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Talent in the Global City

Preparing Dalian for the Twenty-first Century

"In the global knowledge economy, people's skills, learning, talents and attributes—their human capital—have become key to both their ability to earn a living and to wider economic growth" (Keeley 2007). This quote from a recent Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publication reiterates what has become commonsense to many around the world: "Human capital" development is fundamental for economic growth and social progress. Few nations, cities, or development agencies question the link between talented human resources and local prosperity. Even in times of economic crisis, politicians have referred to workers as a fundamental of the economy that remains "strong" and "sound."[1] In the United States, laid-off factory workers have been offered retraining classes to learn skills appropriate for the growing knowledge economy so that they may earn a living and help generate local economic growth in places suffering from global competition and the outsourcing of production. Although the international division of labor sought cheap manual workers for the production of light-industry consumer goods in the 1970s, more recent practices have targeted employees with higher education, language skills, and technological knowledge. Singapore, for instance, recently launched a coordinated effort to attract foreign experts to train the city-state's next generation of

high-tech and biotech researchers and employees. In Bangalore, India, a complex network of universities and corporate training centers prepares people to work in multinational call centers and service operations, making the city competitive in the global knowledge economy. In addition to manufacturing facilities, transnational corporations have established computer and airline call centers in India and Ireland, U.S. tax preparation in Asia, communication corridors in Malaysia, and a biotech research web in Singapore. This celebration of talent in the global city is a worldwide phenomenon, and China is no exception.

A clear example of China's investment in talent is the opening of "talent markets" and "talent exchange centers" in cities across the country. These centers are designated sites for people with special skills, talents, and knowledge to meet employers through job fairs, computer databanks, and resume distribution. Although the first talent markets were small and attracted only a few people, they quickly expanded in the mid- to late 1990s, becoming important sites for the constitution of talented and professional employees. I distinctly remember the day in 1996 when I went to the Spring Festival job fair organized by the Personnel Bureau in Dalian, a major port city in northeast China. I had visited many such events (the first in 1993), but never had I seen so many people waiting to get into the fair. The line, about four people wide, snaked through the neighboring used-car market located just outside the large building where the fair was held. College seniors, their parents, friends, and others who wanted to change jobs came to the fair to look for new employment or to support their friends and relatives. Inside the building, representatives from state-run units, private and foreign-owned companies, and cooperative enterprises sat at tables with the list of positions for which they were hiring posted on the walls behind them, ready to engage in the new mechanism of labor allocation termed "mutual choice" (*shuangxiang xuanze*). These markets facilitated the newly prioritized "flow" of talent across and between cities, so it could be used "efficiently."

Although the image of a college graduates' job fair is commonsense to many Westerners, the spread of talent markets across China's cities is emblematic of significant changes in urban life in the past twenty years. After Mao Zedong died and the new leadership ushered in the "reform era" (1979–present) and the Four Modernizations (in agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense), China turned away from central planning, adopted a socialist market economy, and actively engaged the global market.[2] State-owned units no longer dominated urban economies, migrants moved to cities in search of work, and college graduates looked for employment on

TABLE 1.1 BREAKDOWN OF WORKFORCE IN CHINA (BY NUMBER OF WORKERS IN EACH SECTOR)

Year	State-owned sector	Collectively owned sector	Other ownership
	National workforce		
1980	80,190,000	24,250,000	n.a.[a]
1990	103,460,000	35,490,000	1,640,000
2000	78,780,000	14,470,000	19,350,000[b]
2003	66,212,800	9,510,000	29,200,000[c]
	Dalian workforce		
2000	544,017	123,130	316,394[d]

[a] The first statistic available for the "other ownership" category is for 1984.

[b] *China Labor Statistical Yearbook 2001,* p. 21. "Other ownership" units include foreign-funded, private, share holding, limited liability, and joint venture corporations. For details, see *China Labor Statistical Yearbook 2001,* p. 7.

[c] See "Employment Staff and Workers of China for 2003" statistics at China Data Center Online.

[d] This number includes, for example, foreign-funded and private, limited, and joint venture ownership structures. The foreign-funded numbers account for a total of 16 percent of the workforce, with 81 percent of that sector in enterprises that are not Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan owned. See *Dalian Statistical Yearbook 2000,* p. 35.

their own instead of receiving state-directed job assignments (Table 1.1). With private wealth accumulation, new social and class identities began to emerge, taking shape in the intersection of new work experiences, leisure pursuits, family histories, and policy shifts. The global competition for highly mobile capital and human resources also led to place-wars between cities and more entrepreneurial city-management policies.[3] Municipalities in China maneuvered to compete in the globalized world by establishing special economic zones, creating new city-marketing campaigns, and investing in the "quality" of its population through higher education and training opportunities. China's investment in human capital development is apparent in the dramatic increase in university enrollments and the number of college graduates in the past several decades; graduates increased, for instance, from 147,000[4] in 1980, to 614,000 in 1990, to 950,000 in 2000—an increase of almost 650 percent in twenty years, and more than 50 percent from 1990 to 2000[5] (Table 1.2). With new investments in human capital and ideas about how best to manage population (and labor) flows, it had become "thinkable" for municipalities to open sites where labor—and specifically *talented* labor—could be marketized. This practice directly contrasted ways of doing things under central planning of the high-socialist era (1949–1978). In other words, a new "regime of practices" and "rationality of governing" (governmentality) emerged in the reform era that aimed to optimize the prosperity, comfort, health, and

TABLE 1.2 INCREASE IN NUMBER OF COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS AND GRADUATES IN CHINA

Year	Newly enrolled students	Total enrolled	Number of graduates
1980	281,000[a]	1,144,000[b]	147,000[c]
1990	609,000	2,063,000	614,000
1993	924,000[d]	2,536,000[e]	571,000[f]
1995	926,000	2,906,000	805,000
2000	2,206,000	5,561,000	950,000
2002	3,205,000	9,034,000	1,337,000
2003	3,822,000	11,086,000	1,877,000[g]
2008	6,077,000	20,210,000	5,120,000[h]

[a] *China Statistical Yearbook 2004,* table 21-6 ("Number of New Students Enrollment by Level and Type of School"). These numbers are for graduates of all regular institutions of higher education.

[b] *China Statistical Yearbook 2004.*

[c] *China Statistical Yearkbook 2004,* table 21-7 ("Number of Graduates by Level and Type of School").

[d] *China Statistical Yearbook 2004,* table 21-6 ("Number of New Students Enrollment by Level and Type of School").

[e] *China Statistical Yearbook 2004.*

[f] *China Statistical Yearbook 2004,* table 21-7 ("Number of Graduates by Level and Type of School"). This number is low, likely because of the crackdown after student protests in 1989; the number of graduates in 1994 was 637,000, and in 1995 it was 805,000.

[g] All data in this table through 2003 are from *China Statistical Yearbook 2004.*

[h] The 2008 data are from China Data Center Online.

happiness of the population in new ways.[6] In the process, an urban professional subject emerged who was distinct from the socialist revolutionary cadre of the Maoist era. In this book, I examine the emergence of this urban professional subject and how it is linked with a new way of doing things (practices, mechanisms, techniques of governing) and a new governmental rationality, specifically the contemporary emphasis on talent and strategies for local urban growth.

