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# How Does Governmental Policy Shape Migration Decisions?

## The Case of China's Hukou System

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# Research Question

What Shapes Migrants' decisions?

How does the government do that?

- Hukou policy:
  - Does it work?
  - How does it work?

# Hukou Policy

## Residence Registration System

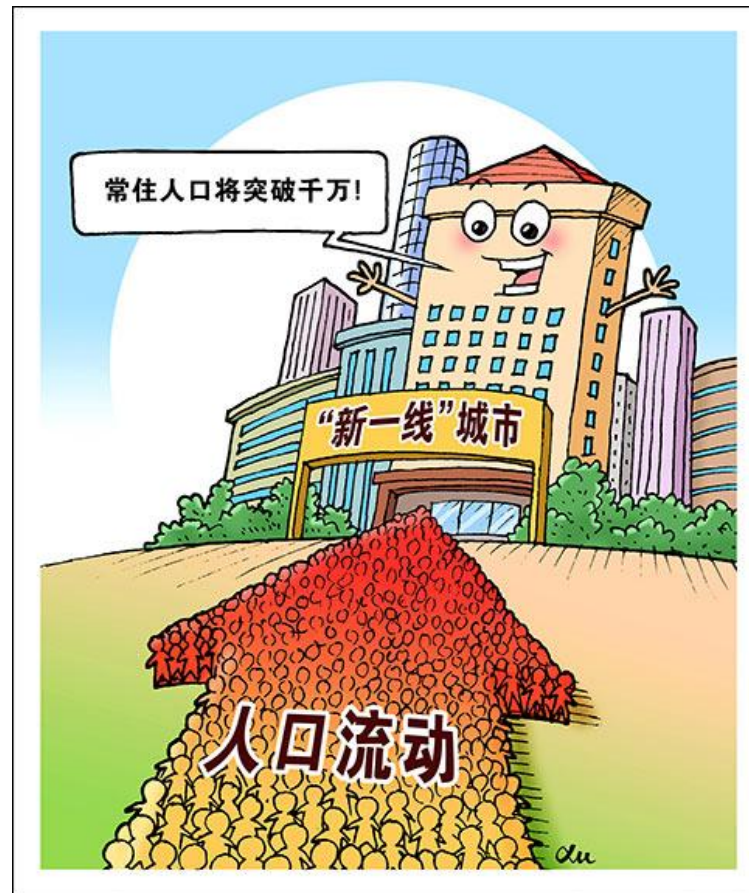
1/ Residents vis-a-vis Non-residents

2/ Alive and well

Favoring the residents

3/ Decentralized reform

# Does Hukou Actually Work?



新动向

新华社发 徐骏 作



裸奔的[REDACTED]，被嫌弃了

# Theory: Barrier vs. Benefit

Assumption: Moving for better life.

$H_{barrier}$  : People prefer cities with **less strict** requirements for local hukou status.

$H_{benefit}$  : People prefer cities where the potential local **benefits is big**.

- People prefer places where the local hukou is **more strict**.
- People prefer places where they can access hukou benefits, **regardless of hukou**.

