

# MEASURING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR SHANGHAI'S FLOATING POPULATION EMPLOYED IN URBAN RENEWAL SITES

JACOB A. WATKINS, GREGORY VEECK, PH.D

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

## BACKGROUND: HISTORY OF HUKOU

The *hukou* system is a government registration system meant to organize the Chinese population by residency status (urban or rural). Initially implemented under Mao Zedong in 1951, the system was designed to limit the movement of population within the Chinese command economy in order to allocate resources and enforce roles for the Chinese population. Under this system, residents registered under a rural *hukou* were forbidden from living and working in urban settings. Maoist and Chinese Communist Party strategy during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962) was to keep Chinese citizens in their respective *danwei* (work unit) in order to maintain even production under the communist system (Guo, 2013). Since enforcement of the system has been lightened in terms of preventative enforcement, *hukou* registration has instead kept a large number of rural Chinese residents from finding prosperity in their destination cities on a level comparable to residents holding urban *hukou* registrations (Wang, 2004; Zhang & Treiman, 2013).

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Issues related to uneven distribution of wealth created by the *hukou* system have taken on the characteristics of political, economic and cultural turmoil as time has passed. Migrant research has largely concluded that residents lacking urban *hukou* registration are generally impoverished, live in low quality housing and work in low wage positions within the suburbs and periphery of Chinese urban manufacturing (Chen, et al. 2006; Delang & Ho, 2010; Feng & Zhou, 2005; Hui et al. 2014). Shanghai has emerged as one of China's most important cities and a creative hub for the developing economy (Olds, 1997; Zheng, 2011). Previous research has yet to look at new urban renewal sites in Shanghai as possible places for migrant concentrations, employment and upward mobility. This study addressed three sets of questions:

- 1) Is there a concentration of migrant workers in two of Shanghai's renewed urban commercial districts?
- 2) What aspects of employment and life in general influence quality of life the most and more specifically does one's *hukou* status have any effect on quality of life?
- 3) What is the overall quality of life for laborers in Shanghai's urban renewal sites?

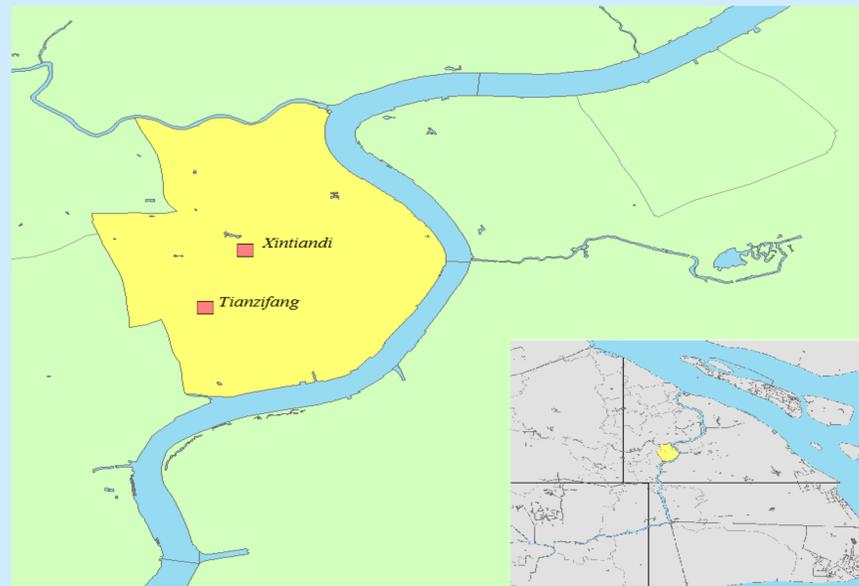


## METHODOLOGY

The survey used in this research contains two parts. The first section incorporates basic ethnographic questions (age, gender, marital status, and *hukou* registration). The second provides a series of questions in a 7-point Likert scale format based on Flanagan's Quality of Life survey (1978). These questions focused on self-reported satisfaction with current employment in terms of compensation, hours worked, commute time and safety.

During weekdays I traveled to one of the two study sites with a translator and distributed surveys to willing participants whose occupations ranged from maintenance and sanitary staff to shop managers and owners of retail stores, salons, art galleries and restaurants. After surveys were completed, participants were given the opportunity to participate in an additional one-on-one interview. These interviews consisted of several open-ended questions regarding the participant's contentment with working in the study site, *hukou* status, and their desire to remain in Shanghai. Surveying concluded on June 29th. A total of 81 surveys were collected.

## LOCATION OF RESEARCH IN SHANGHAI



In June of 2016 I visited two urban renewal sites in Shanghai (Xintiandi and Tianzifang, Huangpu District) to investigate internal migrants working in the city's service sector and their self-reported quality of life. The research joins questionnaires distributed throughout both neighborhoods and in-depth interviews in order to analyze how Shanghai's urban renewal neighborhoods effect the lives of the city's "floating population".

## DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction with safety	81	6	2.47	1.324
Average monthly income	79	9000	4968.35	1926.588
Satisfaction with pay	79	6	3.78	1.317
Hours worked per week	81	5	3.94	1.600
Satisfaction with hours	81	5	3.26	1.321
Overall satisfaction with job	81	5	3.09	1.277
Overall satisfaction with life in Shanghai	80	6	3.25	1.392
Daily commute time	81	5	2.74	1.447
Satisfaction with daily commute time	81	5	3.06	1.417

	%
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	36
Female	64
<b>Age</b>	
18-30	72
31-40	18
> 40	10
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Single	55
Married	44
Divorced	1
<b>Hukou registration</b>	
Local (urban Shanghai)	15
Non-local (rural or non-Shanghai urban)	85
<b>Years Lived in Shanghai</b>	
Six months or less	10
One year	14
Two to three years	18
Four or more years	58

Mean satisfactions for all Likert-scale variables where 1 = very satisfied and 7 = very unsatisfied ranged between 2.47 and 3.94 meaning respondents were generally satisfied with all reported aspects of their employment and overall life in Shanghai. Considering 85% of respondents were non-local residents, these results suggest that Shanghai's service sector may provide a livable environment for the city's migrant population.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING QUALITY OF LIFE IN SHANGHAI

Model	B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t-score	Sig.
(Constant)	-1.85	.698		-2.652	.010
Age	.033	.012	(4) .228	2.636	.010
Satisfaction with commute	.342	.085	(2) .353	4.031	.0001
Hukou* registration	1.280	.343	(3) .311	3.736	.0001
Hours	-.005	.071	-.006	-.069	.945
Satisfaction with pay	.522	.092	(1) .485	5.696	.0001

a. Dependent Variable: Shanghai Overall Satisfaction. \*Hukou dummy where 0 represents local resident and 1 represents nonlocal resident

The result of the multiple linear regression analysis shows an adjusted R2 value of .511 as well as a significant F-value ( $F(5,70) = .511, p < .0001$ ).

The model can be described as:

Participants' overall satisfaction with life in Shanghai =  $-1.85 + .033(\text{Age}) + .342(\text{Satisfaction with commute}) + 1.280(\text{Hukou}) + .071(\text{Hours}) + .092(\text{Satisfaction with pay})$ .

Based on the standardized beta scores, satisfaction with pay was the most important predictor with satisfaction with commute, *hukou* registration and age following in that order. Model diagnostics including absolute and standardized beta values. All variables are significant with logical signs with the exception of hours worked per week variable, which was not a significant predictor. Sex and location (*Xintiandi* or *Tianzifang*) were both found to be insignificant and were removed from the model during earlier estimations.

## MIGRANT QUALITY OF LIFE IN SHANGHAI

1. Chinese internal migrants are employed in the Shanghai's urban renewal sites in high concentrations.
2. Service sector employees, both migrant and non-migrant, seem to be relatively satisfied with the various aspects of their employment and overall quality of life.
3. Being a migrant worker in Shanghai positively influenced overall quality of life in this study.
4. Income is the most influential factor for overall satisfaction with quality of life in Shanghai

## REFERENCES

- Chen, G., Gu, C., & Wu, F. (2006). Urban poverty in the transitional economy: A case of Nanjing, China. *Habitat International*, 30(1), 1-26.
- Delang, C. O., & Ho, C. L. (2010). Public housing and poverty concentration in urban neighborhoods: The case of Hong Kong in the 1990s. *Urban Studies*, 47(7), 1391.
- Feng, J., & Zhou, Y. (2005). Suburbanization and the changes of urban internal spatial structure in Hangzhou, China. *Urban Geography*, 26(2), 107-136.
- Gao, S. (2013). Social changes and state-society relations in post-Mao China. In *Chinese Politics and Government: Power, Ideology, and Organization* (p. 226). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hui, E. C. M., Yu, K. H., & Ye, Y. (2014). Housing preferences of temporary migrants in urban China in the wake of gradual hukou reform: A case study of Shenzhen. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(4), 1384-1398.
- Olds, K. (1997). Globalizing Shanghai: The 'Global Intelligence Corps' and the building of Pudong. *Cities*, 14(2), 109-123.
- Wang, F. L. (2004). Reformed migration control and new targeted people: China's hukou system in the 2000s. *The China Quarterly*, 177, 115-132.
- Zhang, Z., & Treiman, D. J. (2013). Social origins, hukou conversion, and the wellbeing of urban residents in contemporary China. *Social Science Research*, 42(1), 71-89.
- Zheng, J. (2011). 'Creative industry clusters' and the 'entrepreneurial city' of Shanghai. *Urban Studies*, 48(16), 3561-3582.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Gregory Veeck, Dr. Benjamin Ofori-Amoah and Dr. Lucius Hallett, IV, my committee Milton E. & Ruth M. Scherer Fellowship  
Lucia Harrison Endowment  
East China Normal University and Dr. Fengtao Guo  
Hermione Miao and Ken, my research assistants