

Education Problems of Migrant Children in China

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Abstract

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With the large-scale migration of the population and the migration of migrant workers into cities, migrant children's education has become one of China's current important issues in education.

The paper first reviews the evolution of migrant children's education policies in China and the latest developments in related policies. It also introduces the family education issues and social issues of migrant children and presents the basic overview of migrant children education.

The second part of the article focuses on the specific content of compulsory education for migrant children. These include new conditions and new problems in pre-school education, high school entrance examination policies and compulsory education for migrant children in different regions. In megacities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, the policy of "controlling the population through education" has emerged as a result of the reduce policy to the number of people, which has greatly affected the

educational accessibility of migrant children. After 2014, the cities of the Yangtze River Delta, the cities of the Pearl River Delta, and other provincial capital cities have begun to implement a residence permit system, and have set points for admission and points for entry. From the actual situation, this is mainly for highly educated and high-income group, low-educated and low-income migrant workers and their children cannot get the benefits which they deserve from this system. The point system not only fails to provide sufficient educational resources for public schools but also does not allow private schools (migrant children schools) to further develop.

The final part of the paper discusses the policy of reforming migrant children's education and also analyzes the different opinions of different scholars. At the end of the article, I put forward my views on the issue of migrant children's education, and suggest a more fundamental way to solve such problems.

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China has changed from an agriculture-based economy to the second largest world economy successfully in recent years. Although China's urbanization leads to tremendous economic success, there are a lot of problems remaining through this process. While migrant workers rush into the cities to improve life qualities, more and more of them bring their children with them to the coastal provinces and provincial-level cities such as Shanghai and Beijing. However, due to the hukou system and China's public welfare system, it is very difficult for these kids--so-called "migrant children" to access local education especially the public schools run by the government. Among all the mega cities including Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, the Shanghai municipal government created the best educational condition

for the migrant children from 2008 to 2013. (Chen, 2017) This is called--Shanghai Model. In this research paper, I will evaluate educational problems of migrant children in China, also providing some possible solutions to solve the serious issues.

Introduction of migrant children

According to “*China Migrant Children Development Report in 2016*”, there are a total of 35.8 million migrant children in China, which means that 25 out of 100 kids in cities and towns are migrant children. In mega cities like Shanghai, the migrant-local ratio is higher. By the end of June 2016, there were more than 1 million children in Shanghai. This meant that 67 out of 100 kids in Shanghai were migrant children. (Lianquan Gongyi, 2017) Beijing has roughly 900,000 migrant children. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p109) Not surprisingly, there are also a lot of issues in the education of those children. These issues can be divided into two parts; the first part is the difficulty of getting enrolled in school and other related problems; the second part is the family and social problems.

Problems in school enrolling

Enrollment: public or private?

The origin of the educational issues of migrant children is because of the hukou system and related public welfare system. Due to the dual system which was established in the 1950s, citizens' social welfare is highly related with their hukou status. Thus, in the early years of 1990s, migrant children were not allowed to enter

the local public primary schools. Migrant children were finally able to attend the local public schools in 1998. At that year, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Education jointly drafted the “Temporary Law on Migrant Children’s Education. Both the government of the hometown origin and the host city were responsible for migrant children’s education (Ming, 2014) At the same time, the host government should make sure that migrant children could access to local education if these children were unable to attend schools in their hometowns due to multiple reasons. The State Council further clarified the sharing of responsibilities between the origin and host governments in 2001 with the release of “The State Council’s Ruling over Basic Education Reforms and Development”. This policy document established the “Two Primaries (liangge weizhu) ” principle: in migrant children’s education, “the host government has the primary responsibility, and public schools have the primary responsibility” (yi liurudi weizhu, yi gongban xuexiao weizhu) (Ming, 2014) However, in the reality, it was still difficult for migrant children to attend local public schools because their parents had to pay “sponsorship fee” since the central government did not provide extra educational funds to the host government. The fee could be more than 10,000RMB. However, in the 1990s, The monthly wage for migrant workers was only several hundred RMB per month. Thus, the public schools were only open to the richest non-locals. (Ming, 2014)

While the public schools were only open to the rich, and the other migrant children needed education, migrant children schools were created in this case. Unlike public schools where had better teachers and school facilities, the migrant schools were most profit-driven and organized by the non-locals. In order to maximize the interest and minimize the costs, migrant schools were equipped with poor infrastructure and hired “teachers” who were middle school graduates. (Ming, 2014)

In conclusion, migrant schools were completely market-oriented, poor equipped and lacked government's supervision. Migrant workers would not send their children to these schools if they had a better option.

The elimination of tuition fees and the "Three-year Plan."

In 2008, the State Council stipulated that starting from the fall of 2008, compulsory school fees will be waived in urban areas across the country. In addition, the State Council also stipulated that migrant children should attend the nearest public schools and be exempt from sponsorship fees. The central government also began to take some financial responsibilities from this year. From 2008 to 2014, the central government's subvention for migrant children reached 37.14 billion yuan. (Yang, 2016, p8-9) However, this is far from solving the funding problem for migrant children's education.

Shanghai is the first major city that integrates migrant children schools into the public education system. After eliminating tuition fees and miscellaneous fees in 2006 and eliminating sponsorship fees in 2008, the Shanghai municipal government launched an ambitious plan: "Migrant Children Compulsory Education Three-year Action Plan" in 2008 (Feng and Chen, 2017). The plan focused on two steps to provide primary school education to migrant children. The first step was to open all the public primary schools to migrant children who were living in the central urban area. The second step was to transform eligible migrant children schools into private migrant children schools in the suburbs. These private schools were supervised by the municipal government, and at the same time, the government provided a partial subvention to these schools. From 2008 to 2010, there were a total of 162 migrant

children schools that were eligible to be converted into private migrant children schools. These ineligible were closed down by the government (Feng and Chen, 2017). The plan has made tremendous achievements from 2008 to 2013 and won the title of “the Shanghai Model of dealing with migrant children’s education.” I will provide more details about this plan later.

Watershed: 2014

It was helpful to solve the migrant children’s educational issues when Shanghai municipal government reduced the paperwork requirements in 2008. In the past, migrant workers must provide “5 documents” (temporary residence permit, proof of employment, proof of residence, a certificate from the place of origin showing that the family could not provide caregiving support to its children, and *hukou* booklet) to send their children into local public schools. Also, it was very difficult for migrant workers to provide all the paper. It is estimated that 90 percent of migrant workers did not have all the five documents (Ming, 2014). Starting from 2008, migrant workers only needed to prepare two papers: identity cards of parents and proof of residence or employment in Shanghai (Ming, 2014). And there was no difficulty for migrant workers to gain these two licenses. This not only simplified the process but also lowered the difficulty of acquiring all the documents. The “Three-year Plan” and the reduced requirement of paperwork created a golden age for both migrant children and their parents.

However, in 2014, with the new “controlling population through education” policy, the requirement of paperwork became onerous. From 2014, migrant parents must provide residence permit and 2-year flexible employment permit instead of

temporary residence permit in 2013. In 2016, the situation became more difficult. The requirement even rose again in that year! Parents had to provide residence permit (with deed approval) and 3-year flexible employment permit. (Chen, 2017) Actually, it was almost impossible for many migrant workers to obtain these documents. These changes had greatly impacted migrant children since it became more difficult to receive education in Shanghai. A lot of migrant children could not attend any school in Shanghai due to this policy. In 2014, the number of enrollment of migrant children in grade one fell by more than 20,000 in Shanghai. In 2015, the number of migrant children who received compulsory education in Shanghai decreased from 540,000 to 500,000. In 2016, the number decreased to 345,000 which was as many as the number in 2007. (Lianquan Gongyi, 2017)

The situation in Beijing is worse than in Shanghai. Before 2014, education of migrant children in Beijing was already very bad. The requirements for migrant children to attend public schools are “five certificates”: proof of employment of parents, family hukou booklet, residence permit, temporary residence permit, and proof of having no guardianship in hometown. (Zhao and Wei, 2016) These documents have prevented countless migrant children from attending "legal schools" in Beijing. Therefore, they could only go to "illegal schools", that is, migrant children schools. However, because these schools do not have school qualifications, migrant children schools are often closed and demolished by the government. (Zhao and Wei, 2016) Starting from 2014, under the slogan "curb the rapid growth of Beijing's population," the Beijing Municipal Government stipulates that the resident population of Beijing must be "controlled" at 23 million, this means, 15% of the population must be expelled. (Yang, 2016, p13-14) Therefore, it is even more difficult for migrant children to attend school. According to statistics from the Beijing Municipal

