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Guanxi Networks and Job Mobility in China and Singapore*

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Abstract

Despite the differences in labor market contexts in China and Singapore, survey data reveal that in both countries jobs are channeled through strong ties more frequently than through weak ties. Moreover, when job changers and their ultimate helpers are unconnected, they tend to be bridged through intermediaries to whom both are strongly or moderately rather than weakly tied. Finally, helpers' job status has positive impacts on job changers' attained job status. We consider guanxi networks of exchange relations common to China and Singapore to account for these findings.

Granovetter's (1973, 1974) weak tie argument and Lin's (1982, 1990) social resource theory have stimulated fruitful research of how individuals are matched to jobs through networks of social contacts in market economies in North America and western Europe (Bridges & Villemez 1986; DeGraaf & Flap 1986; Lin, Ensel & Vaughn 1981; Mostacci-Calzavara 1982; Marsden & Hurlbert 1988; Montgomery 1992; Wegner 1991; see Granovetter 1995 for a review). In this article, we provide a comparative analysis of the relative efficacy of strong and weak contact ties in job mobility in two fast growing East Asian economies, China and Singapore.

Because market economies are imperfect in circulating labor market information through formal means, researchers have looked at contact networks as an informal information channel through which persons are matched to jobs. Granovetter (1973, 1974, 1982) has proposed a hypothesis

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about the strength of weak ties; he argues that individuals are likely to learn nonredundant information about job openings through networks of weak ties of infrequent interaction or of low intimacy because these networks are wide ranging and tend to bridge individuals across social groups of close interpersonal relationships.

A major theoretical advancement since Granovetter's initial work is Lin's (1982, 1990) social resource theory. Lin envisions a class society and contends that weak ties link persons of different hierarchical rank and thus bridge both information and "social resources" — power, wealth, and prestige of social contacts can be accessed through weak ties. He expects this to be true even if individuals access social resources because of their higher social positions than others. Finally, social resources are thought to facilitate status attainment; Lin argues that social contacts with high social position will lead to jobs of high status for job seekers because of their positional advantages to access job information or to influence the hiring process.

These formulations, especially about the effects of social resources for job status attained, have been generally supported by research from North America and western Europe (with some exceptions¹), but with respect to the relationship between tie strength and social resources, findings from East Asia reveal clear variation. In Japan, for example, Watanabe (1987, 1994) found that respondents in a 1985 Tokyo survey tended to learn job information through strong ties based on family and community networks more often than through weak ties, and jobs channeled through strong ties also were of higher quality (based on salary, job satisfaction, and commitment to firms) than those channeled through weak ties. In China, where jobs were assigned by state authority before the emergence of labor markets in the early 1990s, Bian (1997a) found in his 1988 Tianjin study that job seekers who had close relationships with job-assigning authority at higher levels tended to obtain better jobs. When these relationships were weak or nonexistent, job seekers would approach authority indirectly through their relatives or friends who were in close contact with those in charge. Studies of other East Asian countries or areas have also indicated similar tendencies about the importance of strong relative to weak ties in labor markets (Berger & Hsiao 1988; Wong 1990; Xiong, Sun & Xu 1986).

Why would strong ties be more effective in matching persons to jobs than weak ties in East Asia or elsewhere? In regard to China, Bian (1997b) distinguishes between weak ties used to gather job information in a market economy and strong ties used to access influence from authority in a state socialist economy where labor markets are either greatly altered or nonexistent. His Tianjin study indicates that when there was a lack of labor markets — workers had neither the legal right nor the personal freedom to exchange their labor power for expected returns — obtaining job information was indeed largely irrelevant, because even with information about jobs, one was not given the opportunity to apply for them. What was important was whether one could influence job-assigning authority through

the strong ties of mutual trust and reciprocal obligation. In the Chinese context, mutual trust with help-seekers reduced help-givers' anxiety due to the risky nature of their "misconduct," and a sense of reciprocal obligation that had long been established between them provided the binding power for their exchange relations.

We are interested in whether the lack of labor markets is a necessary condition under which the strong ties of mutual trust and reciprocal obligation prevail in matching individuals to jobs. Given Watanabe's work in Japan, one doubts if this is true cross-nationally. Although a China-Japan comparison would give a useful test of this assumption, a comparison between China and Singapore would be an even better test because these two societies share Chinese cultural roots but have different labor market contexts. Singapore, a city-state with 78% of its population having a Chinese origin, is a market economy and has had labor markets throughout its post World War II history (Fong 1988). Our Singapore data come from a 1994 survey of 512 randomly selected workers in eight industries in the country. China, on the other hand, has been under Communist rule since 1949. After a short period of a socialist mixed economy in the first half of the 1950s, labor markets were eliminated from the urban sector but reemerged, with regional variation (Nee 1996), during the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s. To set regional variation constant, we analyze a 1988 survey of Tianjin, which is an industrial city in the north where labor markets were clearly nonexistent then (Bian 1994a, 1994b).

The focus of analysis in this article is job mobility. We pay special attention to two processes: (1) how job changers find helpers with high social position through ties of varying strength, and (2) whether helpers at high levels lead to better jobs for job changers. Our data analyses will reveal that despite the presence of labor markets in Singapore, jobs there are channeled through strong ties more frequently than through weak ties, just as in Tianjin. Moreover, in both places helpers with higher status, and presumably greater influence in the job mobility processes, lead to better jobs for job movers, but these helpers are also more likely to be found through strong ties than through weak ties. These findings reject the assumption that the lack of labor markets has inherent implications cross-nationally for the relative efficacy of strong ties and weak ties for job mobility. Because in both China and Singapore social networks are *guanxi* networks that are used to facilitate exchange of favors, we use these different labor markets to describe and analyze how *guanxi* networks affect job mobility.

Chinese *Guanxi* Networks Defined

Chinese society has long been known for its emphasis on *guanxi* as a guiding principle of economic and social organization (Cheng & Rosett 1991; Fei 1992; Fried 1953; Hwang 1987; Hu 1944; Walder 1986). Although *guanxi* literally means "relationship" or "relation," its essence is a set of

interpersonal connections that facilitate exchange of favors between people on a dyadic basis (Hwang 1987). Thus, kin or nonkin relationships are not necessarily all *guanxi*, but these are exactly the relational bases to develop them.

