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COUNTY TOWN-*JIAN-ZHI* TOWN DIFFERENTIALS AND MIGRATION TO TOWNS IN CHINA

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As an in-depth study of urbanization in China, this paper examines the structural differentials between county towns and "jian-zhi" towns, both are under the category of "town" in official statistics. Based on the data from the 1987 survey on towns in Inner Mongolia, the findings indicate that county towns are quite different from the other "jian-zhi" towns in their registration structure, occupational structure, and migration patterns.

Compared with other countries, China has had quite a different experience with urbanization since 1949, mainly due to its economic systems and policies of migration control. This study of China's township explores some unique characteristics which provide insights in understanding China's social system.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization and rural-urban migration are considered important aspects of modernization. Compared with other countries, China has had quite a different experience with urbanization since 1949, mainly due to its economic systems and policies of migration control (Banister 1987, p.126). An urban system is a network including residential sites with differing population size and residential patterns. In urban studies and statistics, the residential sites in China are usually ranked as: giant city, big city, medium city, small city, and town (cf. Goldstein and Goldstein 1991).

For centuries within the Chinese urban system, townships have had their own social and economic characteristics distinguished from cities and rural areas, and have played a special role as political and economic intermediates connecting cities with villages (Fei 1987). Three points need our attention in studies of China's urban system: (1) there are significant differences in structure and function between towns and rural areas, between towns and cities; (2) among those officially recognized "towns", there are also some fundamental differences in population size, social structure, and their roles in local administrative and economic activities; and (3) under the reforms of economic systems in the 1980s, township development differs from reforms in the cities and towns might have obtained some new characteristics in the 1980s. In order to understand the entire Chinese urban system and predict the future development of

urbanization in China, sample case studies will be helpful to examine the social, economic, and residential characteristics of towns, their general development experience, and furthermore, the structural differentials among towns.

In-migration has been an important source of urban population growth in China, as well as in other countries. In China, because policies towards migration to cities have been different from those involving migration to towns, rural-town migration may also have its own characteristics compared with rural-city migration and rural-rural migration. Towns with different economic structure and population size might play different roles in absorbing rural surplus laborers and local development. Therefore, in-migration is an important component in urban studies, indicating speed of urban population growth, changes in economic structure of cities and towns, the forms of labor force transition, and the relationship between an urban site with other places (affected by in-migrants' relationship with their place of origin).

The structural characteristics and development of townships in the reformation of China and the migration to towns as an important source of population and economic growth of towns, therefore, are the major topics covered in this study. First, this paper will give a basic introduction of the Chinese urban system, then an introduction of the research site. The major analysis will focus on the structure of town residents in reference to residential registration status and occupations, especially the differentials between county town and other *jian-zhi* towns. Migration to towns as another concentration of this study will be discussed along with income patterns of town residents.

THE URBAN SYSTEM IN CHINA: CITIES AND TOWNS

Since 1952, urban places in China have been officially divided into two categories: city and town. The application of a residential area to be "a city" or "a town" must be approved by the Ministry of Civil Administration. Those officially recognized as "towns" are formally called "*jian-zhi* town" ("organic town"). Some residential areas may also be called "towns" by residents or such a name may even appear officially as the name of the place, but it does not necessarily mean that official status as a "*jian-zhi* town" has been obtained.

"City," "*jian-zhi* town," and "rural areas" are three official categories in Chinese urban statistics. The standards of cities and towns were established in 1955, and changed in 1963, 1984 (for both cities and towns), and 1986 (for

cities only) (Goldstein 1985, 1990; Ma 1990, pp.131-132). According to standards released in 1986, a concentrated residential area with a non-agricultural population over 60,000 and an annual industrial productive value over 200 million yuan may apply to become a "city". Meanwhile, according to the 1984 standards, a place with a non-agricultural population over 2,000 or where a county government is located, may apply to become a *jian-zhi* town. In 1990, there were 461 cities and about 11,400 *jian-zhi* towns in China [1].

Towns (*jian-zhi* towns) have quite a different economic and population structure than those in cities and rural areas. For example, in 1982, town laborers comprised only 6.2% of the total laborers in China, but 29.3% of China's employees in administration, 25.5% in trade, 24.5% in transportation, 27.8% in finance and 20.7% in services, worked in towns (Ma 1990, p.139). Among the town employees, 7.2% engaged in administration (3.9% for city employees), 12.1% in trade (7.2% for city employees), 27.8% in finance (20.5% for city employees), 6.8% in transportation (5.7% for city employees)(p.139). These percentages were even higher than those in cities. This indicates that towns play a role as local centers of administration, trade, services, transportation, and industry in rural areas and serve as important intermediate connections between cities and villages. Other studies from the view of economics and political science have also confirmed the special role of towns in administrative and economic management (Song and Du 1990, p.344).

County towns can be distinguished from other *jian-zhi* towns by their administrative status. County towns became *jian-zhi* towns simply because they are the sites where county governments are located. Other *jian-zhi* towns became "towns" because of their "non-agricultural population" size or total value of industrial production. Although both are in the same category in official statistics as "*jian-zhi* towns", county towns and other *jian-zhi* towns are quite different from each other in many aspects. Among the total 11,400 *jian-zhi* towns in 1990, about 17% (1,900) were county towns (State Statistical Bureau (SSB) 1991, p.32).

During 1953-1990, China's population increased from 583 million to 1,134 million, rural laborers increased from 186 million to 420 million (SSB 1990, p.113; *People's Daily*, June 10, 1991). Meanwhile, cultivated land decreased from 2,161 million mu to 1,435 million mu (or declined from 3.7 mu to 1.3 mu per capita) (SSB 1984, p.137 and 1990, p.332). After the institution of the household responsibility system in the early 1980s, many rural surplus

[1]Among 461 cities, 16 cities with a population over 2 million, 82 cities between 1~2million, 153 cities between 0.5~1 million, 210 under 0.5million (*People's Daily*, March 15, 1991).

laborers were released from fields. They were previously controlled by work assignment in communes and restrictions on migration to urban places, but many have since tried to search for their opportunities in urban areas.

Because city administration is responsible under the present system for providing registered urban "non-agricultural" residents with jobs, housing, low-price grain, welfare, and other facilities (Goldstein 1985, p.12; Banister 1987, p.328), cities have limited capability to absorb these rural laborers. By comparison, the responsibility and expenses to provide those benefits are smaller in towns than in cities. It is because town residents usually have a closer relationship with peasants and may obtain many supplies through those connections. Under heavy pressure of rural unemployment, the government loosened limitations on rural-town migration as an alternative (Goldstein and Goldstein 1990, p.33)[2]. As a result, millions of rural surplus laborers moved into and worked in towns.

The development of the township in China is thought to be based on two things: development of local industry and free market trade (Ma 1990). Both are results of the new social and economic reform. Although newly developed rural and town industries absorbed 100 million rural laborers, over 100 million still remained in search of work in 1990 (*People's Daily*, May 29, 1991). The population pressure in rural China is extremely heavy, partly due to the new system, partly due to high fertility rates in the past. During 1978-1988, rural laborers increased 9.4 million each year on average (*People's Daily*, August 14, 1991).

