and act as a *de facto* local state. In this sense, the company's role as a *de facto* local state is historically prescribed—it did not "willingly" or

"freely" choose to serve those functions, but was faced with a vacuum of governance that it had to fill up as long as it attempted to keep the social reproduction of labor power minimally sustainable.

The real decline of industrial citizenship happened when the economic make-up and labor market became less and less "industrial." Deindustrialization in China might have caused social unrest in the northeast heavy industrial rust belt (Lee 2007), but not necessary in the coastal export-processing sunny belt. Deindustrialization in the coastal provinces, however, indeed brought about the further decay of industrial citizenship. As an outcome of the transition from the manufacturing to the service sector, the decentralization of the workplace made it difficult for employers to either provide or regulate their workers. Also, the service job opportunities created by the expanding domestic consumer market tended to be located in the center city, where large-scale collective accommodations were not available. In other words, dormitories were replaced by urban neighborhoods. Within the urban neighborhoods, the *de jure* local government is supposed to be present and resume its governing function.

From Industrial Citizenship to Outsourced Welfare

After forty years of reform and open policy, which was believed to bring about marketization and liberalization, the Chinese Hukou system was still only partially reformed. To be more specific, in three distinct dimensions, the reform made different degrees of progress at different paces.

Living in the City

In terms of physically moving to the cities, the rights of the rural population to move into and even stay in the cities were achieved through two stages. Firstly, as the export processing model replaced the Soviet planned economy to fuel the Chinese economy in the early 1980s, the travel ban was lifted because the newly industrialized coastal areas needed a massive labor force. At this point, the rights of traveling to the city were still tied to a person's employment status, and practically the working certificate was applied by employees on behalf of the workers. As such, the conditional rights to travel to the cities led to the personal reliance of workers on their employers.

Secondly, as the domestic consumer markets and service sector expanded, more and more migrants sought employment within the city center, oftentimes at small-scale businesses that did not bother to (and many actually could not) apply for employment certificates for them. These workers often lived in modest urban neighborhoods and carried no travel documents, and hence disproportionately subject to police harassment. Conflicts between migrants, especially street vendors, and the urban law enforcement personnel started to attract public attention in the late 1990s. Finally, the 2003 Sun Zhigang Incident in Guangzhou formed pressure for the

government to abolish the travel documents. True, in many places it took much longer for this document to be fully abolished. For example, when I arrived in Hengfa in 2006, the employment certificate was still a way for the local officials to collect money from companies. However, it was abolished eventually.

Since the mid-2000s, therefore, living in urban neighborhoods became increasingly possible for migrants. Yet the living cost, especially the rent, was still preventing them from doing so, except for the "urban villages." These semi-urban neighborhoods, which often located in newly developed commercial districts, were former housing land that used to belong to rural villages and was never fully transferred to the municipal government. As most apartments building were built before the land-grab, the municipal construction code was never applied to these buildings. Losing farmland to the municipal government, former villagers quit "farming land" and started "farming apartments." Maximization of occupancy and minimal safety and quality standards made these neighborhoods available for migrants but also known to the local government and urban residents for high population density, inferior living conditions, and social deviance.

In spite of stigmatization and other challenges, in the 2010s, migrants are allowed to not only travel to but also live in the cities without travel permission or employment certificate. Other dimensions of the state-migrants relationship, however, haven't made as much progress.

Urban Allocation Regime

In Hengfa's time, the resources allocation regime in the coastal cities and townships was strictly exclusive. Due to the early reform financial decentralization, the government budget for each citizen was tied to the city, township, or village where his or her hukou was registered (Solinger 1999). Even after the travel ban was lifted, or even after the deportation of unemployed migrants was abolished and living in the cities became possible, the social provision to migrants in the cities had barely caught up with the spatial mobility of the migrant population. Since the mid-2000s, whether the hukou reform was set in motion towards more inclusive social provisions has been a topic that fueled heated debate. While many central government policies were written to make the local governments include migrants or their children in the urban allocation regime, there were also examples of how the local government or even institutions such as public schools could distort or bypass the central government's regulation (Chan and O'Brien 2019; Lan 2014; Wang 2010).

