“OBSTRUCTED EMBRACE”:
THE ID CARD INSTITUTION IN SHANGHAI, 1945-1949

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Following the victory in the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1945, the Nationalist government in China implemented ID cards in some of its controlled regions as an integral part of the modern-state building project, albeit faced with considerable difficulties and resistance. Focusing on Shanghai, one of the cities that piloted the ID card policy, this thesis examines the various obstacles encountered. It approaches the obstacles from three aspects: the technology used in the ID cards to differentiate individuals and to authenticate documents; the administrative structure and the corrupted personnel responsible for distributing the ID cards; and the trauma of Japanese occupation that stigmatized ID cards as symbols of foreign invasion and excessive surveillance. The obstructed use of ID cards in post-1945 Shanghai provides a fresh perspective on the state-society relations during Nationalist government's final attempts to build a modern state on mainland China.

Keywords: Modern-state building; Individual identification; Japanese occupation; Republican China; Shanghai

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

On September 19, 1947, a Shanghai citizen Gu Miaogen rushed into a local administrative office, shot dead his community leader (*bao* chief 保长), and fled under a new alias. It was reported that, as Gu Miaogen's kinsman, the community leader had the habit of withholding Gu Miaogen's ID cards since the Japanese occupation period (1937-1945). This withholding likely caused significant troubles in Gu's life, leading to cumulative grudges that finally resulted in the bloody murder. Most newspapers portrayed the community leader as a conscientious person and an innocent victim, claiming that it was "for security's sake" that he refused to hand the ID card to Gu Miaogen due to the latter's "bandit-like" behavior.[1] However, as withholding ID cards had become a common practice for community leaders to manipulate residents and secure bribes, there is good reason to speculate that this community leader was not as innocent as the newspapers suggested. The murderer Gu Miaogen, one might imagine, could be a victim of both the power-abusing community leader and the ID card policy.

Since 1937, when the Japanese troops conquered part of Shanghai, the Japanese and their puppet regimes used personal identification documents in their occupied areas to identify individuals for social control. One would need an ID card to travel within the city.[2] After August 15, 1945, when China won the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Nationalist government regained full control of Shanghai, the Nationalist regime decided to continue the ID card policy, albeit under a different name. By 1947, it was hard for individuals to move around and conduct business in Shanghai without an ID card. The police regularly checked ID cards on the street and

[1] "Pudong Gaoqiaoxi Gujia Zhai: wei le yi zhang shenfen zheng, Gu Miaogen qiangsha baozhang 浦东高桥西顾家宅: 为了一张身份证, 顾妙根枪杀保长 (Pudong Gaoqiao West Gu's Family: Gu Miaogen shot dead *bao* chief for an ID card)," *Heping Ribao*, September 21, 1947.

[2] "Jinri jiajin jiebei, jiancha shimin zheng 今日加紧戒备, 检查市民证 (Today Security Guard is Intensified; Citizen's Cards Will be Checked)," *Zhongguo Shangbao*, July 7, 1943.

would bring those without an ID card (or with dubious ID cards) to the police station for further interrogation.[3] This likely made living without an ID card an unbearable experience for Gu Miaogen in 1947, ultimately forcing him to resort to murder.

While this was an extreme case, Gu Miaogen was not the only one suffering from the ID card policy in Shanghai during this period. As I demonstrate in Chapter 3, Gu's case exemplifies the state-society relations in Shanghai through the lens of the ID card policy. In the *baojia* system, the local governance structure implemented in Shanghai since 1942, the local community leaders, or "*baojia* chiefs," were endowed with the power and duty to distribute ID cards. With no effective checks on the *baojia* chiefs, the ID cards policy in fact provided them with another opportunity to manipulate residents and abuse their power. The community leader murdered by Gu was perhaps a typical power-abusing chief within this problematic administrative structure.

Predatory local administrative officers were not the only obstacle that the ID card policy encountered during this period. While the policy seemed to be well-intentioned as part of the Nationalist government's state building project, its implementation faced considerable resistance and difficulties. This thesis aims to understand the multifaceted obstacles that impeded the ID card policy's implementation in Shanghai from 1945 to 1949. It interrogates the ID card as an institution that involved the material card and the technologies used (chapter 2), the bureaucracy that circulated the card (chapter 3), and the competing ideologies behind the policy (chapter 4). Using post-1945 Shanghai as a case study, this thesis contributes to the existing scholarship of information history and individual identification studies.

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[3] Ibid.

1.1 Literature Review

This thesis situates itself at the intersection of information history and individual identification studies. Since the media scholar Marshall McLuhan claimed in 1964 that his was an "information age," the idea of information has garnered increasing attention from scholars of various disciplines.[4] Among the many issues discussed, the rise of the "information state" is an important one, which seeks to explore the various technologies and apparatuses - "chanceries, secretaries, surveillance, archives" - that the state utilized to collect, store, and use information.[5] Following and responding to Max Weber's idea that writing is essential to modern bureaucracy, many scholars have studied the role that paperwork and documents (such as passports, registration books, edicts, law codes) played in the processes of state building, colonial governance, and formation of legality.[6] Several historians of China have pursued along this line. Scholars like Emily Mokros, John Alekna, and Maura Dykstra have focused their works on genres such as imperial gazette and court memorials in the Qing dynasty as well as newspaper and radio systems in the twentieth century, exploring how these documents shaped the information channels of the state.[7] However, among the various genres of paperwork in the making of Chinese state, individual identification documents, which rose as an integral part of the modern state building project and became increasingly essential to common people's everyday life in the early twentieth

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[4] *Information: A Historical Companion,* eds. Ann Blair, et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), vii.
[5] Ibid., ix.
[6] See, for example, Cornelia Vismann, *Files: Law and Media Technology*, trans. Geoffery Winthrop-Young (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008). Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014). Bhavani Raman, *Document Raj: Writing and Scribes in Early Colonial South India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). The recent special issue "Paper Empires: Layers of Law in Colonial South Asia and the Indian Ocean" in *Law and History Review* 41, no. 3 (2023): 417–26 also points towards this direction.
[7] Uluğ Kuzuoğlu, *Codes of Modernity: Chinese Scripts in the Global Information Ag*e (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023). Emily Mokros, *The Peking Gazette in Late Imperial China: State News and Political Authority* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021). John Alekna, *Seeking News, Making China: Information, Technology, and the Emergence of Mass Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2024). Maura Dykstra, *Uncertainty in the Empire of Routine: The Administrative Revolution of the Eighteenth-Century Qing State* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2023).

century, remain relatively understudied. This thesis aims to fill this gap by taking the ID card system in Shanghai in the 1940s as a lens to look at the role that paperwork and information technologies played in building China as a modern state in the early twentieth century.

Among the various information practices of a state, the identification and tracking down of individual human beings are an integral task. This brings us to the second field that my thesis situates itself in: the studies of individual identification. Scholars call this field "the history of identification," "the engineering of identities," or the studies of "historical regime of identification," declaring in an edited volume published in 2013 that personal identification has become "an established research area in social science."[8] While scholars have shed light on the issues of individual identification and identity theft from early on,[9] John C. Torpey's *The Invention of Passport* (1999) could probably claim to be the first monograph that focused on a specific genre of individual identification documents - the passport. Torpey traces the rise of international travel documents since the 19th century in the Western world, taking passports as "the means with which states seek to monopolize the legitimate 'means of movement.'"[10] He proposes to use "embrace" instead of "penetration" as a metaphor to describe state-society relations, in which personal identification documents helped states to "embrace" their citizens, extract resources from them, and keep track of their mobility. For Torpey, "embrace," as derived from the German word "erfrassen" meaning to "grasp" or to "register," is a better image than "penetration"

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[8] Ibsen About, James R. Brown, and Gayle Lonergan. "Introduction," *Identification and Recognition Practices in Transnational Perspective: People, Papers, and Practices,* eds. Ibsen About, James R. Brown, and Gayle Lonergan (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1-16.

[9] Jordan Brensinger and Gil Eyal offered a detailed delineation of previous theoretical discussions about personal identification since the 1960s, including Goffman, Mauss, Foucault, and Deleuze. See "The Sociology of Personal Identification," *Sociological Theory* 39*,* (December 2021), no.4, 266-72. Personal identification was also discussed in Gerard Noiriel's monograph *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[10] John C. Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, second edition)*,* xii.

mainly because embrace "directs our awareness to the ways in which states bound – and in certain senses even 'nurture' – the societies they hold in their clutches."[11] I would highlight yet another advantage of the image of "embrace" – instead of depicting the populace as passively lying prostrate under the top-down penetration of the authoritative state, it depicts state and society on a rather equal footing, allowing space for agency and resistance beyond the state's intentions. By using "obstructed embrace" as title, this thesis draws attention to people's agency while paying homage to Torpey's pioneering study of identification documents.

After Torpey, studies on personal identification practices thrived since 2000, expanding in geographical, temporal, and disciplinary scope. How could states and non-state entities effectively identify individuals? How did individual identification practices vary across time and space, transfer across cultural and national borders? While early answers to these questions have largely centered on Europe and North America,[12] later scholars ventured into colonial settings and non-Western areas.[13] However, in the Anglophone academia, studies on individual identification in

[11] Ibid., 14.

[12] The volume edited by Jane Caplan and John C. Torpey, *Documenting Individual Identity: The Development of State Practices in the Modern World* (2001), offers a series of case studies in the Western world since the 15th century to the present, highlighting the development of identification apparatus and its relation to policing and travel restrictions. Valentin Groebner explores the case of early modern Europe with *Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe* (2007). Numerous studies focusing on specific nation-states have emerged. See Robertson Craig's *Passport in America: the History of a Document* (2012), Edward Higgs's *Identifying the English: A History of Personal Identification 1500 to the Present* (2011), and Albert Baiburin's *The Soviet Passport: The History, Nature and Uses of the Internal Passport in the USSR* (2021).

[13] David Lyon's edited volume *Playing the Identity Card: Surveillance, Security, and Identification in Global Perspective* (2008) covers cases of colonial legacy in non-Western countries and highlighting democratic opposition to state and imperialist identification efforts. This volume includes chapters on post-2003 mainland China and the ID cards used in Hong Kong. David Lyon's monograph *Identifying Citizens: ID Cards as Surveillance* (2009) bridges the surveillance function of ID cards from the pre-modern to the digital age, across metropole and colonial settings, drawing on cases such as British India and Belgian Rwanda, see pages 28-9. *Identification and Registration Practices in Transnational Perspective: People, Papers and Practices* (2013) largely centers on Europe but includes a chapter on the Japanese koseki system since the 1950s. *Registration and Recognition: Documenting the Person in World History* (2012) takes a more global perspective, with most chapters dedicated to non-Western countries, colonial empires, and oversea Europeans. Jaeeum Kim's *Contested Embrace: Transborder Membership Politics in Twentieth-Century Korea* (2016) focuses on East Asia, analyzing disputes over the belonging of Koreans in Japan and China in the twentieth century while addressing the issue of identification documents. Adam M. McKeown explores Asian immigrants' passports from a global perspective in *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the*

early twentieth century China remained sporadic. Studies on social control, policing, and legal reform sometimes touched upon this issue, but usually without detailed exploration.[14]

Individual identification documents in early twentieth century China are worth our attention, because this was the first time when China saw attempts that tried to apply individual identification documents universally to all qualified citizens. Early twentieth century was also the period when the first Republic regime in China struggled to gain recognition and legitimacy as a modern state, trying to prove itself as capable of managing its citizens and endowing them with democratic rights. ID cards and the related household registration system were represented as integral part of an efficient modern state. The study of ID cards therefore provides a special and understudied lens to look at the individual identification system and the modern state building projects in Republican China.

Several articles published on Chinese academic journals have explored in some detail the issue of identification documents in China before 1949. Viewing the ID card as a sign of intensified state penetration down to the individual level, Kui Liu delineates the ID card policy in the 1940s

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Globalization of Borders (2011). The recent Covid-19 pandemic and concomitant travel restrictions have renewed interest in travel documents, with *License to Travel: A Cultural History of the Passport* (2022) being a prominent example that approaches global travel documentation from a cultural history perspective.

[14] "Chapter 9: Deviance, Modernization, Rations, and Household Registers in Urban China" by Lynn T. White in *Deviance and Soical Control in Chinese Society*, 1977, 157-8, briefly introduced in two paragraphs the identification documents in Shanghai and Caton in the 1930s and 1940s. Frederic Wakeman, in his seminal trilogy of Shanghai policing, mentioned identification documents only briefly, quoting Lynn T. White's work. See "Urban Controls in Wartime Shanghai" by Frederic Wakeman, in *Wartime Shanghai*, ed. Wen-hsin Yeh, 1998, 133-56. This article was later included as the Chapter 1 of *Red Star over Shanghai* 红星照耀上海城: 共产党对市政警察的改造 (2011). As far as I can find, only the Chinese edition of *Red Star over Shanghai* has been published; no English edition is available. Other articles and theses that touch upon the issue of individual identification in Republican China include: Rana Mitter's "Classifying Citizens in Nationalist China during World War II, 1937-194," *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no.2 (March 2011): 243-75. Rui Duan, "Zhanhou Nanjing Jingzheng Yanjiu 战后南京警政研究, 1945-1949 (Policing in Postwar Nanjing, 1945-1949)," MA Thesis, 2012, Nanjing University. Weiwei Yang, "Chengxu yu Qianghua: Lunxian Shiqi de Wuhan Baojia Zhidu 承续与强化: 沦陷时期的武汉保甲制度 (Continuity and Intensification: Baojia System in Japanese-Occupied Wuhan)," *Wuhanxue Yanjiu,* no.4 (2020), 144-60. Sun Xiaoming, "Riwei shiqi Shanghai gonggongzujie fazhi bianyi 日伪时期上海公共租界法制变异 (The Changes of Legal System in Shanghai International Concession during Japanese Occupation)," MA Thesis, 2009, East China University of Political Science and Law.

under Nationalist rule and examines the various factors that curtailed the policy's efficacy. Liu pays particular attention to the agency of the Communist Party in appropriating the Nationalist government's ID card regime. While this article aims to study nationwide ID card policy, most primary sources are from Hubei province, possibly because Hubei has been Liu's research focus.[15] Dong Yang studies the "Good Man's Card (*liangmin zheng* 良民证)" issued under the Japanese occupation during the second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945), detailing the Japanese intentions in issuing the cards, as well as the sufferings and resistance of the people.[16] Siou-meng Syu's article illuminates the development of what she calls "identification system (*shenfen bianshi xitong* 身份辨识系统)" in Shanghai from the 1930s to 1949, demonstrating how warfare contributed to the intensification of identification practices.[17] My thesis, focusing on 1945 to 1949 Shanghai and using untapped primary sources, contributes to the existing scholarship by further detailing the various obstacles that the state's identification policies faced during this period. This thesis highlights the materiality of the ID card and interrogates the technology that it used, the administrative system that it mobilized, and the competing ideologies behind the policy.