There are cultural roots that make *guanxi* a principal moral criterion to evaluate individuals. The Confucian tradition defines individuals in relational terms (Yang 1994). Unlike Christianity, which puts individuals in reference to God, Confucianism relates individuals to their significant others, such as father and uncle in the family, and teacher and master in one's career developments. Significant others in the Chinese context are not seen as instruments to help identify and recognize "self," a basic point of cognitive development theory reflecting western traditions of individualism and capitalism (Mead 1934). In Chinese culture the collective is always considered bigger and more important than the individual (Hsiao 1988): self is identified, recognized, and evaluated in terms of one's relations to the groups and communities to which one belongs. This lays both the abstract and the concrete foundations for *guanxi* to operate in Chinese societies, both in and outside China.

A basic characteristic of *guanxi* is familiarity or intimacy: for any two individuals to develop *guanxi*, they must know a good deal about each other and share a good deal with each other. In other words, *guanxi* develops between persons who are strongly rather than weakly tied. Note, again, that *guanxi* is not merely a relationship but a tie through which the parties exchange valued materials or sentiments. Another characteristic of *guanxi* is trustworthiness, which is the result of relatively long-time interactions and the basis for future exchange relations. Because exchanges facilitated through *guanxi* networks are not formally or legally institutionalized, such trust is a necessary component of a *guanxi* connection.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of *guanxi* is reciprocal obligation. Basic obligations are those of family and kinship. Traditionally, material and moral obligations define the relationships among persons of different roles (father, son, et al.) within the family. The web of these obligations was seen by Fried (1953) as the fabric of Chinese society. Fulfilling one's obligations to one's relatives is culturally expected by both the Confucian tradition and the new ethics in contemporary China (Hwang 1987; Yang 1994). If one denies one's obligations, one might pay the ultimate price of losing kinship connections (Lin 1989).

Reciprocal obligations are not limited to family and kinship but extend to nonkin ties. Among Chinese people, close friends address each other as brother or sister. Close neighbors refer to each other as uncle or aunt. And relations between masters and apprentices and between teachers and students are considered father-son relations. These are not merely names people call each other; they set up a high moral standard that ties people together in a close relationship. Persons in these dyadic relationships are expected to help each other as if they are fulfilling obligations to their family

members. As with blood relations, these dyadic ties are expected to last for a long period of time.

Guanxi is perhaps the most important mechanism in social interaction between individuals. "The manufacturing of obligation and indebtedness" is "the primary and binding power of personal relationships" in contemporary China (Yang 1994:6). In popular discourse, *guanxi* is often translated into face (*mianzi*) and emotional feelings of attachment (*ganqing*). This means that reciprocity between strongly tied persons is intensified by added moral and expressive dimensions (Chen & Rosett 1991). The consequence is twofold. On the one hand, *guanxi* is rewarding and durable. When one helps one's *guanxi*, one raises one's reputation as having *ganqing* and wins trust (face) from others. In doing so, one also puts debt on the beneficiary, who is in turn obligated to return a favor when requested (Hwang 1987). Conversely, if an able person refuses to help one's *guanxi*, he/she loses trust from others and can pay the ultimate price of losing social resources embedded in one's *guanxi* networks (Lin 1982).

On the other hand, *guanxi* develops gradually and oftentimes through a third party, because people only help others that are within one's *guanxi* networks. This also implies that *guanxi* building is an everyday matter, through family and kinship ties and close friends developed in school, work, and leisure activities. When one needs help beyond the capacity of one's immediate *guanxi*, one's *guanxi* can serve as an intermediary to bring in an ultimate helper. An intermediary is necessary because it provides the familiarity, trust, and obligation needed to tie together the help seeker and the potential helper.

***Guanxi* and Job Mobility in Tianjin**

From the mid-1950s through the 1980s, the government controlled and allocated urban jobs in China (Bian 1994a; Davis 1990; Walder 1986; Whyte & Parish 1984). With a socialist policy, Chinese citizens in the cities were guaranteed life-long employment, but at the same time they were given neither legal rights nor personal freedom to search for jobs. This system, coupled with an oversupply of labor, had two consequences for job searches at the individual level. First, people in need of work had to wait and accept state job assignments when they entered the labor force for the first time in their lives. The effect of *guanxi* networks on the process of initial job assignments has been documented elsewhere (Bian 1994a, 1994b, 1997a, 1997b; Lin & Bian 1989, 1991). Second, once having entered work, employees were given no freedom to move between work units (i.e., employers). Massive, "planned" reallocations by the government did occur when it developed new organizations or expanded existing ones. Job changes intended by individual workers, however, were out of state plans, and workers needing to change jobs faced bureaucratic resistance from the system and from authority at all levels (Davis 1990). Our analysis here fo-

cuses on how workers used their *guanxi* networks to remove the resistance and move between work units.

Because salary raises and promotions closely followed government regulations and varied mostly by seniority (Bian 1994a; Walder 1990), career advancement was generally not the reason why Chinese workers wished to change. Most cases of job searching were for life matters, such as a desire to work closer to home, or to work in the same place as one's spouse in order to be favorably evaluated by the work unit for a public apartment (Davis 1990).

For potential job changers, a basic form of bureaucratic resistance came from their current work-unit leaders. These leaders normally refused workers' requests to leave jobs and work elsewhere because of the perceived difficulty in obtaining government permission to refill the empty positions. They were more willing to allow workers who requested to leave their position to move between divisions or occupations within their work units. For the sake of state planning and labor control, the government required job turnover to be minimum, having limited labor quotas allocated for job turnovers each year. This also implied that work units wanting to recruit workers from other work units would have the same difficulty in getting government permission to do so. This contributed to work units' habit of hoarding workers under their jurisdiction (Bian 1994a). Under "soft-budget constraints" (Kornai 1986), high labor costs were not a concern of work units, but large, stable employment allowed them to maintain a favorable position for obtaining state budgets and special grants (Walder 1992).

The system did accommodate some job change between work units through individual applications, but this process was constrained by work-unit organizational hierarchy. In Tianjin, as in other cities, work units were managed by one of the five levels of government jurisdictions, from higher to lower: (1) central ministries (no such level existed in small cities and towns), (2) municipal industrial bureaus, (3) district governments, (4) subdistrict governments, and (5) neighborhood committees. These government jurisdictions controlled labor quotas, and budgets and other resources, and therefore had authority to permit job changes between work units under them. Job change involving work units of different government jurisdictions, even at the same hierarchical level, was more difficult because it would affect the budgets and labor planning of different government jurisdictions, which would have to be coordinated, when necessary, by a higher level of government commanding them. Even more difficult was any job change between work units of different government levels, requiring the intervention and coordination by the work units, different levels of governments involved, and the next higher-level of government commanding them. The most difficult job change was from a lower-ranked work unit to a higher ranked work unit between government jurisdictions and across districts.