Education Commission, at the end of May 2014, the number of non-Beijing-born children enrolled in primary schools in Beijing was 56,627, a decrease of 18,000 from the 74,890 in 2013. In 2016, there were 65,000 students in Beijing studying at the migrant children school while two years ago there were 93,000 students. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p111-113)

Cities of the Pearl River Delta and other major cities have introduced a "points system" in recent years. The "points system" requires that migrant workers' families receive points by paying social security fees and owning local real estate. If they reach a certain of points, migrant children can be enrolled in school. Because of the low wages, low education, and low skills of migrant workers, they simply cannot obtain the required points. Therefore, most migrant children do not qualify for entry to this system. (Yang, 2016, p12)

Problems to family and society

The relationship between migrant parents and children

The cause of the educational problem of migrant children is not only because of system and institutions but also related to the family. Migrant workers in cities do not pay enough attention to migrant children's education. They think that teachers and schools should take the responsibility to improve children's educational conditions instead of them (Huang and Xiao 2008). If they cannot guide their children to walk on the right track, migrant children will not behave well even they study with local students in public schools. Some parents concentrate on academic learning but ignore

moral education. On the other hand, most parents don't know how to respect and understand their children. They have strong traditional Chinese parent-centric concept which means the parent must force their children to do what they want them to do. (Wu, 2014) In this case, it is easy for migrant children to developmental issues. These are all dangerous signals that their children may turn from "migrant children" into "problem children."

On the other hand, compared to urban middle class, migrant workers have disadvantages on improving educational conditions for their children. They are less educated which means they cannot help children when they meet academic issues; most of them work in manufacturing, construction and catering industry, which sacrifices precious time to communicate with their children due to long-time and high-pressure working condition; migrants workers cannot afford better learning environment since they receive lower income than urban workers. (Huang and Xiao 2008) According to research done by Professor Feng Shuaizhang and Professor Chen Yuanyuan, migrant parents spend less time on helping children to do homework than local parents. They also spend much less money on buying learning materials than local parents. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p135-136). As a result, the weakness of family education brings more difficulties to migrant children's educational problems.

Moreover, we cannot ignore another important aspect: the safety problem of migrant children. Based on "Shanghai Primary and Middle School Student Safety Report," among all the student deaths in Shanghai, deaths caused by drowning accounts for more than 40 percent and death caused by traffic accidents account for around 20 percent. (Wu, 2014) Among all these students, most of them are migrant children, and only a few of them have local hukou. And most of these cases happen in the summer vacation period when migrant parents have no time looking after their

children. This also means that migrant parents lack basic safety awareness because they are less educated. (Wu, 2014)

Environment and discrimination

A great environment is helpful to children's learning experience and vice versa. (Huang and Xiao 2008) It is a pity that migrant workers cannot provide migrant children decent environment which full of studying atmosphere. Almost all migrant workers live in a place which is called "city-country fringe"(城乡结合部), where includes both urban and rural elements. (Chen 2014) There are almost no learning atmosphere in these places, but more gambling and fighting happen in city-country fringe. For migrant children, they are not only required to adapt urban education but also urban living style and culture which may differ from what they get used to. (Chen 2014)

On the other hand, a certain number of local hukou holders discriminate against the migrant children. The discrimination forbids migrant children accessing more educational resources and understanding the urban culture to a certain degree. (Huang and Xiao 2008) Based on research on Shanghai's public primary schools which already contain a huge number of migrant children conducted by Professor Feng Shuaizhang and Professor Chen Yuanyuan, only one-third of local parents agree that migrant children should have an equal opportunity of receiving Shanghai's compulsory education as local students. One-third of local parents agree that migrant children should study at local public schools, but they refuse that schools should open mixed classes. There are 10 percent of parents argue that if they are given opportunity, they will send their children to other public primary schools which have no migrant

children. (Feng and Chen, 2017) Although these parents only account for 10 percent of all parents according to this research, the truth is that there are much more parents have the same thoughts. They have not “appeared” in this research because they have already moved to other areas which have less migrant population before this research was conducted. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p148) In conclusion, for many local hukou holders, migrant population are not welcome.

Preschool education:

In general, the status of urban migrant children’s school enrollment is: very few people are enrolled in local public kindergartens or high-end private kindergartens, most of them are enrolled in private kindergartens or pre-schools that are supervised by the government, and the rest are enrolled in unlicensed private kindergartens. (Lu and Liu. 2016) However, due to the low quality of preschool education, such education for migrant children in China is not optimistic.

1 The difficulty in enrollment and tuition

Migrant workers in each city argue that the biggest problem with pre-school education in their area is that their children are difficult to be enrolled and are expensive. For example, in Guangzhou, 64.38% of the parents of migrant children think that the number of kindergartens in public schools in their area is insufficient, and it is difficult to be enrolled in kindergartens. 48.13% of parents think that fees charged by private schools are too high and they have difficulty in paying such fees; in Chongqing, 32.5% of parents believe that the number of public kindergartens is insufficient and it is difficult to be enrolled in kindergartens. 26.7% of the parents

think that the fees charged by private schools are too high and they have difficulty in paying such fees. (Lu and Liu, 2016, p70)

Preschool problems reflected by migrant workers, unit: percent

Problems	Shanghai	Guangzhou	Chongqing
Schools insufficient	56.2	64.38	32.5
Difficult enrollments			
Fees too high	43.0	48.13	26.7
Poor teachers	17.2	26.25	15.6
Poor conditions	15.6	25.63	14.9
Others	1.6	8.13	8.8

At present, the number of public kindergartens is insufficient. Most of the public kindergartens can only meet the admission of the children of household registration residents in the city. However, private kindergarten education often has a strong commercial motivation and aims at making a profit. Even if parents choose private kindergartens with low quality, these kindergartens will also collect fees in disguise, such as setting up interest classes, ordering teaching materials, buying toys, etc. On the other hand, the government also lacks supervision over these kindergarten's fee standards. (Lu and Liu, 2016) With rising prices and the state's low investment in private kindergartens, migrant children are increasingly unable to afford preschool education.

2 Poor conditions

Most of the private kindergartens are located in village in the cities (chengzhongcun). The external environment is poor: the roads are narrow and messy, and the surrounding environment is noisy. There are limited outdoor playgrounds in the kindergartens, and children lack necessary game facilities, some of them are even bought in the second-hand market. (Lu and Liu, 2016, p71) The class environment inside the kindergarten also does not meet the requirements of the state's regulations for running schools. The state requires that the size of kindergarten classroom should be more than 50 square meters, but the actual area of these kindergartens is less than 40 square meters. The class size of children in kindergartens has exceeded the standard, with an average of 40 children in each class. (Usually, the size is below 30) Due to the small space, these kindergarten classrooms have many functions such as teaching, eating, and sleeping. (Lu and Liu, 2016, p71) Some kindergartens even allow young children to play in their seats instead of free activities. The health and safety conditions of private kindergartens are very poor. One restroom is shared by several classes; the kitchen is family-style; the walls of kindergartens are low, and children can easily pull out of the wall and go to the road with numerous vehicles and pedestrians. (Lu and Liu, 2016, p71)

3 Poor teachers

Private kindergarten teachers are weak in strength and fluidity. For example, teachers in private kindergartens in Shanghai are mainly secondary school and college graduates. 52.6% of teachers have a teaching age of less than one year; only 10.5% of teachers work for more than 3 years; teachers' monthly salary is low, of which 2,000 yuan has been accounted for 40.9%. Guangzhou's private kindergarten teachers' qualifications were also secondary school and college-based. 14.29% of teachers were

high school graduates, and 66.67% of teachers have a salary of 2000-3000 yuan. (Lu and Liu, 2016, p72) Private kindergartens are equipped with one teacher for each class, and many kindergartens also have a teacher-packaged one-class education method. That is, one person is responsible for all aspects of education and nursing. On the one hand, teachers have great work pressure. On the other hand, there is little room for improvement in the work. Therefore, most teachers choose to leave after working for one year. (Lu and Liu, 2016, p72)