A line has to be drawn, however, between two types of social provisions. The aforementioned discussions about hukou reform are focused on the equalization of social rights, that is, providing migrants with services and resources equal to what urban residents enjoyed. There is, nevertheless, a second type of social provision for migrants. Also labeled as "inclusiveness," "incorporation," or even "equalization," this type of provision is distinctly different from the first type. Largely allocated under the name of "stability maintenance," the Chinese state has been providing resources, benefits, and services to migrants, not in an equalizing manner but as a

particular expenditure that "buys stability" (Lee and Zhang 2013). This type of social provision often cites the Hu administration's slogan of "constructing harmonious society" (Xu 2009), and later on, the Xi administration's slogan of "grassroots governance innovation" (Mei and Wang 2017; Shin 2017; Teets et al. 2017).

In other words, compared with the time I entered Hengfa, more resources are available to migrants through the local government in recent years. However, it does not mean that migrants are being incorporated into the urban allocation regime. Instead, the resources are a part of a larger state-level maneuver to prevent social grievance from developing into social unrest. These palliative measures, as will be discussed in detail later, do not genuinely "incorporate" migrants in this word's original meaning. They usually do not grant migrants with equal entitlements as urban residents; quite the opposite, they offer migrants services that urban residents usually do not have—or do not need. More precisely, the urbanites do not need these services because they were covered by urban social rights infrastructure. Without real equalization of social rights in the urban society, this chapter will argue later, the social services designated to migrants will reproduce the urban-rural divide within the Chinese metropolises instead of incorporating migrants into the cities.

The bottom line is, however, that new resources are emerging to serve the migrant population. The local governments, however, often lack the necessary personnel or specialties to design and conduct social service programs. Unlike the company back in the early 2000s, which both provided the resources and conducted the service, now the local governments choose to "outsource" (or actually, buy-in) social services from grassroots NGOs.

Governance and Regulation

The third aspect of the relationship between the local state and migrants that was cut off by the Hukou System yet filled up by the dormitory labor regime was the governance of migrants' everyday life. Under the exclusive post-reform Hukou System, the local government only dealt with migrants' everyday life when it had to—usually, it meant that crime already happened, and oftentimes even when crimes happened, it could wait until a company like Hengfa to make a request. If it was ever present to the migrants, the local state was purely punitive to them. The idea of "governing," especially in a Foucaultian sense that emphasizes the positive aspect of power, was mainly materialized by companies like Hengfa.

In the 2010s, with the decline of the dormitory labor regime on the one hand and the increasing demand of absorbing the social grievances of migrants on the other, the new social institution that replaces the company will need to be a scheme of social improvement not only in a material sense but also in a moral sense. When it comes to the social engineering of moral life, moreover, the Chinese grassroots NGOs seemed to have an advantage. After all, compared with the foreign idea of "non-government organizations," which often cause confusions and political doubts, these organizations more often referred to themselves as "public-wellness and philanthropy"

organizations. Not only a name but also a mindset, the idea of "public-wellness and philanthropy" has been an intrinsic part of the Chinese NGO community.

In practice, these NGOs did become a channel of the moral agenda of the state, especially in that they spent extended time and resources holding events that represented and reinforce the traditional Chinese moral values. At CommConn, for example, there was a "Double Nine Festival" event held before I arrived in Guangzhou. Traditionally also known as the "Respecting Elderly Festival," Double Nine has been a major festival that is associated with filial piety. For that festival, therefore, CommConn held an event focused on paying respects to the elderly in the community. The highlight of that event was how it ended with younger family members kneeling down before the elderly and washing their feet. Yet even more significant is that, on a more regular basis, the organization collaborated with the local officials to promote recent government campaigns that sought to direct people's behaviors. For example, during a community event held by CommConn, the police department held a session that sought to raise community members' awareness of drug issues. The chief of police gave a presentation of the negative consequences of drug use with detailed descriptions of various types of drugs, including different ways to using them. He then showed community members a few pictures of the tools for using those drugs, in the hope that community members would be cautious about those tools' presence in their families or the community. In events like this, the state was more preventative than punitive. Its goal was more about preventing drug abuse from happening than about punishing people for drug use after it happened. More importantly, when the presentation went over the negative consequences of drug use, a positive moral standard was cited. By negative consequences, the presentation actually meant the positive values that were violated: responsibility, reason, family, self-control, and work ethics, just to name a few. As such, a promotion and reaffirmation of moral values were carried out even without explicitly stating anything.