1.2 Historical Background

This thesis takes the ID card policy in Shanghai from 1945 to 1949 as a case study of the identification practices in Republican China. In 1945, with World War II coming to an end and

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[15] Kui Liu, "Guojia quanli yu jiceng kongzhi - yi 1940 niandai Guominzhengfu shishi de guomin shenfenzheng zhidu wei guanchadian 国家权力与基层控制 —— 以 1940 年代国民政府实施的国民身份证制度为观察点 (State Power and Local Control - From the Perspective of the ID card Policy Implemented by the Nationalist Government in 1940)." *Jiangsu Shehui Kexue*, no.5 (2013): 170-7.

[16] Dong Yang, "Shenfen zhi gu - zhanshi lunxian qu de liangmin zheng tanze 身份之锢 —— 战时沦陷区的良民证探赜 (Caged Identities - A study of the 'Good Man's Card' in Wartime Japanese-occupied Areas)," *Kangri Zhanzheng Yanjiu*, no.4 (2018): 105-119.

[17] Siou-meng Syu, "Banian kangzhan qianhou Shanghai de Hukou dengji, shimin zheng yu shenfen bianshi xitong 八年抗战前后上海的户口登记、市民证与身分辨识系统 (Household Registration, ID Cards, and Identification System in Shanghai before and after the Second Sino-Japanese War)," *Taida Lishi Xuebao* 71, (June 2023): 42-89.

China emerging as a victor, the Nationalist government gained full control of Shanghai, at least nominally, for the first time since the establishment of foreign extraterritoriality in 1843. New expectations from the U.S. and the world urged China to become a democratic, orderly, and peaceful country to prevent further conflicts in the Pacific region. As a showcase of China's modernization, Shanghai pioneered the ID card policy in 1946 before adjacent rural areas did the same. The Nationalist government portrayed ID cards as a necessity for the first 1946 general election while used them as tools to enforce law and order (see Chapter 4).

The year 1945 was not the first time that individual identification documents were introduced in China. In fact, both the Nationalist government and Japanese troops implemented individual identification documents in their controlled areas since the early 1930s. As early as in 1932, Xiao Zheng 萧铮, an intellectual who had studied in Germany, advised the Nationalist president Chiang Kai-shek to implement individual identification documents (*shenfen zhengming shu* 身份证明书) around the newly established Jiangxi Soviet. Xiao proposed that such documents could be used for implementing census, eliminating Communists and bandits, clarifying property and legal rights, and enforcing taxation and conscription duties.[18] In 1933, Chiang implemented "Good Men's Cards (*liangmin zheng* 良民证)" in "Communist-active areas (*feiqu* 匪区)",[19] issuing cards to those who surrendered to the Nationalist government.[20] After the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, the Nationalist government introduced "National Conscription

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[18] Xiao Zheng, *Tudi gaige wushinian: Xiaozheng huiyilu* 土地改革五十年: 萧铮回忆录 (*Fifty Years of Land Reform: Xiao Zheng's Memoir*), Taipei: Zhongguo Dizheng Yanjiusuo Zongjingxiao Zhuanjiwenxue Chubanshe, 1980, 49-51.

[19] "Baqianli lvxingji: liangminzheng 八千里旅行记：良民证 (A Journey of Eight Thousand *Li*: Good Man's Card), " *Fuermosi*, February 10, 1933. This newspaper article, as a part among a travel journal series, reported how "Good Man's Card" was implemented in the Nationalist controlled areas and inflicted burden onto the lower class, who were starving and had no means to pay the 2 *jiao* price of an ID card.

[20] Dong Yang, "Shenfen zhi gu - zhanshi lunxian qu de liangmin zheng tanze 身份之锢 —— 战时沦陷区的良民证探赜 (Caged Identities - A study of the 'Good Man's Card' in Wartime Japanese-occupied Areas)," *Kangri Zhanzheng Yanjiu*, no.4 (2018): 106.

ID Card (*guominbing shenfen zheng* 国民兵身份证)," a card for all capable Chinese male nationals between 15 to 45 years of age, suitable for conscription. In 1940, the Nationalist government decided to issue individual identification cards, called "National's ID Card (*guomin shenfen zheng* 国民身份证)," to every Chinese citizen above a certain age (usually 14). Simultaneously, the Japanese implemented various individual identification cards from 1937 to 1945 to control the Chinese population, turning ID card into symbols of foreign invasion and national humiliation.[21] In 1937, during the "Shanghai Battle," the Japanese conquered and occupied part of Shanghai. From then on, Chinese people passing through Japanese-dominated sentry posts in Shanghai had to present their identification cards for checking, a process that usually involved humiliation and violence, such as being slapped in the face or even raped by the Japanese. To conclude, before and during the Second Sino-Japanese War, both the Nationalist government and the Japanese implemented individual identification documents under various names in China.

Individual ID cards were written into law after the Second Sino-Japanese War ended in 1945. The Nationalist government issued "Amended Household Registration Law (*xiuding huji fa* 修订户籍法)" on January 3, 1946. The eleventh article of this law required that individual identification card (*guomin shenfen zheng* 国民身份证) be issued in certain areas after household registration was completed.[22] Shanghai was one of the cities that piloted the ID card policy.[23] After implementing *baojia* system and conducting an initial census and household registration,

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[21] Common names of individual identification cards include *xianmin zheng* 县民证, *xiangmin zheng* 乡民证, *shimin zheng* 市民证, *juzhu zheng* 居住证, *anju zheng* 安居证, etc. See Yang Dong, 107-8. ID cards as symbols of foreign invasion is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

[22] "*Huji fa* 户籍法 (Household Registration Law)," Entry no.11, *Huzheng Daobao*, no.2 (1946): 25-8.

[23] Nanjing, Shanghai, Beijing are the cities that piloted the ID card policy. This corresponded to Xiao Zheng's suggestion to Chiang Kai-shek: first pilot the ID card policy in big cities and then expand it to rural areas. See note 18.

Shanghai began issuing ID cards to every Chinese national above 14 years old in March 1946 (Figure 1). With the civil war raging on and daily resources running scarce in Shanghai, the Shanghai Nationalist government began issuing a new version of ID cards in October 1948, each with 144 food rationing coupons (Figure 2). To prevent scalpers from reselling goods for high profits, citizens were required to present their ID cards to purchase items such as vegetable oil, rice, knitting wool, and cotton.[24] In 1949, Shanghai stopped issuing new ID cards. After the Communist takeover in 1949, the new government continued to use the 1948 ID cards for food rationing for another two years. In 1952, individual ID cards in Shanghai were officially abolished by the Communist government.[25] China did not see nationwide ID cards used until 1984, when the Communist government issued the "First-Generation ID cards."[26]

[24] "Goumai Shiyou, ping shenfenzheng 购买食油, 凭身份证 (To buy oil, ID cards are required)," *Jingji Tongxun* 835, (1948): 1. "Fagui Huilu: Shanghaishi mianbushangye Tongyegonghui tonggao menshi lingjian yingping shenfenzheng meiren xiangou mianbu yizhang wuchi 法规汇录: 上海市棉布商业同业公会通告门市零剪应凭身份证每人限购棉布一丈五尺 (Compilation of rules: Shanghai Cotton Cloth Commercial Guild Announced: Retailing shops required ID cards; Purchase restriction: One *zhang* five *chi* per person)," *Jinrong zhoubao* 19, no.15 (1948): 21.

[25] Guo Jiwei, Kong Fansheng, "Zaixian cangsang lishi de guomin shenfen zheng (ID Cards that Reproduced History)," *Shandong dang'an*, (April 15, 2009): 70.

[26] Cheryl L. Brown, "China's second-generation national identity card: Merging culture, industry and technology." in *Playing the Identity Card*, 59.

Figure 1: An ID card issued in May, 1946, Shanghai. The embossing stamp reads “Shanghai Municipal Government · Citizen’s Identification Card 上海市政府·国民身份证.” Leaving part of the impression on the photo, the embossing stamp helped to prevent photo swapping. From kongfz.com. (https://book.kongfz.com/7799/1120663353/).

Figure 2: An ID card issued in 1948 Shanghai with food rationing coupons. From kongfz.com. (https://book.kongfz.com/20774/6387916450/)

1.3 Chapter Outline

To understand the obstacles that the ID card policy encountered in post-1945 Shanghai, we should not only examine the policy itself but also interrogate ID cards as an institution that involved the material card (chapter 2), the administrative structure that circulated it (chapter 3),

and the competing ideologies behind the policy (chapter 4). After Chapter 1 as a general introduction, Chapter 2 locates some obstacles of implementing the policy in the ID card as a material object. By contextualizing the use of names, photos, and seal stamps – the technologies used in the ID card to differentiate individuals and authenticate the document – this chapter examines the contested process by which these components struggled to become reliable identifiers of individuals. This chapter argues that the technologies used in ID cards were "slippery" - they were interchangeable (they could not always differentiate one individual from another when people shared the same identifier), mutable (certain identifiers of an individual could change over time and remain unstable), contested, sometimes difficult to get, and subject to forgery. All these features of the ID card components contributed to the obstacles that impeded the implementation of the ID card policy.

As the circulation of ID cards mobilized a gigantic bureaucratic structure, Chapter 3 explores the various problems embedded in the administrative system, with a focus on the *baojia* chiefs as an indispensable group of sub-administrative state intermediaries. This chapter argues that the ID card apparatus was symptomatic of what Prasenjit Duara calls "state involution," a phenomenon that occurs when the state relies heavily on predatory "entrepreneurial brokers"[27] to extend its reach into local society, and results in the expansion of formal structure alongside an "informal structure" – illegal but tolerated practices that further exploit the populace.[28] Situating themselves in a deeply entrenched bureaucratic tradition of collecting surplus fees, the *baojia* chiefs easily found it natural for them to glean illegal but acquiesced benefits from their officially

[27] In *Culture, Power, and the State*, Prasenjit Duara proposes a "state-brokerage model" to describe the 19th-century Qing dynasty, when the state relies on both "entrepreneurial brokers" and "protective brokers" to fulfill local administrative tasks such as taxation and land registration. While "entrepreneurial brokers" took their positions such as clerks and runners mainly to maximize their personal gain through embezzlement, the "protective brokers," largely local elites driven by a Confucian sense of responsibility, tried to protect the village from predatory exploitation. 47.
[28] Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China 1900-1942*: 251-2.

unpaid positions. The “entrepreneurial” and predatory nature of many state brokers presented a significant obstacle to implementing the ID card policy.

Chapter 4 examines the competing ideologies attached to ID cards. While the Nationalist government promoted the ID card as a symbol of entitlement and democracy, especially the citizens’ right to vote, dissenting voices denounced the entitlement discourse and disparaged the ID card as a symbol of surveillance - a painful reminder of Japanese invasion, loss of sovereignty, and national humiliation. ID cards became a site where the legitimacy of the Nationalist rule was both defended and challenged. The traumatic memory of Japanese occupation and the stigmatized imagery of ID cards not only provided anti-Nationalist voices with a new rhetorical weapon to attack the government but also impeded the implementation of the ID card policy.

CHAPTER 2: SLIPPERY "IDENTITY PEGS": TECHNOLOGIES IN ID CARDS

In *Seeing Like a State*, James C. Scott shows how a state forges "tools of legibility" by standardizing measurements and surnames so that the state can easily read the land and the population.[29] In individual identification practices, identification card serves as one of the most critical "tool of legibility," enabling the state to not only see the static existence of households, but also to keep track of the dynamic mobility of individuals. To effectively render the populace legible, I argue that the ID card required at least two components: "identity pegs" and "authority tags." The first component, which Erving Goffman calls "identity pegs," served to differentiate one individual from another. Common identity pegs include a personal name, a fingerprint, or "the photographic image of the individual in others' minds."[30] I argue that the "identity pegs" contained in the Shanghai ID cards – such as names and photos – were slippery, contested, and sometimes difficult to access. The second component, which I call "authority tags," served to authenticate the card with governmental authority. Common "authority tags," like seal stamps, were easily subject to forgery. This chapter, by highlighting the process through which the "identity pegs" and "authority tags" were manufactured, read, and used, identifies some of the difficulties in implementing the ID card policy as rooted in the materiality and technologies of the ID cards.

2.1 The Document

Before delving into each component of the ID card, a description of the document in Shanghai from 1945 to 1949 is necessary. As outlined above in "Introduction: Historical

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[29] James C. Scott. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 25.
[30] Erving Goffman. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. (Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.), 56-7.

Background," the Shanghai municipal government implemented the first round of ID cards in early 1946. Those who met all the following conditions were eligible and required to apply for ID cards: Chinese nationals (with Chinese nationality); having registered as residents in Shanghai; above 14 years of age.[31] This version of ID cards (Figure 1) took the form of a booklet with two leaves and four pages. The first page documented "Shanghai City National's Identification Card," the issuing date (in purple), and the ID number (in blue). The last page read "Do's and Don'ts" and "Corrections." The second page included one's address according to the "ward-*bao*-*jia*-household" structure,[32] as well as one's "citizenship" (when and where one took the oath to become a citizen),[33] conscription experiences, and previous voluntary labor. The third page required a photo, profession, name, age, date of birth, hometown, the town of current residence, education, and household head's name. A round steel seal stamp impression that read "Shanghai Municipal Government, National's Identification Document" striddled the photo and adjacent area.