Therefore, the township is very important in the studies of China's urbanization, not only because towns are significant ponds to absorb rural laborers to maintain social stability, but also because towns have been the new bases of rural industry to support China's development. This study will first examine townships in general, then the structural and functional differentials between county towns and other *jian-zhi* towns, and finally migration to county towns and *jian-zhi* towns. It may provide in-depth information to aid in understanding structural differentials among rural areas, towns and cities as well as among towns themselves; and the special characteristics of rural-town migration. The study of township development and rural-town migration should be put into the broader background of urbanization and modernization in China and help us in searching for the future solution of rural surplus laborer transition.

[2]This trend was predicted by some early studies on China's urbanization (Buck 1981, p.142).

THE SURVEY SITE

In China, the percentage of "town population" (those who live in town sites, not in villages under town administration) in any given area varies by region, and the role towns have played also varies by region (Goldstein 1985, p.23; Kirkby 1985, p.142; and Ma 1990, p.145). Generally, in more developed coastal areas (e.g. Jiangsu, Zhejian), towns function more as commercial centers while towns in northern and western regions have more administrative functions.

In order to study the development of towns and migration to towns in northern China, a survey was conducted in Wongnioute Banner (at the county level in administration), Inner Mongolia, in the summer of 1987 (cf. Figure 1). This survey was sponsored by the Institute of Sociology and Anthropology at Beijing University[3] and focused on township development.

Another sampling survey was carried out in the same region in 1985 focusing on rural-rural migration (Ma 1987). The 1985 rural survey was also conducted by the author, covered 2,089 rural households in 41 villages[4]. The questionnaires used in these two surveys were quite similar. Therefore, a comparison can be made between migration to villages and migration to towns for the same area. Although the general level of socioeconomic development is lower in Inner Mongolia than in coastal areas, the percentage of urban population in the total was relatively high. According to the 1990 census, the urban population (city and town residents) was 36. 1% of the total in Inner Mongolia while the percentage was 26.2 for the whole country (CPIRC 1991).

Because coastal areas have a higher population density and already have large numbers of towns, applications of some residential areas with a large non-agricultural population for *jian-zhi* town recognition usually take a long time for approval. Inner Mongolia, which has large pastoral areas with low population densities[5], needs more towns for local administration and trade; therefore it is easier for places in Inner Mongolia to obtain *jian-zhi* town status. On average, Inner Mongolia has 5.3 towns per million population, the highest of all provinces and autonomous regions in China (cf. Ma 1990, p.145). Although the situation in Inner Mongolia is not representative of

[3]The household interviews were carried out in June 1985. A group of undergraduate students from the Department of Sociology joined the author in household interviews.

[4]Among total interviewed households in the 1985 rural survey, 1, 152 lived in Wongnioute Banner.

[5]In 1990, the population density was 18 persons/square km vs. 118 persons/square km for China as a whole (CPIRC, 1991).

urban development in the whole country, it shares many geographic, social, economic, and cultural characteristics of China's northern and northwestern regions. Wongnioute Banner is located in the middle area of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (Figure 1). In 1989, it had an area of 11,882 square km and a population of 0.43 million (Statistical Bureau of Inner Mongolia 1990, p.489). The level of industrial production (236 yuan industrial production value per capita), average income, and standard of living in Wongnioute are usually considered around the average for Inner Mongolia (Ma 1988, p.35).

In 1987, this Banner encompassed six towns—one county town (Wudan) and five others: Qiaotou, Wufendi, Hairesu, Wuduentaohai, and Wutonghua[6] (cf. Figure 1). By using official registration records, a total of 1,500 households were selected in six towns by a interval sampling procedure[7], and 1,314 households were finally interviewed.

STRUCTURE OF TOWN RESIDENTS

Residential Registration

In China, every resident has an official resident registration status, either "agricultural" or "non-agricultural" depending on parents' (especially the mother's) status at the time of birth. Generally, urban residents are classified as "non-agricultural" while rural residents are "agricultural". Once such a status is registered (the system was created in the 1950s), it is difficult to change from "agricultural" to "non-agricultural".

There are several ways in which a person can change his or her status from "agricultural" to "non-agricultural": (1) to pass the national exams and become a university student (after graduation, the government will arrange an urban job and a "non-agricultural" residential status); (2) to join the army and be promoted to officer (after demobilization, an urban job and a "non-agricultural" status can be obtained); (3) to marry a citizen with a "non-agricultural" status (one can then apply for status transition); (4) to achieve family reunion, when a rural resident is old and sick, he or she can apply to join an adult child who already has a "non-agricultural" status and lives in an urban area (in both cases of marriage and "family reunion", the status

[6]The status of Wutonghau as a "*jian-zhi* town" was approved officially in 1988.

[7]The distribution of interviewed households in six towns were: Wudan (407 households), Qiaotou (219), Wufendi (117), Wuduentaohai (297), Hairesu (163), and Wutonghau (111). The households interviewed in the survey were sampled in the residential registration lists by a interval procedure (every third household in five *jian-zhi* towns and every eighth in county town).

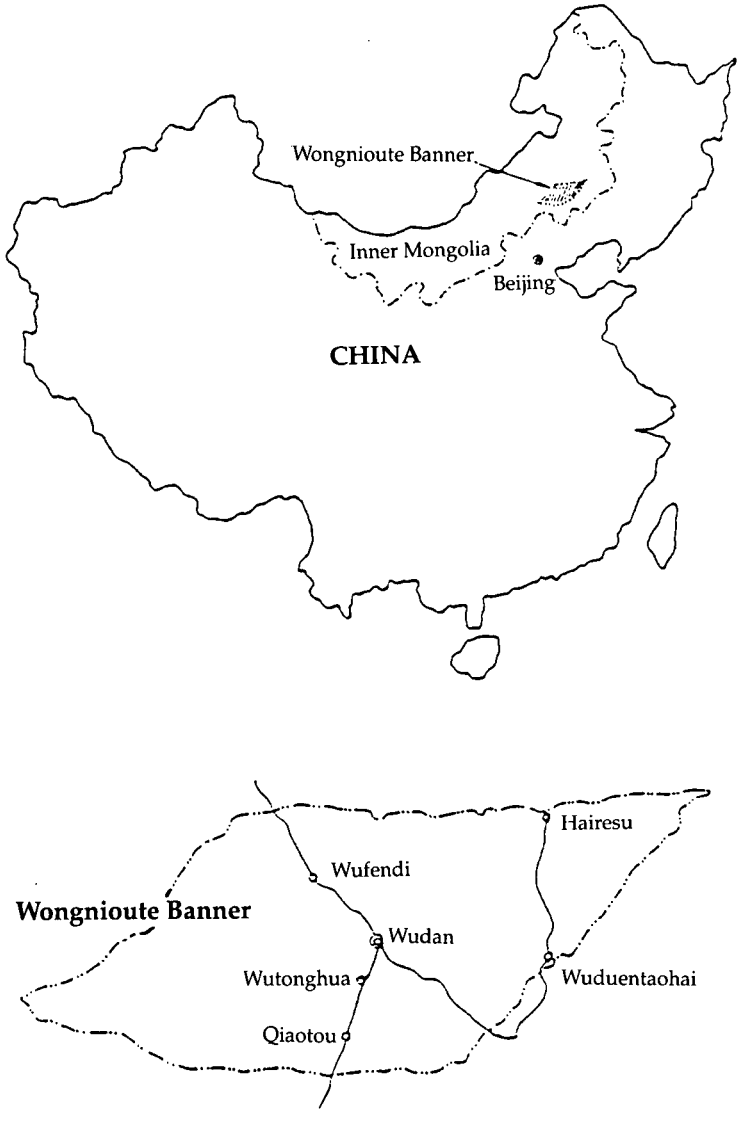

FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF WONGNIOUTE BANNER IN CHINA AND SIX TOWNS WITHIN WONGNIOUTE BANNER

change process usually takes years and may not always be granted); and (5) to change status through recruitment into some special construction programs or other jobs that are crucial in urban places (cf. Goldstein and Goldstein 1985, pp.12-13).