Dalian, a port city of approximately six million in the late 2000s and the focus of this study, is an intriguing place to examine these processes (Figure 1.1). Under the leadership of Mayor Bo Xilai (1993–2000), followed by Lin Yongjin (2000–2003) and Xia Deren (2003–present), Dalian began advertising itself to potential investors and visitors as the "Hong Kong of the North," a "Garden City," and the "Pearl of the North." Municipal marketing campaigns boasted of the city's expertise and talent, research universities, the new Software Park, and the abundance of quality human resources. Officials also produced images and representations of Dalian as a hub of finance, trade, and tourism for the global economy, emphasizing the concentration of universities and "high-quality" personnel in the city. In fact, the number of college enrollments and graduates in Dalian increased significantly in the

FIGURE 1.1 Dalian, China. *(Created by Xiongjiu Liao.)*

1990s and early 2000s, mirroring the national trend (Table 1.3).[7] Although less familiar to Westerners than Shanghai or Beijing, recently Dalian has drawn international attention for being named "China's Bangalore" because of its concentration of information technology companies (Thompson 2006), for hosting the "Summer Davos" conference of the World Economic Forum Global Growth Companies, for becoming the "fresh air" training location for U.S. track and field athletes prior to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, for receiving the accolade of most "livable" city in China (Fu 2006), and for being the subject of a National Public Radio feature on how Dalian University of Technology has used State University of New York as a model for its new automotive school (Abramson 2008a, 2008b). Intel also recently announced a US$2.5-million investment in a chip plant in Dalian. Echoing municipal campaigns, the CEO of Intel noted Dalian's "geographical advantages, sound infrastructure, and abundant human resources" as reasons for choosing the city.[8]

The urban professionals I met in Dalian worked in white-collar jobs in the city as managers and assistants, civil servants and private entrepreneurs, and researchers and translators. They were not the top elite or "princeling" children of high leaders, nor were they the individuals who resisted the "professionalization" of their worlds and lived more alternative urban lives. Rather, they were common urban employees who hoped for social mobility, satisfying careers, and perhaps families. As talented human capital, they focused on

TABLE 1.3 INCREASE IN NUMBER OF COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS AND INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN DALIAN AND THREE COMPARABLE PORT CITIES

Year	No. of institutions of higher education	Student enrollment	City population
		Dalian	
1996	12[a]	53,100	5,374,000
2000	14	85,800	5,514,700
2003	18	150,000	5,601,600
		Tianjin	
1996	20	71,400	8,984,500
2000	21	119,100	9,120,000
2003	37	245,200	9,260,000
		Ningbo	
1996	4	10,400	5,300,800
2000	8	25,900	5,409,400
2003	12	80,100	5,490,700
		Qingdao	
1996	4	26,100	6,902,700
2000	6	46,100	7,066,500
2003	25	164,840	7,206,800

Source: China Data Center Online.

Note: College enrollments were expanded in 1998.

[a] In 1980, Dalian had ten institutions of higher education (*China Statistical Yearbook 1981,* pp. 81–82).

career development and personal advancement, developed a specialized set of skills or knowledge bases, aimed to be creative and enterprising, and were considered critical to the success of the global city in China. In the following chapters, I examine who this new professional subject is; how he or she made choices; and how he or she negotiated often-conflicting demands and regulatory schemes from state, market, and familial regimes. I argue in particular that the new professional in China remains closely connected with the nation—although not necessarily the Communist Party—leading to a new social form that I call "patriotic professionalism." This professionalism weds career planning and individual professional development with national projects of state-strengthening and urban projects of local growth and prosperity in interesting and unexpected ways.

Many studies of the processes addressed here (urban entrepreneurialism, practices of self-enterprise, valorization of autonomy, and use of the market

mechanism) have turned to the concept of "neoliberalism" to explain such shifts in urban life. Although I argue that neoliberal techniques of governing, such as more autonomous decision making and the marketization of labor, have been adopted in China, I also argue that these neoliberal techniques of governing are being combined with *non*liberal ways of governing the self and others—such as Maoist-era politics of socialist modernization and ethics of concern for the well-being of the nation. It thus does not make sense to describe the new urban professionals as "neoliberal subjects," for that assumes too much about the ethics and politics of these young people.[9] My analysis challenges more traditional understandings of neoliberalism as a particular combination of political, technical, and ideological elements that necessarily emerges as a "package" in disparate locations (Hoffman, DeHart, and Collier 2006). I thus aim to contribute to understandings of changing urban life in China, anthropological studies of subject-formation in global city spaces, and analyses of neoliberalism itself.

In the next section, I discuss reforms in China that valued knowledge workers in new ways; my argument is that these reforms included neoliberal ways of doing things, producing what I term "late-socialist neoliberalism" and a subject form I call "patriotic professionalism." In the second half of the chapter, I argue that this emergence of professionalism is similar to human capital development found elsewhere in the world, particularly as a strategy for urban growth.

Reforms in China: The Planned System as a "Problem"

The social, political, and economic transformations that frame the discussion in this book are numerous and have led to unprecedented change in China's cities. This is particularly true of the reform era after Deng Xiaoping's much-cited 1992 tour of southern China and the Special Economic Zones (*nanxun*), when he embraced—and thus accelerated—reforms in the planned system and urged the country to move ahead with "the socialist market economy."[10] These transformations also correspond with a decade of research that I conducted from 1993 to 2003 on professionalism and urban transformation in Dalian. During this time, China welcomed foreign direct investments (FDI), promoted new sectors of the economy and industries as "growth points," and even brought entrepreneurs into the Party and sanctioned the commodification of real estate and labor.[11] Urban economies were diversified, and college graduates were no longer required to work for the state upon graduation.

Instead, they chose jobs on their own and wrote resumes, attended job fairs, scoured newspaper ads, and used connections to find employment. With their families, they made decisions about working for the state or in the private sector, considering the advantages of each.