In 1948, the Shanghai municipal government issued a new version of ID cards, each with 144 food ration coupons attached (Figure *2*). While most entries remain more or less the same with those in the previous version, the "citizenship" column was gone, which probably speaks to the overwhelming chaos that tore the Nationalist government's democratic veneer in its final months in Shanghai. The 1948 version bore a red square stamp that read "The Stamp of Shanghai Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau 上海市民政局印" and a blue round stamp "Republican China, National ID Cards, Shanghai 中华民国·国民身份证·上海市."

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[31] "Shanghai shizhengfu fa gei guomin shenfen zheng zan xing banfa 上海市政府发给国民身份证暂行办法 (Shanghai Municipal Rules: Regulations for Distributing ID Cards)," *Shanghai shizhengfu gongbao* 2, no.21 (1946): 467.

[32] We will discuss this administrative structure in more detail in chapter 3.

[33] We will discuss the "citizenship" column and its implications in more detail in chapter 4.

While the ID card as a whole is a tool to make the people "legible" to the state, each component of the ID card is a marker that helps to identify individuals or authenticate the document. The remaining part of this chapter centers on three major components – names, photos, and seal stamps – to explore the intrinsic problems in these parts that impeded the implementation of the ID card policy.

2.2 Names

Names, perhaps the most commonly used "identity pegs," featured prominently in the ID cards issued in Shanghai during this period. This identity peg, however, remained slippery. The "slipperiness" of naming manifested mainly in three aspects: First, the naming traditions in China encouraged each individual to adopt multiple names throughout one's lives, which allowed one to easily assume multiple identities. Second, problems arose when multiple persons shared the same name, making it difficult to distinguish one individual from another solely by their name. Third, it was still common in the 1940s that married women adopted their husbands' surnames and concealed their maiden names, a highly gendered naming practice that reduced the identification accuracy for these individuals.

The "interchangeability-mutability" framework proposed by Jordan Brensinger and Gil Eyal to gauge an identity peg's ability to identify individuals can help us better understand the "slipperiness" of naming. According to Brensinger and Eyal, "interchangeability" refers to the degree to which an individual cannot be distinguished from another.[34] For example, when multiple individuals share the same name, the "interchangeability" of that name becomes high, as it simultaneously refers to multiple individuals and therefore cannot distinguish these individuals

[34] Jordan Brensinger, Gil Eyal, "The Sociology of Personal Identification," *Sociological Theory* 39, no.4 (December 2021): 266.

from one another. "Mutability" pertains to "recognizing an individual as the same individual previously encountered."[35] This becomes a problem when a certain identity peg of an individual – such as facial features – changes over time. In terms of naming, when one individual has multiple names and uses different names under different circumstances, the "mutability" of a name becomes high as it cannot consistently identify the same individual. To reduce the "interchangeability" and "mutability" of names, the state needed to enforce standardization to forge names into effective tools of legibility. However, the process of standardizing names was far from smooth in Republican China. Similar to the negotiated naming practices in the late-19th-century U.S. as detailed by Craig Robertson,[36] the standardization of names in China involved contestations between the state and society, as well as negotiations between tradition and modernity.

While it had been common practice in China for individuals to have multiple names throughout their lives, this practice increased the "mutability" of names and curtailed the individuating ability of naming. An 1946 article in a Shanghai newspaper stated that "citizens of our nation always have more than one name" – "milky name (*ruming* 乳名)" as a baby, a "schooltime name (*xueming* 学名)" as a student, an "official name (*guanming* 官名)" as an official, plus various alternative names (*zi*, *hao*, *biehao* 字,号,别号), not to mention the multifarious pen names of literati and the unpredictable account names for the rich.[37] While acknowledging such a variety of naming practices, this article called for everyone to "have an primary name ready as soon as possible." The very fact that such a reminder was needed revealed

[35] Ibid., 266.
[36] Robertson Craig. *The Passport in America: The History of a Document,* 43-54.
[37] "Tan xianzhi shiyong xingming: Kuai zhunbei yige benming ba! 谈限制使用姓名: 快准备一个本名吧! (On Name Usage Restrictions: Prepare a Primary Name as Soon as Possible!)" *Haiguang*, no.9 (January 29, 1946): 7.

that adopting only one primary name was far from common sense or common practice in early 1946 Shanghai.

Debates about whether individuals should have only one legal name arose as early as in 1937. In June 1937, the Legislative Yuan in Nanjing rejected the proposal to limit one legal name for each citizen, as it was "not consistent with social reality," suggesting that it was quite common for people to have multiple names in daily practices. During the war with Japan, in July 17, 1941, among the state's efforts to implement income tax and wartime state control, the Legislative Yuan in Chongqing passed the "Rules of Name Restriction (*xingming shiyong xianzhi tiaoli* 姓名使用限制条例)", requiring that "each national of ROC can have only one "primary name (*benming* 本名);" the name registered in household registration would be taken as the primary name; those who used alternative names (*xingzi ji biehao* 姓字及别号) should specify their primary names."[38] Immediately after the Sino-Japanese War, the "Rules of Name Restriction" and relevant discussions circulated again in Shanghai's newspapers. In January 1946, Wu Qiyuan 伍启元 proposed strengthening the law on name standardization, insisting that standardized and restricted name usage was integral to a modern state, as it helped to implement "the multifarious modern state control (*xiandai de ruogan tongzhi* 现代的若干统制)" and facilitate democratic suffrage. It also helped to reduce the usage of traditional Chinese alternative names (*zihao* 字号), which he described as "a malign practice reminiscent of feudalism (*daiyou fengjian yiwei de exi* 带有封建意味的恶习)."[39] Calling for institutional and legal reform, Wu's article used the discourse of modernization to persuade the state to strengthen its policy on naming standardization. On May

[38] "Guofu mingling gongbu xingming shiyong xianzhi tiaoli 国府明令公布姓名使用限制条例 (The Government Announced Name Usage Restriction Rules)," *Xinwen Bao*, July 18, 1941.
[39] Qiyuan Wu 伍启元, "Xianzhi shiyong xingming wenti 限制使用姓名问题 (The Issue of Naming Restriction)," *Xinwen Bao*, Janurary 3, 1946.

12, 1947, the Bureau of Finance announced a new policy requiring banking and finance (*yinqian ye* 银钱业) to allow only one legal name for each deposit account. Those who had used "guild names (*tangming* 堂名)" to register for a deposit account should change into an individual's primary name.[40]

Despite such efforts of standardizing names, the die-hard tradition of having multiple names curtailed the ID cards' efficacy in distinguishing individuals. An article titled "ID Card?" expressed such worries in a Shanghai newspaper: "Does everyone use their primary name [on the ID cards]? If someone use their alternative names (*huaming* 化名) for some reasons, how can we detect it?"[41] Indeed, while the policy required that "one should apply for the ID card from where they live; if one lives in more than one place, they should apply from the place where they live the longest; it is forbidden to apply more than once,"[42] there was no substantial method to prevent someone from applying twice from two places using two different names. It seemed that until its downfall on the mainland in 1949, the Nationalist government never fully solved this problem.

Another problem – when multiple individuals shared the same name – increased the "interchangeability" of names, thereby curtailed the individuating ability of naming. A Shanghai newspaper article in 1947 reported that the duplication of names was a serious problem in China. According to a recent census in Shanghai, there were 15 individuals in the city sharing the same name with the Shanghai mayor; more than 1,000 women in Shanghai shared the name "Wang

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[40] "Caizhengbu jiandu yinqian ye dui yu cunkuanhu xianyong benming tuixing banfa 财政部监督银钱业对于存款户限用本名推行办法 (Rules: Finance Department Requires Banks to Allow Only Primary Names for Deposit Accounts)," *Jinrong Zhoubao* 16, no.22 (1947): 15. As noted in the document, this rule was first published on May 12, 1947.

[41] "Guomin shenfenzheng? 国民身份证? (ID Cards?)" *Haiguang,* no.18 (1946): 5.

[42] "Benfu fagui: xiuzheng Shanghai shizhengfu fagei guomin shenfen zheng zan xing banfa 本府法规: 修正上海市政府发给国民身份证暂行办法 (Municipal Rules: Revised Regulations for Distributing ID Cards)," *Shanghai shizhengfu gongbao* 4, no.26 (1946): 658.

Xiaomei 王小妹." The article argued that the high rate of name duplication was due to formulaic Chinese naming practices: many people used their "childhood names (*xiaoming* 小名)" throughout their lives, while these childhood names, given to them by their parents, were often very formulaic and highly repetitive.[43] The high rate of name duplication rendered names and identities highly "interchangeable," significantly decreasing the identifying ability of personal names.

The third problem with naming lay in the shorthand names of married women. In late imperial China, it was common practice for a woman, once married, to adopt a new shorthand name. The new name usually preserved her paternal surname and sometimes included her husband's surname, but her maiden name would fall into oblivion. Despite surges in women's rights movements since the 1920s, this female naming tradition persisted into the Republican period. In Lun Xun's 1924 heart-wrenching fictional short story "New Year's Sacrifice," the poor female protagonist was always addressed by her fellow villagers as "Xianglin's wife" after her first husband Xianglin's name. Such an appellation persisted even after her first husband died and she was sold to a second husband. Throughout the story, one never learns "Xianglin's wife's" maiden name.[44] Fictional as the story was, it revealed the enduring practice of married women's shorthand naming in the 1920s, a practice that persisted into the 1940s and curtailed the efficacy of ID cards.

In April 1947, an article titled "The Problematic Naming of Women's ID Cards" in a Shanghai newspaper claimed that it was still common practice for married women to write

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[43] "You 'shiwuge Wu Guozhen' shuo dao xingmingquan de baohu wenti 由"十五个吴国桢"说到姓名权的保护问题 (Fifteen Wu Guozhen and the Protection of Name Rights)," *Zhendan falü jingji zazhi* 3, no.8 (1947): 5.

[44] Lu Xun, "New Year's Sacrifice." *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China: The Complete Fiction of Lu Xun,* Trans. Julia Lovell (London: Penguin Classics, 2009): 161-177.

"husband's surname + paternal surname + *shi* (氏)" instead of their full maiden names on their ID cards. Insisting that such a practice was "extremely improper" under the new Nationalist constitution and detrimental to women's suffrage, this article claimed that if without immediate change, this practice would "taint a democratic country with feudalistic coloring and make our nation a laughing stock both domestically and abroad (*yixiao yu zhongwai* 贻笑于中外)." The article concluded with a call for nation-wide immediate action to promote writing female names in full on ID card, so that "the remaining feudalistic poison would be eliminated and we thereby become a completely democratic state."[45] The standardization and restriction of name usage, as highlighted in the discursive space of 1940s Shanghai newspaper, was seen as an integral part of a modern, democratic state. The ability to enforce standardization, restriction, and gender equality in naming became a significant measure of modernity. However, the very fact that such discussions flourished in newspapers suggested that the "feudalistic residue" of untamed naming practices posed an enduring threat to the efficacy of the ID card policy.

2.3 Photos

To apply for an ID card in post-war Shanghai, applicants were required to submit three copies of photographs: one to be attached to the ID card and the other two to be kept on record at the ward office and the municipal government. Individuals who could not afford or obtain

[45] "Nüzi shenfen zheng de timing wenti 女子身份证的题名问题 (The Problematic Naming of Women's ID Cards)," *Xi Bao*, April 30, 1947. While commenting on Qingdao's condition, the author insisted that the female shorthand name was a nation-wide problem. As *Xi Bao* was a newspaper published in Shanghai, such a discussion about female naming presented itself in the discursive space of Shanghai newspaper.

photographs were permitted to use fingerprints from their two index fingers as an alternative.[46] The preference for photographs over fingerprints indicated that photography was considered a more accurate method of identification, embodying an authoritative "truthfulness" in representing an individual. However, this perceived "truthfulness" of photography was not always welcomed and was sometimes challenged by the citizens of Shanghai. The contested "truthfulness" of photography, together with the troubles and costs involved in obtaining photographs, impeded the effective implementation of ID cards.

The supposed "truthfulness" of photography was not always welcomed or recognized by Shanghai citizens when it was introduced as an identification tool. In 1946, a man complained in a Shanghai newspaper that the photos taken for ID cards made him appear "haggard and emaciated (*zhenxing humian* 鸩形鹄面)," giving him the look of a treacherous suspect. He lamented, "If this photo were displayed at a police station, passersby would undoubtedly say: 'This guy looks very much like a thief (*zeitou zeinao* 贼头贼脑); no wonder he will end up in litigation!'"[47] This self-ironic remark implied that photography as an identification method failed to capture his middle-class demeanor, which should have presented him as a reliable citizen who deserved trust and respect. While the photo did present a fleeting moment of his physical appearance, it failed to reflect the true "personality" and social class that defined his identity.

To better understand the resistance to photography as an identification tool, it is necessary to contextualize it in the history of photography in Republican Shanghai. Since its introduction to

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[46] "Benfufagui: xiuzheng Shanghaishi zhengfu fagei guominshenfenzheng zanxing banfa 本府法规: 修正上海市政府发给国民身份证暂行办法 (Municipal Rules: Revised Regulations for Distributing ID Cards)," *Shanghai shizhengfu gongbao* 4, no.26 (1946): 658.

[47] "Guomin shenfen zheng gei wo de mafan 国民身份证给我的麻烦 (The Troubles that ID Cards Brought to Me)," *Haiguang*, no.19 (1946): 3.

