
Acknowledgments

As a member of the last group of urban youth “sent down” to the countryside, I experienced at first hand the ubiquity and power of the *hukou* (household registration) system as a teenager in China. My academic interest in the subject, however, started to develop later, when I was studying political economy and development issues at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Writing my Ph.D. dissertation and thereafter books on China’s modernization and labor allocation offered me a chance to begin collecting materials on the *hukou* system. For the early construction of the conceptual and analytical framework used in this book, I am personally indebted to my teachers and advisors at Penn: Thomas Callaghy, Francine Frankel, Avery Goldstein, Joanne Gowa, and Friedrich Kratochwil.

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