Research on the policy of the high school entrance examination:

Since migrant children receive junior high school education in places other than their place of residence, they continue to go to the place where they completed their secondary school education and then participate in the high school entrance examination. This is called a non-local exam. (Wu and Ge, 2016)

At present, migrant children often face four choices after receiving the middle (junior high) school education: they remain in the local high school (not in big cities) or vocational school; work in the cities; return to their place of origin to attend school, or back to their home to work. (Wu and Ge, 2016, p79-81)

According to a study conducted by the Chinese Academy of Educational Sciences, participation in high school entrance examinations in the cities is the primary choice for migrant children in junior high schools and their parents. The proportion of migrant students who are studying in the cities and want to take the high school entrance examination in the place where they study is 80.1%. Only 1.3% of students plan to return to hometown to take the exam. (Wu and Ge, 2016, p80)

However, the fact is always contrary to the wishes. According to data from the 2010 census, primary school enrollment of migrant children in China is 85%, junior high school enrollment is 40%, and high school enrollment is less than 30%. In addition, according to the Ministry of Education's survey of migrant children in Fengtai District of Beijing, Xuhui District of Shanghai, Hebei District of Tianjin, Luohu District of Shenzhen, Yiwu City of Zhejiang Province, and Langfang City of Hebei Province, it is almost impossible to see migrant children's enrollment in top middle schools and higher education. (Wu and Ge, 2016, p81)

1 The limit of application

As of August 2014, 27 provinces have clearly defined the policies for migrant children to participate in the local examination. However, all provinces and cities have set different conditions for applying for the exam. For example, some cities stipulate that such examinations are only for migrant children in the province, and children across provinces are still required to return to the residence to take the exam. Besides, most cities need migrant children to provide temporary residence permits, hukou of origin, certificates of secondary school entry for inflows, and proof of parents' employment. (Wu and Ge, 2016, p82-84)

In addition to the above conditions, some regions also require that students have a certain number of years of schooling, and only specific groups of people can apply for such situations. For example, the conditions for taking the high school entrance examinations in Hainan Province are as follows: students who have completed one year in the third grade in Hainan Province; legal guardians are permanent residents who are employed in Hainan Province, and they have residence certificates issued by

the police department of Hainan Province. (Wu and Ge, 2016) Shaanxi Province stipulates that the students shall hold a diploma issued by a junior high school in Shaanxi Province, and may take a high school entrance graduation exam in the district where they graduated from junior high school. (Wu and Ge, 2016) Shenzhen City stipulates that if the students have completed three years of junior high school in Shenzhen, they may attend high school entrance examination in the district where they study. Similar policies have been introduced in other regions including Beijing and Xiamen, requiring migrant children to have the formal status of a local junior high school and have three years of complete learning experience in school. (Wu and Ge, 2016)

Some provinces and cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin allowed the opening of secondary vocational schools to migrant children. For example, according to the regulations of Beijing, all migrant workers shall have valid proof of residence, a legal and stable residence, a legal and stable occupation for three years, and have paid social insurance for three consecutive years in Beijing. And their children have a formal school status and have been studying in junior high school for three consecutive years, and those students may take the examination for secondary vocational school in Beijing. (Wu and Ge, 2016, p84)

Shanghai have similar regulations. Starting in 2008, Shanghai has opened secondary vocational schools. Since 2012, higher vocational schools have been opened. Since the number of space offered cannot meet the needs of migrant children at all, these schools are only open to those students with the best grades, and the remaining students with better results will only be rejected. (Wu and Ge, 2016, p84)

Although the city of Guangzhou opens to high schools for migrant children, the city's entrance examination system is the most complex of all cities. Before 2014, the

conditions for applying for high school are: migrant children must be a junior high school student in Guangzhou, plus a “school selection fees” (Zexiaofei) of 20,000 to 40,000 yuan. From 2014 to 2016, the “school selection fees” (Zexiaofei) were exempted, but the enrollment quota was limited to 8%, that is, out of every 100 high school students in Guangzhou, there were only eight migrant children. (Wang, 2016) Therefore, they face this tremendous competition. According to a student named Yang Fei, if candidates without a residence permit in Guangzhou want to attend high school, their grade must be at least 50 points higher than that of local candidates. (Zhang, 2016, p242-243) From 2017 onwards, the admission standards have also been added from 2014, adding more than three years of legal and stable job certification, proof of residence and proof of social insurance accumulated for more than three years. (Wang, 2016) We can imagine how many migrant children will not be able to attend high school because of these policies.

2 Causes of "Difficult in taking the exam."

First: Compared with compulsory education and higher education, the education funding at the senior high school level is relatively low, especially for ordinary high school education, and the expenditure per capita is low. From 2012 to 2014, the average budget education expenditures and public budgets for public funds at all levels of education show that the growth rate of the above two education funds in ordinary high schools is slower than that of regular junior high schools. (Wu and Ge, 2016, p85-86)

Student per capita public finance budget education fee, unit: RMB

Year	Primary	Middle	High school	Vocational	College and
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	school	school		school	university
2012	6129	8137	7776	7564	16367
2013	6902	9258	8448	8785	15592
2014	7681	10359	9025	9129	16103

Due to the government's low investment, coupled with the arrival of migrant children, the city's high school education resources are in short supply. As a result, high schools charged migrant children with high "school selection fees" (Zexiaofei). Although to some extent, this makes up for the lack of funding for public school education, it also results in unequal access to education for low-income families due to economic disadvantage. (Wu and Ge, 2016)

Second: The "institutional discrimination" of migrant children in the destination places is severe. As a financially disadvantaged group, it is difficult for parents of migrant children to hand over the so-called "legitimate and stable" employment certificates and proof of residence, not to mention to pay social insurance for three consecutive years. "Institutional discrimination" is also reflected in the admission score. Compared with local students, migrant children are already in a weak position in academic achievement. The government sets a very high score to intentionally deprive of migrant children who are eager to attend high school. (Wu and Ge, 2016, p86-89) Another point I must mention is that in large cities, the government has closed many schools because of the continuous reduction of local students. However, there are still many local parents who still regard migrant children as competitors of their children. (Wang, 2016) As a result, many local parents use the excuse of "limited local education resources in cities." to oppose the opening of the examination to

"protect" local children. From this point, local parents have become the government's "accomplice."

Regional Differences and Comparisons

Beijing:

As of the end of 2015, the total number of migrant children receiving compulsory education in ordinary primary and secondary schools (including migrant schools for children) was 483,600. Of these, 387,700 migrant children were enrolled in public schools, which accounted for about 78.31% of the total number of migrant children in compulsory education. About 80,000 migrant children were enrolled in private migrant children's schools, accounting for 16.54% of the total number of migrant children in compulsory education. The remaining 24,900 migrant children were studying at high-fee private schools (with a tuition fee of more than 10,000 per semester) and accounted for about 5.15% of the total number of migrant children at the compulsory education. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p107-110)

Distribution of migrant children attending schools in Beijing in 2015, unit: percent

Public schools	Migrant children school	High-fee school	Total
78.31%	16.54%	5.15%	100%

1 "Five Certificates": Increasing Thresholds

In 2002, according to the Beijing Municipal Government's "Notice on Interim Measures for the Implementation of Compulsory Education for School-age Children

and Adolescents among Migrant Population”, if migrant children lived in Beijing for more than half a year, they needed to provide “four certificates”, the employment certificate of the parents, the house registration booklet, parental identity card and temporary residence permit. After applying to the temporary residence sub-district office for approval, they could be given the "Letter of approval in Beijing." In 2004, for the first time, Beijing implemented the “requirements for the five certificates” and added a living certificate on the basis of 2002’s requirement. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p110-111)

In 2010, the Beijing Municipal Education Commission promulgated the "Administrative Measures for the School Students of Beijing Elementary and Secondary Schools," and migrant children only needed the "three certificates" to be enrolled: the parents' residence certificate in Beijing, the hukou booklet, and the proof of temporary studying in Beijing. However, in actual practice, the implementation of the "five certificates" created in 2004 for the migrant children was still required.