Because many people have tried to change their status by marriage,

adoption, or joining programs, the government sets an annual quota for status transition. It varies by region and is usually calculated as a small percentage of the total present urban "non-agricultural" residents in the respective city or town. For example, the annual quota for Tibet Autonomous Region was 3%(Liu 1988, p.189). Local cadres who violate these restriction are punished (Banister 1987, pp.336-337).

Registration Status of Town Residents

Because towns are located in an intermediary way between cities and rural areas, the residential status of de facto town residents is not as "pure" "non-agricultural" as in cities. On the other hand, some people's registration may not be identical to their residential site. The structure of town residents by registration and the deviation between registration and residence, therefore, is a very interesting component in understanding town population and rural-urban transition in China.

First, let us look at town residents as a whole (including both in county town and other *jian-zhi* towns). In Table 1, all households interviewed in towns are classified into three groups by de facto residence patterns: Group 1 (all members of the household live in town), Group 2 (only the household head lives in town), and Group 3 (all household members live in rural areas but the head works in town by day). The last group is also defined as "commuters" (Ma 1988; Goldstein and Gu 1991). Each of three groups can be divided further into four registration status subgroups: (a) all household members have "non-agricultural" status, (b) only the household head has "non-agricultural" status, (c) all household members have "agricultural" status, and (d) only the household head has "agricultural" status.

Of the total interviewed households, 56.6% both lived in town and have all household members with "non-agricultural" status; an additional 17.1% of the interviewed households have their head holding a "non-agricultural" status and the remaining members were expected to apply for status transition. Therefore, "non-agricultural" households are confirmed to be the major body of town residents in this area.

For Group 1, "all live in town", (81.6% of the total), two thirds have all their members with "non-agricultural" status (Table 1). Group 2 (household head lives in town) comprised 9.5% of the total. They have a stronger relationship with rural areas than the members of Group 1, because their family members stay in villages. Their household size (4.5 on average) is generally larger than that of Group 1 (4.1), but smaller than Group 3 (4.9). This is understandable because household size is closely related to number of children and rural residents usually have more children than town

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED IN TOWNS IN WONGNIOUTE BANNER BY REGISTRATION/RESIDENCE STATUS, 1987

Residence status	Registration status	Household number	%	Mean size of household	Mean education of head	Mean income (1982)	Mean income (1986)
All live in town (1)	All non-ag(a)	742	56.6	3.9	2.2	291	627
	Head non-ag(b)	157	12.0	4.5	2.2	196	427
	All ag(c)	163	12.4	4.5	1.5	165	435
	Head ag(d)	8	0.6	4.3	2.3	236	541
	Subtotal	1071	81.6	4.1	2.1	257	568
Head lives in town (2)	All non-ag(a)	21	1.6	3.1	2.2	199	648
	Head non-ag(b)	67	5.1	4.7	2.0	146	484
	All ag(c)	37	2.8	4.8	1.5	181	466
	Subtotal	125	9.5	4.5	1.9	165	506
All live in rural (3)	All non-ag(a)	5	0.4	5.0	3.5	175	378
	Head non-ag(b)	45	3.4	4.8	2.3	184	533
	All ag(c)	67	5.1	4.9	2.0	155	476
	Subtotal	117	8.9	4.9	2.2	167	494
Total		1312	100.0	4.2	2.1	241	555

Resistration Status:
"ag": agricultural resident; "non-ag": non-agricultural resident.
Mean education of household head refers to the following codes:
0: iliteracy; 3: senior middle school graduate;
1: primary school graduate; 4: professional high school graduate;
2: junior middle school graduate; 5: college graduate.
Income is annual household income per capita (yuan).

residents. The position of Group 2 in respect to fertility level is in the middle.

"Commuters" (Group 3), constituting those who only stay in town during the day, may be considered semi-town residents. They and their families do not really live in town, but by working in town every day,[8] they participate to some extent in the community activities of town residents. On average, their "commuting" distance is 5.3 km, ranging from 1 to 40 km. Most of this group are "rural-town" commuters and they usually go to their workplace by bicycle. A small number of this group are "town-town" commuters. Another study of Yuanping county in Shanxi province reported that the average "commuting" distance was about 5 km (Wang 1987), very close to the "commuting" distance in Inner Mongolia.

[8]In some studies, the frequencies of "commuters" is defined as "regularly" (Goldstein and Gu 1991, p.6).

"Commuters" comprised 8.9% of the total interviewed households. Their average education is higher than Groups 1 and 2. All commuter household heads completed at least junior middle school although their income does not necessarily exceed other town residents. The average household income per capita of "commuters" increased from 167 to 494 yuan during 1982-1986, but their income is still the lowest among the three groups in 1986.

But compared with the income of farmers in rural areas, the "commuters" earned a higher income. The 1985 rural survey suggested that household income per capita increased from 209 to 369 yuan during 1980-1984 in the villages of the same area (Ma 1987, p.259). It seems that some poor rural residents found their fortune in towns by becoming "commuters". This suggests that pursuit of higher income is one reason for them to "commute" every day.

The group structures by registration also have something in common. Except those from Group 3, subgroup (a) in Groups 1 and 2 (with all their members having "non-agricultural" status) had a smaller household size than other subgroups and the highest income in 1982 and 1986. The household heads of subgroup (a) also had relatively higher education.

Subgroup (b) (made up of only those households whose head had a "non-agricultural" status but not the other members) was generally in the middle between subgroups (a) and (c) in education and income. It indicates that the households of this group shared social and economic characteristics with both "official urban residents" (subgroup a) and "official rural residents" (subgroup c).

The heads of subgroup (c) had lower education than the other subgroups in each of the three groups by residence, and also had a lower income in 1986 (except Group 1) and a large household size (except Group 3). Therefore, variations exist among the groups based on registration and residential patterns.

Differences Between County Towns and Other "Jian-zhi" Towns

Although both county towns and other *jian-zhi* towns are in the same statistical category *jian-zhi* town, significant differences were found between Wudan (the county town) and other *jian-zhi* towns in some basic characteristics.[9] Wudan (the county town) is located in the center of Wongnioute Banner, had a urban population of 27,600 in 1985. Its urban area was 480 hectare. In contrast, the urban population of other five *jian-zhi*

[9]In the following discussion, "*jian-zhi* towns" or "other *jian-zhi* towns" refer to the *jian-zhi* towns excluding county towns.

towns was about 1,570 on average and in urban area averaged about 150 hectare.

Figure 2 clearly shows that Wudan is much larger than Qiaotou and Wutonghua in urban area. Wudan has seven urban residential committees, three senior middle schools, two theaters, two hospitals, a county court, a long-distance bus station, and a whole set of county government bureaus. Both Qiaotou and Wutonghua have only one main street, one department store, one senior middle school, one clinic, one cinema, and all town residents are organized as one residential committee.