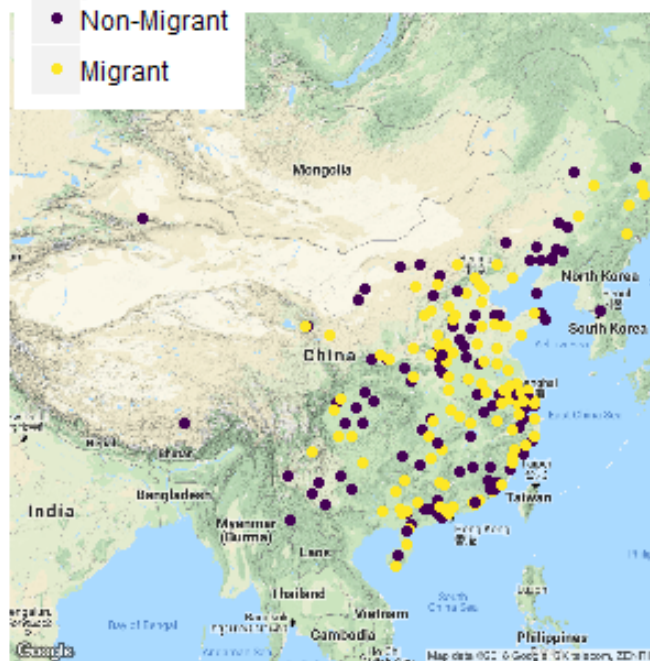
# Data

## Living Environment Satisfaction Survey of Chinese Residents (LESS 2018)

- 1100 respondents

- Half migrants, half non-migrants

Respondent Geo-Distribution



Path of Migration





# Validation

China Labor-Force Dynamics Survey (CLDS  
2016)

# Measurements

- Preference:
  - Willing to move in
  - Willing to stay

- Hukou strictness

Subjective: "How difficult to gain the hukou in your current living place?"

- Training set: Hukou openness of 64 cities

(刘金伟. 2016. “我国城市户籍开放程度及其影响因素分析——基于全国63个样本城市的评估.”  
《国家行政学院学报》 (05): 91-95+143-144.)

- Input Data: A list of socioeconomic, industrial, and demographic variables of the prefectures.
- Prediction: Chaining random forest
  - 0-1
  - Beijing: 0.927

# Examination Map

For the barrier theory

Do people know the barrier?

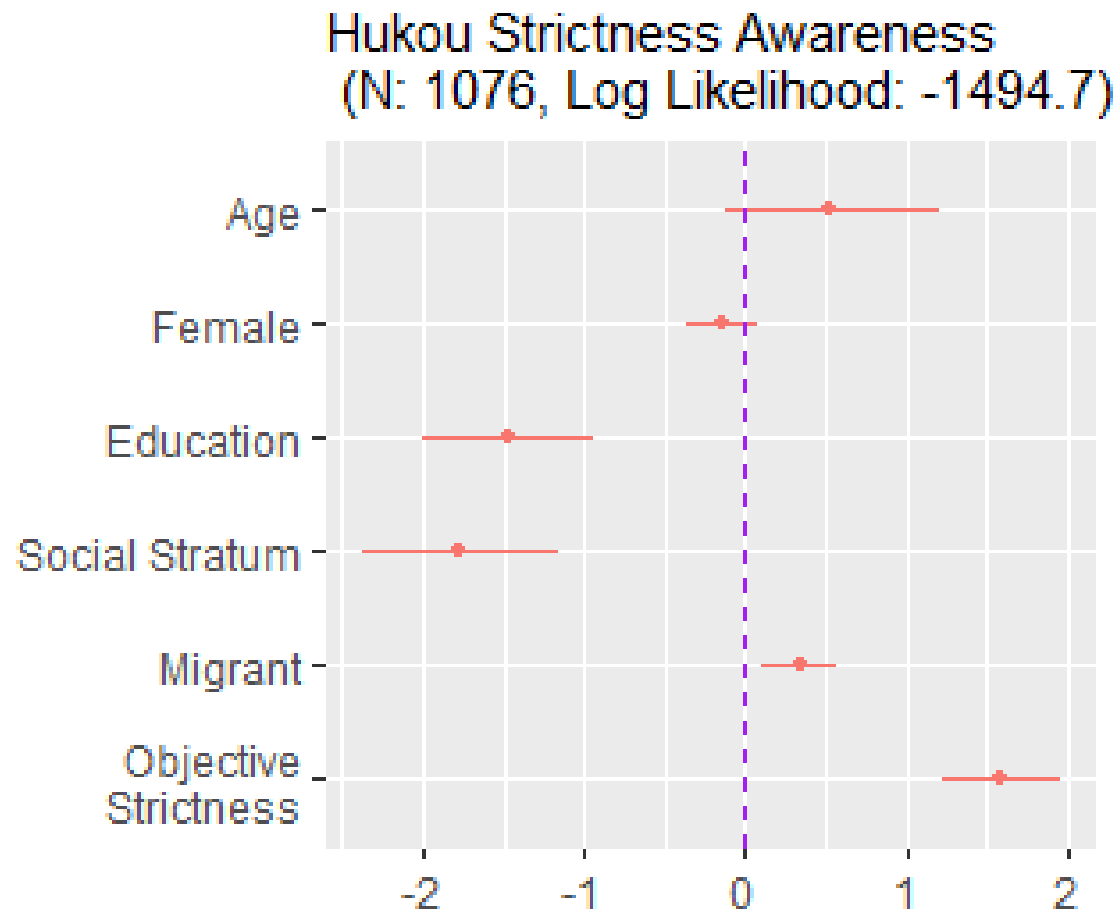
→ Do they care?