Since the early 1990s, this new professional middle class has exploded onto the urban scene, increasingly familiar to Western viewers through CNN broadcasts, newspaper articles, and *Business Week* reports, especially with extensive coverage of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Images of young families shopping in shiny new plazas, well-heeled women and men taking taxis and private cars to work, and couples on dates spending leisurely hours together in new malls, restaurants, and tea shops have become commonplace representations of global cities in China, especially those on the eastern seaboard. Additionally, Western observers of China are increasingly aware of the dramatic rural-to-urban migration and low-paid factory production that have been fueling the growth of this urban middle class and the dramatic expansion of the urban population, from just under 18 percent in 1978 to just over 36 percent of the population in 2000 (K. Zhang 2004: 30–31).[12]

What lies behind the new urban landscapes of high-rise offices, export-processing zones, and middle-class social identities is a series of critical reflections on Maoist-era governing of the economy and society. These critical reflections, by government officials and academic elite in China and economic and political observers outside China, identify the Maoist-planned system of high socialism as "a problem" of "excessive government," principally in relation to a market-based, liberal democratic system (Foucault 1997a: 77). For example, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, direct distribution of labor assets by state-planning agencies began to be identified as inefficient, irrational, wasteful, and poor management. In 1982, for instance, Deng said:

> We do have talented people, but *the problem is how to organize them properly,* arouse their enthusiasm and give scope to their talents. On the one hand, there is a great demand for scientists and technicians. On the other hand, there are cases of serious waste, because they are not assigned enough work due to poor organization, or cannot apply what they have learned or put their specialized skills to best use. We should consider the problem of organizing and managing scientists and technicians, because the present method of management doesn't work. *How to use their talents and use them properly is quite a problem.* (Deng 1985: 8; emphasis added)

Economists and foreign investors accused state units of monopolizing educated workers and blamed the units for wasting talent through overstaffing, poorly utilizing their skills, and labor hoarding. Economic reforms that expanded ownership to private, joint venture, and foreign-owned enterprises also highlighted the need for college-educated workers in sectors outside state ownership. The failure of the assignment system to let talent flow to where it was most needed and into positions where the workers would be satisfied were newly identified as serious obstacles to national development. While debates about possible interventions certainly were contentious (see H. Wang 2004), in these discussions the socialist labor-allocation system was identified as a problem. Various actors, in other words, had "problematized" the command economy and raised new questions about "what should be ruled, by whom and through what procedures" (Rose 1993: 285).[13]

With this problematization of socialist planning and acceptance of new truth statements about the command economy, China entered a new campaign of reform and opening up (*gaige kaifang*; 1979–present), which experimented with the market mechanism and welcomed interaction with foreign entities, particularly after Deng's 1992 tour of the Special Economic Zones (*nanxun*). Government officials initiated reforms in the assignment system and devised new market-based methods to distribute labor to where they believed it was needed. They instituted "mutual choice" (*shuangxiang xuanze*) to allow graduates and employers, instead of state functionaries, to make decisions about where to work and whom to hire; opened job fairs to facilitate this exchange; supported face-to-face interviewing; and established talent exchange centers to manage the process of job change across sectors of the urban economy (state, private, and foreign). Job assignment offices on campuses were renamed "career guidance" offices, and university officials learned how to guide graduates into appropriate positions instead of assigning them.

These critical reflections and governmental shifts have produced a new form of governing that I call "late-socialist neoliberalism," shaping new subjects (urban professionals) and spaces (global cities) in China. I call this neoliberal governmentality "late-socialist"[14] (versus postsocialist or just neoliberal) because it exhibits multiple techniques, norms, and modes of self-formation, including socialist elements. Late-socialist neoliberalism is (at once) distinct from Maoist-era state socialism and the dominance of central state planning and the command economy, and from neoliberal regimes found in the United States and Europe. The social form of patriotic professionalism, for instance, weds neoliberal methods of labor allocation with a Maoist-era sensibility of the relationship between labor power and nation building.

A critical aspect of the governmental change in China was the adoption of more distanced techniques of governing that encouraged self-governance rather than state-directed planning. These techniques—such as individual job selections rather than state assignments, or the location of investment decision making in municipalities instead of in central agencies—differed from those of the high-socialist era, when citizens and cities had little autonomy to generate their own plans, to create new models for development, to pursue individual interests, or to accumulate family wealth.

In contemporary times, graduates must be well versed in what constitutes responsible choices; how to make those choices; and how to develop the self through the management of skills, knowledge, and potential rather than through allegiance to a strict set of Party rules or state-directed welfare distribution. This shift away from direct state assignments is an important aspect of the development of professionalism, for the new methods of labor distribution require a subject who differs from the high-socialist worker. Employment markets for college graduates—as well as the decentralization of urban planning—pivot on a respecification of social actors as autonomous in ways not possible under the centrally planned system of direct assignments (see Rose 1996b). In the process of learning how to make choices—and making them—active, enterprising subjects have emerged, what David Bray (2005: 179) describes as the transition from the "traditional employment mentality" to the initiative to "create your own rice bowl." Late-socialist neoliberal governmentality has cultivated active and enterprising subjects who are able to make choices about appropriate employment that develop the individual, the city, and even the nation—citizen-subjects who are the "counterpart to entrepreneurship, innovation and national competitiveness" (Rose 1999: 282). The professional employee, in other words, has emerged in place of the assignee.

These techniques have created a space that Li Zhang and Aihwa Ong (2008) term "a new social" in contemporary China, in which self-directed career planning, self-improvement through training and education, and self-cultivation of proper ways of acting (e.g., no spitting during the Olympic Games) have shifted the locus of development from central authorities to young professionals and the municipal governments that try to attract them. This new focus on the *self* (and on the local) exhibits a "reconceptualization of target subjects from objects of administrative fiat to autonomous agents with vested interests and rights" (Sigley 2004), albeit an autonomy that is meant to support national modernization efforts. As the new professionals I met embraced a self-enterprising ethos, they also talked about the importance

of caring for their families and of developing themselves to help China prosper. Concern for the nation was integrated into their own individual career pursuits. Thus, even as individuals made their own choices about where to work, and even as explicit commitment to the socialist project was no longer necessary, post-Mao governing remained concerned with the "overall strength of the nation," relying now, however, not on ideology but on "the capacities" of people (Sigley 2004: 565). At the same time, practices that aim to enhance "the capacity and potential of individuals and the population"—what Ong calls "optimizing technologies" (2006: 6)—intersect with discourses of culture/education (*wenhua*), quality (*suzhi*), and appropriate feminine and masculine activities (see Chapters 5 and 6) as well as other forms of regulation that lead to fairly stable social categorizations and to potentially "unruly" subject forms (Zhan 2005; see also Rofel 2007). Subject formation, in other words, is a complex and contested process.

In the following chapters, I examine various sites in the "microphysics of power," the detailed and multiple points and norms through which the governing of others and of the self occurs, and how these specific nodes are necessarily linked to questions of national strength and social collectives. To make sense of how neoliberal practices and socialist norms of national progress are able to come together in a relatively stable social formation, I take an analytical approach informed by the work of Michel Foucault and other governmentality scholars. In particular, I argue what at first may seem counterintuitive: that the promotion of choice, autonomy, and freedom are not naturally existing human characteristics but techniques of governing that specify the post-Mao professional subject.

Choice as a Technique of Governing: A Governmentality Perspective

Many analyses of post- and late-socialism present reforms in central planning as moments when people experience freedom from the state. These analyses assume that when the state retreats, individual agency is restored, and people have the opportunity to be who they really are. The focus of this study—the growth of employment markets and career options in a globalizing city—is an arena where narratives of freedom are especially strong and to which people often point as proof of the retreat of the state and the decline of governance in everyday affairs in China. This study also highlights the professional middle classes, a group that scholars have documented in cities across Asia as forming their identities through individual actions, especially

consumption and lifestyle choices,[15] and as harboring the potential for political opposition as the state retreats from their lives.[16] These studies, however, frame their analyses around state-society power struggles and identification of individual agency, rarely analyzing choice or autonomy themselves. For instance, they tend to ask whether the arrival of autonomy and the private accumulation of wealth are the roots of a liberal political system in places that do not have such political traditions, and whether this liberalism will lead to popular democratic movements against authoritarian governments. This line of inquiry is based on a conceptual separation between state and society and suppositions about politics as direct opposition to the state. The assumption is that the state either intervenes in people's lives or it does not; if it does not, people have opportunities for political participation and opposition to the state.