To fight against the resistance from the system for job change between work units and to remove the difficulties imposed by the hierarchy of work units, potential job changers used *guanxi* to influence decision makers. Permission from current work-unit leaders was the necessary first step, but permission from leaders of the respective work unit was equally important. The permission from government officials having authority over these work units was also essential not only for leaving the current work unit, but also for determining the level of future work units. The higher the rank of the officials contacted, the higher the rank of work units that one could work for. As for how to obtain all of these permissions through *guanxi*, the case of Ms. Zhou is illustrative.

In 1986, Ms. Zhou moved from the Tianjin railway bureau as a train conductor to a motorcycle repair shop as an accountant; a move that required several months of *guanxi* work. She wanted to move because she had had a baby and could no longer travel on her job as a train conductor. She had many good reasons for leaving her job: neither her mother nor her mother-in-law could take care of her baby while she went to work, and she did not have any *guanxi* who could help to enroll the baby in an overnight nursery (in extreme shortage), not to mention that she did not have the money to do so anyway. Therefore, she requested that she leave her train conductor job to work elsewhere so that she could take care of her baby.

Her supervisor, supported by higher authority in her work unit, would not consider her request unless she helped train apprentices. When she made the effort to do so, her supervisor then offered her a job as a cashier in the work unit's wage office, a daytime job that did not require traveling. She took it, but because she was asked to substitute for conductors who were out sick several times, Ms. Zhou decided to take action. She approached one of her *guanxi*, the director of the railway bureau's labor office that had jurisdiction over her work unit on labor affairs, and asked him to "talk" to her work-unit leadership about her situation. This director was a big brother of an "old buddy" of her respected uncle, who himself was a party cadre in a local resourceful television manufacturer. After the director intervened, and most importantly, after he promised to help with a replacement quota for Ms. Zhou, Ms. Zhou was given permission by her work unit to search for a new job elsewhere.

Locating a new work unit was not as difficult for Ms. Zhou because of her longtime *guanxi* network building. She wanted to move to a motorcycle repair shop close to her home, a shop that was small, state-owned and under a district government. The shop director's daughter was a high-school friend of Ms. Zhou's. When Ms. Zhou was a train conductor on the Tianjin-Shanghai route, this friend and her family asked her to buy things for them in Shanghai, a request she never turned down. "We were *guanxi* to each other," explained Ms. Zhou during her interview by the first author. So, when she asked them for help, the director said that she could come to work there (to take on a job as a cashier and then as an accountant) as soon

as she obtained a labor quota from the local government labor bureau to hire her.

Obtaining a labor quota from the local labor bureau was difficult. This time, Ms. Zhou understood that the labor bureau would not even consider her request if she were to apply for a labor quota herself. In the Chinese context, no individual could possibly apply for a labor quota because all the quotas were allocated to work units exclusively. But the motorcycle repair shop did not have any strong reason to apply for a labor quota, and its director, having no *guanxi* with officials of the labor bureau, would not want to try either (he could lose face if he did). Thus the ball was in Ms. Zhou's court. She used all her creativity to talk to her relatives, neighbors, and friends to see if any of them knew anyone in the bureau. She finally learned that a relative of one of her former classmates was a ranking official of that bureau. Through her classmate, the official had her prepare an application on behalf of the motorcycle repair shop and then sent her application directly to his office following standard procedures. It took a couple of months for his office to grant a labor quota to the motorcycle shop, where Ms. Zhou finally worked as an accountant.

In all, three "ultimate" helpers assisted Ms. Zhou: a bureau official helped her leave her work unit, a work-unit director helped her get work in his shop, and a local government official helped her obtain a labor quota for her new job in the shop. All these people were indirectly connected to Ms. Zhou through others who had strong ties with her and them.

***Guanxi* and Job Mobility in Singapore**

In Singapore, *guanxi* network building is an everyday phenomenon. People develop their *guanxi* in many ways, one of which is through family and kin relations. Such relations are long lasting: people do not break off after age 21 to gain independence, but they continue to look to their elders for advice and support. Old school ties also play an important role in *guanxi* networks. Many people keep in touch with their grade school, high school, and college mates; alma mater or alumni membership is very strong. Singaporeans are also country club addicts: they join country clubs with golf courses and other recreational facilities for interaction. Men also develop friendships through their army connections; each male Singaporean attends compulsory army training at age 18 for two and a half years and serves in the Army as a reservist for the next 20 to 30 years. Finally, social occasions (especially lunches and dinners) are used to exchange promises for doing favors for each other, such as helping one's *guanxi* get a good job.

Although Singapore is well known for its strong government intervention in its economic and social spheres, this intervention is aimed at overcoming market failures, and therefore only supplements a strong market system (Fong 1988). Indeed, there has been a consensus among observers of

Singapore that this city-state has a well-developed market system, including labor markets (Berger & Hsiao 1988).

Ministry of Labor of the Singaporean government (MLS 1994) reports that from 1974 to 1994, Singapore's labor force grew from 850,000 to about 1.7 million workers, revealing an average annual growth rate of about 5%. During this period, per capita median monthly income rose from about US \$250 in 1974 to US \$1,234 in 1994. However, labor shortages have been status quo in all sectors and at all skill levels (MLS 1994), which are reflected by persistently low unemployment rates (e.g., 1.6% and 2.6% in the first two quarters of 1994, the year of our Singapore data).

Although abundant job opportunities are available, job mobility is not without constraint. Because maintaining qualified labor is an important managerial decision, employers want to be sure of an employee's commitment to the company. In fact, as reported in the local press, employers are especially concerned about the relatively low company loyalty displayed by Singaporean workers. These workers tend to job hop and are impatient to climb the career ladder without first acquiring the necessary experience and skills in different work settings (Chew & Chew 1992). Employers consider recruitment through personal connections as a good strategy for learning about potentially trustworthy and qualified candidates, since this information is hard to obtain through formal channels.