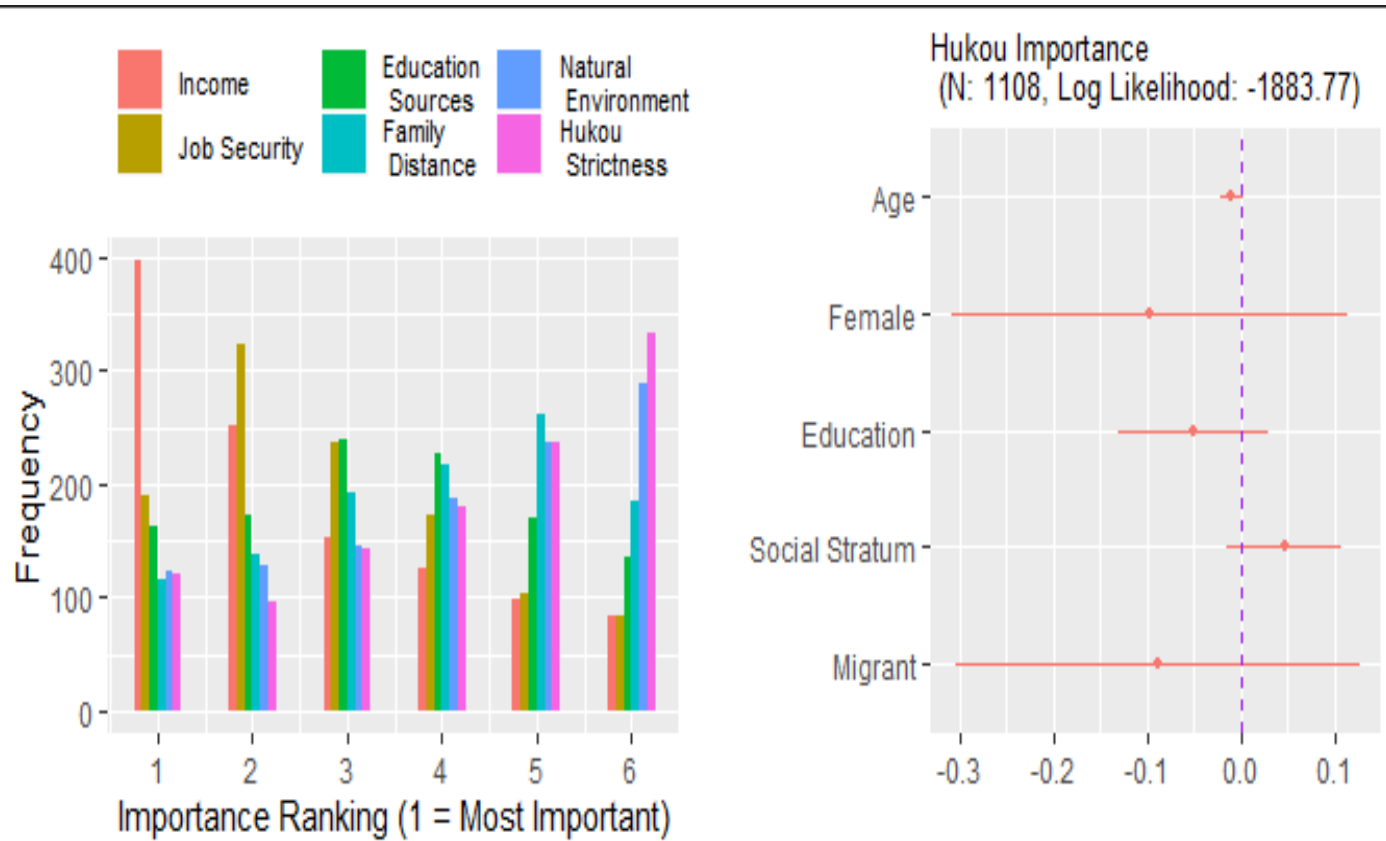
For the benefit theory

Do people care about