China, photography served various functions, but two are particularly pertinent to this analysis: portrait photos for customers and "mug photos" for identifying criminals and suspects. As early as the 1870s, people in Shanghai could take artistic self-portraits in photo shops. Various techniques were developed to beautify (*zhengxiu* 整修) the portraits, trying to capture an artistic air with carefully designed makeup and fashionable poses (Figure 3). These enhancements made people "love to see themselves in the portrait photos more than in the mirror."[48] These artistic portraits primarily served as a means of entertainment for the well-to-do class and for women, including sex workers and dancing girls, to present and advertise their beauty. However, when photography began to be used as a surveillance tool for individual identification, it was initially applied to criminals and suspects. As early as 1886, the Shanghai police station began taking photos of prisoners for record-keeping.[49] By the 1910s, posters for wanted suspects began incorporating "mug photos" for more accurate identification.[50] These photos typically featured a head-on stare, centered on the face without much artistic decoration, highlighting the "truthfulness" of the suspect's physical features. Starting in the 1920s, newspapers were also filled with photos of "wanted" suspects (Figure 4). Beginning with criminal mug photos and "wanted" photos, photography for identification purposes became associated with distrust and stigmatization. When the ID card policy began to require identification photos for every citizen, it was natural that many, especially the well-to-do class who considered themselves decent and respectable, perceived a newfound distrust under the camera's suspicious gaze. In 1948, it was mandated that "ID card

[48] Bingxue Tong, *Zhongguo zhaoxiangguan shi* 中国照相馆史, 1859-1956 (*History of Photo Studios in China, 1859-1956*), Beijing: Zhongguo sheying chubanshe, 175-182.
[49] Tao Ge, Dongxu Shi, *Juxiang de lishi - zhaoxiang yu qingmo minchu Shanghai shehui shenghuo* 具象的历史——照相与清末民初上海社会生活 (*History of Image - Photography and Life in Shanghai from Late Qing to Early Republican China*), Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 129.
[50] Ibid., 130.

photos should not be beautified."[51] The "truthfulness" of photography as an identification tool triggered complaints among Shanghai citizens, as it failed to meet the beautifying expectations shaped by portrait photos and evoked a sense of state distrust and surveillance. While these grievances might not have directly led to non-conformity in practice, they added to the popular complaints about the ID card policy.

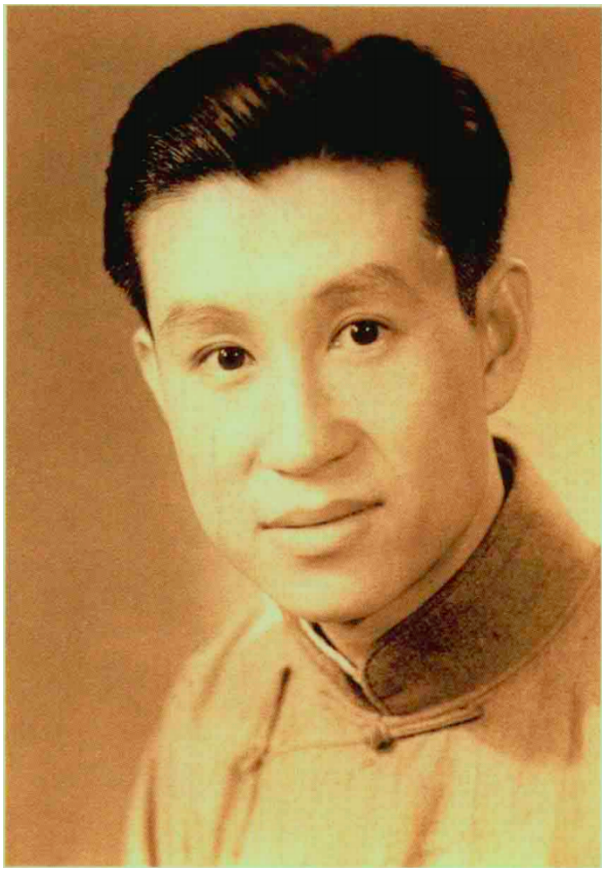

Figure 3: A portrait photo taken in Shanghai in around 1933. It presented a carefully maneuvered pose that seemed to imitate the fashion among celebrities. It was different from the ID card photos as it had a prominent artistic, aesthetic air. From Tong Bingxue, *History of Photo Studios in China* (1859-1956), 182.

[51] "Shimin pai shenfenzheng zhaopian, ge zhaoxiangguan bude jujue 市民拍身份证照片，各照相馆不得拒绝 (When citizens want to take ID card photos, photo shops should not refuse)" *Heping ribao,* October 28, 1948. This announcement specified: "The negatives of photos should not be beautified or adjusted (照相底片概不修理)."


賞格二千萬元

Figure 4: May 15, 1940. *Shun Pao*. A "Wanted" Notice (shangge 赏格) with the suspect's photo. The ID card photos looked similar to the "Wanted" photos that were prevalent on newspapers since the 1920s.

Apart from the middle-class concerns regarding identification photography, the process of taking photos presented practical and financial challenges for many people. The process of obtaining ID card photos involved negotiation between the state, photographers, and citizens. To keep the cost of photo-taking relatively low and affordable, the Shanghai municipal government frequently issued price control orders. For the first round of ID issuance in early 1946, for example, the government classified photo shops in Shanghai into two tiers: level-A shops could charge 600

yuan (法币) for three photos, while level-B shops could charge 400 *yuan* for three photos.[52] Some photo shops circumvented this policy by requiring customers to purchase at least six photos per session, thereby increasing the costs associated with obtaining an ID card.[53] As the inflation rate escalated in subsequent years, the government's price caps often fell short of covering the basic costs incurred by photo shops for taking ID card photos. Given that ID card photography was usually not profitable, some photo shops limited the amount of ID card photos they took each day in 1948, creating additional difficulties for citizens in urgent need of photos to apply for ID cards.[54] The high demand for ID card photos gave rise to a new profession: peddler photographers. These individuals used portable cameras to take photos for newcomers at docks upon their arrival in Shanghai. A newspaper article referred to this business as "cheating country folks,"[55] implying that these photographers charged high prices for their services. While these peddlers likely helped to alleviate the burden of obtaining photographs, their business imposed a financial strain on newcomers to Shanghai.

The cost of taking ID card photos could be a significant expense for many households in Shanghai. In early 1946, the official price limit was 150 or 200 *yuan* for three photos.[56] Even middle-class household that could afford housemaids complaint about the expenses of taking ID card photos.[57] The financial burden increased after 1947, when the Shanghai government

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[52] "Shanghaishi zhaoxiangguanye tongyegonghui qishi 上海市照相馆业同业公会启事 (Shanghai Municipal Photography Guild Announcement)," *Shun Pao,* March 9, 1946.

[53] "Qingling guomin shenfen zheng, shaofan niangyi beisizhang 请领国民身份证，烧饭娘姨备私章 (Applying for ID Cards; Housemaid should Prepare Personal Seal)," *Kuaihuo lin* 14 (1946): 9.

[54] "When citizens want to take ID card photos, photo shops should not refuse (Shimin pai shenfenzheng zhaopian, ge zhaoxiangguan bude jujue 市民拍身份证照片，各照相馆不得拒绝)," *Heping ribao* 和平日报, October 28, 1948.

[55] "Houhei Xinquan 厚黑新诠 (New Interpretation of *Houhei*)," *Shun Pao*, April 7, 1947. This article described a journalist, after being fired for half year, borrowed some money and began a small "peddle-photo" business on Shanghai docks - to take ID card photos for those coming from rural areas to Shanghai.

[56] "Guomin shenfen zheng zhaopian guiding xianjia 国民身份证照片规定限价 (Official Price Limits for ID Cards' Photos)," *Xinwen bao,* Feburary 7, 1946.

[57] "Qingling guomin shenfen zheng, shaofan niangyi bei sizhang 请领国民身份证，烧饭娘姨备私章 (Applying for ID Cards; Housemaid should Prepare Personal Seal)," *Kuaihuolin* 14*,* (1946): 9.

mandated that all children must apply for ID cards immediately after birth, and, of course, their parents should bear the additional costs.[58] When the old card was lost or when new version of ID cards became available and mandated, applying for new ID cards also entailed additional photos, hence additional expenses. After the first round of ID card issuance in 1946, the government enforced a new version of ID cards with food rationing coupons in November 1948. Shanghai citizens must apply the new version to be able to access daily necessities. To save money and avoid inconvenience, some people reused photos from their old ID cards (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The ID card of an eight-year-old girl, issued in 1948, Shanghai. The photo bears a red impression on the upper-left corner and an embossing impression on the bottom-right corner, which likely suggest that this is an old photo used in a previous ID card. The ID card format for kids were no different from those issued for adults. In this ID card for an eight-year-old, under the column "What type of profession is taken," it writes "house chores." From kongfz.com. (https://book.kongfz.com/572703/4549592891/)

[58] "Xiaobaixing yichu niangtai jiuyao qingling shenfenzheng 小百姓一出娘胎就要请领身份证 (Once Born, Commoners Have to Apply for ID Cards Immediately)," *Li Bao,* October 30, 1947.

Photos were attached to ID cards with glue, making them easy to be swapped. In 1947, several women from rural areas who had recently arrived in Shanghai to work in a brothel found themselves unable to apply for prostitution registration due to a lack of Shanghai ID cards. They decided to take other prostitutes' Shanghai ID cards and replaced the photos with their own. However, this tactic was quickly discovered when they presented the homemade ID cards to the police station for registration.[59] It was likely the seal stamps, which left an impression on the original photos, that alerted the police to the alternations. Some individuals, as we shall see in the next section (2.4 Seals), were clever enough to forge seals or mimic the impressions left by official stamps. The ease with which ID photos could be swapped created loopholes that opportunists could exploit when situation suited them.

2.4 Seals

To function properly, an ID card needed not only "identity pegs" to differentiate individuals but also "authority tags" to authenticate the document. The prominent title "National's Identification Document (*Guomin shenfen zheng* 国民身份证)" and the seal stamps on the ID cards all served as "authority tags," symbolizing state affirmation and governmental authority. ID cards issued in post-1945 Shanghai usually required one or more seal stamps for authentication. The version issued in 1946 required a single embossing stamp, which read "Shanghai Municipal Government · Citizen's Identification Card 上海市政府·国民身份证" (Figure 1). The version issued in 1948 included at least two stamps: a rectangular, red stamp that read "Seal of Shanghai Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau 上海市民政局印;" and a round, bluish stamp that partially

[59] "Guomin shenfenzheng bianzao, jiyuanzhu danda wangwei 国民身份证变造, 妓院主胆大妄为 (Faking ID Cards; Head of Brothel as Bold as Brass)," *Shishi xinbao wankan*, July 16, 1947.

covered the photo, reading "Republican China, National ID Cards, Shanghai 中华民国·国民身份证·上海市" (Figure 2). Starting from February 24, 1949, newly issued ID cards in Shanghai used embossing stamps instead of the round rubber stamp, which "had been prone to problems."[60]

The most prominent problem with seal stamps was their vulnerability to forgery. Both the Communists and other opportunists forged seals to serve their various ends. On May 12, 1948, an article in a Shanghai newspaper warned that recently "the Communists forged a huge number of ID cards for espionage." The article provided a detailed description of the illegitimate seals faked by the Communists: "the county seals they (the Communists) use are wooden, square at the corners; the stamp color is yellowish, similar to the color of the fingerprints. As for the individual number, they start not with the name of a ward (*qu*), but with 'International (*guoji* 国际).'"[61] The appearance of such a warning in a Shanghai newspaper suggested that the Communists and their forged ID cards might have infiltrated the city.

Apart from the Communists, immigrants who newly moved to Shanghai in 1948 and 1949 were also frequently found forging ID cards and seal stamps. From 1948 to May 1949, the raging civil war in China between the Nationalists and the Communists produced surges of refugees, many of whom fled to Shanghai. Without Shanghai ID cards, these individuals could not go out on the streets without risking detention by the police. If they had no relatives to claim them, they would be expelled from the city.[62] This strict enforcement of ID card regulations compelled some immigrants to forge ID cards and seal stamps. For example, a man from Huai'an who arrived in

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[60] "Xinfa shenfenzheng gaigaiyonggangyin 新发身份证改盖用钢印 (The Newly Issued ID Cards Will Have Steel Seal Stamps)," *Shun Pao*, Feburary 24, 1949.

[61] "Fei qitu yi jian mao liang, weizao guomin shenfenzheng 匪企图以奸冒良，伪造国民身份证 (The Communists Faked ID Cards to Pretend to be 'Good')," *Yishi Bao*, May 12, 1948.

[62] "Tuji da jiancha, wu zheng wu ye shusan chujing 突击大检查，无证无业疏散出境 (Sudden Mass Inspection; Those without ID Cards or without Jobs Will Be Expelled)" *Shun Pao*, April 29, 1949.

Shanghai in 1948 faked an ID card and the accompanying stamp but was discovered by the police in May 1949.[63] It is unclear how long he managed to evade detection with the forged ID.

Ironically, forging IDs sometimes became a lucrative business for current or former administrative and police staff. With their knowledge of bureaucratic processes, they easily pretended to assert authority by faking seals and IDs. For example, a former military policeman, after being dismissed, began forging ID cards and seals of the military police office, "selling the ID cards for high prices (*gaojia chushou* 高价出售)" and "deceiving more than seventy people." When he was discovered in June 1948, it was unclear how long his illegitimate ID cards had been in circulation.[64] In an era of strict mobility restrictions, forging ID cards became a profitable business, and producing authentic-looking seals was a critical part of the operation. In conclusion, by faking seals, Communists and opportunists not only curtailed the efficacy of the ID card policy but also challenged the symbolic authority that the Nationalist state sought to monopolize.

Faking seals was not the only way that former or current bureaucratic personnel exploited the ID card policy for personal gain. The symbolic authority of the state, embodied in the ID card seal stamps, provided administrative staff who handled the ID cards with new opportunities to abuse their power. In the next chapter, we will turn our attention to the bureaucratic structure of post-1945 Shanghai and the "entrepreneurial" personnel within it.