In contrast, my study shifts the question away from the discovery of individual agency and possible opposition to the state to an inquiry into how modes of power and normative practices help produce the professional choosing subject. Shifting away from questions about overt political opposition does not mean I disregard questions of politics or resistance to forms of power. Rather, the point I am making is similar to the distinction Colin Gordon makes in his description of Foucault's concept of governmentality. Gordon notes that, unlike classical political philosophy, which was concerned with the "best government," "governmentality is about *how to govern*" (1991: 7; emphasis added).[17] Similarly, I am not asking whether the professionals would be better off with a liberal democracy and when they would demand it but rather how they have come to be self-enterprising subjects in a regime that has undergone a series of critical reflections about how best to govern in China. What I am trying to avoid are the assumptions about the evolutionary development of capitalism, civil society, and democracy that are embedded in many discussions of emerging middle classes.[18]

Thus, although it may be tempting to see reforms in socialist planning as the onset of freedom, such a perspective assumes that autonomous decision making and calculative choice, whether in job searches, home purchases, or love seeking, are natural human characteristics that exist a priori. In this book, I do not present the act of choosing as an already-existing condition within individuals that is expressed with the end of governance; rather, I interpret choice and autonomy as techniques of governing adopted by the post-Mao government (Hoffman 2006). As a technique, job choice may then be analyzed as a part of power relations, a mechanism of regulation, a device deployed to help encourage college graduates to be self-enterprising individ-

uals, offering a more nuanced analysis of self-enterprise, opportunity, and choice than many studies of the middle class do. While middle-class consumption and lifestyles may be used to map contours of social change, studies of consumption per se not only underemphasize *production* in middle-class formation but also, by naturalizing the act of choosing, mask much about who these young people are and the mechanisms and rationalities that have led to the emergence of professionals.

A central argument in this book is that as we recognize the real and tangible changes in Chinese citizens' everyday lives, we also must understand how the very notions of freedom and autonomy are a part of the governing and subject-formation processes. Experiences of autonomy and choice interpreted in this way may be analyzed as mechanisms aimed to end the guarantee of dependency on the state and to promote post-Mao visions of national strength and modernity. The perspective that practices and strategies of freedom are not outside power relations and are not indicative of the absence of power draws on Foucault's writings about liberal governmentality and power/knowledge (e.g., 1991, 1997a). For Foucault, governing is about "the conduct of conduct" and refers to rationalities and techniques that seek order and economy and that shape self-governance. The specific argument about choice as a technique of governing also builds on the work of scholars who have extended Foucault's work on liberal governmentality and have argued that regulation and management of subjects happens "through freedom."[19] Freedom in this analysis is "a technical condition of rational government" that helps produce "entrepreneurial" and "competitive" individuals (Burchell 1996: 24, 23). My goal here is not to measure the degree to which people really are or are not free from the state. Similarly, Lisa Rofel argues we must be critical of hypotheses about how people are "casting off socialism [in China] to find their true inner selves" (2007: 6),[20] and Gary Sigley argues that the post-Mao state has "regrouped" rather than "retreated" (2006).

To understand how choice is part of the complex and sometimes contradictory subject-formation process, I turn to the everyday techniques and rationalities of governing in such domains as universities, job fairs, families, and urban spaces. As I describe in subsequent chapters, governing through choice crosses over state, market, and familial domains to help constitute and give meaning to professionalism and professional subjectivity. A governmentality approach is useful precisely because it focuses on rationalities and technologies and therefore allows us "to see forms of power that conventional state-centric approaches miss" (Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005: 205). An ethnographic analysis of choice across these domains offers insight into

how governmental rationalities have specified urban professionals who see themselves as independent from state-planning organs and tied to the nation through the legacy of the socialist welfare system, dreams of China's prosperity, and practices of self-cultivation.

Neoliberalism in Late-Socialist China

Thinking of choice as a technique of governing presents interesting links between contemporary China and technologies of rule that are associated with "advanced liberal," or neoliberal, regimes, such as the United States. The work of British sociologist Nikolas Rose is particularly useful here: He argues that in advanced liberal regimes, governing occurs in more "distanced" ways and "through the regulated choices of individual citizens" (Rose 1993: 285; 1996b).[21] Distance, in his analysis, refers to the space "between the decisions of formal political institutions and other social actors" that fosters responsible and self-enterprising subjects (Rose 1996b: 53), what has been termed "socialism from afar" in China (Zhang and Ong 2008). These autonomous subjects are governed through their choices, which exhibit a degree of expertise, self-mastery, and self-maximization, such as choices about healthy living, continuing professional education, or responsibly managing consumer debt.

In addition, many definitions of neoliberalism identify "good" government as "the end" of state intervention into the economy and society, the promotion of the market mechanism, and the generalized fostering of entrepreneurialism. In numerous interviews I conducted in Dalian, people suggested that the market mechanism—and not the planned economy's job assignment system—was the most "rational" and "reasonable" way to distribute educated workers across workplaces and even cities. Particularly after China adopted the market "as a mechanism of government" in 1992 (Sigley 2004: 568), markets became a "cure" for problems (H. Yan 2003a: 499) and a kind of "test" (Foucault 1997a: 76; Hindess 2004: 26) or "regulative ideal" (Collier 2005b: 23) of good or efficient government.[22] In other words, the problematization of central planning led to the adoption of modes of governing—the marketization of labor distribution, the valorization of autonomous and calculative choices, the decentralization of decision making, and the emergence of self-enterprising subjects—that referenced advanced liberalism.