In 1987, the status of Wutonghua, as a *jian-zhi* town was not approved yet. The procedure was completed in 1988. Figure 2 shows that Qiaotou (a *jian-zhi* town) is very similar to Wutonghua (a large site of Xiang government). The difference between county towns and other *jian-zhi* towns is more obvious and significant compared with that between *jian-zhi* towns and large "Xiang towns". To study urban development in China, sometimes the real situation needs to be assessed rather than relying on the titles of official categories.

Both county towns and *jian-zhi* towns have larger urban areas and more service facilities and factories in coastal areas with a high population density, but the differences between county towns and *jian-zhi* towns are also significant. Another study in Jiangsu Province indicates that the average urban population was 64,000 for 6 county towns and 14,000 for other 19 *jian-zhi* towns; the average urban area was 900 hectare for county towns and 200 hectare for other *jian-zhi* towns (Wang Shengbai 1987, p.35).

Tables 2 and 3 show that the registration and residential patterns are also different for county town and other *jian-zhi* towns. Group 1 comprises 84.3% of interviewed Wudan residents vs. 73.8% of interviewed residents in other *jian-zhi* towns. But Group 1a (all household members registered as "urban" and all live in town) comprises 79.4% of county town residents while only 40.8% of the residents in other *jian-zhi* towns. So, county towns are "purer" urban areas than other *jian-zhi* town in registration status. Because Group 1b is only 4.7% in Wudan while 15.4% in the other towns, it seems that county town residents also find it easier to change their registration status when their household heads obtain an "urban" status.

Wudan has far fewer households in Group 1c (all members live in town but have "agricultural" registration status) than other *jian-zhi* towns (0.2% vs. 17.5%). It is because rural suburbs in county towns are organized into communes or separate towns in administration while peasant teams in town areas of other *jian-zhi* towns are included in the town area residential organization.

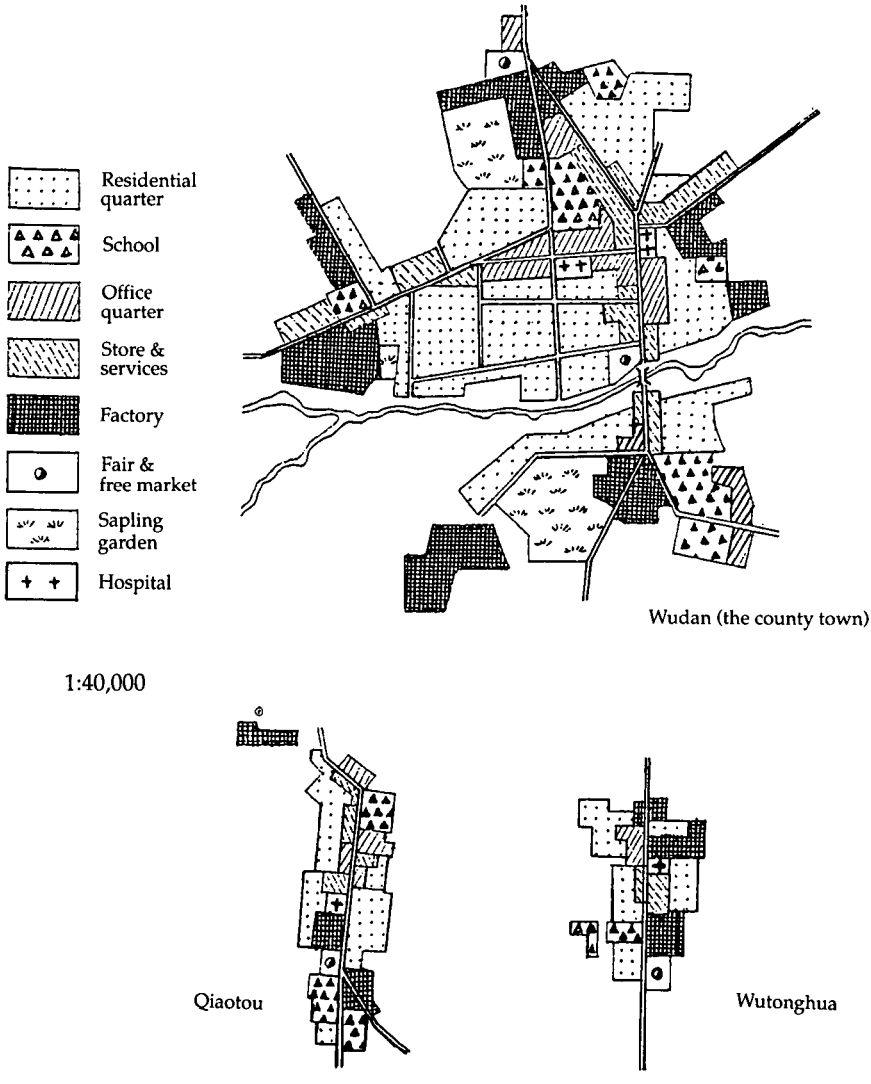

FIGURE 2. COMPARISON OF TOWN AREA OF COUNTY TOWN AND OTHER *JIAN-ZHI* TOWNS IN WONGNIOUTE BANNER

"Commuters" (Group 3) comprise only 1% of Wudan residents, but 12.5% in other *jian-zhi* towns. Local industry and services in county towns recruited their laborers mainly from town households. Because of their smaller population size, small towns recruit some laborers from nearby villages as "commuters". Therefore, it is clear that other *jian-zhi* towns

TABLE 2. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS IN WUDAN (COUNTY TOWN) BY RESIDENTIAL AND REGISTRATIVE STATUS, 1987

Residence status	Registration status	Occupation 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total	Case	Total
All	All non-ag	—	2.5	0.5	11.6	—	34.9	4.9	44.6	1.1	100.0	370	79.4
live	Head non-ag	—	—	0.5	15.8	—	3.7	0.5	3.7	—	100.0	19	4.7
in town	All ag	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	1	0.2
Head	All non-ag	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	0.0
lives	Head non-ag	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	8	2.0
in town	All ag	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	8	2.0
All	All non-ag	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	0.0
live	Head non-ag	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	3	0.8
in rural	All ag	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	1	0.2
Total		0	2.5	0.7	11.4	0.7	34.7	5.0	44.1	1.0	100.0	404	100.0

*Occupational distribution not calculated due to less than 10 cases.

TABLE 3. OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS IN FIVE *JIAN-ZHI* TOWNS BY RESIDENTIAL AND REGISTRATIVE STATUS, 1987

Residence status	Registration status	Occupation 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total	Case	Total
All	All non-ag	—	0.5	1.6	6.3	2.5	43.7	12.9	31.9	0.5	100.0	364	40.8
live	Head non-ag	0.2	0.7	0.7	0.2	—	48.2	25.5	20.4	—	100.0	137	15.4
in town	All ag	43.6	1.3	10.3	1.9	19.2	11.5	4.5	6.4	1.3	100.0	156	17.5
	Head ag	12.5	—	—	12.5	50.0	25.0	—	—	—	100.0	8	0.1
Head	All non-ag	—	—	—	—	—	60.0	10.0	30.0	—	100.0	20	2.2
lives	Head non-ag	—	—	1.7	1.7	—	41.4	27.6	27.6	—	100.0	58	6.5
in town	All ag	11.4	—	8.6	2.9	25.7	31.4	14.3	5.7	—	100.0	35	3.7
All	All non-ag	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*	5	0.6
live	Head non-ag	—	—	—	2.5	5.0	52.5	20.0	20.0	—	100.0	40	4.5
in rural	All ag	6.1	—	7.6	—	56.1	15.1	4.5	10.6	—	100.0	66	7.4
Total		9.0	0.6	3.6	3.6	9.8	36.9	14.2	21.9	0.4	100.0	889	100.0

Registration Status:
"ag" agricultural resident; "non-ag" non-agricultural resident.