From 2004 to 2013, despite the entry barriers to the “Five Certificates”, according to statistics, the number of non-Beijing-born students in compulsory education in Beijing continued to increase, from 227,000 in 2004 to 473,000 in 2013. In the past ten years, the population has increased by 246,000, and the average annual increase is 24,600. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p111-112)

On March 16, 2014, the Central Government issued a policy to “strictly control the population size of the mega-cities with a population of more than 5 million in the urban area” and consequently the “controlling population through education” policy began to be utilized. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p112-114) Therefore, on May 1, 2014, the Beijing Municipal Government explicitly requested non-Beijing-born school-age children in the compulsory education period to submit "five certificates" and other

"relevant materials." The threshold for the "five certificates" has been substantially higher than in 2013. The authority for the verification of the "five certificates" also changed from the original street-based (jiedao) to the district-based (qu). (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p112-114) Dongcheng District, Fengtai District, Tongzhou District and Daxing District required proof of work in the district; Xicheng District and Changping District required more than three months of continuous social security contributions; Tongzhou District required more than 12 consecutive months of social security contributions; Daxing District even required more than three-year of continuous social security contributions. Regarding the requirements for temporary residence permits, the processing time for temporary residence permits in Xicheng, Fengtai and Haidian District must be before March 31, 2014; the processing time for temporary residence permits in Fengtai District and Changping District must be before December 31, 2013. In addition, Dongcheng District, Xicheng District, Chaoyang District, Fengtai District, Haidian District and Changping District stipulated that even if both parents hold a temporary residence permit, they still need to apply for a non-custodial certificate at the place of residence. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p112) At this time, it was less than one month before the entrance registration was completed, and many parents had to return urgently to their place of residence to request the certificate. Among all districts in Beijing, the entrance conditions in Tongzhou District are the most demanding. Tongzhou District is called "Sleeping City," and most parents do not work in Tongzhou District. Some parents have changed their work during this period. Even if they had served ten years of social security before, they were stuck outside the standard. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p112-113) Many parents had already prepared the "five certificates" and their children's admission is still a big problem.

After the admission threshold was raised in 2014, there were 55,233 non-Beijing students enrolled in primary school, including 31,426 migrant children. Compared with 2013, there were 74,490 non-Beijing enrolled students, including 50,107 migrant children. Both numbers decreased to 19,657 and 18,681, respectively. It is not difficult to see that the increase of entry requirements has a great impact on the mobility of children entering school. At the junior high school level, 36,871 non-Beijing students were enrolled in 2014, which was a decrease of 4,058 from 41,029 non-Beijing students in 2013. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p113-114)

In 2015, the standard for the “Five Certificates” in Beijing were announced successively from March to May, and the threshold was further raised compared to 2014. Because of these policies, at the elementary school level, 46,191 non-Beijing students enrolled in school. Compared to 2014, the number of non-Beijing students enrolled was 55,233, and student population decrease to 9042. At the junior high school level, 33,398 non-Beijing students were enrolled in 2015. Compared to 2014, the number of non-Beijing students enrolled was 36,971 and this decreased by 3,573. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p113) The difficulty of entering school in 2016 was comparable to 2015, but the admission process was more complicated than ever. In the past, parents only had to go directly to the street to submit their audit information. After the audit, they would log in to the “Beijing Compulsory Education Enrollment Service Platform for Enrollment Education” (platform, a government online registration website), fill in the information, and print the “School Age Information Collection Form.” In 2016, some districts and counties required parents to log in to the “platform” in the prescribed time to submit the “five certificates” for auditing materials before they could carry the paper materials to the street for the “five certificates”. After the audit, they would log in to the “platform” again and print "School Age Information

Collection Form." (If you miss the submission date, you will not be able to apply for the "five Certificates" audit in the street.) During the application process, many parents encountered that the application materials could not be passed. Because the application materials involved were numerous and complicated, parents did not know how to prepare for the application. Since the application time is usually only 1-2 weeks, many non-Beijing children were excluded. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p114)

2 Graduation: Where are the children meeting the requirements?

Can migrant children who have successfully conquered the "five certificates" fully enjoy their hard-won education and complete their compulsory schooling?

In 2012, 37,053 migrant children entered junior high school as first-year students. In 2013, when these students entered the eighth grade, 966 people left and the dropout rate was 2.61%. In 2014, when these students progressed to the ninth grade, 7,811 left, and the dropout was 21.64%. In 2015, when these students graduated from the ninth grade, another 6,427 left and the dropout rate was 22.73%. In the past three years, 15,204 children have left and the dropout rate was 41.03%. This means that two out of every five migrant children enrolled in junior high school will leave early and fail to complete the junior high school in Beijing. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p115)

What is the cause of this phenomenon? Is it because these children and their parents do not want to successfully complete the junior high school in Beijing? The answer is negative. This problem is that students who are non-Beijing hukou students are restricted from attending high school and can only apply for secondary professional schools; after 2014, they cannot even attend public high schools. In order to attend high schools, many migrant children choose to return to their hometown before graduating from junior high school. In their hometown, they will take the high school

entrance examination, and later, become a high school student and take the college entrance examination during their third year. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p115) Since these children have lived in Beijing for a long time, upon their return to their hometowns to receive local education, they encounter countless troubles due to disparities in teaching materials, education methods, living habits, and hometown culture. (Zhao and Wei, 2016)

With Beijing's efforts to strengthen population control and increase elementary school's entrance requirements, some migrant children are sent back to their hometowns, and some of them remain in Beijing with no school to attend. In fact, there is a third option for these children: attend school in Hebei. (Yang, 2016, p284-288) According to Hebei's 2013 sitting college entrance examination policy, if students have a high school record in Hebei for more than two years and their parents have "certificate of employment or unemployment registration" and proof of local residence, students from other places can register for the college entrance examination in Hebei. "Although the Hebei college entrance examination scoreline is quite high, at least we can maintain the regularity of a home." (Yang, 2016, p286) A parent of migrant children explained the benefits if this option. The image points out that this group of children becomes a group who try everything they can to receive education near Beijing. This phenomenon, consists of the cities near Beijing in Hebei, forms a "Beijing education belt." (Yang, 2016, p285)The cause of this phenomenon is nothing else but Beijing's strict population control policy.

3 What does Beijing's education need?

By the end of 2014, the resident population of Beijing was 21.51 million, among them, 8.18 million were migrant workers. The total GDP of the region reached 2.13 trillion

yuan. If we calculate according to the resident population, the per capita GDP was 100,000 yuan. The city's public budget expenditure was 451 billion yuan, of which education spending was 75.849 billion yuan. There were 337 junior high schools in the city with 306,789 students. The per capita public finances budgetary education fee for students was 36,705.21 yuan (the national average was 10,359.33 yuan); there were 1,040 primary schools with 821,152 students are at school, and the per capita public education budget for students was 23,441.78 yuan (the national average was 7681.02 yuan). On the other hand, the number of students in the compulsory education period in Beijing accounted for only 5.24% of the permanent population, which was half of the national average (10.12%). (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p116-117) It is obvious that the educational resources in Beijing education are quite abundant and the funds are sufficient. It is not a matter of funds that causes a series of education problems.

According to statistics, over the past two decades, Beijing has been continuously reducing the number of primary schools and the number of teachers. From 1995 to 2012, the number of elementary schools in Beijing dropped from 2,867 to 1,040; the number of full-time primary school teachers dropped from 6,2000 to 4,9000. From 2003 to 2012, the number of junior high schools in Beijing dropped from 434 to 341; the number of full-time junior high school teachers dropped from 34,000 to 20,000. (Beijing Statistical Bureau) At the same time, the permanent population of Beijing continues to grow, with 12.51 million in 1995, 14.56 million in 2003, and 20.68 million in 2012, and the increase was 65% in 1995-2012. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p116-117) On the one hand, Beijing's population has risen sharply, the economy has grown rapidly, and financial resources have expanded dramatically. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p117) On the other hand, the government is constantly reducing educational resources.