Nonetheless, it may be confusing to talk about "neo" or "advanced" liberalism in China. In fact, recently China studies scholars have been debating the evidence of neoliberalism in China, a place with Confucian, imperial, and socialist histories, but not a "liberal" political tradition per se. Wang Hui,

for example, identifies the "sprouts" of "neoliberal ideology" when factions pushed for "market radicalization" and greater decentralization of power and privatization after the 1989 social movement (2004). Others, however, dispute that "neoliberalism" exists in China. Andrew Kipnis, for instance, takes issue with Pun Ngai's (2003), Hairong Yan's (2003b), and Ann Anagnost's (1997b, 2004) discussions of *suzhi* (quality) discourse as neoliberal, arguing instead that the ways social hierarchies are naturalized in China are not liberal. Although Kipnis's critique of the conflation of Marxist critiques of global capitalism and Foucauldian studies of neoliberal governmentality in China studies is important (2007; see also Barnett 2005; Song 2006b),[23] his analysis confines neoliberalism either to "systematic discourses" or "an ideology," producing an either/or analysis that dismisses the possibility of neoliberal technologies of governing combining with nonliberal elements. Moreover, the rejection of the argument that neoliberal elements exist essentially relegates China to a status of "other" and "different." In addition, focusing only on moral hierarchies and authoritarian aspects of *suzhi* discourses (e.g., Kipnis 2007; Hsu 2007) fails to acknowledge the importance of how market relations do affect subject formation—particularly through campaigns to raise the population's quality and the infusion of particular kinds of value into bodies and identities—as Pun's, Yan's, and Anagnost's work does.[24]

Rofel also questions the coherence of neoliberalism in China by extending Mei Zhan's (2005) notion of "unruliness" to argue that China was not simply "confronted with a uniform bundle of neoliberalism" when joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), for instance (Rofel 2007: 159). Rather, in negotiations over China's ascension to the WTO, she notes "an unstable social field of neoliberal interaction" and "strange hybrids that belie the idea that neoliberalism is a uniform set of principles" (2007: 166, 169). Such interventions are critical for moving beyond the addition of an "s" to the term "neoliberalism" to make it plural, the idea that "a singular type of neoliberal subject" (Rofel 2007: 2) exists, or the notion that China is "in transition" and thus "not yet" neoliberal (H. Wang 2004). Susan Greenhalgh and Edwin Winckler's work also pushes beyond simple understandings of neoliberalism descending on China in their study of reproductive-planning policies and the place of science in the constitution of autonomous and self-governing subjects (2005). Yet, in these studies, references to a "neoliberal capitalism," "*the interests* of neoliberalism" (Rofel 2007: 188; emphasis added), and a neoliberal subject "whose interests, desires, and choices *align with* those of a neoliberalizing market and state that have shaped those interests, desires, and choices to their own ends" (Greenhalgh and Winkler 2005: 244; emphasis

added) do exist. Such perspectives imply that neoliberalism is always associated with one hegemonic, political project, a position I reconsider in this book.[25] Ong's work on "neoliberalism as exception" and "exceptions to neoliberalism" is helpful in pushing past simplified notions of variations of neoliberalism by analyzing how states in Asia have adopted neoliberal *and* authoritarian measures in one regime of governing. Ong's argument is noteworthy in that it foregrounds the complex and strategic governmental interventions that are not "reducible" to one particular political project but that, for instance, include *and* exclude specific segments of the population from "neoliberal considerations" (2006; see also Dunn 2008; Hindess 2004; Sigley 2004).

My project is not to define neoliberalism as a particular bundle of elements or as having one particular set of interests related to capitalism and class power. In the United States, for instance, the Left *and* the Right have adopted neoliberal "ways of doing things," to use Foucault's language, employing these techniques for various ends.[26] Much of the literature on neoliberalism in anthropology and geography, however, assumes that neoliberalism takes a particular form, with a "standard" bundle of policies and a particular political project (Hoffman, DeHart, and Collier 2006). Although groundbreaking in many ways, these arguments are limiting in others. Geographers, such as David Harvey (1989b, 2005) and Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell (2002), argue that neoliberalism—characterized as entrepreneurial city management, privatization, deregulation, and extension of market logics to the provision of urban services—has reshaped urban spaces and landscapes. Although Peck and Tickell, and such others as Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, are interested in processes of neoliberalization and diverse neoliberal forms, whether "roll back" or "roll out" neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell 2002), as a "restructuring ethos" (Peck and Tickell 2007)[27] or as "geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism'" (Brenner and Theodore 2002), they emphasize an overarching ideological element, what Peck and Tickell call a "new religion of neoliberalism" and a "metalogic" (2002: 33, 36). These definitions of neoliberalism take a political stand (particularly regarding global capitalism) that presumes an opposition, and perhaps incompatibility, between neoliberal projects of individual improvement and self-enterprise and notions of social progress, solidarities, and collective values.[28] Such an approach to the study of neoliberalism in cities presents it as a fairly coherent "top-down" package, as Clive Barnett also notes (2005; see also Mitchell 2004), and thus does not provide the conceptual tools to explain how specific neoliberal practices may combine with nonliberal norms and politics in everyday activities and in nonstate domains. Recently, however, new challenges to

the assumed forms that neoliberalism may take have appeared through discussions, for instance, of variation and hybridity (Larner 2003; Brenner and Theodore 2002), a technical analysis of neoliberalism (Collier 2005b) and "global assemblages" (Ong and Collier 2005).[29]

By disaggregating the various components that constitute a regime of governing—a move governmentality studies offer—I analyze contemporary social forms and what is at stake in their emergence. I describe a new family formation termed "one household, two systems" in Chapter 6, for instance, that referred to the strategic deployment of family labor simultaneously in the state and private sectors by young professionals. Typically, the woman stayed in the state sector, and the man ventured into the world of private enterprise. This practice was the result of familial negotiations over how to enhance stability and manage new risks that were linked to the legacies of state socialism, spatialized gender ideologies, and the market distribution of goods. Additionally, I argue that in the new norm of professionalism, we see a combination of the neoliberal cultivation and actualization of autonomous choices with Maoist-era expressions of concern for the nation, wedding individual career development with China's future prosperity.

Thus, although I argue that neoliberal governmental technologies are evident in China, I want to emphasize that late-socialist neoliberalism differs in significant ways from the advanced liberal "formula of rule" described by Rose. This is particularly true in terms of the "supplanting" of certain norms of "service and dedication" by norms of "competition, quality and customer demand" and the extent of "the de-statization of government" in China (Rose 1996b: 56). The notion of patriotic professionalism, for instance, suggests that political norms cultivated in the Maoist era have not been fully supplanted by neoliberal ones. Ordinary citizens actively embrace an ethic of self-care that foregrounds individualized career development and social mobility enacted through the marketplace *with* politics reminiscent of socialist modernization that link work and patriotism and that emphasize the good of the nation as a whole.[30] Individual and autonomous employment choice is intimately connected with an understanding of labor power as being critical to socialist modernization projects. Similarly, in his research on urban budgetary practices in an industrial city in post-Soviet Russia, Stephen Collier argues that fiscal-planning reforms adopted neoliberal "technological mechanisms" but also that a "rationality of a market-type" intersected with other substantive ends found in Soviet bio-politics. This intersection meant that neoliberalism did "not imply the wholesale replacement of one form of social organization with another"; in other words, the adoption of the market mechanism

in budgeting did not imply the "marketization" of society (2005b: 388; forthcoming). The emergence of patriotic professionalism similarly suggests that there has not been a "wholesale replacement" of Maoist revolutionary subjects with Westernized, middle-class individuals and that this social form does not simply represent the corruption of socialism by global capitalism.