Occupations:
1: farmer;
2: student;
3: self-employed (Ge-ti-hu);
4: retired cadre or worker;
5: worker (contract or temporary);
6: worker (state-owned enterprises);
7: school teacher;
8: cadre;
9: others.

absorbed more rural laborers than county towns did.

Occupational Structure of Town Residents

In order to clarify the reasons for the residential and registration patterns in towns and the income differentials among town residents, occupational distribution of county town and other *jian-zhi* town residents by residence and registration is also examined in Tables 2 and 3.

The major occupational groups of town residents are "workers" of state-owned enterprises and "cadres". Both are government employees. These two occupations comprised 77.8% of the interviewed households in Wudan, but only 58.8% of the interviewed households in other *jian-zhi* towns.

"Teacher" is the third important occupational group among five *jian-zhi* town residents (14.2% of the total). In Inner Mongolia and other northern areas of China, each Xiang has at least one junior middle school, senior middle schools are usually located in towns and recruit students from villages. Towns are the local educational centers. The senior middle schools in county towns only recruit the rural students with highest exam scores. Therefore, the percentage of "teacher" in county town residents is much smaller (5%) than that in *jian-zhi* towns.

Among the households of Group 1, 163 households had all members with an "agricultural" status (Group 1c, cf. Table 1). Tables 2 and 3 show that 156 households (98% of the Group 1c) live in *jian-zhi* towns and 43.6% of them are farmers. In many small towns, farmers who cultivate the land around the town are counted as "town residents", but with "agricultural" status. They were organized as "productive teams" under the commune system and now are under the town government.

The second largest occupational group in Group 1c (with all members as "agricultural" but live in town) in *jian-zhi* towns is "contract or temporary workers" who worked for the government or collective enterprises (19.2%). Some of them were from town farming households. When their land was used to build a factory or institution, some farmers' team laborers were recruited. Sometimes, these recruited laborers even became "formal" workers (11.5%) or cadres (6.4%) in government institutions or state-owned enterprises.

Self-employed businessmen or handicraftsmen only comprised 0.7% of the total in county town and 3.6% in other *jian-zhi* towns. About one-half of them are from rural areas ("agricultural" status) but live in town. Compared with coastal areas, development of private business is still at a low level in Inner Mongolia. Most of these self-employed residents open grocery stores or restaurants along town streets.

The people in Group 1b comprise 15.4% of the total in *jian-zhi* towns but only 4.7% in county town. They are workers, teachers, and cadres (48.2%, 25.5% and 20.4% respectively among *jian-zhi* town residents) who were originally from rural areas, recently graduated from school, and recruited by government institutions. Their family members live with them in town but are still in the process of applying for a registration status transition.

Eight households have heads with an "agricultural" and the rest "non-agricultural" status (Group 1d) and all of them live in *jian-zhi* towns. They have a higher education; 87.5% of them had an occupation of either worker of state-owned enterprises or teacher, and a relatively higher income (541 yuan). Because of these advantages, these men (who were from rural areas) were able to marry town women and live with the bride's family. This is not a common marriage pattern in China. Therefore, the number is very small (0.6% of the total) and this subgroup can only be found in Group 1 and in *jian-zhi* towns.

Group 2 comprises only 2.5% of county town residents while 12.6% in other *jian-zhi* towns. About 90% of them are employed either as "worker", "cadre", "teacher" or "contract or temporary worker". They are either recruited local laborers or transferred from other areas; their family members either remain in rural areas or other places.

Among a total interviewed 115 "commuter" households (only 4 of them live in Wudan), 67 are from rural households (of which 37 are contract or temporary workers), 43 from rural households (but these commuters themselves had already changed their own status while they continued living in villages), and 5 had all other household members having "non-agricultural" status, but who lived in rural areas. The last 5 are young couples with higher education, who obtained a government job in town (1 worker, 2 teachers, and 2 cadres), changed their registration status, but prefer to live with their parents in nearby villages. The concentration of "commuters" in *jian-zhi* towns indicates that county towns play a minor role in absorbing rural surplus laborers compared to other *jian-zhi* towns.

Based on the structural characteristics of town residents discussed above, it is clear that the basic function of county towns in this area is still administrative. It seems that in Inner Mongolia, rural industry in *jian-zhi* towns has developed but is still at a low level. Besides, many "workers" actually work in government institutions, not in factories. Collective factories and handicraft workshops have recruited some contract or temporary workers, although their number is small. Private business in trade and services only started in the mid-1980s in these towns.

County towns (as Wudan) are similar to small cities in their economic

structure, construction design, residential patterns, and function as local political, administrative, and economic center. In respect to population size, other *jian-zhi* towns are much smaller than county towns but close to the sites of Xiang government (the former commune), which are also called as "Xiang towns" (Wang Shengbai 1987; Ma 1990).

The basic difference between *jian-zhi* towns and the sites of Xiang government includes: (1) *jian-zhi* towns (not the sites of Xiang government) have their "people's representative meeting" (which functions as a local congress); (2) *jian-zhi* towns' construction plan has to be approved by the "Office of Town Construction Designing and Planning" of county and prefecture governments and *jian-zhi* towns also can obtain a "town construction fee" each year; (3) the quota of cadres of a *jian-zhi* town government is much larger than that of a Xiang government, and town government has more functions and administrative power in promoting the development of local industry, trade, and services.

Therefore, the urban-rural web consists of giant city, large city, small city, county town, *jian-zhi* town (except county town), site of Xiang government (Xiang town), and village. To fully understand both urban and rural development, the in-depth studies of urbanization in China need to pay attention to the structural and functional differentials between them, not be limited by official statistical categories.

These residential sites are also dynamic. Every year, a number of "Xiang towns" become *jian-zhi* towns and a number of county towns become small cities. According to the 1986 standard, having a 60,000 "non-agricultural" population is the condition of becoming a "city". In 1982, 24 towns had their "town area" population over 100,000, and 227 towns had their population between 50,000 to 100,000 (SSB 1985, p.87). A large proportion of these big towns should become cities but remained as towns because their applications have not been approved. On the other hand, according to the 1984 standard, having a 2,000 "non-agricultural" population is the condition of becoming a *jian-zhi* town. A survey in Jiangsu province, which covered 169 "Xiang towns" (the site of Xiang government), found that only 47 "Xiang towns" had their "town area" population less than 3,000. The rest, 122 "Xiang towns", had populations between 3,000 and 12,000 (Zou Nongjian 1985, p.84). Many of these big villages should become towns but remained as "rural areas".

Rural-urban sites are more like a continual chain with some overlaps between cities and towns, and between towns and villages based on their official titles and actual situations. Examination of the differentials and common characteristics of these residential sites, and understanding their

dynamics, will be helpful to predict future urban development in China.