Hiring through personal connections also reduces recruitment costs. Recruiting a professional, managerial, or administrative (PMA) employee, usually takes three months. Formal recruitment channel costs include (1) examining and scanning competing companies' advertisements and terms, which is time consuming, (2) advertising (ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000) for a professional position, and (3) screening candidates (100 to 200 applications per position). To recruit non-PMA workers, procedures are simpler but include the costs for running newspaper ads and conducting walk-in interviews.

Because recruitment through formal channels is both costly and time consuming, and may be unreliable for bringing in qualified workers with company loyalty, referrals from known people are highly considered. When personal referrals are provided, companies do not advertise the position and are less stringent on screening. For non-PMA jobs, companies use a "referral bonus" to reward current employees when they bring in a friend for a job interview. And because employees wish to protect their own reputation, they do not recommend just anyone but only those who they believe will be good workers in their companies. This is one of the companies' strategies of using *guanxi* to get an increased pool of potentially reliable candidates for low-post jobs. Higher ranking positions, though, can be filled from a pool of relatively fewer qualified candidates. Organizations are often reluctant to advertise such positions because it can signal to the public that there may be significant leadership changes, which can unsettle the market. So higher positions are often sought via *guanxi* or less overt means.²

The chances of having the correct *guanxi* considerably increase if job seekers are located in "rich" networks full of nonredundant ties of fairly good strengths. Nonredundancy means that one can have contacts across a broad range of workplaces, thus increasing the range of the companies from which one can learn about jobs that are "open" only internally. Ties of good strength — strong or medium but not weak — ensure that one's name is likely to be passed over to a friend's or a relative's company, or to the company of one's friend's relative or one's relative's friend. A good word about oneself from one's friend, which means a great deal to the prospective employer, is more likely to be given when the tie is strong or moderate rather than weak. To Singaporeans, weaker ties mean less trust and less obligation and therefore, in the words of an interviewee, "less reliability."

Referrals are also an issue. To employers, referrals are not equally considered because more names are always referred than positions available. And the job status of recommenders matters; they are seen as qualified to make good recommendations for jobs of their own type and status because they have sufficient knowledge and experience. This is so even if the recommendation might involve upward mobility; the new job has a higher rank or status than the job changer's previous job. This suggests that, while the correlation between one's attained job and one's previous job is high, upward mobility is possible and positively affected by the job status of recommenders.

Hypotheses

By 1988, Tianjin did not have a labor market. Workers' requests to change jobs were resisted by the bureaucratic system. Ms. Zhou's case indicates that even those workers who had good reasons to change jobs had to use *guanxi* to obtain permission from authorities to release them from their current job and to locate a new workplace. In addition, she had to deal with the government, once again through *guanxi*, to obtain a labor quota in order for the new work unit to hire her. Finally, the rank of the new work unit she moved to was associated with the hierarchical levels of her helpers' work units. In general, *guanxi* networks were useful in this context because people of the same *guanxi* networks were obligated to help each other, even between the powerful (authority) and the powerless (job changers). In fact, *guanxi* was a social power that balanced the imbalanced power relations between job-control authority and job changers.

For many years now, Singapore clearly has had a labor market. Its workers are generally free to search for jobs and to move between employers at will. Employers, though similar to their western counterparts in desiring to hire qualified workers, are more cautious about hiring. Given the labor shortage, bad consequences of job turnover, and costly open recruitment processes, employers attempt to seek out reliable, trustworthy work-

ers through informal channels such as their employees' *guanxi* networks. Informal channels are preferred in part because they help reduce invisible "costs" of information asymmetry made problematic in formal channels: lack of adequate knowledge of the workers' background, their technical and social competence, particular attitude toward work, and propensity toward company loyalty. Job changers, likewise, rely on their *guanxi* networks to obtain information about job openings and to place themselves on prospective employers' lists of potential job candidates. Moreover, job changers' obtained job status tends to be affected by their contacts' (recommenders') job status because employers believe the contacts are qualified to make good recommendations for jobs similar to their own.

Thus, the presence of labor markets in Singapore may not mean that it necessarily differs from Tianjin in the effects of *guanxi* networks on job mobility. One possible difference may be how *guanxi* networks are mobilized. In Tianjin, potential job changers use *guanxi* to make it possible to leave current jobs and work elsewhere, whereas in Singapore *guanxi* is used by cautious employers to recruit workers exhibiting company loyalty. Despite this difference in "initiators," the resulting association between tie strength and job mobility outcome may be similar between Tianjin and Singapore in the following way:

Hypothesis 1. Jobs are channeled through strong ties more frequently than through weak ties.

Hypothesis 2. Indirect ties are used to connect job changers to their ultimate helpers when the direct connections are either absent or too weak to be useful, but effective indirect ties are those in which intermediaries are strongly rather than weakly linked to both potential job changers and their ultimate helpers.

Hypothesis 3. The status of jobs found through *guanxi* networks are associated with that of the ultimate helpers whose impact is within the limits of their job status or office power.

Samples and Descriptive Data

Our Tianjin data are from a 1988 survey and our Singapore data from a 1994 pilot study. The time difference in these two data sets is not a concern in that our project was initially designed to test the hypothesis of whether the presence of labor markets would affect the relative efficacy of strong and weak network ties for job mobility. The 1988 Tianjin survey was used because labor markets were largely absent at that time. Bian and Logan (1996) document that labor markets began emerging in the city around 1991.

The 1988 Tianjin survey used a household sample of 1,008 adult respondents (18 years of age and older) who had worked in the civilian labor force. The respondents were obtained through a multistage random sampling to take advantage of the city's hierarchical structure of districts,