Additionally, in advanced liberal regimes, the extensive privatization, deregulation, and marketization of everything from health care to insurance highlight the particularly de-statized space of these domains, the kinds of decisions that are made, and the individualized nature of expertise. Provisions of goods and services and decisions about them have been pushed outside the bounds of the formal government bureaucracy. In China, however, the late-socialist state conditions the meaning of post-Mao autonomy through regulation of the domains in which choices are made and the ways in which they are made. This conditioning is apparent in the consistent use of moral education to guide graduates into certain positions, university interventions into what is called an unbalanced marketplace, and the impact of the socialist urban-welfare system that associated the state with security for many urban families. As I explain in more detail in Chapter 4, even as Western liberal political theory has emphasized individual liberties and freedom from the state, in post–World War I *Ordo*-liberalism and Chicago School neoliberalism, the role of the state has been acknowledged as critical in arranging liberty and free competition. Wang Hui also argues that in "the Chinese version of neoliberalism," the state is critical to the emergence of neoliberalism, what he terms a "complex mutual dependence" between state policies and market ideology rather than "some fundamental conflict" between them (2004: 21).[31] Thus, while this ethnography moves across state and nonstate domains, it also accounts for the state as an active participant in late-socialist neoliberalism.

I turn to governmentality studies to help with this analysis precisely because such an approach allows for the conceptual flexibility to analyze the practices, technologies, ethics, and politics that combine in particular regimes. Few scholars have taken neoliberalism itself as an object of study in this way, distinguishing between the technical, political, and ethical elements that constitute a "way of doing things."[32] Indeed, Foucault explains that he "tried to analyze 'liberal-ism' not as a theory or an ideology—and even less, certainly, as a way for 'society' to 'represent itself' . . . but, rather, *as a practice,* which is to say, as a '*way of doing things*' oriented toward objectives and regulating itself by means of a *sustained reflection*" (1997a: 73–74; emphasis added). In other words, it is not an inevitable governmental system that defines neoliberal governmentality per se but rather a rationality of "sustained reflection"

that leads to particular practices. Analyzing these practices allows us to understand how neoliberal practices may combine with nonliberal, socialist, or authoritarian practices, for instance, without describing such combinations as contradictions, anomalies, disorder, or betrayals (see also Collier 2005a, forthcoming; DeHart 2010; Muehlebach 2007). In this book, I argue that patriotic professionalism and "one household, two systems" family formations are ideal domains through which to examine these often-undocumented social forms and to understand what is at stake in their deployment. Moreover, examination of their emergence pushes us to reflect not only on recent forms of governing, professional subjecthood, and urban spaces in late-socialist China but also on what we mean by neoliberalism itself (Hoffman, DeHart, and Collier 2006).

Contemporary Connections between Talent and the Global City

In many ways, the emergence of the post-Mao professional subject is an urban phenomenon. The careers these young people sought were middle-class, white-collar, office, management, and entrepreneurial opportunities found predominantly in urban labor markets and urban economies. Among new graduates existed a palpable urban hierarchy in which they assumed the best opportunities (*jihui*) were in the dominant cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, although many hoped to stay in Dalian as well.[33] Employment decisions by professionals incorporated a spatial consideration that hinged not only on governmental rationalities of choice but also on the refiguring of urban places as hubs in the global economy and as locations of opportunity. Cities also embraced the idea that attracting talent (*rencai*) would be good for local development and economic growth.

As I explain in more detail in Chapter 2, I understand the emergence of active and enterprising professional subjects as being intertwined with processes that have led Dalian to pursue place-specific and border-crossing images as competitive strategies. Plans to become the "Hong Kong of the North," for instance, were developed locally, exhibiting autonomous decision making and self-enterprise by municipalities that echoed employment choice and career planning by young professionals. Urban place-making campaigns, such as the "Hong Kong of the North" or images of Dalian as a "green" garden seaside city, also were enmeshed in conversations about job opportunities for the professionals, thus not only resonating with job choice and practices of professional career development but also relying on those practices. Planners

in Dalian have explicitly linked the success of open-door modernization with the kinds of workers, residents, and conveniences found in this city. At the same time, college graduates have been encouraged to become outward-looking professionals who train and promote themselves as skilled and talented employees, simultaneously helping the city develop. A "vocabulary of enterprise," in other words, links the decentralization of urban planning with the promotion of an "innovative spirit" in college graduates—that is, late-socialist rationalities of enterprise constitute places and people.[34] As part of what Cris Shore and Susan Wright (1997) call the "anthropology of policy," a central argument in this book is that acts of individual self-development and place marketing—even when they are touted as evidence of freedom from state control—are new mechanisms in late-socialist governmentality.

The analytical focus on how reform-era methods of governing specify particular kinds of spaces and subjects also challenges more naturalized correlations made between human capital and urban development in the urban studies literature. Much of this literature on the value of expertise, talent, and higher education for urban economic growth and national progress presents this correlation as a rational and even natural phenomenon. Although neoclassical economists previously emphasized "the accumulation of physical capital" for economic development, they now argue "that knowledge, training, and skill possessed by humans might be as important as, if not more important than, physical capital in the determination of output" (G. Chow 2007: 208; see also Becker 1994; Castells 1989; Glaeser 2005). Across Asia, economists have upheld the improvement of the "stock and quality of human resources" as a sign that a government is preparing its labor force for new engagements with the global knowledge economy (Chowdhury and Islam 1993: 19; Keeley 2007; Xiao and Tsang 1999; Siu and Lau 1998; Yusuf and Nabeshima 2006). Urban scholars also have noted the link between skilled knowledge workers, concentrations of professional and managerial producer services, and "global city" developments (e.g., Sassen 1991, 1998; Olds 2001; Yeung 2000).[35] This correlation has become particularly popular in the United States, with Richard Florida's arguments about the ascendancy of a new "Creative Class." Florida suggests that the creatives generate economic growth through the production of new ideas and technologies, and that the cities that can attract this class with cool neighborhoods and tolerant attitudes will prosper. Creativity, he writes, "is now the *decisive* source of competitive advantage," and thus municipal governments must build cities that attract such workers (Florida 2002b: 5; emphasis in original; see also Florida 2005). Although the celebration of talent permeates urban politics in many cities, it

is critical to understand that what seems like a rational, commonsense, and natural form of economic growth, urban development, and class formation has emerged in China through historically specific problematizations of the Maoist-planned system, new articulations of the global knowledge economy, and a highly contested reworking of the relationship between the state and expertise. Examining the situation in China, in other words, provides an opportunity to think critically about urban politics that celebrate the creative class and the naturalized choices they make (see Chapter 2).