This shows that the planning departments and education departments lack a scientific forecast of demographic changes and the allocation of educational resources deviates from the actual needs. Thus, the reason for the difficulty in enrollment is not capital, but the nature of discriminatory created by the state. According to the current education management system in China, the district and county level governments take the responsibility of the expenditure of the compulsory education stage. As the number of migrant population in each district and county is different, each district and county bears different pressures on education funding. For example, it is obviously that Changping District of Beijing (2013 compulsory education expenditure was 1.713 billion yuan, accounting for 99.42% of total education expenditure), has more Education funding pressure than Xicheng District (2013 compulsory education expenditure was 2.261 billion yuan, accounting for 45.86% of total education expenditure). (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p117)

4 Reduction of migrant school

Migrant children schools, as a supplement to educational resources, should be valued and supported by the local government. However, Beijing's migrant children's schools were repeatedly shut down for ten years in Beijing. In 2006, 2011 and 2012, there was a large-scale shutdown of migrant children schools. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p118) In 2006, in order to welcome the Olympic Games in Beijing, the districts banned many the migrant children schools due to "illegal schooling" for migrant children, while "regulating and retaining" more than 60 schools. In 2009, Chaoyang District dismantled a large number of "village in the cities" due to land reserves and demolished a number of migrant children schools. Since June 2011, Beijing has closed 24 large migrant children schools, involving 14,000 students, including some

schools that have “standardized” requirements. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p118) The reason for the closure is commonly stated as that “schools have serious safety hazards in terms of housing safety, fire safety, electricity safety, and healthcare,” and they “have failed to obtain school qualifications in accordance with relevant procedures.” According to the "Standards for Schools in Beijing for Running Primary and Secondary Schools," schools must have special classrooms for calligraphy, fine arts, labor skills, and computers. The per student building area must reach 14.1 square meters. This is almost impossible for the migrant school in the urban-rural area. Of course, like other big cities, Beijing's migrant children schools also have problems such as unprofessional teachers and large teachers' mobility. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p118-119)

Due to the lack of official data and information and Beijing's “unfriendly” attitude toward migrant children schools, some private institutions and individual organizations have investigated these schools. According to this data, as of 2014, there were 127 migrant children school in Beijing, with 93,000 students. However, two years later, there were only 112 migrant children schools in Beijing, with 65,000 students in school, and the remaining 28,000 students all left Beijing. Of the remaining schools, half of them were self-built unlicensed elementary schools, and they might face the destiny of being dismantled or discontinued in the coming years. (Zhao and Wei, 2016, p119)

5 What happens when migrant children return to hometown to study?

Since Beijing refused to accept migrant children, many migrant children return to their hometown to pursue higher education. However, they encounter numerous troubles when they return to their hometown. According to interviews done by

Professor Gu, students who born in Beijing but return to Hebei Province encounter both studying difficulties and cultural differences. These students praise Beijing's education since it focuses more on "quality education" which emphasis every aspect of education including regular classes, art, music, computer science and physical education. But at the same time, they argue the local education is "too difficult." Local education only cares about scores and textbooks are much more difficult to read. This makes students frustrated and leads to the result that fails to attend university and college. (Gu, 2016)

Culturally, since these students have lived in Beijing for several years and had almost no connection with their hometown when they return, they find that they are unable to understand the local language. This makes them isolated with their peers. Furthermore, some teachers use local language or mandarin with a heavy local accent to teach which makes migrant children unable to understand what teachers are teaching. On the other hand, migrant children believe that they are "civilized" and "urbanized." They are used to Beijing's lifestyle. (Gu, 2016) However, the local lifestyle has brought "culture shock" to them which makes them more difficult to get used to the local environment. These migrant children complain that "local boys and even teachers use bad language! They are uncivilized." "They never say 'thank you,' 'sorry' or 'good morning.'" "Some students believe I am a left-behind child!" (Gu, 2016) In conclusion, migrant children who return to their hometown face much more challenges than their peers.

Shanghai and "Shanghai Model"

Introduction

As I mentioned above, the Shanghai municipal government launched an ambitious plan: “Migrant Children Compulsory Education Three-year Action Plan” in 2008. According to the “Plan,” all the migrant children, whether studying at local public schools or suburb private migrant children schools, will be included in the Shanghai compulsory educational system. By the end of 2010, 470,000 migrant children were studying at those schools, the percentage raised from 57.1 percent in 2007 to 100 percent in 2010. Among these children, 71.41 percent of them studied at local public schools, and the rest of them studies at private schools. Meanwhile, the government invested 10.34 billion RMB on the construction of 363 primary schools, middle schools, and kindergartens in suburban areas to create more educational recourses for migrant children. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p42)

Achievements in private schools

In the past, when people mentioned “migrant children schools,” these schools would be described as “profit-driven, low quality, and dangerous daycare schools.” Currently, with the success of the “Three-year Plan,” private migrant children schools have made tremendous success although they still need more improvements. One of the most important reasons behind this is the continuous increasing government’s subsidies. The subsidies raised from 2000 RMB per student per year in 2008 to 5000 RMB per year in 2012. Although public schools receive much more subsidies, these funds are sufficient for private schools to operate. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p93)

More subsidies provide the recourses for increased hiring of trained teachers for private migrant children schools. In the past, few teachers were willing to teach at

migrant children schools because the monthly wage was too low. In 2009, the monthly wage for a junior teacher was only 1500 RMB per month. Three years later, the wage increased to 3500 RMB per month. With enough funding, more and more teachers are willing to do their jobs well, and they believe the occupation is precious. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p98) Thus, more teachers tend to remain at private schools, and this is helpful in providing high teaching quality to migrant children.

Achievements in public schools

Compared with migrant children in private schools, those who are enrolled at local public schools are more fortunate. While a computer is shared by 50 students in one classroom at private schools, migrant children at public schools can enjoy much better infrastructures. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p177) Unlike private schools, public schools have independent computer labs, art and craft classrooms, music classrooms and presentation classrooms. Also, each classroom is equipped with a computer and projector. With these electronic devices, teachers can teach English classes by using Powerpoint and playing cartoons and songs. In comparison, private schools still utilize traditional teaching method: textbook, workbook, and blackboard. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p178) On the other hand, compared with private school class size which has 50 students, class size is smaller at public schools because one classroom only contains 20 to 30 students. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p177) Since the government provides much more investments and subsidies on public schools (17000 RMB per migrant child per year), teachers have higher monthly wages and better social welfare. Hence, migrant children at these schools can enjoy high standards of teachers.

From a lot of migrant parents' perspectives, once their children are enrolled in public schools, they don't need to worry about their educational issues anymore. However, the migrant children's mental health cannot be ignored. Otherwise, it will have a huge negative impact on themselves and the society. (Wu, 2014) Thus, while many public schools are providing better teaching quality to migrant children, they are also helping them to solve mental issues, and better prepare them for integration into Shanghai's society. In Yangpu District, 17 public schools work as an educational group, compiling two textbooks about the migrant children's family education and social integration. The group does not only focus on migrant children but also on their teachers and parents. An educational booklet is compiled to guide teachers in the most effective methods for helping migrant children. This special meeting between migrant parents and school faculty is held almost once a month. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p180-181)

Existing issues in the "Shanghai Model."

Although the "Shanghai Model" has slightly solved the migrant children's educational problems, there are still issues left to be solved. Despite the policy changes from 2013 to 2014 that made it more difficult for migrant children to get enrolled in both private and public schools and relatively low quality of private schools, there is one significant issue: the enrollment status of middle schools.

According to 2012 PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) report, there were 108,000 15-year-old students in Shanghai. The European countries of Greece and Portugal had similar 15-year-old population, but their total population was less than half of Shanghai's total population which was 24 million. (Feng and Chen,

2017, p166) So where were these “missing children”? Due to the hukou system and high school entrance examination system, most of the 13-15-year-old migrant children go back to their hometown to receive further education. For migrant children whether they are studying at public or private schools, It is estimated that the percentage of entering middle schools in Shanghai is 35 percent, the percentage of entering high schools is only 13 percent. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p167) As a result, for the majority of migrant children, returning to their hometown to receive higher education is the only option.

The other issue is private migrant children school teachers’ wages and social welfare. Although their wages have increased drastically because of government subsidies, the gap between public school teachers and private school teachers is still quite large. While the yearly wage of private school teachers is 60,000 RMB, the yearly wage of public school teachers is 70,000 RMB which excludes all kinds of welfare. Moreover, the pension of a private school teacher is only 2500 to 2600 RMB per month. This is much lower than the public school teacher’s which is 6700 RMB per month. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p171-172) Therefore, once private school teachers accumulate sufficient working experience, many of them quit their jobs and attempt to work at public schools. This situation creates another problem of the private migrant children schools existing as the “teacher training institutions” for public schools. (Feng and Chen, 2017, p170) The outflow of excellent teachers lowers the teaching quality of private migrant children schools.