From the Politics of Exclusion to the Politics of Incorporation

From 2006 to 2016, the urban migrant regulation regime has experienced a dramatic change in all three aspects that we demonstrated in the previous sections. In terms of the freedom to physically move into and settle down in the cities, the loosening of restrictions has been extraordinarily significant. The outcome of it, of course, is a gargantuan population that lives in urban neighborhoods instead of factory dormitories. As a result, the old regulatory regime that relied on the company as a *de facto* local state stopped being effective. At the same time, in terms of social rights and social provisions, the withdraw of the company was fillup by the local government's resources that were directed to the migrants. These resources, however, were not assigned to the migrants for the purpose of equalization of social rights. Under the name of "stability maintenance," these resources tend to provide services that help them cope with the social exclusion caused by unequal treatments, instead of funding the existing urban social provision regime and expanding it to include migrants. Thirdly, there is always a demand for regulating/ intervening in migrants' everyday life so the society. Companies such as Hengfa used to play this role, and now grassroots NGOs are fulfilling this function. In CommConn's case,

nevertheless, we can see that it is not only the NGO but also the local state who participate in this "positive" social engineering. More precisely, on many occasions, the NGO bridged the gap between the local state and the migrants by holding events, while the local state played a major role in promoting the social agenda.

What we can see on the three dimensions of changing the urban migrant regulation regime, as such, is the increasing involvement of the local state in the everyday life of migrants. Not only directly present to the migrants in urban neighborhoods but the urban local state also sponsors social service programs that focus on serving migrants. Besides intervening in the material conditions of the migrants, the urban local state also directly got involved in shaping migrants' moral world.

It was not the case ten years before I entered Indiville and Collectiville. Ten years ago, what Hengfa represented was a model marked by the exclusion of migrants from the host society. Under the dormitory labor regime, the company served as a governing body that fulfilled all the governmental functions in migrants' everyday life. Because it served the functionality of the state in a way independent of the latter, I call it a *de facto* local state that functioned parallel to the *de jure* local state. The *de jure* state, at the same time, had adopted an exclusionist and discriminative attitude towards the migrants back then. Nowadays, by contrast, the local state in both Indiville and Collectiville showed keen interest in social intervention within the migrant communities. If the dormitory labor regime was based on the exclusion of migrants from the urban society, especially the resource-allocation regime, neo-corporatism seems to be an attempt to incorporate them through the distribution of welfare (Howell 2015).

The Politics of Neo-corporatism

When the Guangzhou mayor made the comment about "learning the lesson of the Zengcheng Incident and improving migrants' sense of belonging," he was demanding the municipal officials to carry out a social incorporation agenda. Moreover, in his address to the officials, institutional innovation and social services were emphasized. There three key phrases of the mayor's words, sense of belonging, institutional innovation, and social services, merge into what this research calls neo-corporatism fits the mayor's request well—it is a newly emerging institutional arrangement that seeks to incorporate both civil associations and migrants by providing, respectively, resources and services. Ideally, this regime should incorporate both the civil society and the historically marginalized internal migrants, enhance control and general well being of the governed. As the previous section discussed, it calls for the politics of incorporation.

In reality, however, the practice of neo-corporatism is more complicated than its promise. Not only that different models compete with each other, but each of them has different unintended consequences. As will be discussed below, the promise of welfarist incorporation failed, the

control over civil society is strengthened and obscured at the same time, and the structurally biased internal migration regime is mystified.