The contemporary emphasis on human capital for economic growth is, I argue, the current iteration of red-expert debates in China. In the high-socialist era under Mao, ideologically committed ("red") jacks-of-all-trades were promoted and trusted over politically suspect "experts." Those who focused on their individual (i.e., selfish) pursuits of expert and technical knowledge were considered politically unreliable and were relegated to the "stinking ninth" class position. According to Mao, technological and scientific knowledge "were not politically neutral matters," and their practitioners could have a "class character" and thus needed to be monitored and reformed carefully (Meisner 1977: 224; see also Greenhalgh 2008). This perspective on knowledge produced heated debates (or red-expert debates) within the Party regarding what was better for China's modernization and development—political commitment or knowledge and expertise.[36] The "technocratic movement" ushered in by Deng and his fellow reformers decreased reliance on those who were "red" and increased admiration for those with "expertise."[37] Deng was explicit that people should respect knowledge and talent (*zunzhong zhishi, zunzhong rencai*) and that education, particularly scientific and technical education, was critical to the nation's development (Deng 1994e: 40–41).[38] China, he said, could not succeed "without skilled personnel and knowledge" (Deng 1994d: 20),[39] and if China "could get its education right, its human resources would be unbeatable by any country" (Hughes 2006: 32). The linking of science and technology with national development has been termed a "techno-nationalism" that promoted science and technology in nation building and raised questions about how to adapt or adopt Western practices into Chinese culture and tradition (Hughes 2006; see also Deng 1994a; He 2002; Miller 1996; Y. Yan 2002).[40] Promotion of these human resources was reinforced when in 1997 President Jiang Zemin "called for 'cultivating millions of high-*suzhi* [quality] laborers and skilled technicians to meet the demands of modernization'" (cited in H. Yan 2003a: 495) and as transnational agencies also called for "human development" and "investments" in China's human capital (UN 1999; Dahlman and Aubert 2001). The critical reflections on

Maoist governmentality that led to the valorization of talented human capital made it thinkable and reasonable to consider expertise, science, and technology as sources of economic growth and thus to connect urban development with this type of worker.

Desire for talented employees also was institutionalized in household-registration policies. Having a legal household registration (*hukou*) in a major city was a critical factor in job searches, and hiring decisions in Dalian's talent market often began with questions about where one had a registration. Developing a career and establishing a family with some security in one of these cities required a legal residency permit (*hukou*), influencing where job seekers went and what they did. College graduates nevertheless had more means to change their legal residency than former farmers seeking construction, household, and restaurant jobs in urban centers.[41] Rural migrants in particular have faced tougher policies in the name of controlling urban growth, suggesting that a kind of "variegated citizenship in which populations subjected to different regimes of value enjoy different kinds of rights, discipline, caring, and security" has emerged (Ong 1999: 217). Policies that attract talent and discipline migrants—that is, the contemporary reworking of the relationship between the state and expertise in this most recent iteration of the red-expert debates—have thus led to new norms of productivity, understandings of human resources, and noticeable new valuations of the citizenry. Although talent is coveted and cities compete with each other to attract and keep such resources, the socialist worker and rural farmer have been *de*valued. After the terms "*rencai*" (talented personnel) and "*zhuanye renyuan*" (experts) became commonly used in conversations about urban planning, many citizens felt it was commonsense and reasonable that *rencai* would and should have social mobility. Migrant workers selling products on city streets, working at construction sites, and offering other urban services, on the other hand, were often associated with crime and instability (L. Zhang 2001; Solinger 1999). Employers and young professionals regularly used such terms as "*wenhua*" (culture/education), "*suzhi*" (quality), and "*wenming*" (civilization) to distinguish between people and to help define an urban sensibility.[42]

This celebration of human capital for urban development and the devaluation of migrants and farmers are producing profound inequalities within and across China's cities. Reforms that have produced prosperous coastal sites, such as Dalian, and new middle classes have also produced sites of decline, a troubled "rust belt," and new forms of poverty.[43] Many in China have identified such shifts as a "rationalization" of the social structure, in contrast to what they term the *unnatural* and *irrational* class and gender polarizations of

the Maoist era (see Chapters 5 and 6; see also Rofel 1999, 2007). The valorization of talent coupled with language about the rationalization of the social structure in recent years has, in many ways, naturalized new class distinctions, such as those between professional middle-class urbanites and rural-to-urban migrant laborers.

Yet, as I argue in this book, the fostering of talent in the global city should be analyzed as governmental strategies and assemblages (see also T. Li 2007), rather than as a natural evolutionary pattern or the arrival of truly free citizens and rational markets. In municipalities around the world, the celebration of talent has created new urban landscapes of high-end leisure-focused neighborhoods; it has been based on feelings of insecurity in the competitive global economy; and it has devalued certain workers and citizens while professionals and creative talent have been valued. Thus, an important aim of this book is to problematize the commonsense-ness of the correlation between talent and global city prosperity, and thus to denaturalize the resulting social-class formations (see Chapter 5).

Anthropological Fieldwork in a Global City

Fieldwork and research for this book have extended over a period of ten years, beginning with my first visit to Dalian in the summer of 1993 to learn more about the city's strategy to become the "Hong Kong of the North." The following summer, I focused more specifically on the new talent market in Dalian, which at that time was in a small space on the edge of a city park, just past some odorous public restrooms. This was followed by twelve months of research from 1995 to 1996. I lived at Dalian University of Technology, where I was the first foreign graduate student, and I worked closely with Professor Liu Zhongquan in the Sociology Department. This research was supplemented by six months of observation and informal conversations in Shanghai in 1996 and 1997 and shorter fieldwork trips back to Dalian in the spring of 1998, the summer of 1999, and the winter of 2003.

In many ways, Dalian's talent exchange center and talent market were my original field sites. I have seen this center grow from a small set of rooms to a large hall next to the library to a multistoried office building. During my fieldwork, I frequently went to the Sunday job fairs at the talent market to meet job seekers and employers. It also was an excellent opportunity for participant observation, since young people looking for work in a foreign company often approached me, asking what company I was representing and what kinds of workers I needed. I attended a series of major job fairs, conducted

on-the-spot interviews, observed, and (in the case of the Spring Festival fair in 1996) had ninety-eight students (fifty-six men and forty-two women) fill out brief surveys about their job-hunting experiences.[44] Professor Liu and two friends helped me that day in an effort to minimize the impact of my American-ness.

Professor Liu also introduced me to researchers and workers in the city government who were responsible for economic development, planning, and rural-urbanization processes. Visits to their offices, materials they provided, and Professor Liu's own research on urbanization in Dalian were important sources of information. I also read histories of Dalian, newspaper articles about the city, and materials on Mayor Bo Xilai and his plans for the city and Mayor Xia Deren and his support for the IT industry and port facility expansion. People I interviewed also regularly commented on changes in the urban landscape, adding ethnographic descriptions to official representations of the city.

Although the talent market was an important site for me, it also was critical that I met professionals who were satisfied with their jobs or who used connections or the newspaper to find new positions. Sources for meeting other young professionals were numerous, but the most common was an introduction from others I had met, such as the owner of a private company who introduced me to a friend of his at the tax bureau, the manager of a factory who introduced me to his two college-graduate children, and the friend of a teacher whom I met the very first time I went to Dalian who called me and simply said, "I think we can become friends." She was right, and I spent a great deal of time with her and her in-laws. Five of her husband's aunts and uncles were college educated. These multiple methods were necessary for urban fieldwork (see also Smart and Zhang 2006). Although it is impossible to count all those I met briefly at job fairs, on buses, and in taxis (it was common to share taxis), the nonstudent (postgraduate) group of informants and friends numbered well over one hundred.