TABLE 1: Tie Strength and Job Change in Tianjin and Singapore

	Tianjin		Singapore	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Total sample	983		512	
Number of job changers	497	50.5	348	68.0
Job changers				
Percent men	259	52.2	157	45.1
Secondary school and higher	242	48.7	215	59.2
PMA jobs ^a	142	28.6	118	33.9
Supervising someone	118	23.7	186	53.4
Use of a helper	247	49.7	263	75.6
Helpers				
Percent male	196	79.4	153	58.2
Percent kin	53	21.4	55	21.0
Percent indirect connection	85	34.4	43	16.3
Intimacy with helper				
Total				
5. very well	96	41.9	94	35.7
4. well	53	23.1	91	34.6
3. moderately well	39	17.0	50	19.0
2. slightly well	14	6.1	19	7.2
1. not at all	27	11.8	9	3.4
Direct connection				
5. very well	70	46.4	78	35.5
4. well	32	21.2	73	33.2
3. moderately well	29	19.2	46	20.9
2. slightly well	9	6.0	15	6.8
1. not at all	11	7.3	8	3.6
Indirect connection				
5. very well	26	33.3	16	37.2
4. well	21	26.9	18	41.9
3. moderately well	10	12.8	4	9.3
2. slightly well	5	6.4	4	9.3
1. not at all	16	20.5	1	2.3
Indirectly connected through				
kin-to-kin	21	26.9	3	7.0
kin-to-nonkin	19	24.4	3	7.0
nonkin-to-kin	3	3.8	0	.0
nonkin-to-nonkin	35	44.9	37	86.0
Mean score of intimacy for				
Total	229	3.77	263	3.92
Direct connection	151	3.93	220	3.90
Indirect connection				
R-H	78	3.46	43	4.02
R-I	78	3.84	43	3.40
I-H	73	3.93	40	3.68

^aPMA: Professional, managerial, and administrative jobs; the contrast category includes clerical workers (15.2) and manual workers (13.1).

subdistricts, and neighborhood committees. The 1994 Singapore study used a cluster sampling of eight major industries, resulting in a sample of 512 current employees randomly selected from these industries. Current analysis uses job changers in these samples. Descriptive information about the samples is presented in Table 1.

In each sample, respondents were asked if someone helped them in their most recent job changes. We found that respondents were more likely to be helped by someone when they changed jobs across organizations. For the present analyses, we also considered job changes within organizations. Because effects of tie strength on social resources and effects of social resources on job mobility outcomes are similar for job changes within and across organizations, we do not differentiate between these two types of job changes in our statistical analyses.

As indicated in Table 1, 50% of Tianjin's and 68% of Singapore's respondents reported that they had changed their jobs since they entered the workforce.³ About three quarters of the job changers in the Tianjin sample changed their jobs between 1978 and 1988, the period in which the economy underwent reforms even though there was a lack of labor markets. In the Singapore sample, all the job changes occurred after 1972, with 85% changing jobs after 1986. About 50% of Tianjin's job changers and 76% of Singapore's⁴ acknowledged that someone provided help in their most recent job change.

Note that the reported percentages of job changers using helpers to change jobs are those who were *successful* in doing so. Those who used helpers unsuccessfully were not included in the statistics. Information about these failed cases would have made the analysis more complete, but to our knowledge omitting this information is a common error made by social network analysts of job searches since Granovetter. Lacking this information could lead to inaccurately estimating the effectiveness of social networks in occupational attainment processes.⁵ Thus, the estimates reported here are comparable to previous findings on the same topics but, as with previous findings, need to be interpreted with caution.

Both Tianjin and Singapore have skewed samples in favoring men as helpers, but Tianjin's is more skewed (80% men) than Singapore's (58% men). Helpers who are relatives of the respondents are the same (21%) between Tianjin and Singapore, but more helpers are indirectly available to the respondents in Tianjin (34%) than in Singapore (16%).

We measured the strength of ties between respondents and their helpers in terms of intimacy on a five-point scale from knowing the helper "not well" to "very well." As described above, intimacy or familiarity (*shu*) is one of the key characteristics of *guanxi* in Chinese society. The distributions are similar in Tianjin and Singapore, except for the "not well" category in which Tianjin has a much higher number of respondents (about 11.8%) than Singapore (3.4%); this is due largely to the use of more indirect ties in Tianjin. For direct connections to helpers, intimacy distributions are about the same between Tianjin and Singapore: less than 70% in the two

TABLE 2: Coefficients from OLS Regression Predicting Access to Helper's Job Status^a

Predictors	All Tie Direct		Indirect Tie Users			
	User	Tie User	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	(1)	(2)				
Tianjin (Dependent variable: helper's work unit rank, a 5-point scale)						
Intimacy R-H						
Not at all	.22	.37*	-.15	.02	.23	-.27
Slightly well	.60**	.66**	.55**	.73**	.45*	.66**
Moderately well	.61**	.60**	.72**	.80**	.58**	.75**
Well	.52**	.40*	.64**	.68**	.46**	.55**
(scale)	(-.15**)	(-.19**)	(-.09)	(-.10)	(-.08)	(-.09)
Intimacy R-I						
Not at all					-.32*	-.05
Slightly well					-.49**	-.71**
Moderately well					-.47**	-.68**
Well					-.13	-.47*
(scale)					(.03)	(.03)
Intimacy I-H						
Not at all						
Slightly well				-.43*		-.56*
Moderately well				-.61**		-.83**
Well				-.28		-.23
(scale)				(.08)		(.11)
Constant	2.21	2.18	2.73	2.54	2.93	2.73
R ²	.23	.20	.26	.35	.35	.45
N	220	146	73	73	73	73

higher-intimacy categories, about 20% in the middle category, and more than 10% in the two lower-intimacy categories. The average intimacy scores for direct-tie users are very close between Tianjin (3.93) and Singapore (3.90). These findings support hypothesis 1 that jobs are channeled through strong ties more frequently than through weak ties in both Tianjin and Singapore.

Country differences are revealed by the respondents who connect indirectly to their helpers. For Tianjin, although 60% of job changers who connect to their helpers indirectly know their helpers either "very well" or "well," 20% do not know their helpers well and about 7% know them only "slightly well." In contrast, job changers in Singapore tend to know their helpers "very well" or "well" (about 80%), and only 2% do not know their helpers well. In terms of role relations, more than 51% of Tianjin's job changers find their helpers through relatives; about half of these helpers are second-step relatives, and another half are friends or acquaintances of

TABLE 2: Coefficients from OLS Regression Predicting Access to Helper's Job Status^a (Continued)

Singapore (Dependent variable: Helper's occupation, a 6-point scale)						
Intimacy R-H						
Not at all	.08	-.05	2.19**	3.40**	1.33**	3.31**
Slightly well	.59**	.57**	.86	1.59**	.82*	1.53**
Moderately well	.53**	.50**	.09	.24	.18	.17
Well	.22	.22	.51	.87**	.73	.89**
(scale)	(-.16**)	(-.14*)	(-.33**)	(-.55**)	(-.32**)	(-.51**)
Intimacy R-I						
Not at all					-.49	-.85
Slightly well					-1.15*	-.11
Moderately well					-.38	.11
Well					.08	-.01
(scale)					(.25)	(.15)
Intimacy I-H						
Not at all				n.c.		n.c.
Slightly well				-2.01**		-1.97**
Moderately well				-1.17**		-1.30**
Well				-.59		-.65
(scale)				(.53**)		(.51**)
Constant	1.08	2.43	-1.08	.89	-.31	.60
R ²	.25	.22	.55	.72	.59	.73
N	241	200	38	38	38	38

^aPredictors included in the equations but not presented are gender, age, and education for both China and Singapore samples. Omitted category for the series of intimacy dummies is "very well."