The Janus-faced Implementation of Neo-corporatism

First of all, in practice, neo-corporatism is not a coherent regime that functions evenly and render the same effects. Two models of government procurement, namely, state deployment and grassroots advocacy, coexist under the emerging state-society configuration that this research calls neo-corporatism. Each of these models, as illustrated above, is based on different state logics and invites different NGO practices, eventually leading to contrasting social and political outcomes. James Scott's (1998) classic argument on legibility and the exclusion of local knowledge sheds light on the state deployment model. Under the name of "equalizing social services" (Li et al. 2017), this model seeks to provide services to the historically marginalized internal migrants across the board, which requires government procurement for social programs to be made at every street-level local government. The tender and evaluation system is highly standardized and focused on the quantifiable attributes of the programs at the expense of unquantifiable local variations to keep the more than 160 social programs transparent and accountable to the state. In this top-down, one-size-fits-all coalition building, NGOs tend to pursue government contracts and their renewal by fitting in with the criteria of bureaucratic paperwork.

Neo-corporatism is not coherent because, at least in part, the state is not coherent. The state involved in the state deployment model is a bureaucratic state in Max Weber's sense: it is rationalized, standardized, instrumentalist, and efficient (Weber 1922: 956). However, the state is not a homogeneous and static entity but rather is composed of different branches (Long 2018) and layers (Hsu 2012) that work according to different interests and logic. As the model of grassroots advocacy shows, some agencies seek to renovate the way of governing from within, a practice that exemplifies a disposition Weber might consider "entrepreneurial." In recent years, responding to the slogans "grassroots governance innovation" (Mei and Wang 2017; Shin 2017; Teets et al. 2017), many government officials and party cadres seek political recognition from their higher-ups and consequently political promotions by launching innovative measures of social improvements. Recognition of this type demonstrates a type of state optics that differs fundamentally from legibility and can be best described as conspicuity, that is, standing out among one's colleagues. Government branches led by these political entrepreneurs or the "entrepreneurial state" as opposed to the "bureaucratic" one leaves space for NGOs to pursue bottom-up, one-of-a-kind coalition-building by carrying out social programs that stand out as political showcases before upper-level officials.

The immediate effects of these two models on migrants' life are noticeably different: the top-down imposition of state deployment fails to capture real community needs and instead "problematizes non-problems," whereas the bottom-up model of grassroots advocacy could provide what can be called "localized palliative solutions" to the community needs. However,

compared with the promise of neo-corporatism, even the more successful grassroots advocacy model exhibits discrepancy with what neo-corporatism seeks to achieve: the solutions it provides, after all, are localized and palliative: local officials lack the incentives to replicate similar social programs because they do not need multiple "political showcases" at the same time. A district official expressed this idea clearly: "CommConn's work is good. It is well-recognized. But we will not need a second site in our district." As a result of the logic of political showcases, NGOs in the grassroots advocacy model often find their ambition to expand their successful experience hindered by the same state incentives that initially grant them the flexibility necessary for their success. On the other hand, the services available through these programs are focused more on helping migrants cope with the problems caused by the labor market or the uneven distribution of social rights, instead of solving the "root cause." The English class itself is a case in point: despite its relevance to migrants' needs, its major goal is to enhance their market opportunities instead of reducing their dependence on the market. In the same vein, as the unequal access to public education causes migrants to send their children back to their hometown for schooling, it becomes fashionable for NGOs to organize "little migratory birds" summer camps for these children when they visit their parents in the city during summer vacation.

In this light, as will be further addressed later, neo-corporatism is not exactly what Jude Howell (2015) calls "welfarist incorporation": it is not welfare because it does not reduce market dependency, and it is not incorporation because it does not reduce institutional exclusion.

Neither Welfare nor Incorporation

Four decades after the economic reform and about two decades after the poignant case of Sun Zhigang, China's Hukou System is still fundamentally unchanged and causing a virtually unbridgeable vacuum between the state and internal migrants. Used to be filled up by the dormitory labor regime, this vacuum of social provision and governance is now filled up by social programs contracted by the government to NGOs.

Compared with the employers in the manufacturing sector, community NGOs are further integrated into the functioning of the government, but not necessarily closer to the migrants. As a matter of fact, deeper integration into bureaucratic logic may actually prevent NGOs from engaging with the served community. Whether an NGO could engage with the community needs in a meaningful way depends on the kind of government procurement, the standardized or the specialized, in which it participates.