Where were they?

After kicked out by the local government, where were the migrant students who could not receive compulsory education? In fact, there were four places that migrant children could go. The first place was their hometown. Since Shanghai refused to accept them, these children could only return home, especially for those who were in grade eight in middle school.¹ This is because all the children must take the high school entrance examination (zhongkao) at their hukou location.² Among the children who returned to their home, 80 percent of them returned alone, and 20 percent of them returned with either mother or father. For those 80 percent children, they would become left-behind children and face all kinds of challenges such as lacking care from parents, mental health problems, poor environment and so on. (Chen, 2017) Also, education discontinuity and textbook discontinuity could lead to serious issues. For example, a primary school in Shanghai only has five grades and the grade six is moved to middle school and has a different name: preparatory class (yubeiban). When migrant children graduate from primary schools and return to hometown, they may find that it is both difficult to get enrolled into either primary school or middle school. On the other hand, Shanghai's textbooks are also very different from other provinces. This will bring more obstacles for migrant children who are already getting used to familiar textbooks in Shanghai.³

The second place was the place near Shanghai such as Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province. These migrant children either lived at boarding schools or spent a

¹ My experience: Some of my middle school classmates returned to Zhejiang province in grade eight even in grade nine.

² My experience: All my high school classmates had Shanghai hukou.

³ My experience: the education in Shanghai is unique from other places. For example: Shanghai especially focuses on English while other provinces focus on Math, Physics and Chemistry. Thus, the English test is extremely hard for migrant children but Math test maybe too simple. Also, the textbooks are not unified. There are even two types of English textbook in Shanghai: Oxford and New Century. Each district uses different English textbook. My middle school was in Pudong New District and I was quite get used to Oxford textbook. But my high school which was in Yangpu District and used New Century textbook. The discontinuity of textbook affect my English grade largely. My English score dropped from 94 to 60.

lot of time on commuting (Chen, 2017) The third place was kindergarten in Shanghai. There were some parents refused to send their children to hometown and let them become left-behind children. In order to stay in Shanghai, their children remained at local kindergartens since they couldn't go to primary schools. Most of these children were 8 even 9 years old and normally, these children should become grade two or grade three pupils. However, the Shanghai municipal government stipulated that children who were older than the schooling age (7 years old) could no longer go to primary school. (Chen, 2017) For the same reason,, the four place was private cram school. It was questionable for migrant children who remained at kindergarten or went to private cram school to receive regular education in the future. (Chen, 2017)

Dilemma of private migrant children schools

The direct influence of the policy changes in 2014 was the survival of the private migrant children schools. Since the government funding on private schools was based on the number of students, those schools could not receive enough funds to operate because it was much more difficult for migrant children to enter these schools from 2014. Thus, the number of private migrant children schools dropped from 162 in 2010 to 137 in 2014. (Chen, 2017) It was predicted that more schools would be closed due to this policy. For those remaining schools, due to lacking government's funding, teachers' monthly wage became lower, and hence, the education quality was largely affected.

In fact, the existing private schools all had relatively high quality since the schools with awful quality were all closed down before 2008. Although the education funding to private schools has risen from 2000 RMB per student per year in 2008 to

5000 RMB per student per year in 2014, it was much cheaper than the funding to public schools which was 17000 RMB in 2014. (Chen, 2017) This meant that it was completely possible to solve the educational problems of migrant children through much lower funding. At the same time, the local students' interest was not hurt. However, with the implement of the two-child policy, the demand of educational recourse will increase in the near future. Thus, the closure of private migrant children schools which are supposed to balance the educational opportunity between the local and the non-local will bring more difficulties for migrant children to receive compulsory education in Shanghai.

Vocational education and migrant children

Starting from 2008, Shanghai's vocational schools were gradually opened to migrant children. This was helpful since it solved the educational discontinuity problem when migrant children graduated from middle schools. However, due to the policy changes in 2014, it was not easy for migrant children to get enrolled in vocational schools. (Lianquan Gongyi, 2017) As a result, a huge number of grade nine students could not enter such schools since they did not meet the harsh requirement. In 2016, the total number of migrant children graduated from middle school was 34 thousand. However, only six thousand of them could enter vocational schools, and the remaining 28 thousand students were excluded from the educational system. (Lianquan Gongyi, 2017) According to studies, there are three results when migrant children cannot go to vocational school. (Lianquan Gongyi, 2017)

- (1) Illegally entering labor market through all kinds of connections
- (2) Staying home and addicted to video games

(3) Becoming unemployed personnel or gangsters

Apparently, all of three results, especially the third one, will create a lot of harms to both migrant children themselves and the whole society.

Suzhou City, Jiangsu Province:

As one of the important central cities in the Yangtze River Delta, Suzhou City has a fairly developed economy. In 2015, the city's GDP was 1.45 trillion yuan, and public budget revenue was 156.08 billion yuan. The advantage of economic development has attracted a large number of migrant workers. At the end of 2015, the total Suzhou household registration population (with Suzhou hukou) was 6,670,100, and the migrant population was 6,981,100. The migrant population was basically in the same number as the household registration population. There were also a large number of migrant children in Suzhou. Taking Huqiu District as an example, in 2014, there were 31,004 primary school students in the region, of which 11,735 were migrant children. Among these children, 9,259 were enrolled in public schools, and 2,476 were enrolled in migrant children school. There were 11,413 junior high school students in the district, including 2,764 children of migrant workers, all of them attended public schools to receive a junior high-level education. (Liu, Wang and Zhu, 2015)

Number of primary schools students in Huqiu District, Suzhou City, unit: person

Local children	Migrant children	Total
11735	19269	31004

Migrant children in Huqiu District, Suzhou City, unit: person

Migrant children in public	Migrant children in	Total
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school	migrant children school	
9259	2764	12023

1 Entry threshold for "Jungle Law."

From 2012, Suzhou City requires that enrolled children’s parents should meet the requirements of “a stable living, stable work (certificate of at least one year’s work), and stable income (paying social insurance for at least one year)” in the locality.

However, due to the limited number of spaces, not all migrant children with these admission qualifications can enter public schools. In addition to requiring these three “stable” conditions, some schools also require higher demands for non-local residents such as real estate licenses and household registration booklets. (Liu, Wang and Zhu, 2015)

In January 2016, Suzhou City learned from the experience of the Pearl River Delta region and introduced the “points system” into the education system of Suzhou City. The government implemented a points system based on the academic qualifications of the non-local population, the number of years of service, the length of residence, and the number of years of paying social security fee. In conjunction with the number of places available for public schools, the department of education arranged children of schooling age to enter public schools in descending order of points. (Liu, Wang and Zhu, 2015) However, the point system does not solve the problem of difficult entry of floating children, which is mainly reflected in the following three aspects:

One: The point entry model is a system that allocates educational resources in a relatively fair manner under conditions of limited educational resources. However, due to the integral indicator, the setting of weights and scores favors high-end talents

(such as university students), while ignoring most ordinary migrant workers. This is very unfair for migrant children to have equal rights in compulsory education in cities.

In the integral index, the indicators with one-time bonus of more than one hundred points are only those with high academic qualifications and professional or technical talents. This is precisely the condition that migrant workers cannot achieve.

According to statistics, among the migrant population in Suzhou City in 2015, only 7.61% had a college degree or above. Although through the payment of social insurance (at least for more than three years, plus 5 points per month), continuous residence (at least for more than six years, plus 30 points per year) or own local real estate (60 square meters and above, plus 60 points; each additional 25 square meters can be scored by 20 points). (Liu, Wang, and Zhu, 2015, p145-146) These conditions are very difficult for migrant workers who come from rural areas to achieve.

Two: Even if migrant workers can earn certain points, this does not mean that their children will be able to enter public schools, because it depends on whether public schools have enough spaces. Moreover, not all schools are open to migrant children.