* p <.05 (two-tailed) ** p <.01 (two-tailed)

their relatives. When helpers are found through nonkin ties (intermediaries), these helpers also tend not to be the relatives of the intermediaries (45%). For Singapore, indirect ties are predominantly nonkin-to-nonkin ties (86%), leaving only 14% for helpers found through kin ties.

Tianjin's job changers, when connected to their helpers indirectly, tend to have weaker ties with helpers (an average score of 3.46) than their ties to the intermediary (3.84) and the ties between intermediary and helper (3.93). This lends support for hypothesis 2. However, somewhat puzzling results are obtained for Singapore: When respondents connect to their helpers indirectly, their ties to their helpers are very strong (4.02), and stronger than their ties to the intermediary (3.40) and the ties between intermediary and helper (3.68). Why one would need to go through weaker bridges to contact a potential helper who is already strongly tied to oneself

is puzzling. We wish to add two points of afterthought. First, only 16% of Singapore respondents actually went through an intermediary to contact a helper. The small number of cases ($N = 43$) means, perhaps, that the results are not as reliable as we might wish. Second, Singapore is known as a "kiasoo" society: people fear failure, so they will grab at any bit of assistance they can get to boost their chances. Thus, even when the ties between respondents and helpers are already strong, the respondents may still go through someone else to double or triple their chances of success. The role of the intermediary then is to provide greater "ammunition" than if the intermediary is not present.

Intimacy and Access to Social Resources

Lin's work (1982, 1990) points to the need to examine the social resources (contacts' status, power, or wealth) accessed through network ties, whether strong or weak. His strength-of-tie hypothesis predicts a negative association between tie strength and social resources. To test this hypothesis, we use somewhat different variables that measure helper's job status in Tianjin and Singapore. In Tianjin, helper's job status is measured by the hierarchical level of his/her work unit, using a five-point scale from low to high: (1) section, (2) department, (3) division, (4) bureau, and (5) ministry. As documented earlier in this article and elsewhere (Bian 1994a; Lin & Bian 1991; Logan & Bian 1993; Walder 1992), the higher the rank of a work unit, the better the available jobs and the higher the compensation that workers enjoy. A helper's work-unit rank is associated with the work units of the respondents whom they helped and therefore is a social resource in the context of job mobility. In Singapore, helper's job status is measured by a six-category occupational scale: (1) unspecified occupations, (2) service and sales workers, (3) clerical workers, (4) executives and administrative officers, (5) professionals, and (6) directors and managers. This scale is adapted from both official reports and research literature (Chew & Chew 1992; MLS 1994).

In their American study, Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn (1981) used a regression technique to predict the effects of tie strength (between respondents and their helpers) and respondents' characteristics on social resources, after statistical controls. We have modified this model in the following way. We have kept the measure of tie strength (intimacy) between respondents and their ultimate helpers, labeled respondents-helpers or R-H. We also include intimacy between respondents and intermediary (respondent-intermediary or R-I) and intimacy between intermediary and ultimate helper (intermediary-helper or I-H). Our control variables include respondents' gender, age, and education. To simplify presentation, we only show the results of the three intimacy measures in Table 2. In separate equations, we use a scale and dummy variables of these intimacy measures to identify the possibility of curvilinear effects. Coefficients for intimacy scales, which are

also obtained separately, are displayed in parentheses. Full results are available upon request.

Model 1 represents all respondents who use helpers in their most recent job change. Overall, as indicated by the significant, negative coefficients for intimacy scales in both Tianjin (-.15) and Singapore (-.16) equations, the general tendency is that the weaker the tie, the greater the likelihood that respondents contact helpers at higher levels. However, the ties of lowest intimacy ("not well") are least likely to help respondents contact high-level helpers in both countries. In fact, the dummy variables indicate that the most helpful ties are the ties of medium strengths ("moderately well" and "slightly well"). This is true for those respondents who connect their helpers directly (model 2) in both countries.

For Singapore, tie strength for respondents-helpers has a negative effect on one's access to high-level helpers. This confirms Lin's (1982) original hypothesis concerning the negative association between tie strength and social resources. However, this is conditional upon the intimacy for intermediaries-helpers, which has a positive effect on one's access to high-level helpers. Thus stronger ties between intermediaries and ultimate helpers increase the likelihood that respondents are put in contact with higher-level helpers. This positive effect results from *guanxi* networking — favors are provided to strong-tie contacts (intermediaries). Intimacy for respondents-intermediaries has no independent effects, indicating that strong, medium, and weak ties between respondents and intermediaries are equally effective in placing respondents in contact with their ultimate helpers at high levels.

The story for Tianjin is somewhat different. The scale measures of intimacy for R-H, R-I, and I-H are insignificant due to the fact that the highest intimate ties and the lowest intimate ties are equally less effective in accessing high-level helpers than the ties of medium strengths ("well," "moderately well," and "slightly well"), as indicated by dummy variables for intimacy. Specifically, respondents are not likely to contact higher-level helpers if they know intermediaries "very well" or "not well." The same is true for the effects of tie strength between intermediaries and ultimate helpers. This finding appears to indicate that although help could be most available from persons of strongest ties, these persons are most likely to be redundant in terms of resources. The weakest ties, on the other hand, are most likely nonredundant, but persons in those ties are perhaps less willing to help. This leaves the ties of medium strengths to be the most effective in accessing resourceful helpers.