a high-valued Hukou?

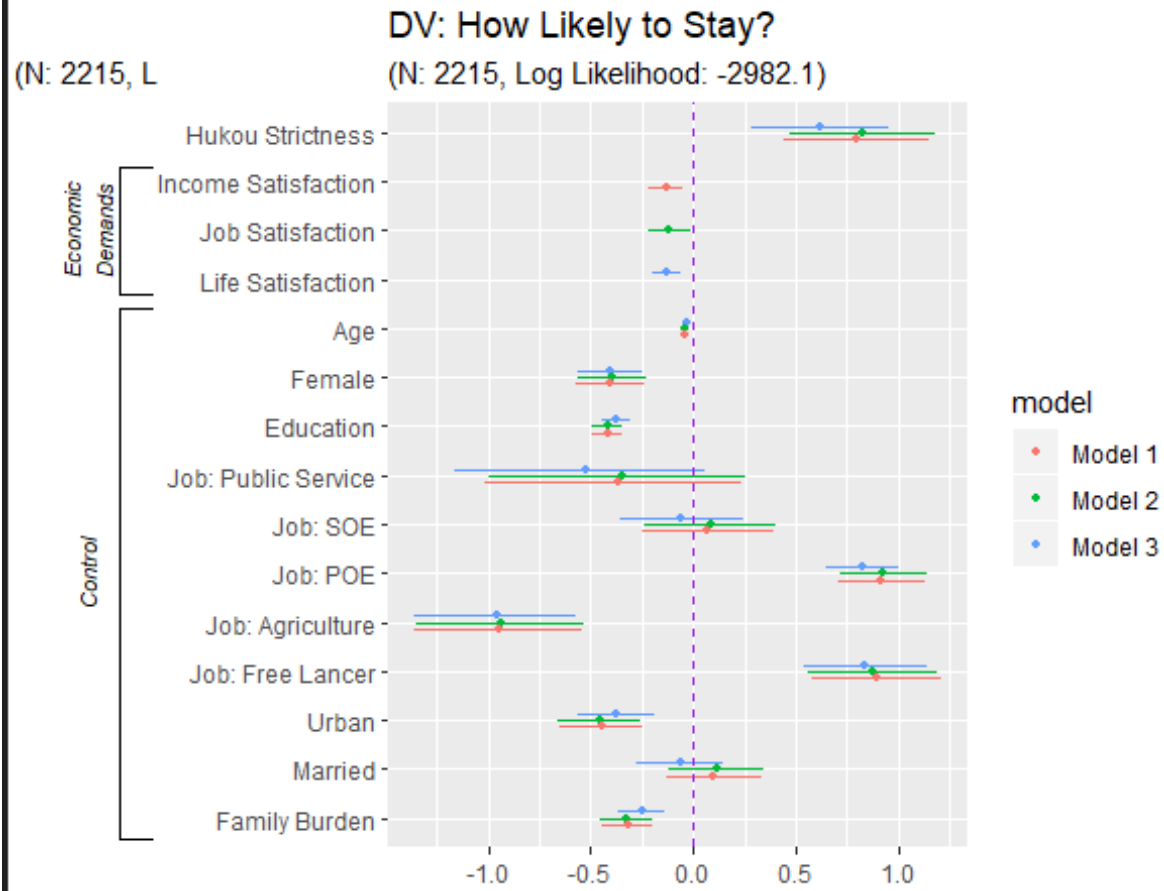
→ Hukou vs. benefit?