The government can protect education resources with high quality in the region by setting a “hidden threshold” of “does not have space at this moment.” Take Huqiu District as an example, in 2015; there were 12 ordinary middle schools, 21 primary schools, and 51,500 students. However, only seven secondary schools and 13 elementary schools were open to migrant children, and there were only 1,183 spaces available. What has to be said is that all "excellent schools" that had great reputation in the area reject migrant children's enrollment. (Liu, Wang, and Zhu, 2015, p146)

Three: For children who cannot attend public school for various reasons, they can only return to their place of residence or study in a private school. However, private schools often charge different fees for attending students for their own developmental

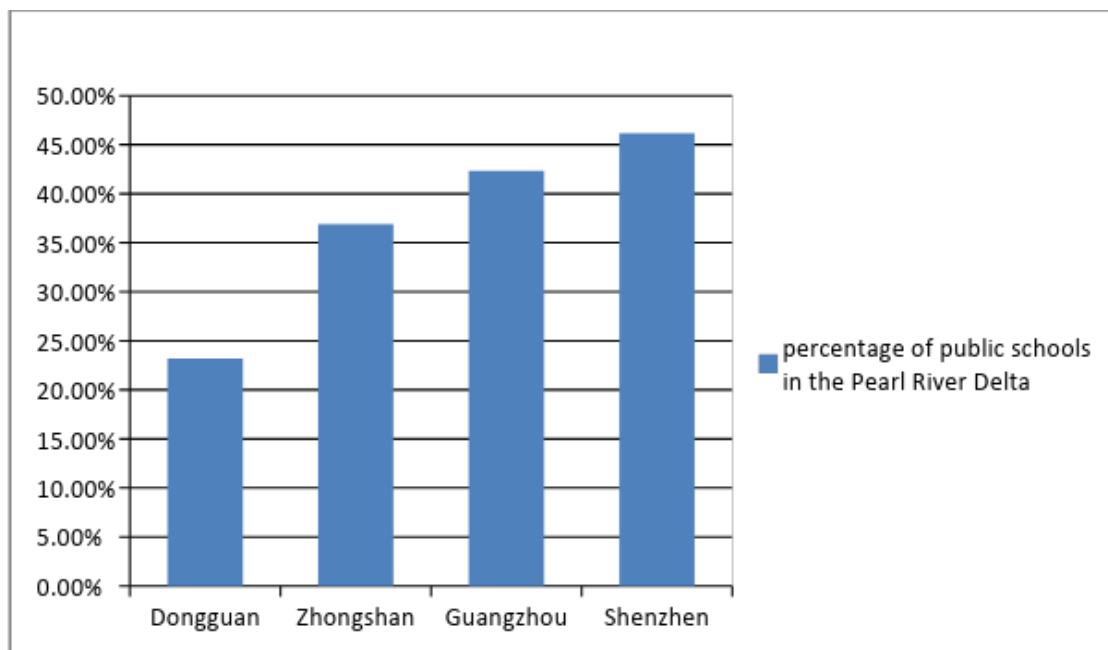
needs (site costs, teacher salaries, and utility expenses). From the fall of 2010, tuition fees for private schools in Suzhou ranged from 600 yuan to 29,000 yuan per semester. At the same time, the quality of education in private schools cannot be guaranteed, and there are hidden hazards in health and safety. Therefore, migrant children must pay high fees for low-quality educational resources while they cannot obtain the right of receiving an education that they deserve. (Liu, Wang, and Zhu, 2015, p146)

2 Dilemma

As a developed city in the Yangtze River Delta, although Suzhou has a developed economy, plenty of migrant children has brought tremendous financial pressure to it. Education expenditure in Suzhou accounts for 30% of total financial expenditure, which is much higher than the national average of 14.87%. Under the existing school scale and the conditions for running a school, if the municipal government want to solve the school attendance problem of the migrant children, it is necessary to build more new schools or expanding existing schools. However, in the urban area, the cost of land requisitioned is 1 million yuan per mu, and the construction of a new primary school needs 200 million yuan or more, and the construction of a new middle school needs 300 million yuan or more. (Liu, Wang, and Zhu, 2015, p148-149) According to the central "two-oriented" policy, the district and county level governments take the responsibility of the expenditure of the compulsory education stage; this brings considerable pressure to the local government. If the "two-oriented" policy remains unchanged, the right to equal compulsory education for migrant children in Suzhou is still not guaranteed.

Guangdong Province (Pearl River Delta):

As the region with the fastest economic growth rate and the largest number of migrant workers, the majority of cities in the Pearl River Delta region have seen the phenomenon of migrant populations exceed the household registration populations. Take Shenzhen as an example, in 2015, the resident population was 11.37 million, and the registered population was only 3.4 million. Therefore, cities in the PRD mainly rely on the development of private education to solve the problem of migrant children education. In 2010, in the urban-rural areas such as Baiyun District, Tianhe District and Haizhu District in Guangzhou, children of migrant workers in the compulsory education stage accounted for about 75% of the private schools. In 2015, the percentage of public schools in the Pearl River Delta region was 46.4%. The percentages from low to high were 23.18% in Dongguan, 36.9% in Zhongshan, 42.33% in Guangzhou, and 46.18% in Shenzhen. Among them, Zhongshan City is unique, and it has pioneered the entry policy of the points. From 2010 to 2013, more than 25,500 migrant children in Zhongshan City obtained qualifications for public schools through the point system. (Wu, 2016, p153-160)



1 "prosperous" private education

Due to a large number of migrants and the shortage of local public education resources, private education in Guangdong Province has a place in the local education system. According to the information from the Guangdong Provincial Department of Education, in 2011, the proportion of migrant workers who enrolled in private schools in Guangzhou was 62.66%, Shenzhen was 69.54%, and Dongguan even reached 80.3%! Unlike Beijing, where excludes migrants, Guangdong Province believes that supporting and developing private schools is an important way to solve the problem of migrant children's education. From 2008 to 2014, Guangzhou municipal and district finances system invested 1.11 billion yuan in private education. From 2016, Dongguan City has started to purchase spaces from high-quality private schools to meet the educational need of migrant children. The municipal government provided migrant children with 28,000 public spaces and purchased 5600 privately-owned spaces. In the future, this base will increase by 20% annually. At the same time, the government continues to increase financial investment to improve the quality of education in private schools and to reduce tuition and other fees through tuition subsidies. In 2015 alone, Dongguan City spent more than 3 billion yuan to improve the quality of migrant children's education. (Wu, 2016, p153-160)

2 The dilemma

Although Guangdong Province has made great efforts to improve the current status of migrant children's education, it still faces tremendous financial pressures. In 2014, Dongguan's public budget expenditure was 46.89 billion yuan, of which education spending was 11.89 billion yuan, accounting for 25.36% of the total. According to the estimation of the Dongguan City Bureau of Education, if all the migrant children who

currently enrolled in private schools are transferred to the public schools, the city will need to invest an additional 7.7 billion yuan each year. The Guangzhou Municipal Bureau of Education stated that as of May 2015, the total number of students in the compulsory education stage in Guangzhou was 1.25 million, including 630,000 non-Guangzhou students, accounting for 50.4% of the total number of students. If Guangzhou wants to raise this ratio to 53%, it will need to fill a gap of 53,000 spaces and the municipal government will also need to have a corresponding number of schools and teachers. This is an almost impossible task for Guangzhou. (Wu, 2016, p160-162)

Although private schools allow migrant children to learn, there is no guarantee that children are able to receive as same as the quality which public schools have.

Although the number of private schools in Guangdong Province is much higher than other areas, this does not mean that these schools have a higher quality of education.

In private schools in Guangdong Province, there is not only a gap between public schools and private schools, but the development of private schools is also unbalanced.

In some schools, such as the Guangzhou Huayi School, which operates in a group, have strong capital strength. Therefore, there is no significant difference between this school and other public schools. However, more schools can only provide their children with the most basic education. It can be said that these schools are not schools but daycare centers. (Wu, 2016, p295-301) As a result, Guangdong Province should take greater efforts in the development of private education.