TABLE 3: Unstandardized and Standardized Coefficients from OLS Regression Predicting Job Mobility Outcome

Predictors	China: D.V. = Work Unit Rank			Singapore: D.V. = Job Scale		
	All Tie Users (1)	Direct Tie Users (2)	Indirect Tie Users (3)	All Tie Users (4)	Direct Tie Users (5)	Indirect Tie Users (6)
<i>Social resources variables</i>						
Helper's job status	.28** .26**	.25** .24**	.33** .27**	.32** .32**	.31** .33**	.35** .30**
Helper's tie to firm	.13 .06	.14 .06	.17 .07	-.01 -.01	.02 .01	-.19 -.06
Helper in family business	.26* .12*	.18 .08	.36* .18*	-.29* -.07*	-.13 -.03	-.48** -.50**
<i>Tie strength measures</i>						
Indirect tie	.16 .07			.07 .06		
Tie strength						
R-H	-.04 -.05	-.01 -.01	-.06 -.09	.07 .06	.10* .09*	-.04 -.03
R-I			.12 .17			-.04 -.03
I-H			.01 .01			-.13 -.09
<i>Respondent's characteristics</i>						
Gender	.14 .06	.07 .03	.20 .10	.05 .02	.13 .05	-.29 -.10
Age	-.01 -.01	-.01 -.01	-.01 -.09	.03** .17**	.03** .19**	.06* .30*
Education	.10* .11*	.10* .11*	.08 .10	.30** .37**	.27** .34**	.48** .50**
Prior job status	.34** .50**	.45** .63**	.20** .32**	.32** .40**	.33** .44**	.19** .20**
Constant	.58	.14	1.60	-.91	-1.02	-1.28
R ² for full model	.46	.58	.31	.69	.67	.85
R ² for model with prior job status only	.41	.35	.14	.38	.37	.43
N	219	146	73	241	200	38

* p < .05 (two-tailed) ** p < .01 (two-tailed)

Social Resources and Mobility Outcomes

Table 3 presents ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions estimating the effects of helpers' job status (as an indicator of social resources) on respondents' new job status with statistical controls, one of which is respondents' prior job status. We expect a strong association between respondents' new job status and prior job status because, in Singapore, employers value previous occupational experience and qualifications in hiring transferred workers, and in Tianjin, bureaucratic rules required matching of new jobs assigned with previous jobs. The strong effects of prior job status on new job status, as revealed by Table 3, may be due in part to the small numbers of categories used to measure job status (a 5-level scale for Tianjin and a 6-level scale for Singapore); Marsden and Hurlbert (1988) and Wegener (1991) used more comprehensive SEI-type scales and found smaller correlations between prior jobs and new jobs. Nevertheless, these correlations are stronger in Tianjin and in Singapore, as revealed by both standardized coefficients and R^2 s for models with prior job status only. But common in equations for both Tianjin and Singapore are the significant coefficients for variables measuring helper's resources, which we will focus in our analysis.

The most consistent results for both Tianjin and Singapore are the positive, independent effects of respondents' prior job status on mobility outcomes. The positive effects of helpers' status on respondents' mobility outcomes are net of respondents' prior job status and other characteristics, and are more pertinent. These positive effects of the social resources are obtained for the models for total job changers, those who are connected to helpers through direct network chains, and those who are connected to helpers through indirect network chains.⁶ These results support hypothesis 3 on the positive effects of social resources.

Beside helpers' job status, we consider two other variables as indicators of social resources in the job mobility context: helper's tie to the firm into which respondents move and whether helpers work in a family-based firm. The first of these is not significant, the second is useful (only for indirect tie users), but there are country differences (positive for Tianjin and negative for Singapore). For China, when helpers work in a family-based firm (family businesses and street-level, small collectives that are largely household based), job changers tend to move into higher-ranked work units. In Singapore, when helpers are affiliated with a family-based firm, their beneficiaries tend to obtain lower-level occupations.

This may point to the different patterns of influence networks in Tianjin and Singapore. Tianjin's family-based firms (again small collectives included) are connected to large state factories for supply and/or sales. Business connections tend to be extended into personal connections between heads of these different levels of firms. Because jobs in higher-ranked work units (state-owned or not) offer better benefits (housing, medical benefits, etc.), heads of household- and neighborhood-based firms

can be asked by someone who is targeting jobs in high-ranked work units. The fact that this only affects those using indirect ties indicates that the beneficiaries are not the children of heads of family firms or their close friends. It was "distance" ties in their *guanxi* networks who are channeled through to obtain jobs in high-ranking work units.

In Singapore, on the other hand, if a helper works in a family business, his/her influence is perhaps limited to his/her own firm. Since higher-ranked jobs such as managerial and professional jobs are more likely to be found in nonfamily (large) firms, respondents who are not helped by someone from family-based firms are more likely to obtain such jobs. Indeed, family-based firms in Singapore tend to be small, with few higher-ranked jobs and small spheres of influence outside their own organizations. Their interaction is more with other family-owned businesses than with nonfamily corporations (Chew & Chew 1992).

Concluding Remarks

This comparative study of Tianjin and Singapore examines how *guanxi* networks and social resources embedded in them affect job mobility. The analyses provide some answers but also pose many questions about job mobility. Clearly, a large number of job changers in both Tianjin (50%) and Singapore (75%) use *guanxi* to change jobs. In Singapore, *guanxi* is used to obtain both information and influence from social contacts for one's job mobility, and this flexibility may be responsible for the higher percentage of jobs changed through *guanxi* networks in Singapore than in Tianjin. Indeed, our descriptive analyses indicate that in Tianjin, in 1988, *guanxi* is used more for obtaining influence from authorities, and access to information about jobs seems to be irrelevant there.

Clearly, in both Tianjin and Singapore, job changes are facilitated through stronger ties more frequently than through weaker ones. This finding is true despite the fact that labor markets are present in Singapore but not in Tianjin in 1988. In contrast to western countries where job changers tend to be linked to their helpers through weak ties rather than strong ties (DeGraaf & Flap 1986; Granovetter 1974; Lin, Ensel, Vaughn 1981; Marsden & Hurlbert 1988), the different findings from Tianjin and Singapore demand interpretation. To be sure, a nonmarket-market dichotomy is an insufficient source for such interpretation.⁷

We have looked to *guanxi* networks, common to Tianjin and Singapore, to account for the fact that jobs are channeled through strong ties more frequently than through weak ties. We have described the tensions between employees and employers in the different labor market contexts in Tianjin and Singapore. The tension in Tianjin was for a potential job changer to fight against a bureaucratic system resisting job mobility. The tension in Singapore is for employers to be sure about the reliability of workers with company loyalty. In both places, *guanxi* networks of job changers provide

channels to release these tensions. Interestingly, *guanxi* networks, though a web of strong ties, are not necessarily redundant, but exchange of favors implies that it occurs between people having different resources to trade. Future research of small group interactions in Chinese societies should shed light on the empirical basis of this interpretation.