MIGRATION TO TOWNS

A key to understand the different growth patterns of the various types of residential areas is migration, including commuting. Basic questions raised in most migration studies are: Why did people move? How many times have these people migrated in the past? Where did they come from? How did they learn about this place? Who helped them in their migration? Have they improved their income by migration? Are there significant differentials between migration to county towns and to other *jian-zhi* towns? Within the context of discussions on residential and occupational structure above, the survey data will be examined in order to answer these questions.

Among the total interviewed households, 34.9% were native born in Wudan and 21.2% in other *jian-zhi* towns (Table 4). Therefore, the population of other *jian-zhi* towns increased more than county towns through in-migration. The proportion of in-migration to *jian-zhi* towns which occurred before 1950 is very small (0.4%), and a large proportion of in-migration occurred in the 1970s and 1980s (22.7% and 35.9%). In contrast, in-migration to county towns increased in the 1950s and declined in the 1980s. County towns expanded during the "great leap forward" movement and started to limit in-migration later because they faced similar problems to those characterizing small cities with respect to food and housing supplies.

Table 5 shows the motivation distribution of the migrants who moved to towns in comparison to the information obtained in the 1985 rural survey. As revealed in many migration studies, migration has been widely used by many people as a method of maximizing their income (Todaro 1976; Shaw 1975; De Jong and Fawcett 1981). For the pre-1950 migration, the largest proportion of in-migrants to towns (including both county town and other *jian-zhi* towns) and villages have moved to pursue a higher income (59.1% in Wudan and 55.0% in villages). Since 1950, this has still been the main reason for rural-rural migration. But the number declined for migration to towns, especially to county towns when stricter migration control was in practice in the late 1950s.

Partly as a result of the new economic reform policy, the percentage of in-migrants who claimed their motive for migration as pursuit of higher income increased in *jian-zhi* towns during the 1970s and 1980s. These people moved by themselves to search for work opportunities as "contract or temporary workers" or to open private businesses. This type of migration

TABLE 4. MIGRATION STATUS OF INTERVIEWED TOWN HOUSEHOLD HEADS

Year of moving	County town		Five *jian-zhi* towns	
	Number of household	%	Number of household	%
Native born:	142	34.9	192	21.2
Migrant subtotal:	265	65.1	715	78.8
1901~1939	12	2.9	2	0.2
1940~1049	9	2.2	2	0.2
1950~1959	49	12.0	61	6.7
1960~1969	42	10.3	114	12.6
1970~1979	84	20.6	206	22.7
1980~1987	69	17.0	326	35.9
Unknown	0	0.0	4	0.4
Total	407	100.0	907	100.0

became possible only under the new reform policies. Therefore, policy factors were clearly the key considerations to regulate rural-urban migration, to limit rural residents to move to towns for a higher and stable income in the past, and to promote development of local industry and trade by loosening the control of people's geographic mobility.

Job transfer has been the main reason for a large proportion of migration to towns after 1950 (38.2% in *jian-zhi* towns and 31.7% in county towns). In contrast, only a small proportion of migrants who moved to rural areas (4. 2%) reported job transfer as their main motive for migration. This is closely related to differentials of villages and towns in occupational structure.

"Government arranged migration" refers to migration that resulted from new job appointments for young graduates, cadre "Xia-fang" (transfer to a lower level), and soldier demobilization. This is the largest group of migrants to Wudan (38.7%) and the second largest group in othe *jian-zhi* towns (28%). In rural areas, this reason for migration refers to government arranged migration projects. Such projects were organized for a group of farmers whose home village suffered serious natural disasters during the 1960s and 1970s. It comprised only 6.7% of the total of migrants who moved to rural areas.

The proportion of marriage migration increased significantly in rural areas (from 4% to 27.2%) during 1950-1985 but remained low in towns. It seems that town residents married among themselves or with migrants who already had jobs and had transferred into towns. These migrants usually do not claim marriage as their reason of migration.

TABLE 5. MOTIVES FOR MIGRATION TO TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Year of migration	Motives for in-migration to county town(%) (the 1987 Survey) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	Total
Before 1950	59.1	13.6	9.1	9.1	9.1	0.0	0.0	100.0	22
1951~1960	9.7	16.1	3.2	25.8	45.2	0.0	0.0	100.0	31
1961~1970	5.7	11.4	2.9	54.3	22.9	0.0	2.9	100.0	35
1971~1980	1.6	11.1	3.2	42.9	36.5	0.0	4.8	100.0	63
1981~1987	0.0	8.6	8.6	47.7	34.3	0.0	2.9	100.0	35
Total	10.2	11.8	4.8	38.7	31.7	0.0	2.7	100.0	186
Year of migration	Motives for in-migration to *jian-zhi* towns (%) (the 1987 Survey) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	Total
Before 1950	33.3	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	3
1951~1960	18.6	15.3	1.7	18.6	40.7	0.0	5.1	100.0	59
1961~1970	8.0	5.7	4.5	23.9	50.0	0.0	8.0	100.0	88
1971~1980	14.5	16.4	3.8	23.9	36.5	1.3	3.8	100.0	159
1981~1987	17.6	7.5	1.5	35.7	34.2	0.5	3.0	100.0	508
Total	15.2	11.0	2.8	28.0	38.2	0.6	4.3	100.0	508
Year of migration	Motives for in-migration to 41 villages (%) (the 1985 Survey) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	Total
Before 1950	55.0	20.0	4.0	0.0	7.0	2.0	12.0	100.0	100
1951~1960	47.9	16.4	8.6	8.6	3.5	0.0	14.7	100.0	313
1961~1970	43.9	10.4	12.2	11.3	5.2	0.9	16.1	100.0	230
1971~1987	46.9	12.2	27.2	0.0	2.7	0.0	10.9	100.0	147
Total	37.6	14.5	12.4	6.7	4.2	0.5	14.1	100.0	798

Motives for migration:
1: pursuit of higher income;
2: family reunion;
3: marriage;
4: government arranged migration;
5: job transfer;
6: political reasons;
7: other reasons.

Town residents have a higher geographic mobility. Among the migrants who moved after 1947 (the date when the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region established), 62.5% of county town migrants and 57.8% of *jian-zhi* town migrants moved more than once while the percentage was 23.2 for rural migrants (Table 6). A large proportion of town residents are cadres, workers or teachers who usually have high mobility because of job transfers. On the other hand, most rural residents are farmers who usually hesitate to leave their land; moreover, their migration has been more limited and regulated by government policies.

It is a basic condition for potential migrants to obtain information about

their destination and to have some confidence in being able to receive the help necessary after their arrival before making the decision to move. Because relatives or friends usually can provide such information and help, having relatives or friends at their destination becomes a very important factor. Table 7 indicates that a higher proportion of migrants who moved to towns had no relatives or friends at the destination before their move than rural-rural migrants (56.4% vs. 28.3%). The percentage of this group is very high in *jian-zhi* towns (63.7%). This is probably related to the structure of their occupations. Many "contract and temporary" workers in *jian-zhi* towns were recruited from villages without kinship connections. Job appointment or transfer of workers and cadres were usually arranged by the government according to the work needed, not the kinship networks of employees.

For rural-rural migrants, 58.8% had non-immediate relatives at their destination before moving. Because farmers usually do not live separately from their family members, the percentage who migrated to join immediate relatives (parents, adult children, spouse) was small (5.8%). Therefore, having non-immediate relatives at their destination is a common precondition for a farmer household to make a decision to migrate. Such relatives could provide information and help migrants in their adjustment at their destination, provide housing and tools, and assistance in obtaining official registration, etc.