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[63] "Weizao shenfen zheng fan qisu 伪造身份证犯起诉 (The Criminal who Faked ID Cards is now under Litigation)" *Xinwen Bao*, May 19, 1949.

[64] "*Kaige xianbing weizao guanfang, chushou shenfen zheng deng xingpian* 开革宪兵伪造关防，出售身份证等行骗 (Fired Military Policeman Faked Seals and Sold Faked ID Cards)," *Xiaoribao*, June 24, 1948.

CHAPTER 3: "ENREPRENEURIAL BROKERS": ADMINISTRATING ID CARDS

The assemblage, distribution, use, loss reporting, and reapplication of ID cards involved a vast bureaucracy, including sub-administrative groups such as *baojia* chiefs (*baojia zhang* 保甲长) and the police. These groups, far from being well-coordinated cogs in a machine, each had their distinct agency. Consequently, they either intentionally appropriated the ID card policy or unintentionally curtailed the efficacy of the ID card institution. This chapter explores the various problems inherent in the administrative system, with a special focus on the *baojia* chiefs as key state intermediaries. This chapter argues that the ID card apparatus was symptomatic of what Prasenjit Duara calls "state involution," a phenomenon that occurs when the state relies heavily on predatory "entrepreneurial brokers"[65] to extend its reach into local society, and results in the expansion of formal structure alongside an "informal structure" – illegal but tolerated practices that further exploit the populace.[66] Situating themselves in a deeply entrenched bureaucratic tradition of collecting surplus fees, the *baojia* chiefs easily found it natural for them to glean illegal but acquiesced benefits from their officially unpaid positions. The "entrepreneurial" and predatory nature of many state brokers presented a significant obstacle to implementing the ID card policy. The ID card policy and its appropriation by the *baojia* chiefs provided a vivid lens through which to view a larger picture of obstructed modern state-building efforts in Republican China, which Philip Kuhn describes as China's "constitutional agenda."[67]

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[65] See note 27.
[66] Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China 1900-1942*: 251-2.
[67] Philip A. Kuhn. *Origins of the Modern Chinese State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 91. For a detailed description of Kuhn's idea, see page 43 of this thesis.

3.1 The Bureaucracy

For an ID card to reach its bearer in post-1945 Shanghai, it passed through a vast administrative structure – a system newly established after the Second Sino-Japanese War, yet inheriting many wartime designs. In the 1945 post-war bureaucratic reshuffle, the Nationalist government set up the Shanghai municipal government and divided the city into 33 wards (*qu* 区). Each ward was equipped with a ward office (*qu gongsuo* 区公所), a ward chief, an associate ward chief, and 19 to 26 ward officers.[68] Below the ward-level was the *baojia* system (保甲) responsible for maintaining local order. In the *baojia* system, 10 to 30 households constituted a *jia*, and 10 to 30 *jia* constituted a *bao*. Each *bao* had a *bao* office (*bao bangongchu* 保办公处), a *bao* chief (*baozhang* 保长), an associate bao chief, and 1 to 3 bao secretaries (*bao ganshi* 保干事). Below the *bao* level, each *jia* had a *jia* chief (*jiazhang* 甲长) and each household had a household head (*huzhang* 户长). While *bao* secretaries was paid by the government, *bao* chiefs and *jia* chiefs did not receive any official salary,[69] making them a group of "sub-bureaucratic functionaries."[70] Each above-mentioned administrative level (*bao*, ward, municipal) had a council, and the leaders of each level were supposed to be elected by lower-level representatives in the council, theoretically making the entire structure a democratic apparatus that encouraged political participation. Despite some changes (which will be discussed later in this chapter), the

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[68] *Shanghaishi nianjian: minguo san shi wu nian* 上海市年鉴: 民国三十五年(*Shanghai Municipal Annuals: 1946*), Shanghai: Zhonghua Book Company (*Zhonghua Shuju* 中华书局), 1946. E36.

[69] "*Shi Zhuzhifa Shixing Xize* 市组织法施行细则 (Rules for City Organization)," *Shun Pao Shanghai Citizens' Manual* (*Shenbao Shanghai Shimin Shouce* 申报上海市民手册). Shanghai: Shun Pao Press. 1946. E8.
Also see "保长甲长均无给职，保长得支公费，但保办公处之职员得给薪金" in "*Shanghaishiqu baojia zhengbian shixing guize* 上海市区保甲整编施行规则 (Rules for constructing Shanghai *baojia* system)," *Shun Pao Shanghai Citizens' Manual* (*Shenbao Shanghai Shimin Shouce* 申报上海市民手册), Shanghai: Shun Pao Press. 1946. Entry No.33. E19.

[70] Joseph W. Esherick. "Local Elites: Resources and Strategies." *China in Revolution: History Lessons,* (The Rowman&Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc. 2022), 81.

post-1945 Nationalist *baojia* system was a continuation of the *baojia* system implemented in Shanghai under the puppet regime during Japanese occupation (1937-1945).

The responsibility for ID card affairs was transferred from the police station to the newly established "Civil Affairs Office (*minzheng chu* 民政处)" on November 7, 1945.[71] This Office handled various civil tasks, including maintaining the *baojia* system, conscription, household registration, ID card distribution, foreign sojourners' registration, citizen and government-official candidate registration, and the general election of *baojia* chiefs and municipal senate representatives.[72] By assigning ID card affairs to the Civil Affairs Bureau, which also dealt with democratic and local self-governance issues, rather than to the Police Bureau (*jingcha shu* 警察署)[73], the state aimed to portray the ID card as a symbol of democracy rather than surveillance. This topic will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

To obtain an ID card, a Shanghai citizen needed to first fill out an application form and submit it together with three photos to a nearby ward office. The ward office, already stocked with blank ID cards issued by the municipal government, would provide these blank ID cards to citizens for completion. The completed ID cards were resubmitted to the ward office and subsequently forwarded to the municipal government for verification, when they were checked against the household registration records. If all the information on the ID cards matched the household registration records, the cards would be approved with a municipal seal stamp. The stamped ID cards were routed back through the structure from the municipal government to the ward, then to the *bao*, the *jia*, and finally to the household, reaching each individual. If an ID card was lost, the

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[71] *Shanghaishi nianjian: minguo san shi wu nian* 上海市年鉴: 民国三十五年 (*Shanghai Municipal Annuals: 1946*), Shanghai: Zhonghua Book Company (*Zhonghua Shuju* 中华书局), 1946. E36.

[72] Ibid. E7-8. "(San) Shanghaishizhengfu minzhengchu zhi zuzhi ji zhizhang（三）上海市政府民政处之组织及职掌 (Entry 3: Shanghai Municipal Civil Affairs Office: Organizations and Duties)."

[73] The English translation of *jingcha shu* into "Police Bureau" follows Wakeman in *The Shanghai Badlands*, 110.

individual needed to report the loss in a local newspaper and reapply for a new card, going through this complicated procedure again.[74] The entire bureaucratic process involved tremendous personnel and resources, sometimes taking more than a month to complete.[75]

3.2 The *Baojia* Chiefs

While a huge administrative structure was integral to the circulation of ID cards, the *baojia* chiefs were the local organizers who had direct interaction with each household. They served as the most hands-on intermediaries between the state and the people. This chapter focuses on the *baojia* chiefs to highlight the inherent problems within the administrative system that hindered the effectiveness of the ID card policy.

Baojia chiefs were essential to the circulation of ID cards. In early 1946, the Shanghai municipal government ensured that *baojia* system was implemented before starting the census, registering households, and distributing ID cards, as all these tasks relied on the *baojia* chiefs at the local level. When the officially stamped ID cards were issued by the Civil Affairs Bureau, it was ultimately the *jia* chief who delivered the ID cards to each household. If there were errors in the recorded information or if an ID card was lost, residents needed to work with the *baojia* chiefs to reapply for new cards. The ID card policy significantly increased interactions between residents and their *baojia* chiefs.

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[74] "Xiuzheng shanghaishi zhengfufagei guomin shenfenzheng zanxing banfa 修正上海市政府发给国民身份证暂行办法 (Revised Rules for Distributing ID Cards in Shanghai)," *Shanghai shi zhengfu gongbao* 4, no.26 (1946): 657-8.

[75] "Laobaixing de hua: shi yi qu shenfen zheng hegu chichi bu fa 老百姓的话: 十一区身份证何故迟迟不发 (The People's Voice: Why ID Cards in Ward No.11 Haven't Been Distributed Yet)," *Haijing* 22, (1946): 11. This newspaper article reported that in the Eleventh Ward in Shanghai, the *baojia* chiefs collected ID card application forms at the beginning of July, but they did not yet get their ID cards at the end of July.

The *baojia* chiefs, whom the ID cards relied on to circulate, were largely driven by self-interest in taking these positions. I argue that both during and after the Second Sino-Japanese War, many *baojia* chiefs fit what Prasenjit Duara calls "entrepreneurial brokers" – individuals who occupied lowly or sub-bureaucratic positions primarily to maximize their personal gain through embezzlement. There were various ways in which *baojia* chiefs embezzled money in Shanghai. Some sold inexpensive things at exorbitant prices and forced their residents to buy them.[76] Another method was extorting large sums of money from residents who needed exemptions from certain state-enforced duties, such as the "self-policing groups (*zi jing tuan* 自警团)," a policy under the puppet regimes that required every household to take turns to provide labor.[77] It was also common that *baojia* chiefs collected "donations" from residents for various illegal reasons. For example, immediately after China won the Second Sino-Japanese War, some *baojia* chiefs in Shanghai demanded "Victory Donations" from residents, claiming tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands *yuan*. The government had to issue newspaper reminders warning citizens to be wary of such illegal collections.[78] The image of *baojia* chiefs preying on people for personal gain was so pervasive that they were commonly compared to "talons and teeth, hawks and dogs (*zhaoya yingquan* 爪牙鹰犬)" and "jackals for the tiger (*wei hu zuo chang* 为虎作伥)"[79] – the predatory henchmen of tyranny. Folk songs lamented how "*xiang* chiefs bought land; *bao* chiefs

[76] "Jieshi Xianggongsuo zhiyuan jiajie zhiwushangzhi bianli siying shangye shiyong falü yiyi 解释乡公所职员假借职务上之便利私营商业适用法律疑义 (Explaining Which Law Should be Applied to Xiang Officers Who Appropriated Their Privilege to Do Private Business)," *Zuigao fayuan niankan*, 1945, 28-30.
[77] "Baojia zhang qiya pingmin, 保甲长欺压平民! (*Baojia* Chiefs Bullied Commoners!)" *Shehui ribao*, August 12, 1945.
[78] "Baojia lanpai shengli juankuan 保甲滥派胜利捐款 (*Baojia* chiefs Collected Illegal 'Victory Donation')," *Qianxian Ribao*, Sept 1, 1945.
[79] "Yancheng wei hu zuochang de baojia renyuan 严惩为虎作伥的保甲人员 (Punish Those *Baojia* Chiefs Who Are 'Jackals for the Tiger')," *Qianxian Ribao*, Sept 25, 1945.

squandered money; *jia* chiefs were always happy; while household heads were desperate and sad."[80]

The ID card policy provided another opportunity for the "entrepreneurial" *baojia* chiefs to abuse their power. A common method was to withhold ID cards until residents offered satisfactory bribes. Given the necessity of an ID card to access food and travel in Shanghai, ID cards became an effective tool for manipulating residents. The symbolic power of the state, embodied in the ID cards, lent *baojia* chiefs considerable authority in ways the state did not fully anticipate and could not effectively prevent. For example, a resident complained that after moving to a new place and in need of a new food rationing card, they waited for at least three months to receive it from the *baojia* chief. It was usually only after offering gifts that one could obtain their ID cards.[81] Withholding ID cards caused considerable troubles for residents and exacerbated neighborhood conflicts. The murder that we encountered at the very beginning of this thesis, where a male resident shot dead his *bao* chief for delaying the issuance of his ID card, is illustrative of this situation. It was reported that this *bao* chief had served in this position since the Japanese occupation period, suggesting that the tactic of withholding ID cards might not be new.[82] The murder likely represented the final outburst of long-term grievances, symptomatic of the widespread antagonisms against *baojia* chiefs who routinely withheld ID cards for bribes and manipulation. This tactic garnered additional profits for the *baojia* chiefs during the first general election of the Shanghai municipal council in 1946. Some *baojia* chiefs forced residents to vote

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[80] The Chinese folk song reads: "乡长得田买地，保长花天酒地，甲长欢天喜地，户长哭天哭地." "Xiang bao jia zhang zhi tanwu 乡保甲长之贪污 (The Corruption of *Xiang baojia* chiefs)," *Haiyan* 3, (1946): 3.

[81] "Yancheng wei hu zuo chang de baojia renyuan 严惩为虎作伥的保甲人员 (Punish Those *Baojia* Chiefs Who Are 'Jackals for the Tiger')," *Qianxian ribao*, Sept 25, 1945.

[82] "*Pudong Gaoqiaoxi Gujia Zhai: weile yizhang shenfenzheng, Gu Miaogen qiangsha baozhang* 浦东高桥西顾家宅: 为了一张身份证, 顾妙根枪杀保长 (Pudong *Gaoqiao* West Gu's Family: Gu Miaogen shot dead *bao* chief for an ID card)," *Heping Ribao*, September 21, 1947.

for specific candidates before the residents could obtain their ID cards. In return for this special favor, candidates treated the *baojia* chiefs to luxurious dinners or offered them gifts.[83] Another trick was forcing residents to buy "ID card protective jackets (*pasi tao* 派司套)" at inflated prices when distributing the ID cards.[84] The ID cards, with the symbolic power of the state that they embodied, provided *baojia* chiefs with extra authority and opportunities to abuse their power.