Our analysis strongly supports Lin's social resource hypothesis. Despite the differences in labor market contexts between Tianjin and Singapore, and despite strong associations between prior jobs and attained jobs, helpers' job status has remarkably similar and equally important effects on respondents' mobility outcomes in both places. The difference in the effects of a helper's working in a family-based firm, however, results from the difference between Tianjin and Singapore in the influence that networks have in economic sectors. This indicates that Lin's social resource hypothesis may be valid across labor market contexts.

How social resources are accessed through social ties of varying strengths is still open to question. In contrast to the conventional measure on strength of ties between respondents and their ultimate helpers, we have considered two types of network chains: (1) one-step chains of direct connection between job changers and their helpers and (2) two-step chains in which job changers are connected through intermediaries to helpers. In one-step chains, although job changers tend to know their helpers "very well" or "well," those job changers who know their helpers "slightly well" or "moderately well" are the ones who contact helpers at higher levels. Given that contact with high-level helpers leads to better job mobility outcomes, this finding indicates that even in one-step chains, neither the strongest nor the weakest ties are effective in accessing social resources. The ties of medium strengths are the most useful in both a nonmarket system Tianjin and a market system Singapore.

Our interpretation of the strength of medium ties is indirect. On the one hand, strong ties are most available and are most likely to be redundant in terms of the kinds of information and resources offered, a point similar to Granovetter's (1973, 1974) weak-tie argument. Therefore, they are unlikely to relay information about jobs in an imperfect market system or transmit influence in an imperfect bureaucratic system for job mobility. Weak ties, on the other hand, are most likely nonredundant; however, in Chinese culture they are also most unlikely to facilitate exchanges of favors that require a sense of trust and moral obligations between exchangers. Because giving information or influence to help someone change jobs is understood in the context of exchange of favors, weak ties are unlikely to be helpful in mobility processes. The ineffectiveness of the strongest and weakest ties leave the ties of medium strengths to operate most effectively in the job mobility process in Tianjin and Singapore.

This may not be peculiar to Tianjin and Singapore but perhaps has broad implications for research of interpersonal networks. Granovetter's weak-tie argument has directed our attention to weak ties as a broad category of social networks. Our findings point to an important feature of

weak ties: weakness is not without limit. Indeed, the fact that colleagues, friends, relatives, and even direct family members tend not to be too close or too far apart from each other requires careful research of the meanings and implications of social ties of medium strengths.

Our findings on two-step chains of indirect connection between job changers and their helpers remain mixed between Tianjin and Singapore. For Tianjin, the weak ties between job changers and their ultimate helpers are conditional upon the strong ties between job changers and intermediaries and between intermediaries and ultimate helpers. For Singapore, however, although stronger ties between intermediaries and helpers tend to lead to better social resources, both strong, medium, and weak ties between job changers and intermediaries are equally effective. We do not have a good explanation for this. One likely possibility is that strength of ties is multidimensional: job changers may obtain help from intermediaries whose relations may be more sensitive to other dimensions than intimacy. One such dimension may be the kin-nonkin distinction. Another dimension is the extent to which people do favors for others unconditionally. Future studies should use multiple measures to explore these puzzling results.

Notes

1. Some exceptions include Marsden and Hurlbert's (1988) analysis of a 1970 Detroit area study that showed that social resources were bridged through weak and strong ties rather equally, and Wegener's (1991) West German study that showed that the effect of tie strength on social resources depended on the status of job changers (low-status workers tend to access social resources more through strong ties than through weak ties).
2. For example, a local major bank had hired away a very high ranking manager from a foreign bank. The press got hold of the news and publicized it prematurely. It created a furor in the banking industry causing much anguish and anger at the foreign bank.
3. In his 1986 Tianjin study, based on a sampling strategy similar to the one used in the 1988 Tianjin analyzed here, Walder (1992:526) finds that the average number of jobs held by employees aged 40 to 54 was about two, and among those who have worked for 31 to 35 years 45% have never changed jobs, or 55% have changed jobs since entering the labor force. A similar figure (57%) was found for this age group of job changers in the 1988 Tianjin study.
4. On a separate question about methods of job change, 35% of the respondents in the Singapore study admitted that they used *guanxi* to find jobs. Another 40% who said that they used other means (newspaper ads, headhunters, etc.) also admitted that someone provided "greatest help" in their job changes. The question about methods of job change was not used in the Tianjin study.
5. We owe this insight to an anonymous reviewer.
6. The strategy to analyze subsamples of tie users has also been used by previous researchers (Lin et al. 1981; Marsden & Hurlbert 1988; Wegener 1991). In a separate analysis (not reported, but available upon request from the first author), we estimated these same models using total respondents. We found that for both Tianjin and Singapore, with controls for all variables included in Table 3 and an additional dummy variable for use of ties, the coefficients of contact's job status are about the same in magnitudes and in levels of statistical significance ($b = .283$ with $p < .01$ for Tianjin and $b = .334$ with $p < .01$ for Singapore) as those reported in Table 3. These results raise our confidence in the results presented in Table 3, although the subsamples of indirect tie users are relatively small. Moreover, for Tianjin, with controls for respondents' gender, age, education, and

prior job status, the dummy variable for use of ties has positive effect on respondents' new job status, indicating that respondents using contacts enjoy greater opportunity for upward mobility because of contacts' social resources than those who do not use contacts. So, if there were underreporting on using contacts to change jobs, such cases would be in small numbers. For Singapore, the dummy variable for use of ties has no independent effect on respondents' new job status. Because it is "normal" to use contacts to change jobs in Singapore, this finding does not imply underreporting but indicate that respondents who do not use contacts (25%) can obtain high-status jobs because of their qualifications. Indeed, respondents who do not use contacts to change jobs reveal stronger correlations of new job status with prior job ($r = 1$) and with education (.787) than do respondents who use contacts (.611 and .679, respectively).

7. A possible alternative interpretation is whether labor is scarce or abundant, which was proposed by an attendant to the paper's presentation at the University of Chicago. It was argued that labor scarcity in Singapore might be a cause for job changers to use influence networks to obtain desired jobs. However, for many decades now Tianjin has been under the opposite situation of labor oversupply. To test this interpretation, therefore, more data are needed from countries with different degrees of labor scarcity but within the same institutional arrangements for labor market processes.

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