Among the migrants who moved to towns, 25.4% had immediate relatives there before moving (33.2% in Wudan and 22.5% in other *jian-zhi* towns). When a cadre or worker is assigned a job in a town, his family usually joins him later; but some young cadre or worker might ask to work in his hometown. Two groups ("no relatives" and "having immediate relatives") together comprised 81.8% of total migrants to towns.

TABLE 6. MIGRATION FREQUENCIES OF MIGRANTS WHO MOVED TO THE PRESENT RESIDENCE AFTER 1947

Number of past migration	Rural residents*	*Jian-zhi* town residents	County town residents	Town total
1	76.8	42.2	37.5	40.9
2	14.5	30.4	34.4	31.4
3	5.8	14.6	13.9	14.4
4	2.1	9.3	9.3	9.3
5+	0.9	3.5	5.1	3.9
Total parcentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total cases	901	711	265	976

*Data for rural residents are from the 41 village survey (1985).

Town-town migration, as rural-rural migration in rural areas, seems to account for the major part of migrants into towns (53.2% of the total)(Table 8). Rural-town migration comprised 40.2% of the total.[10] Among rural-town migration, 77.4% were from a village within the same county and therefore represented short-distance movement. The percentage of rural-town migration within the town territory in the total has increased since 1970, indicating the increase of rural contract and temporary workers in towns. Among town-town migration, 60% moved within the same county. Therefore, the county border is still important for the migration to towns and town residents' mobility has largely been limited within their county. The migration distance and geographic mobility is associated with the development level of market economy and transportation.

City-town migration comprised only 6.6% of the total, and has become increasingly rare in the last three decades. In the 1950s, the major migration streams were rural-town, rural-city, and town-city migrations accompanying rapid development of urban industry, largely involving changes up the urban hierarchy. In the early 1960s, city-town and city-rural migration increased because of economic difficulties and dismissal of employees (Banister 1987, p.331).

It should be noticed that those city-town migrants who had already returned to cities before the survey (1987) could not be covered. Theoretically,

TABLE 7. RELATIONSHIP OF MIGRANTS WITH RESIDENTS AT DESTINATION BEFORE THEIR MIGRATION

Relationship	Rural residents*	*Jian-zhi* town residents	County town residents	Town total
No relatives or friends	76.8	42.2	37.5	40.9
Immediate relatives**	14.5	30.4	34.4	31.4
Non-immediate relatives**	35.8	14.6	13.9	14.4
Friends	2.1	9.3	9.3	9.3
Unknown	0.9	3.5	5.1	3.9
Total percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total cases	884	711	265	976

*Data for rural residents are from the 41 village survey (1985).
**"Immediate" relatives include parents, spouses and children; All other relatives are termed "non-immediate" relatives.

[10]A study of Hubei province (a more developed region than Inner Mongolia) reported that among the migration to towns, town-town migration comprised 35.6% of the total (including both males and females), and rural-town migration 52.4% (Goldstein and Gu 1991, Tables 3A and 3B).

compared with rural-town and town-town migrants, city-town migrants have stronger motivation to return to their place of origin and a higher possibility to do so under the Chinese system.

According to information provided by local administration, return of some early city-rural migrants (especially urban students who were sent to rural areas for "re-education" and later returned to their city of origin, cf. Banister 1987, p.340-341) occurred in this region in the 1970s. But most city-town migrants in Inner Mongolia remained in towns. This is because many of them came from small cities (such as Chifeng) or probably they were previous rural-city and town-city migrants in the late 1950s and had only spent a short period of time in cities. They are relatively satisfied with their present residence.

INCOME OF TOWN RESIDENTS

On average, income of town residents doubled in the four years between 1982-1986 from 241 to 555 yuan (Table 1). As farmers, town residents have been better off since the system reform in the 1980s. Among the groups by residential and registration patterns, non-agricultural residents have a higher income if their whole household or household head lives in town

TABLE 8. PLACE OF ORIGIN OF MIGRANTS IN TOWNS

Place of origin	Rural				Town			City	Total	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	%	#
Jian-zhi towns	16.9	16.1	32.5	7.7	13.0	2.2	7.9	3.7	100.0	545
County town	2.3	24.1	29.1	4.5	16.8	3.2	6.4	13.6	100.0	220
Year of migration:										
Before 1949	4.0	12.0	4.0	16.0	8.0	16.0	16.0	20.0	100.0	24
1050~1959	8.5	17.1	9.8	6.1	25.6	12.2	15.9	3.7	100.0	81
1960~1969	7.0	14.9	7.0	2.6	36.8	14.9	5.3	10.5	100.0	113
1970~1979	13.3	21.4	9.3	1.6	31.0	7.3	6.0	8.5	100.0	244
1980~1987	15.6	16.9	3.6	1.0	32.0	18.9	5.9	2.9	100.0	298
Total	12.8	18.3	6.6	2.5	31.7	14.1	7.4	6.6	100.0	765

Place of origin:
1: a rural area within the territory of this town,
2: a rural area in another town within the territory of the county,
3: a rural area in other county within Inner Mongolia,
4: a rural area in other province,
5: a town within the county,
6: a town in other county within Inner Mongolia,
7: a town in other province,
8: a city in Inner Mongolia or other provinces.

(627 and 648 yuan in 1986).

Table 8 indicates in both 1982 and 1986, Wudan residents earned about 100 yuan more than other *jian-zhi* town residents. It may be because county town residents usually have a higher education (2.3 vs. 2.1) and smaller household size (3.9 vs. 4.3).

The Spearman correlation coefficients show that the most important factor associated with income per capita (in 1982, especially in 1986) is household size (-.402 for *jian-zhi* town and .-368 for county town). Because adult children usually establish their own household soon after starting to work, it is natural that more small children is related to a larger household size in residential registration. Therefore, larger household size means lower income per capita because small children add no income to their households.

Occupation is not significant as expected (.094 for county town and .022 for *jian-zhi* towns).[11] It is because large income variation exists within occupation groups (e.g. mean income of cadres in 1986 was 670 yuan for Group 2, but only 370 yuan for Group 3). Besides, occupations are coded by social prestige with result that while some occupations (e.g. self-employed) had a relatively low social prestige, they earned the highest income.

During 1982-1986, the effect of occupation on income showed almost no change and the effect of education on income changed only slightly (from -.015 to .002 for county town and from -.008 to .028 for *jian-zhi* towns). Because family planning programs have become weak in both rural areas and towns in Inner Mongolia as a minority autonomous region in the 1980s, accompanying large variations in number of children among town residents, the effect of family size on income per capita increased (from -.192 to -.368 for county town and from -.204 to -.402 for *jian-zhi* towns).

TABLE 9. CHARACTERISTICS OF COUNTY TOWN AND *JIAN-ZHI* TOWN RESIDENTS IN WONGNIOUTE BANNER, 1987

	Case	Mean size of household	Mean education of head	Mean income (1982)	Mean income (1986)
Wudan (county town)	407	3.89	2.28	314	630
Five *jian-zhi* towns	907	4.28	2.10	207	520

Income in household annual income (yuan) per capita.
Mean education of household heads refers to codes in Table 1.