The ID card policy in Shanghai was symptomatic of what Prasenjit Duara calls "state involution," a concept that helps explain the intrinsic problems within the administrative system that hindered the implementation of the policy. According to Duara, "state involution" occurs when the state relies heavily on predatory "entrepreneurial brokers" as it extends its reach into local society. This results in the expansion of formal structure alongside an "informal structure" – illegal but tolerated practices that further exploit the populace. Duara argues that "state involution" became a significant issue in rural North China from the late Qing through the Republican era, leading to self-destructive effects for the Republican government by intensifying exploitation to unbearable levels.[85] While Duara's study focuses on rural areas in Northern China and does not mention ID cards, I argue that the concept of "state involution" helps to explain the intrinsic problems in Shanghai's administrative system that hindered the implementation of the ID card policy. This policy, as part of an effort to build a modern and more penetrative state, heavily relied on "entrepreneurial brokers" such as the *baojia* chiefs. By providing them with another opportunity to abuse power and embezzle money, the ID card policy, as a formal structure, inadvertently provided opportunities for an informal structure to grow, further exploiting the residents.

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[83] "Baojia zhang de quantao 保甲长的圈套 (The Trap of *baojia* chiefs)," *Haitao* 11, (1946): 10.

[84] "Fazujie ling shenfen zheng: pasitao bing bu qiangshou 法租界领身份证: 派司套并不强售 (Applying for an ID card in the French Concession: the ID card protective jacket is not forced)," *Zhongguo shangbao*, November 29, 1942.

[85] Prasenjit Duara. *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China 1900-1942*: 251-2.

Why were many *baojia* chiefs in Shanghai "entrepreneurial brokers" instead of "protective brokers"?[86] One reason was that *baojia* chiefs were not officially prebendary positions; instead, they were better described as "sub-bureaucratic,"[87] with no official salary nor opportunity for promotion. As unpaid officials, it became somewhat reasonable for *baojia* chiefs to seek personal gains from residents beyond what was legally allowed. Historically, it was an established and acquiesced custom in China that local administrative personnel, such as tax farmers and yamen runners, embezzled profits while performing their tasks, given that their legal income was often inhumanly low. Not only did magistrates tolerate such behavior, but residents also generally accepted paying extra fees to tax collectors as long as the fees were customary and not exorbitantly high. Collecting such fees was seen more as following informal customs than engaging in outright corruption.[88] The *baojia* chiefs in post-1945 Shanghai, operating within this deeply entrenched tradition of collecting surplus fees, easily assumed that it was natural for them to glean some profits from their officially unpaid positions.

Of course, not all *baojia* chiefs were purely entrepreneurial or predatory; some were altruistic when fulfilling civil duties. For example, a newspaper article reported that several *baojia* chiefs in South Region of Shanghai helped repair broken lamps that had remained unused for years. It was said that the *baojia* chiefs paid out of their own pockets for the repairment. The article, titled "Baojia Chiefs: The Lamplight in the South Region," compared the new *baojia* chiefs to newly lit lamps that had been darkened for years during the Japanese occupation.[89] Another example occurred in 1948, when the valorized price of the ID cards fell below their printing costs; to

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[86] For an explanation of "entrepreneurial brokers" and "protective brokers," see note 27.
[87] Joseph W. Esherick. "Local Elites: Resources and Strategies." *China in Revolution: History Lessons*: 65.
[88] See T'ung-tsu Ch'u's *Local Governance in China under the Ch'ing,* 49-53, 67-70, 88-91; Prasenjit Duara's *Culture, Power, and the State*; Bradly W. Reed's *Talons and Teeth: County Clerks and Runners in the Qing Dynasty*.
[89] "Baojiazhang fuzeren: nanshi de ludeng 保甲长负责人：南市的路灯 (*Baojia* Chiefs: The Lamplight in the South Region)," *Dongfang ribao*, Sept 6, 1945.

distribute the ID cards as required, *baojia* chiefs had to cover the price gap out of their own pockets.[90] While responsible, altrustic and "protective" brokers indeed existed, the prevailing complaints about *baojia* chiefs in newspapers suggested that a significant proportion of them were "entrepreneurial" and predatory. This added to the sufferings of the people and hindered the implementation of the ID card policy.

After winning the Second Sino-Japanese war, the Nationalist government made efforts to justify and improve the *baojia* system, striving to distinguish the Nationalist *baojia* from the preceding Japanese version. One strategy was to remodel the system as a democratic apparatus and make *baojia* chiefs accountable to the people, though this efforts did not seem to be very successful. The Nationalist government relocated the *baojia* and ID cards affairs from the police station to the Civil Affairs Office, a new organ established in November 1945 responsible for "people's affairs." This change in affiliation suggested, at least rhetorically, an attempt to democratize and improve the post-war *baojia* system. The implementation of *baojia* was always included in the "self-governance (*zizhi* 自治)" section of post-1945 official documents. According to the *baojia* regulations, *jia* chiefs were to be elected by household heads, and *bao* chiefs were to be elected by representatives in the *bao* council (*baomin dahui* 保民大会). However, in practice, achieving a democratized *baojia* was not easy in post-1945 Shanghai. In some areas, available candidates and voters were reluctant to participate in the election. When the *bao* council attendees were fewer than required, the election had to be postponed. Besides, the elected *bao* chiefs sometimes refused to take their positions. Conversely, in other areas, local gangsters fought for the *baojia* chief positions. Local rogues brought their henchmen to the election place and forced

[90] "Xiaolaobaixing yichu niangtai, jiuyaoling shenfenzheng 小百姓一出娘胎, 就要请领身份证 (Once born, a commoner needs to apply for an ID card)," *Li Bao*, October 20, 1947. "惟国民身份证工本费, 前依照户籍法施行细则规定, 每份收回一百元, 近以物价飞涨, 与实际印刷成本相差悬殊, 各地保甲人员时有赔累情事."

attendees to vote for a certain person.[91] The *baojia* system, which had served as an apparatus of surveillance since the Song dynasty, proved difficult to transform into a democratic system based on general elections.

Another state effort to improve the system was to renew *baojia* personnel by replacing former Japanese-collaborators with respectable and responsible intellectuals.[92] However, many former collaborators were reported to continue their political careers without obvious hindrance.[93] Despite a heated public appeal for a reshuffle of *baojia* personnel in late 1945, it seems that there was little change in personnel during and after the war.

To conclude, despite state efforts to improve the *baojia* system, entrepreneurial *baojia* chiefs continued to appropriate the ID card policy, thereby intensifying popular antagonism against it in post-1945 Shanghai. ID cards, with their symbolic state power, endowed sub-administrative personnel with considerable authority and new opportunities to manipulate residents and abuse their power. The ID card policy, as part of the modern state-building efforts, was symptomatic of what Prasenjit Duara calls "state involution," where formal state penetration grew together with informal structure, exacerbating the suffering of the people and unleashing self-destructive effects on the state.

In *Origins of the Modern Chinese State*, Philip A. Kuhn examines what he calls the "constitutional agenda" that Chinese governments pursued from the late Qing to the Maoist era. A major goal of the "constitutional agenda" was to eliminate middlemen, largely local licentiates and

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[91] Shengli Guo, Ding Deng, "Zhanhou Shanghai de baojia zhidu jiqi xuanju fenxi 战后上海的保甲制度及其选举分析 (The *Baojia* System and its Election in Post-war Shanghai)," *Nanchang Daxue xuebao* 41, no.3 (2010): 100-1.

[92] "Chehuan baojiazhang 撤换保甲长: 敌伪旧任多劣行, 但愿新来比旧强 (Replace *baojia* chiefs: the Old ones who Worked for the Japanese and the Puppet Regime were bad; Wish the New Chiefs are Better)," *Qianxian ribao*, December 12, 1945.

[93] "Wei baojia weiyuan Shifou Funi Fenzi? 伪保甲委员是否附逆分子? (Whether the *baojia* chiefs who worked for the puppet government were collaborators?)" *Shehui Huabao*, no.2 (1946): 12.

clerks, between the state and its taxpayers, in order to eradicate tax evasion and embezzlements. Kuhn found that both the Qing and Republican governments attempted to remove these intermediaries but ultimately failed.[94] The ID card policy and its appropriation by the *baojia* chiefs provided a vivid lens through which to view this larger picture of obstructed modern state-building efforts in Republican China.

[94] Philip A. Kuhn. *Origins of the Modern Chinese State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 91.

CHAPTER 4: SURVEILLANCE OR ENTITLEMENT?: DEBATING ID CARDS

The sudden news of victory after the prolonged Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) brought forth avid anticipations of peace and civil rights among Chinese citizens. The heightened expectations made everything that marked a continuity from the wartime years unbearable. Unfortunately, ID cards were understood as part of this continuity. Since the Japanese enforced various types of ID cards in Shanghai in the 1930s, individual identification documents had been stigmatized in printed media as symbols of humiliating foreign invasion and excessive state surveillance. After the war, the Nationalist government made strenuous efforts to promote the new ID cards as symbols of entitlement and democracy – particularly the citizens' right to vote in a democratic state. The official rhetoric claimed that the GMD-issued new ID cards were different from the Japanese identification documents, as the former endowed democratic rights to citizens while the latter simply imposed surveillance and oppression. However, throughout the 1945-1949 period, ID cards remained a painful reminder of the traumatic experiences under the Japanese rule. This chapter argues that the traumatic wartime memory established ID cards as an enduringly stigmatized symbol of surveillance and foreign invasion, greatly impeding the implementation of the ID card policy in Shanghai. Despite the state's efforts to portray ID cards as symbols of entitlement and democracy, the official rhetoric was refuted by dissenting voices, leaving the Nationalist government unable to control the connotations of ID cards in its final years in Shanghai.

4.1 Trauma of Japanese Occupation: ID Cards as Surveillance

The Japanese and their puppet governments in China had enforced various individual identification documents for social control starting in the 1930s, causing great suffering and humiliation to the Chinese people. Dong Yang delineates how the Japanese and their puppet

regimes used ID cards to monitor Chinese people's mobility, restrict the amount of food available to each household, and identify anti-Japanese rebels. The process of checking ID cards on the street by the Japanese was often an humiliating experience. The Chinese were forced to bow to the Japanese and present their ID cards; those who failed to do so were often slapped, forced to kneel for hours, or even beaten to death on the spot. Additionally, ID card application process provided the Japanese an opportunity to identify young, attractive women to rape.[95] Chinese people suffered so much under the "rule of the ID cards" that they called ID cards "documents for dogs (*gou paipai* 狗牌牌)."[96]

Like other Japanese-occupied areas, Shanghai experienced similar humiliations related to ID cards under the Japanese rule. Newspaper accounts of these sufferings established ID cards as symbols of foreign invasion and national humiliation. On May 2, 1938, a Shanghai newspaper reported that under the Japanese-controlled puppet regime, travelers to and from the South Region of Shanghai had to present their ID cards (*liangmin zheng* 良民证) for inspection. Ironically, whether or not one presented an ID card, it was reported that one had to endure being slapped in the face to pass through the checking points. This news was juxtaposed with a prominent slogan "Defend the Nation as a whole; Forsake partisanship; Only in this way can we revive our nation and overcome national crisis."[97] In May 1938, "national crisis" clearly referred to the Japanese invasion, which had escalated into full-scale war a year earlier. ID cards, as symbols of national humiliation, were used to provoke nationalist sentiments and raise anti-Japanese morale in the

[95] Dong Yang, "Shenfen zhi gu - zhanshi lunxianqu de liangmin zheng tanze 身份之锢 —— 战时沦陷区的良民证探赜 (Caged Identities - A study of the 'Good Man's Card' in Wartime Japanese-occupied Areas)," *Kangri zhanzheng yanjiu*, no.4 (2018): 114.

[96] Ibid., 115. Dog as an imagery connotates submissive subordination in Chinese cultural tradition.

[97] "拥护整个国家利益牺牲一切党派偏见必如此始能复兴民族克服国难." "*You hu fu Nanshi, dai erguang, liangmin zheng* 由沪赴南市，打耳光，良民证 (To South Region, One Will be Slapped in the Face; Good Man's Card)," May 2, 1938.

early stages of the war. From 1938 to the March of 1939, newspapers repeatedly reported how, in Pudong region where anti-Japanese guerrillas persisted,[98] Japanese troops rigorously checked Chinese people's ID cards and killed those without proper documents. On November 16, 1938, for example, a Shanghai newspaper reported how the Japanese troops ruthlessly beheaded a Chinese young man after finding his identification documents dubious. In reality, the Chinese young man had an old version of the ID card and had not yet the chance to update it. The news article accused the Japanese troops of "randomly slaughtering innocent people"[99] and further piqued nationalist sentiments by ending with a heartbreaking scene where the man's wife - in fact, widow - coming to collect his dead body. Such reports, including detailed accounts of people being slaughtered for lacking ID cards,[100] portrayed ID cards as symbols of the merciless Japanese tyranny over the Chinese, a symbol that invoked and reinforced the nationalist dichotomy between the Chinese people and their foreign invaders.

Winning the Sino-Japanese War in August 1945 filled Chinese citizens with pride, which made identification documents - symbols of foreign invasion - unbearable. A Shanghai newspaper article in late 1945 declared: "It seems ridiculous to ask a *free* citizen to carry identification documents. Are citizens in other *independent states* forced to carry such a device, too?" (Italics mine)[101] Proud of being free citizens in an independent country, many Chinese people found it ridiculous to endure the surveillance of ID cards any longer. After all, ID cards were things

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[98] See Wakeman: "Before March 1939 Fengxian district in Pudong, for example, was completely under the control of (Chinese loyalist) guerrillas. But after army units under General Nakajima launched a one-mouth mopping-up operation, the district was cleared of resistance." In "Urban control in wartime Shanghai" in *Wartime Shanghai*. 136. note 32.

[99] "Fufu wu 'shimin zheng,' fu jing bei zhanjue 夫妇无"市民证," 夫竟被斩决 (A Couple without ID Cards; the Husband Was Beheaded)," *Xinwenbao*, November 16, 1938.

[100] For example, *Xinwenbao* on March 7, 1939 reported how Chinese people without ID cards were shot dead on the spot. Detailed description of killing was likely intended to provoke anti-Japanese sentiments.