I also systematically interviewed two classes of graduating seniors at Dalian University of Technology (DUT; chemical engineering and English for science and technology majors); and had three classes from DUT and neighboring Northeast Economic and Finance University fill out questionnaires regarding their job-hunting plans.[45] As I always lived on campus, I was able to spend time with college students informally in addition to the more formal interviews and surveys I asked them to complete. In 1996, I also interviewed international finance majors at Northeast Economic and Finance University and project-budget majors at a nearby secondary

specialized school (*zhongdeng zhuanke xuexiao*) under the authority of a provincial ministry.[46]

Interview questions included inquiries about educational and work background, families, future hopes, leisure activities, and living situation. Most often, we would talk about their professional lives, which inevitably led to conversations about their parents and spouses or girl- and boyfriends. The longer, more formal interviews with working professionals lasted anywhere from one to six hours and often overlapped with meals. I established emotional bonds of friendship with many that took us beyond the formal interview, talent market, or university setting. The participant-observation role I experienced when spending time with these professionals allowed me to learn more about their ideals, dreams, troubles, families, and working lives. With the extension of fieldwork into various city spaces and private homes and family time, I also was able to examine how these other domains were affected by the marketization of labor allocation and how the legacies of the urban-welfare package as well as gender and family norms shaped contestations over the meaning of middle-class professionalism.

Over the years, I met regularly with administrators at DUT who were responsible for career guidance and student admissions. I also conducted interviews with administrators at Northeast Economic and Finance University, Liaoning Normal University, and the secondary specialized school. Extended and multiple interviews were conducted with human resource managers or those responsible for hiring, such as the sixteen companies (two foreign ventures, five joint ventures, five state-owned units, three private companies, and one collective) that I focused on during 1995–1996, and I had numerous shorter conversations with those trying to hire workers (e.g., at job fairs) during all visits between 1993 and 2003. Often personnel managers told me of their own experiences as well, providing reflexive and insightful commentaries on how the laboring generations differed.

The college seniors I interviewed were approximately twenty to twenty-three years old, and the ages of the postgraduates ranged from their early twenties for the more recent graduates to their early forties for those who were married with families, or at least hoping to be soon. Those I originally met in the 1990s also got married, had children, became established in their careers, and changed jobs multiple times during this decade of research. I have referred to this group off-handedly as "reform-era babies," but it is a serious classification as well. Major political events in their lives included the series of student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in 1989 and the subsequent crackdown and emphasis on patriotic education in the years

following, the 1999 U.S.-led NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, and Beijing's loss of its bid for the 2000 Olympic Games. Throughout their lives, they had seen an improvement in their families' standards of living as many people came to have some disposable income and new products were available for purchase. Air conditioners, refrigerators, televisions, and stereos were increasingly common in these people's homes, although the desire for products often outstripped their financial means.

What Follows

In the following chapters, I explore late-socialist neoliberalism in China and how these new ways of doing things have shaped global city spaces and urban professional subjects. In Chapter 2, I consider the respatialization of Dalian from an industrial Chinese city to a potential strategic site of global capitalism (e.g., as the "Hong Kong of the North") and how these spaces emerge in conjunction with subjects who are said to make such a city successful (outward-looking, enterprising professionals). Although the chapter's focus is on post-Mao urban-development strategies, the entrepreneurialization of place, and the localization of decision making, I also argue that colonial and socialist visions of modernity have framed the contemporary processes of global city formation.

In Chapter 3, I present evidence of the new practices and technologies of governing that have emerged with reforms in the university system and direct state job assignments. These practices included calls for job choice and employee mobility across cities as mechanisms to rationalize the distribution of and to enhance the development of talented human capital for national and urban growth. Choice and guidance rather than mandatory plans framed the graduates' employment experiences, producing new opportunities and new insecurities in the shift from assignee to employee. In the process, employment itself became a site of *self*-development and potential personal fulfillment (whether achieved or not) in the global city, a marked change from the Maoist-era notion of labor as part of the means of production owned by the state.

In Chapter 4, I explore how these new technologies of job choice and an ethos of self-enterprise have been wedded in unexpected ways with ideas of state strengthening and Maoist-era ideals and expressions of patriotism, leading to the specification of what I call "patriotic professionalism." As talent was upheld as a critical source of global city status, new norms of self-development and enterprise framed the young graduates' lives as they faced choices (*xuanze*)

and opportunities (*jihui*) not available in the planned system. This chapter thus moves from the explication of choice as a technique of governing to questions of how that shapes subjectivity. I argue that the subject form of patriotic professionalism incorporates technologies that resonate with the Western liberal tradition as well as norms, politics, and forms of authority that are not liberal in nature.

The professionalization of employment and the rise of talented human capital in the global city are contested and uncertain processes, even as city marketing campaigns expressed their emergence as commonsense and natural. In Chapters 5 and 6, I explore some of these negotiations in more detail by moving into other social domains. Chapter 5 focuses on how the norms of culture/education (*wenhua*) and quality (*suzhi*) were infused into the hiring process. I argue that these norms reinforced the idea that people could change their lives by focusing on self-improvement and self-enterprise, redeploying Confucian ideas of self-cultivation and Maoist calls for constant self-study with neoliberal notions of entrepreneurialization of the self. Yet I also suggest that processes of class reproduction are being naturalized in China, limiting social mobility for many. Employers made links between an applicant's home environment and the idea of an embodied quality that was exhibited through ways of talking, thinking, and behaving, legitimizing and naturalizing these social distinctions and new forms of social inequality in the city. Recognizing this diversity and the tensions between these standards of behavior also illustrates how subject formation is a contested and heterogeneous experience.

In Chapter 6, I turn more directly to the dismantling of socialist urban services and provisions, particularly housing, and ask how this process is linked with gender regimes. I examine the "one household, two systems" (*yi jia, liang zhi*) family formation, in which one family member (usually the woman) stayed in the state system for security and benefits, while the other (usually the man) ventured into the world of private business and money, linking gendered notions of security with traditional distinctions of inside/outside as well as ideas about the safety of modern city spaces. Families and young professionals "calculated" the risks and benefits of working in the different sectors, fusing an economic way of thinking with gender regimes as well as anxiety around the restructuring of the socialist city.

In Chapter 7, I conclude the book by returning to questions of how we may analyze and make sense of neoliberalism in China, particularly in light of the global economic crisis. I argue that the analysis in this book may contribute to our understandings of the crisis due to its focus on human capital formation and production, rather than consumption, in self-formation and

due to its governmentality perspective in analyzing transformations in the relationship between states and markets. I argue that while individual choices and enterprise are emphasized in China, these techniques of rule do not push governing into the nonstate realm as we see in the United States. The state remains an important participant in late-socialist governing—a governing I term "neoliberal"—through a premium on nation building, patriotism, and the legacy of a socialist state system that distributed goods and services to urban citizens. Building on the work of other governmentality scholars, in this book I aim to provide tools for analyzing neoliberalism in multiple sites. Moreover, I suggest that a study of subjectivity is a particularly fruitful domain for this endeavor.