## Do People Know and Care?

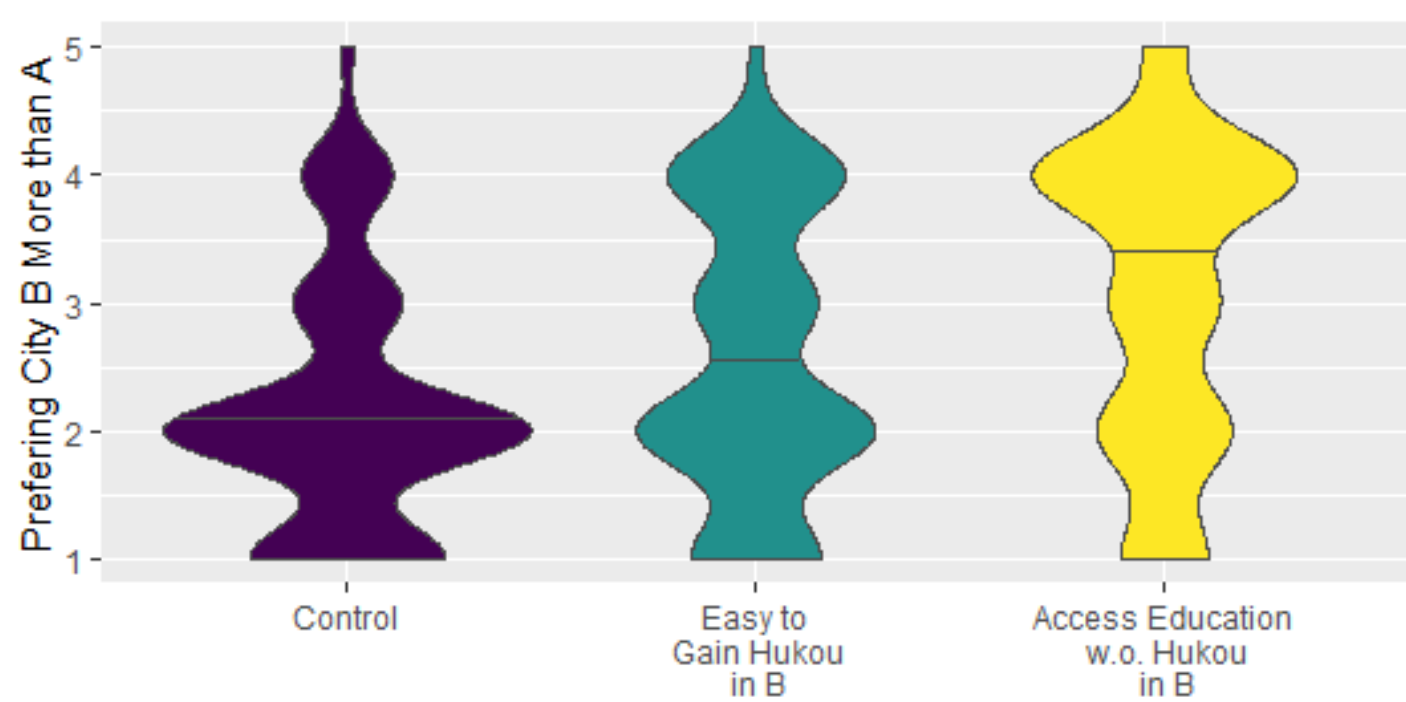




# Hukou vs. Benefit?



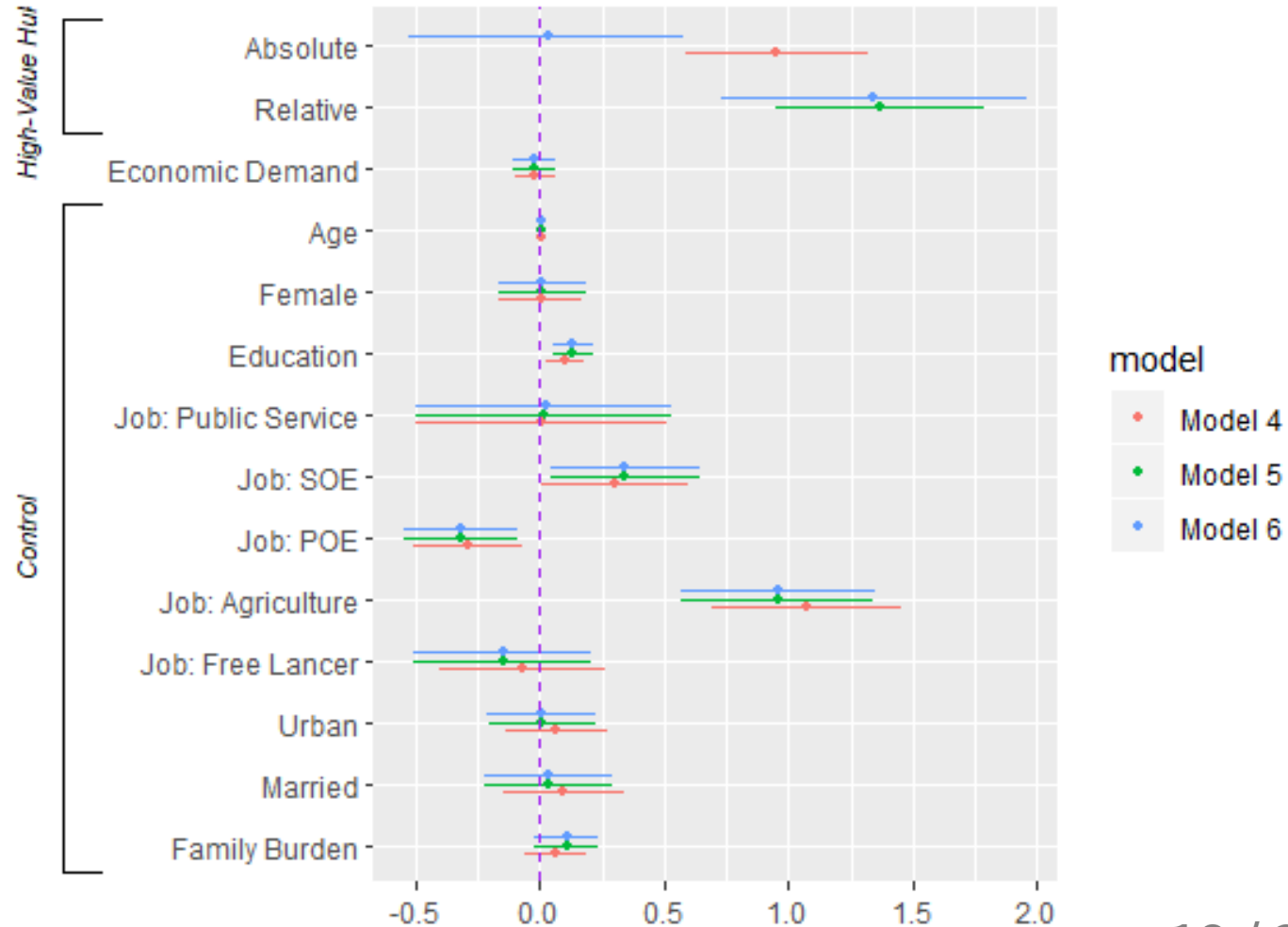




## DV: How Much Do You Want a Local Hukou?

(N: 2215, Log Likelihood: -2195.41)

2215, L



## Take-home Points

1. People don't care Hukou as much as commonly thought.
2. Hukou does shape (potential) migrants' decisions by loading values.

# Thank you!



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<https://sammo3182.github.io/>



[sammo3182](https://github.com/sammo3182)