[101] "Cong liangmin zheng tan dao guomin shenfen zheng 从良民证谈到国民身份证 (From Japanese ID cards to Nationalist ID cards)," *Frontier Daily*, December 28, 1945.

"belonging to the past (*guoqu shidai de* 过去时代的)"[102] (Figure 6); they were tools that the Japanese used to "control the Chinese."[103] In other words, after the war, ID cards persisted as symbols of foreign invasion, colonial surveillance, and the loss of state sovereignty. Why, many wondered, did China, now an independent state, still need ID cards?

In late 1945, when citizens in Shanghai learned that the Nationalist government planned to implement nationwide ID card policy, opposing voices went ballistic on the printed media. They perceived a self-evident continuity between the Japanese ID cards and the Nationalist version. An article in a Shanghai newspaper, titled "From Japanese ID cards (*Liangmin zheng*) to Nationalist ID cards (*Guomin shenfen zheng*)," exemplified this logic:

> The aim of the ID card policy under the Japanese and their puppet governments was to persecute (Chinese) patriots... It was not surprising that our enemy hated us and treated us as slaves; what surprises me is that now after winning the war, our government persists in continuing the tyrannical rule of the enemy - this is truly surprising and lamentable![104]

In this article, the ID card was represented as a tool of surveillance and control, designed to "persecute (Chinese) patriots." Continuing the ID card policy meant that the government was "continuing the tyrannical rule of the enemy." This demonstrates how the traumatic memory of Japanese ID cards persisted after the war, making it difficult for the Chinese to see any difference between the old and the new ID cards. Rather, the prevailing view was to see the ID card policies under different regimes as a "continuity." The enduring trauma of Japanese occupation equated the previous and current identification documents, intensifying antagonism against the Nationalist ID card policy.

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[102] "Shenfen zheng 身份证 (ID Cards)," *Zhilan huabao*, no.1 (1946): 1.
[103] "Shenfen zheng 身份证 (ID Cards)," *Dianbao*, September 19, 1945.
[104] "Cong liangmin zheng tandao guomin shengfen zheng 从良民证谈到国民身份证 (From Japanese ID cards to Nationalist ID cards)," *Frontier Daily*, December 28, 1945.

Many other newspaper articles from 1945 to 1949 also associated ID cards with the Japanese invasion and excessive surveillance. In a 1946 Shanghai newspaper article titled "Checking ID Cards," the author recounted how he always forgot to bring ID cards and consequently suffered greatly during the Japanese occupation. Now, with "the Japanese ID cards transformed into the Nationalist ID cards," he thought he no longer needed to carry it around. However, he was checked and warned on the street to "bring the ID card next time." The author sarcastically suggested that the government should adopt the ancient Egyptian practice of branding slaves with a mark on their skin, so they would never forget to bring their identity markers with them.[105] This black-humored vignette jokingly compared ID cards to the identifiers branded on slaves, implying that ID cards were tools of surveillance and enslavement, similar to the oppressive measures experienced under the Japanese rule. By invoking the traumatic memory of Japanese ID card policies and highlighting the role of IDs as instruments of surveillance, newspaper articles like this one fueled popular antagonism against the ID card policy.

Poetry also participated in the anti-ID card campaign. The pro-Communist poet Su Jinsan's poem, published in 1947 Shanghai, is a notable example. Titled "National's ID card (*guomin shenfen zheng*)," this poem uses scathing black humor to depict the misery brought by the Nationalist government's ID cards. In the poem, the protagonist applies for his ID card by strictly following the required procedures, but his photo is suspected by the police of not being his own. When he goes out to buy medicine for his dying father, he is repeatedly checked and detained due to ID card issues. By the time he returns home with medicine, his father has already died. With a wry sense of humor, the poem concludes with the protagonist deciding to burn his father's ID card along with paper money, "so that father's ghost will not be detained on his way to the

[105] "Cha shenfen zheng 查身份证 (Checking ID Cards)," *Haitao*, no.37 (1946): 4.

underworld!"[106] Highlighting ID cards as devices for surveillance and mobility restriction, Su's poem captured the prevailing anti-ID card sentiments of the time and added on to the popular resistance againt the Nationalist ID card policy.

Figure 6: A drawing titled "The ID card." It depicts a person submissively lowering his head while handing over his ID card to a bossy policeman (or perhaps a Japanese soldier) with a bayonet. The notes on the right read: "ID cards, as troublesome documents from the past, still persist today. They create burden and financial strains for the people. This phenomenon is now called 'the recurrence of history.'" From *Zhilan huabao* 1, (1946): 1.

In conclusion, the traumatic memory of living under the control of Japanese identification documents had stigmatized ID cards as symbols of foreign invasion, excessive surveillance, and forced subordination. After winning the war in 1945, the stigma persisted, and the Chinese found it ridiculous and unbearable that the Nationalist government would apply such a tool of surveillance to its own citizens. Far from being submissive or cooperative, newspapers in post-

[106] Jinsan Su, "Guomin shenfen zheng 国民身份证 (National's ID Cards)," *Underground* 地层下, Shanghai: Xingqun Chuban Gongsi 星群出版公司, 1947, 8-10.

1945 Shanghai was filled with anti-ID card sentiments, reinforcing the perceived continuity of ID cards under both regimes, thereby challenging the legitimacy of the Nationalist ID card policy.

It is interesting to note that even into the 21th century, the Japanese identification document "Good Man's Card (*liangmin zheng*)" persisted in Chinese collective memory as a symbol of national trauma and illegitimate rule. During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, when the Chinese government tightened travel restrictions with the "Health Code" system,[107] a magazine *Harper's Bazaar* remarked: "I've never imagined that now with "Good Man's Card" in hand, we still need to worry about the green code turning into a red code." While this allusion to "Good Man's Card" was most likely intended as a light-hearted, witty remark rather than an outright slander, comparing the Communist government's "Health Code" to the Japanese invaders' "Good Man's Card" was too much for the government and the patriotic netizens to bear. The implication was that the Communist government's pandemic travel control was as tyrannical and illegitimate as the Japanese occupation of China. Realizing the dangerous political connotations of this comparison, the magazine apologized publicly, promising that they would "always bear in mind the spirit of loyalty to the country and to the Party (*shizhong jinji aiguo aidang de jingshen* 始终谨记爱国爱党的精神)" and that they would "enhance their understanding of political history."[108] This anecdote illuminates how enduring the Good Man's Card is as an image of surveillance and Japanese invasion. More than eighty years after its issurance in China, the document still has the potential to challenge the legitimacy of any state or policy associated with it. However, the way that the magazine smoothly drew a parallel between the "Good Man's Card" and the "Health

[107] Lingxiao Zhou. "Algorithmic Policing: The Datafication and Categorization of Everyday Life in China's Pandemic Technogovernance." *New Media & Society*, Forthcoming.

[108] "Ba jiankangma cheng wei liangmin zheng, shishangbasha zhiqian 把'健康码'称为'良民证'《时尚芭莎》致歉 (Calling 'Health Code' as 'Good Man's Card,' *Harper's Bazaar* Apologized)," *Pengpai News,* https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_8158444. Accessed April 10, 2024.

Code" also reminds us of James Scott's insight: "The aspiration to such uniformity and order alerts us to the fact that modern statecraft is largely a project of internal colonization, often glossed, as it is in imperial rhetoric, as a 'civilizing mission.'"[109]

4.2 Voting in a Democracy: ID Cards as Entitlement

Given the immediate traumatic memory of the Japanese ID card, the Nationalist government endeavored to distinguish its policy from the preceding Japanese version when it decided to implement ID card policy in December 1945. The head of the Shanghai Civil Affairs Office made a telling statement at a news conference: "Our ID cards are different from the identification documents issued by the Japanese puppet government. While theirs aimed at preventing (Chinese) patriotic activism, the current ID cards aim at providing us with citizens' rights."[110] This statement underscores a crucial strategy to distinguish the Nationalist version from the Japanese ones: to promote the Nationalist ID cards as symbols of entitlement. While entitlement could encompass various forms of welfare, benefits, and legal rights, this chapter focuses on how the Nationalist government promoted ID cards as symbols of suffrage - the right of citizens to vote in a democratic state. However, as we will see, the official symbolism of entitlement was resisted and denied; ID cards remained a reminder of surveillance and illegitimate rule. The Nationalist government failed to control the connotations of ID cards in its final years in Shanghai.

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[109] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 82.

[110] "Minzheng chuzhang zhaodai jizhe xi shang, changtan minzheng wenti 民政处长招待记者席上, 畅谈民政问题：国民身份证可享受公民权利, 也是法律争执时有力的证据 (The Head of the Civil Affairs Office Talked about Civil Affairs in News Conference: with ID Cards One Can Enjoy Civil Rights; It is Also Strong Evidence in Legal Disputes)," *Shimin ribao*, March 22, 1946.

In August 1945, new pressures for democratization were exerted on the Nationalist government from the U.S., the Communists, and other political parties in China. During the Chongqing Negotiations between the Nationalist government and Communist leaders from August 29 to October 10, 1945, one of the key issues discussed was "democratization (*zhengzhi minzhu hua* 政治民主化)." The Communists claimed that an integral part of this democratization project was implementing local self-government and general elections.[111] The U.S., a significant source of support for Chiang Kai-shek's regime, also strongly advocated for China to become a unified, peaceful, and democratic nation. President Franklin D. Roosevelt urged China to democratize and maintain unification, as a civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists could potentially lead to confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.[112] Democratization became an inevitable trend that the Nationalist government had to embrace to sustain its legitimacy. With the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), Chiang Kai-shek found himself compelled to carry on the interrupted mission of democratization that had been initiated by President Sun Yat-sen.

Under this pressure, the Nationalist government decided to carry out the first general election. Shanghai, as a showcase of Chinese modernity, piloted the general election on April 28, 1946, to produce the first popularly elected Municipal Council (*shi canyihui* 市参议会). Individual identification apparatus such as the *baojia* system, household registration, census, and ID cards were all presented as preparatory work for the upcoming general election, political participation, and local self-governance. Notably, all *baojia* and ID card affairs were now assigned

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[111] *Zhonghua minguo zhuanti shi: guogong neizhan* 中华民国专题史: 国共内战 (*Themed History of Republican China: The Civil War between the Nationalists and the Communists*), vol.16, eds. Xianwen Zhang, Yufa Zhang, (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2015), 54.

[112] Zhonghua minguo zhuanti shi: guomin zhengfu zhizheng yu dui mei guanxi 中华民国专题史: 国民政府执政与对美关系 (*Themed History of Republican China: The Nationalist Government and Sino-U.S. Relations*), vol.5, eds. Xianwen Zhang, Yufa Zhang, (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2015), 383.

to the Civil Affairs Office instead of the police bureau, suggesting that ID cards pertained to civil affairs and local self-governance rather than surveillance or social control. The progress made in implementing ID cards was included in the "democratization" column in governmental reports.[113] The Nationalist government tried hard to maintain at least a veneer of democratization when building its individual identification apparatus.

ID cards were represented as a prerequisite for the general election and a symbol of democracy. The Shanghai mayor avidly reminded qualified citizens to "go to your *bao* office to apply for your ID cards. This concerns your voting rights; we hope you do not relinquish your own rights."[114] In the 1946 Shanghai general election, citizens needed to first obtain their ID cards (or at least an ID card receipt), register in the *bao* office to "acquire their status as a voter,"[115] and present ID cards to the officials before they could exercising their right to vote.[116] Some regions even waited "until the ID cards were fully distributed before carrying out the general election."[117] If a citizen had not yet received their ID card, they needed to present a temporary "ID Card receipt (*shouju* 收据)" before voting. The receipt confirmed that they had applied for an ID but not yet received it. Government officials praised registrars who, when distributing ID card receipts, wrote the voting location on the back of the receipts, which "made it easier for voters to participate."[118]

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[113] *Shanghaishi Nianjian: Minguo Sanshiwunian* 上海市年鉴: 民国三十五年 (*Shanghai Municipal Annuals: 1946*), Shanghai: Zhonghua Book Company (*Zhonghua Shuju* 中华书局), 1946.

[114] "Shanghaishi xuanju shiwusuo gonggao 上海市选举事务所公告 (Shanghai Municipal Election Office Announcement)," *Shanghai shizhengfu gongbao* 8, no.3 (December 1947): 43.

[115] "Wei minzhu bozhong, shoujie shi canyiyuan xuanjuqi jin, xuanmin mo fangqi quanli 为民主播种，首届沪市参议员选举期近, 选民莫放弃权利 (Sowing Seeds for Democracy; The First General Election for the Shanghai Council is Approaching; Voters Do not Relinquish Rights)," *Shun Pao*, April 20, 1946.

[116] "Hushifu dingding xuanmin zhuyi shixiang 沪市府订定选民注意事项 (Shanghai Municipal Government Revised Notices for Voters)," *Shun Pao*, April 20, 1946.

[117] "Dangxuan canyiyuan mingdan jiang gongbu 当选参议员名单将公布 (The Elected Council will be Announced)," *Shun Pao*, May 10, 1946.

[118] "*Di yi jie shi canyiyuan, jinri toupiao xuanju, xuanmin mo fangqiquanli, ruyou wubiqingshi anxuanjususongfa banli* 第一届市参议员, 今日投票选举, 选民莫放弃权利, 如有舞弊情事按选举诉讼法办理 (The First Council will be Elected Today; Voters Do Not Forsake Your Rights; Fraud Will Be Punished According to Law)" *Shun Pao*, April 28, 1946.

The 1946-1947 version of Nationalist ID cards contained a column titled "citizenship (*gongmin zige* 公民资格)" (Figure 1). This column recorded when and where the card bearer "became" a citizen and obtained legal rights through a "citizenship oath ceremony (*gongmin xuanshi* 公民宣誓)," where one listened to a didactic lecture about democracy and pledged an oath before being officially registered as a citizen. In this sense, it was the ID card and the registration process that engendered citizenship and give legal rights to each card bearer. In official rhetoric, the ID card, as proof of one's citizenship and prerequisite for suffrage, was an integral part and a symbol of a democratic state.