[11]Occupations are coded for calculation of correlation by social prestige: farmer (1), self-employed (2), retired cadre or worker (3), contract or temporary worker (4), state-owned enterprise worker (5), teacher (6), cadre (7), student and others (missing).

TABLE 10. CORRELATION MATRIX OF SELECTED VARIABLES FOR TOWN RESIDENTS IN WONGNIOUTE BANNER, 1987

	Per82	Per86	Occup	Educa	Mig-num	Regist	Residen
County town							
Per86	.485**	1.000	—	—	—	—	—
Occup	-.064	.094	1.000	—	—	—	—
Educa	-.015	.002	-.041	1.000	—	—	—
Mig-num	.068	.126	.173**	.023	1.000	—	—
Regist	-.240**	-.192**	-.058	-.059	-.036	1.000	—
Residen	-.184**	-.146*	.020	-.033	-.022	.707**	1.000
Size	-.192**	-.368**	.173**	-.004	.096	0.78	.135*
Jian-zhi towns:							
Per86	.349**	1.000	—	—	—	—	—
Occup	.056	.022	1.000	—	—	—	—
Educa	-.008	.026	.097*	1.000	—	—	—
Mig-num	.037	.091*	.200**	0.74	1.000	—	—
Regist	-.177**	-.191**	-.452**	-.097*	-.193**	1.000	—
Residen-.102*	-.102	-.027	-.018	-.036	-.019	.357**	1.000
Size	-.204**	-.402	-.073	-.32	-.010	.167**	.112*

*p < .01, **p < .001.
Per82: annual household income per capita in 1982;
Per86: annual household income per capita in 1986;
Occup: occupation of head (code refers to Table 3);
Educa: educational background of household head (code refers to Table 1);
Mig-num: number of previous migration of household head;
Regist: registration status (coded in non-agricultural-agricultural order);
Residen: residence status (coded in urban-rural order);
Size: household size.

For *jian-zhi* town residents, occupation (coded in prestige) is closely related to registration status (.452) but not necessarily to residential patterns (-.018). In contrast, occupation has no significant correlation with registration for county town residents. About 80% of Wudan residents registered as "non-agricultural" but they have various occupations. It is an important difference between county town and other *jian-zhi* town residents and shows the stronger "urban" nature of county towns.

For both county town and *jian-zhi* town residents, frequencies of previous migration have a very slight impact on income while migration frequencies are associated with occupation. "Non-agricultural" occupations usually have a higher geographic mobility than farmers.

Compared with migrants to towns, household size has less effect on income per capita among rural residents (-.036, cf. Ma 1987) because farmers generally have more children with very few exceptions. Correlation

between education and occupation is weaker for town residents (-.041 for county town and .097 for *jian-zhi* towns) than rural residents (.235). In towns, the number of farmers is small and most children of town households complete their junior middle school education. In contrast, rural children sometimes do not complete primary school but instead start to work in fields. Most rural residents with higher education can find a non-agricultural job: working in local administration or teaching in primary or junior middle schools. Therefore, education is more significant in obtaining a non-agricultural occupation for rural residents.

Multiple regression analysis is used to examine how these social and educational variables work together to affect people's income in towns (Table 11). In regression analysis, household size, occupation, migration experience, and previous income in 1982 are significant to income in 1986 for both county town and *"jian-zhi"* town residents. Besides, for *jian-zhi* town residents, registration and residence also become significant to income. Living and being registered in town increased their income. There are less variations in registration and residence patterns among-county town residents.

SUMMARY

The development of townships has had a complicated experience in China in the past four decades. Accompanying the system reform in the mid-1950s, private enterprises disappeared, trade and services all came to be managed by the government. Except for towns which functioned as local administrative centers (the site of county government), many market towns became villages (Fei 1988).

The policy to encourage development of small towns was the result of new system reform introduced in the 1980s. Private businesses and free markets developed under the new policies. As a result, townships recovered their functions as local trade, service, and industrial centers. The number of *"jian-zhi"* towns increased from 2,874 in 1980 to 11,481 in 1988 (Ma 1990, p.134). The town population also increased rapidly.[12] Many county towns developed and came close to the standard of small cities (some of them have already become cities) and many new *"jian-zhi"* towns established all over China.

Based on the discussion of the structure of town residents and analyses of rural–town migration, town populations are found to have their own

[12]Because the statistics of urban population included the rural residents within administrative borders of cities and towns since 1984, it is difficult to obtain precise numbers of town population in the resent years.

TABLE 11. MULTIPLE REGRESSION FOR TOWN RESIDENTS WITH MEAN INCOME PER CAPITA IN 1986 AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

	County town	*Jian-zhi* towns
(Constant)	524.99	835.21
Size	-54.70***	-63.53***
Regist	—	-59.29***
Residen	—	41.90**
Mig-num	15.10*	16.16*
Occupation	21.29***	-13.46**
Per82	.51***	.31***
R^2	.3473	.2489

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

characteristics in residential, occupational, and migration patterns. Town populations share some characteristics with rural residents (indicated by their residential and registration patterns), but also share some characteristics with city residents (in their non-agricultural economic activities).

Among those officially recognized *jian-zhi* towns, county towns are quite different from the rest in their registration structure, occupational structure, and migration patterns. County towns are close to small cities in their structure and function while other *jian-zhi* towns are more like the rural-urban transition zone. Based on the analysis of registration and occupational patterns, county towns clearly play a minor role in absorbing surplus rural laborers.

On the one hand, those who work in towns have less geographic mobility than city residents; although the work is non-agricultural activity it generally involves "local business." On the other hand, rural residents also have higher mobility than town residents because they cannot find enough work in their village and have to travel outside the village looking for work. Town residents usually have stable jobs. "Commuters" in *jian-zhi* towns (very few in county towns) have a high mobility. It is a special phenomenon because of registration and work assignment systems in China. As other town residents, they are better off under the new reform policies.

The percentage of productive value of rural industry (including town and village industry) in all of China's industrial productive value increased from 9.2% in 1978 to 25% in 1990 (*People's Daily*, Jan. 22, 1991). In 1990, the tax paid by rural industry to the government reached 41 billion yuan, about 14% of the total national income of the government (*People's Daily*, Feb. 4, 1991; SSB 1990, p.20). Considering the government did not invest in rural

industry as in state-owned enterprises, this percentage is very significant in the finances of the Chinese government. Meanwhile, by exporting their products, rural industry earned 13 billion US$ in 1990 (*People's Daily*, Feb.4, 1991). The annual increase rate of productive value of rural industry was over 13% in 1990 and continues to increase in 1991 (*People's Daily*, Feb. 21, 1991). All this development is closely related to the changes in structure and size of town populations, and related to rural-town labor force transition.

Since the social and economic reform in the 1980s, the Chinese government has encouraged the development of small cities and towns. When rural industry becomes stronger and plays a more important role in the national economy, town populations will certainly display some new characteristics in the process of further social and economic reform.

The rural-town labor force transition is already underway in various forms. The previous town labor force management and regulations were a part of the planning economy, which related to housing and grain supply systems, ownership systems of work units, labor force recruitment and management, and migration regulations. With system reform and development of the market economy, labor force transition as well as the transition of residential patterns will certainly take place. Such structural changes, not only the changes in geographic distribution (rural areas, towns, and cities) of laborers but also the structural changes of labor force within each section, are the significant indicators of the social and economic development of Chinese society.

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