However, even in the case that the NGO can identify real community needs and provide meaningful solutions, the solutions are also localized and palliative. For example, when the urban welfare regime provides unemployment benefits to urban residents, well-intended, well-operated social programs for the migrant workers might be focused on the job training. In other words, while the urban welfare regime seeks to decommodify the labor power of urban residents,

a social program for migrants is doing the opposite: it seeks to make sure that the labor power of migrants can remain commodified.

Similarly, in the case of political participation, there seems to be an absolute limit for migrants: at the end of the day, local residents' interests need to be taken care of first. In this sense, what Jude Howell calls "welfarist incorporation" is neither welfarist nor incorporation.

Strengthened yet Obscured Control over Civil Society

In terms of delivering welfare or incorporating migrants, neo-corporatism never fully lives up to its promise. However, in terms of incorporating grassroots NGOs, the outcome was noteworthy. Looking at the relationship between the local government and EnrichLife or CommConn, it would be hard to imagine that, in exactly the same year when this fieldwork was conducted, Guangdong Province launched a major crackdown on labor NGOs. Almost immediately, those who were considered "crossing the red line" disappeared, and the others were silenced. However, the relationship between the state and grassroots NGOs became closer than ever in the aftermath. The docility of NGOs not only stems from the threat of state violence but more importantly from their deepening reliance on government resources. As some insiders reported, one reason for the 2016 crackdown was those NGOs' financial connections with foreign agencies; about one year after the crackdown, the central government wrote a law to ban foreign funding. At the same time, the expanding government procurement market became more and more crucial to NGOs.

But reliance on government resources is not the only factor that contributes to docility; in fact, it might not even be the major one. When NGOs are subject to regular audit and assessment or collaborating with local officials in various types of political showcasing, the work process of NGO staff becomes a game of aligning the interests of the NGO with the interests of the state. When the outcome of the game is determined by how well they can achieve the alignment, the compliance towards the state is rather based on consent than coercion.

The relationship between the authoritarian state and civil associations is an old, yet still ongoing debate. On the one hand, there are those who follow the Tocquevillian tradition and, in a state-society dichotomy, believe that civil associations will serve to keep the authoritarian power in check and protect democracy; on the other hand, objections to this perspective never cease happening. The corporatism literature, for example, sees the potential of civil associations for bridging the state and the people. Neo-corporatism, however, is different in its use of market logic and the voluntary servitude towards the state.

The Politics of Depoliticisation

While failing to equalize social welfare or realize genuine social incorporation, neo-corporatism served to incorporate civil associations through market-based mechanisms. Moreover, once the coalition was established, the hegemonic discourse of "equalizing social services" and "grassroots governance innovation" found its material base. The state-NGO coalition is

established based on this discourse, practices this discourse, and recreates this discourse. With the social programs that claims to serve the needs of the community while bypassing the structural issues, the hegemonic discourse of "good governance" has found its community-level incarnation: either "problematization of non-problem" or "localized palliative solution," while not serving the real interest of migrants, serves to direct the public's attention to either non-problems or locally, palliatively solvable problems and make a plausible claim that the state is serving those interests. At the ground level of migrants' daily life, political issues such as the unequally distributed citizenship under the Household Registration System is obscured and replaced by the technicality of social services, and in this sense, neo-corporatism resonates what has been said about social improvement programs in a very different context, an "anti-politics machine" (Ferguson 1990).

In the community, the interaction between neo-corporatist social programs and the migrants still follow the principle of depoliticization. In Indiville, the disengaged social programs and the decentralized migrant networks leave the vacuum of governance unfilled. Migrants therefore rely on the widespread and diverse social networks to exchange information and resources to solve their everyday life problems while avoiding state interventions. The "politics of self-help" is therefore an everyday life practice that distances itself from the state politics. By contrast, in Collectiville, the engaged social program and consolidated migrant networks created a channel for collective negotiation between the local state and the migrants, which eventually turned into an institutionalized platform. However, the over-incorporation between the local state and the migrant community may lead to a different type of depoliticization—the negotiation presupposes the legitimacy of the *status quo* and hence is deprived of the possibility to challenge the structure. In other words, the negotiation is confined to what Tania Li calls "render technicality," yet by so doing, it is also confined to technicality.

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