While the government tried to inculcate the idea that ID cards endowed and engendered "citizenship rights," this didacticism did not fully take root. In June 1947, a year after the first general election, a Nationalist government notice reiterated that the "citizenship" column on the ID cards should not be left blank.[119] This notice suggested that it was still common that people were perplexed or indifferent about what "citizenship" and "voting rights" entailed, therefore leaving the "citizenship" column blank. People did not buy into the official rhetoric that tried to establish ID cards as symbols of democracy and entitlement.

Instead, the official rhetoric triggered wry taunts and resistance. A 1946 Shanghai newspaper article, when commenting on the ID card, indignantly asked: "Why did the government implement such a policy? ...Did it mean that our eight-year anti-Japanese wartime efforts earned us nothing but a title 'Chinese citizen'? ...Why do we need to be given this 'citizenship' title *again*?" (Italics mine)[120] By the word "again," this article implied that "we" were *naturally*

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[119] "Jiangsu sheng zhengfu daidian: jieshi tianfa guomin shenfen zheng shi duiyu gongmin zige yingfou tianzhu yiyi 江苏省政府带电: 解释填发国民身份证时对于公民资格应否填注疑义 (Jiangsu Municipal Notice: Explaining whether citizenship column on the ID Cards should be Filled)," June 25, 1947. no.28177.

[120] "Cong guomin shenfen zheng tandao ling yiren zheng 从'国民身份证'谈到领'艺人证' (From the Nationalist ID Cards to 'Artists' Identity Card')," *Renmin shiji (Shanghai)*, no.11 (1946): 18-9.

Chinese citizens and did not need a government-approved ID card to confirm that status. Another newspaper article published in early 1949 in Shanghai, which contained a doggerel entitled "ID cards," shared similar sentiments. The doggerel began with: "Now, already forty years old, I just acquired my Chinese nationality (through obtaining the ID card)." It ended wryly with: "We can now celebrate our 'citizenship rights (*gongmin zige*)!' But with such a card in hand, where on earth can we go?"[121] This wry doggerel mocked the notion that an ID card could endow one with citizenship. Published three months before the downfall of the Nationalist government in Shanghai, this doggerel epitomized the prevailing resistance against ID cards as symbols of entitlement. Instead, as the previous section of this chapter shows, ID cards remained symbols of travel restriction, surveillance, and the encroachment of individual liberty. Despite its efforts, the Nationalist government failed to determine the symbolism of ID cards. This failure offers a unique lens to understand the decreasing state capacity and dwindling popular support that the Nationalist government faced in its final years in mainland China.

[121] "Shenfen zheng 身份证 (ID Cards)," *Lunyu*, no.171 (1949): 9. "行年四十, 始入国籍. ...可以贺兮, 公民资格! 执此通行, 何处去得?"

EPILOGUE

As the Chinese saying goes, "when policy comes from the top, countermeasure comes from below (*shangyou zhengce, xiayou duice* 上有政策，下有对策)." The ID card policy in post-1945 Shanghai exemplified this proverb. As a device that linked up the highest governmental authority down to grassroots individuals, the ID card had to contend with complicated social fabrics and people's agency. Well-intended as part of the modern state-building project, this policy faced multifaceted difficulties and triggered unanticipated consequences.

This thesis explores the various obstacles, resistance, and countermeasures that the ID card policy encountered in Shanghai under the Nationalist government from 1945 to 1949. It fills the gap in the existing scholarship of individual identification practices by offering a case study of early twentieth-century China. Looking beyond the policy itself, this thesis interrogates ID card as an institution that involved not only the physical card and the administrative structure but also the competing symbolisms attached to it. Chapter Two investigates the ID card as a material object, focusing on the technologies used for individual differentiation (names and photos) and document authentification (seal stamps). The standardization of names encountered significant challenges due to traditions of one individual adopting multiple names, name duplications, and the common practice of married women abandoning their maiden names. Additionally, photos as identification tools were unpopular among respectable citizens and posed a financial burden for many, while seal stamps were prone to forgery by Communists and other opportunists. Chapter Three examines the administrative structure responsible for ID card circulation, highlighting the role of sub-administrative "state brokers" - the *baojia* chiefs. The ID card policy provided these entrepreneurial brokers with opportunities to abuse their power and collect illegal revenue, symptomatic of what Prasenjit Duara describes as "state involution." These predatory and

entrepreneurial *baojia* chiefs were significant obstacles to the policy's implementation. Chapter Four delves into the discursive realm, exploring the competing symbolisms associated with ID cards. While the Nationalist government attempted to promote ID cards as symbols of democracy and citizens' voting right, the enduring trauma of the Japanese "Good Man's Card" stigmatized the Nationalist ID cards as tools of surveillance and authoritarian control.

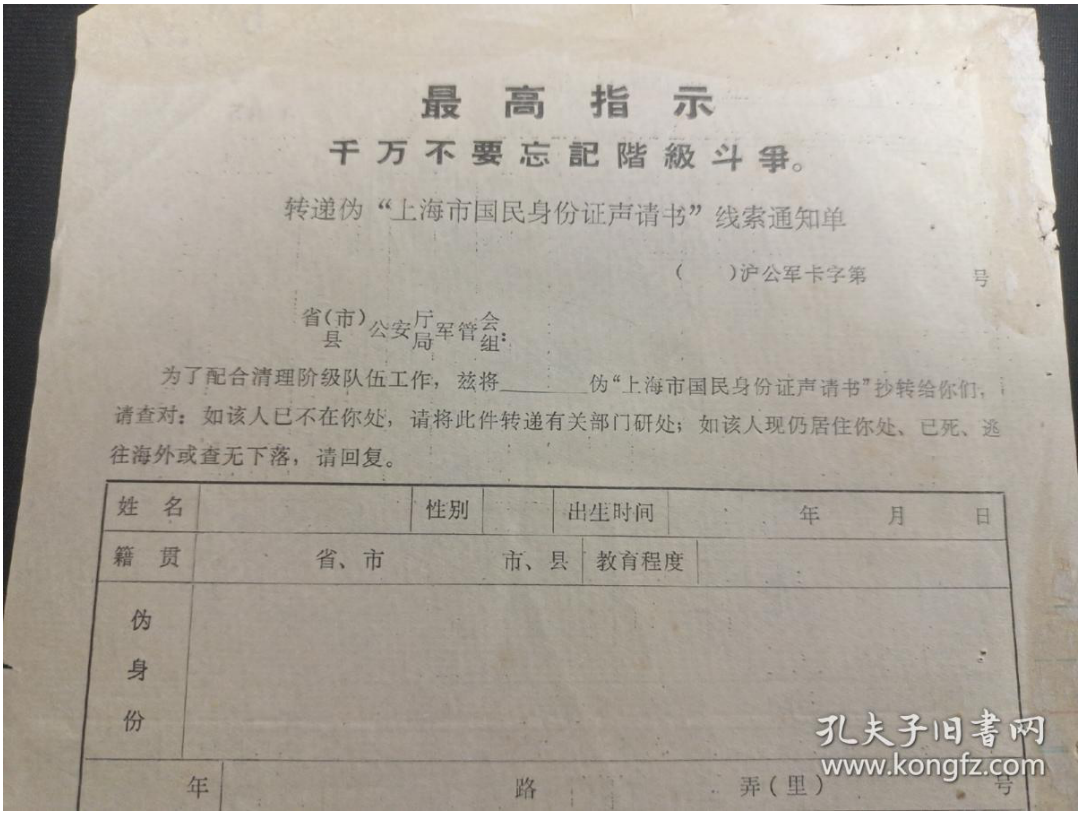
While the Communist government abolished Shanghai individual ID cards in 1952, the story of ID card in China did not stop here. Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist government, when retreating to Taiwan in 1949, continuted the ID card policy there. Current Taiwan ID card policy traces its origin back to Chiang's time in the 1940s.[122] In mainland China, the Communist government preserved the Nationalist ID cards in the police station[123] and later used them to locate and identify individuals. A 1969 document shows how the Communist government used GMD-issued Shanghai ID card application forms to comb the country for individuals (Figure 7). In 2000, these ID cards were relocated to the Shanghai Municipal Archive. It was reported that these cards helped many people to find their relatives in Taiwan.[124] In mainland China, after three decades absent of nation-wide individual identification documents, the Communist government implemented paper-laminated ID cards nationwide in 1985, usually called "first-generation ID card." Since 2004, an updated version "second-generation ID card (*erdai shenfen zheng* 二代身

[122] See Zhengjian Chen, "Woguo guomin shenfenzheng zhidu ji juese gongneng zhi yanjiu -yiminguo 36 nian zhi 94 nian lici huanfa wei zhongxin 我国国民身分证制度及角色功能之研究 - 以民国 36 年至 94 年历次换发为中心 (A Study of the ID card System and Its Roles and Functions - With a Focus on 1947-2005)," National Chi Nan University. MA Thesis.

[123] Yunping Tang, "minguo shiqi Shanghai de 'guomin shenfen zheng' 民国时期上海的'国民身份证' (National's ID Cards in Republican Shanghai)," *Archive and History* 档案与史学, (August 2004): 50.

[124] Ibid., 50.

份证)" followed suit. These second-generation ID cards, still in use until today, feature a new technology RFID (radio frequency identification) for machine-reading.[125]



最 高 指 示

千 万 不 要 忘 記 階 級 斗 爭。

转递伪"上海市国民身份证声请书"线索通知单

(　　)沪公军卡字第　　号

省(市)县公安厅局军管会组:

为了配合清理阶级队伍工作，兹将_____伪"上海市国民身份证声请书"抄转给你们，请查对：如该人已不在你处，请将此件转递有关部门研处；如该人现仍居住你处、已死、逃往海外或查无下落，请回复。

姓　名		性别		出生时间	年　月　日
籍　贯	省、市　　市、县		教育程度		
伪身份					
年	路		弄(里)		号

Figure 7: A document issued by the Communist government in 1969: "Notice of transmitting the 'GMD-issued Shanghai ID cards application forms.'" This document suggests that the Communist government preserved and used the GMD-issued ID cards application forms to locate individuals in the 1960s. From konfz.com. (https://book.kongfz.com/13234/4456812774/)

The Chinese second-generation ID cards are commonly found to represent technological progress, national strength, and citizens' rights. Such positive representation of Chinese ID cards was vividly illustrated in a 2017 Chinese talent show featuring international students as guests. During a discussion about ID cards from their respective countries, the Chinese host was astonished to see that the Italian ID card was merely a printed booklet with a photo attached to it

[125] Cheryl L. Brown, "China's second-generation national identity card: Merging culture, industry and technology," *Playing the Identity Card*, 59.

by staples. He exclaimed, “Is this made from paper?” The commentary humerously underscored his implication: “Is your country really so poor as this? (*nimen qiong cheng zheyang*?)”[126] (Figure 8) Playful as this remarks was, it interpreted the low-tech ID card as a sign of a country’s economic and technological weakness. By contrast, the high-tech Chinese ID card, which are plastic and utilize machine-reading technologies, symbolizes China’s national strength and technological advancement. Compared to the “backward” Italian ID cards that resemble “what my dad used to hold,”[127] the Chinese ID card is turned into a symbol of modernity and a source of national pride.

Figure 8: A screenshot from a Chinese talent show. The Italian citizen on the right is presenting his Italian ID card. The Chinese host on the left, very much surprised, exclaims: “Is this made from paper?” The commentary reads: “Is your country really so poor? (nimen qiongcheng zhe yang?)” Accessed May 22, 2024.
(https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1tS4y1375j/?spm_id_from=333.337.search-card.all.click)

ID cards in contemporary mainland China are often represented as symbols of entitlement. An animation exemplifies this idea when introducing identification documents in ancient China:

[126] “*Geguo shenfen zheng dou zhang shayang* 各国身份证都长啥样? (How do ID cards in other countries look like?)” *bilibili*, https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1tS4y1375j/?spm_id_from=333.337.search-card.all.click. Accessed May 22, 2024.
[127] Ibid.

"In the past, only officials had identification documents, while commoners didn't. Why? Because commoners didn't have high social status!"[128] The implication is that in the past only those with high social status could enjoy identification documents to prove their privileged identity. The current ID card issued by the Communist government, equally given to every Chinese citizen, symbolizes entitlement for elites and commoners alike. The image of ID cards as tools of surveillance falls into oblivion; instead, they represent recognition and entitlement - I'm not a nobody, but someone with notable identity and acknowledged social status. The use of ID cards are so thoroughly naturalized in contemporary mainland China that seldom anyone ever question their existence, nor link it with excessive surveillance or foreign invasion. The study of the history of ID cards, in this sense, helps to denaturalize individual identification documents by revealing the contested process of its historical construction.

Further questions remain to be explored. How did the Communist government manage to legitimize and naturalize the use of ID cards? What new or old hindrances did the Communist ID card policy encounter as compared with the Nationalist policy in the 1930s and 1940s? How did the Nationalist government learn from previous failures and adjust its policy in Taiwan? What is unique or common about China's ID card experiences when compared with global identification practices? While these questions are beyond the scope of this thesis, they merit further comparative studies and exploration. By delineating the resistance and obstacles that the ID card policy encountered in post-1945 Shanghai, this thesis contributes to existing scholarship on information history and personal identification, paving ground for later studies of identification practices in Republican China.

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[128] "Ni zhidao jintian de shenfen zheng, zai gudai dou jiao sha ma? 你知道今天的身份证，在古代都叫啥吗?(Do you know how ID cards were called in ancient China?)" *bilibili*, https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1sU4y1A7gR/?spm_id_from=333.337.search-card.all.click. Accessed May 22, 2024.

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"Commoners' Voice: Why ID cards in the Eleventh Ward haven't been distributed yet (*Laobaixing dehua: Shiyiqu shenfenzheng hegu chichi bufa* 老百姓的话: 十一区身份证何故迟迟不发)." *Haijing* 海晶. vol.22. 1946. p.11.

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