Chengdu City, Sichuan Province:

In 2014, the total number of migrant children in Chengdu was 354,785, of which 254,508 were attending in public schools, accounting for 71.7% of the total; 100,277

students enrolled in private schools, accounted for 28.3% of the total. According to statistics, there were 197 migrant children schools (more than 50% of the students were migrant children) in Chengdu in 2013, of which 149 were public-owned, accounting for 75.6% of the total; 48 were private schools, accounting for 24.4%. The total number of students in those schools was 224,958, and there were total 133,241 migrant children who were attending these schools, accounting for 59.2% of the total. (Zhang, 2016, p177-180)

Distribution of migrant children attending schools in Chengdu, unit: percent

Percent of migrant children in public school	Percent of migrant children in private school	Total
71.7%	28.3%	100%

Number of migrant children schools in Chengdu

Public school	Private school	Total
149	48	2812

1 The Evolution of a Roller Coaster-like Policy

Since 2004, Chengdu has begun to establish a policy of bringing the children of migrant workers in cities into the nine-year compulsory education system and has continued to simplify the policy. Before 2009, the policy was applied to "children aged 6 to 15 who live in rural areas in Chengdu temporarily and have the ability to study for nine years of compulsory education." By 2015, it was simplified as "the children of non-local employees who are currently working in the city." The

procedures for admission are also simplified: from the first 20 working days to 30 working days; the registration time was increased from 5 working days to 10 working days; the application acceptance point was moved from the district government to the sub-district office; government issued free compulsory educational certificate to migrant workers and their children. (Zhang, 2016, p180-183)

However, in the context of the population control policy issued by the central government, in 2015, Chengdu made changes to the education policy toward migrant children and at the same time, implemented the education model of the points system. The points system was originally established to better allocate limited educational resources. However, this system has been used as a tool for the “controlling population through education” policy to deprive migrant children of the right to receive compulsory education. Facts have proved that this policy has been strongly dissatisfied with the parents of migrant children. According to the Survey Report on the Urbanization of Migrant Workers in Sichuan in 2015 published by the Sichuan Bureau of Statistics, nearly 60% of the respondents believed that “there are too many restrictions on applying for admission and the standards are too high.” “The admission procedures are cumbersome,” “it is difficult to get into public schools,” and “it is difficult to find a school that you are willing to accept.” It can thus be seen that if the central government's "controlling population through education" policy does not stop, the situation of migrant children education in Chengdu will become less and less optimistic. (Zhang, 2016, p180-183)

2 The Dilemma of clich é

Like other places where the population flows in, Chengdu also has a serious shortage of funds on education. Chengdu’s migrant children’s education fund is shared by the

central and local governments. The current problem is that the gap between the total amount of special funds supported by the central government and the actual spending is too large. This has led to a heavy financial burden on local governments, especially district and county governments. For example, in 2012, the central city area solved 114,742 children of migrant workers who met the policy conditions. According to the student's per capita cost calculation, the per capita estimated cost was 8,000 yuan/person for elementary school, 10,000 yuan/person for junior high school, and the total cost was at least 900 million yuan. The total amount of special subsidies given by the central migrant workers was only 49.65 million yuan. In this case, even if the municipal government invested more in education, the funding gap was still large. The shortage of funds also caused tension. With the gradual graduation of primary school students, the shortage of secondary school education will further expand. If this problem cannot be solved, the local government will have to raise the entry threshold to displace migrant children. (Zhang, 2016, p183-187)

Analysis of Policy Recommendations for Migrant Children Education

As the education of migrant children is concerned with the future development of China, many scholars have thoroughly studied this issue. They also give policy suggestions to improve the education of migrant children. Based on my research, scholars have reached the following consensus:

- 1 The government needs to reduce entry barriers to protect the rights of migrant children to education

Compulsory education, as the basic public service provided by the government, is the most basic right for migrant children. This is also an important way to prevent the

transmission of poverty and class solidification. In the case of significant differences in regional education, it is necessary to set certain access conditions for public schools in cities, but they should be simplified and relaxed. As long as the migrant workers have stable jobs and domiciles in the destination, they are the taxpayers who migrate into the cities, and their children have the right to attend local public schools for compulsory education. There are two main entry conditions for migrant children to study in the destination: identification and proof of residence. The conditions for social insurance is unnecessary, and it should be eliminated. (Yang, 2016)

2 Education finance should be shared by all levels of government

Compulsory education for migrant children is a nationwide public good; the central and provincial governments should take the major fiscal responsibilities instead of pushing education financial pressure to district governments. Therefore, it is essential to establish a mechanism for allocating education funds at all levels of government. Funds for compulsory education for migrant children in the province should be paid by the provincial government and should be shared by provincial, municipal, and district governments. Funds for compulsory education for migrant children who migrated across provinces should be based on the provincial government and should be shared by the central, provincial, municipal and district governments. Funds for compulsory education for migrant children who have migrated across provinces to municipalities directly under the Central Government shall be based on the municipal government and should be shared by the governments at the central, municipal, and district levels. If the central government can afford more than half of the education funds, the local government's financial pressure on education will be reduced largely.

Thus, they are more willing to provide educational rights to migrant children. (Yang, 2016)

3 Developing private schools to improve migrant children schools as a supplementary

In cities where the proportion of migrants is high or even exceeds the hukou population, it is unrealistic for migrant children to rely on public schools for compulsory education. Therefore, the government must allow private schools and improve migrant children schools. For private schools which consist of migrant children, the government should provide financial support to reduce the infrastructure gap between private schools and public schools. The government should also ensure that the workload and salary of private school teachers are equal to those of public schools. In this way, private schools can get long-term development, and the quality of private education can be improved. (Yang, 2016)

Migrant children schools meet the requirements of compulsory education for low-income migrant workers. Due to their low cost, proximity to the migrant workers' parents' residence, and flexible entry forms, the migrant children's school will still receive long-term support from migrant workers who cannot access to public schools. For these schools, the government should help to improve the quality of hardware while ensuring that migrant children can "attend school," and gradually transform these schools into private schools. (Yang, 2016)

4 Paying attention to preschool education for migrant children

Children's rights to education must be placed first. At present, urban policies are more supportive of predominant public kindergartens and high-end private kindergartens, and preschool education for the most vulnerable migrant children has been seriously

neglected. The government should increase public investment in private kindergartens and set minimum quality standards to ensure the public welfare of preschool education. As for migrant children kindergartens, the government should also provide financial support and policy support to existing kindergartens. Meanwhile, shutting down the worst schools. Migrant children kindergartens should be converted into private kindergartens as soon as possible to accept the government's management and supervision. (Lu and Liu, 2016)

Disagreement among scholars:

However, although the scholars reached this consensus, they have formed completely different views on the household registration system reform. Among them, most of the scholars, including Yang Dongping, Lu Ming, Lu Jianfei, Wu Ni, Zhao Wei, Wu Kaijun, and Wang Xiang, all believe that the household registration system is the root cause of a series of education problems for migrant children. At present, China's education configuration still follows the government plan allocation scheme under the planned economy. The government allocates educational resources based on the number and distribution of hukou population. However, with the economic reform and the rapid development of China's economy, the household registration system has not been adapted to social development. This system, which includes many social welfare functions such as education, medical care, social security, and housing, has hindered the development of urbanization in China and has also aggravated social differentiation. The government should be aware of the economic laws of urbanization and the development of large cities, accurately forecast urban population and demand, and finally, adjust urban planning. Although the existing point system for admission allows a certain number of migrant children to attend school, the point

system is entirely biased towards high-end talent, and it is unfair to the right of receiving equal education for migrant children. The policy of "controlling population through education" and forcibly expelling the so-called "low-end population" policy completely violates the rule of social development, and it is also a direct cause of the increasing difficulty for migrant children to receive compulsory education in cities. (Yang, 2016; Lu, 2016; Shao, 2016)

On the other hand, some scholars, such as Liu Yuzhao and Wang Yuanteng, have different viewpoints between mainstream views. They believe that under the current background that the central government strictly controls the size of the population in large cities, the possibility of compulsory education for migrant children in cities such as Shanghai and Beijing is already very small. Therefore, it is necessary to return these migrant children to the province where they are registered. For example, most migrant children in Shanghai should return to Anhui Province, and the Shanghai Municipal Government and the Anhui Provincial Government should be concerned about the migrant children's psychological problems and the convergence of teaching materials. These scholars do not pay enough attention to household registration system reforms and urban development. Therefore, in their work, they have not mentioned anything about these two aspects. (Liu and Wang, 2016)

From a long-term perspective, what should the government do?

The government needs to break through the mindset of the planning economy, understand the internal laws of the development of large cities and reduce the fear of population growth. On the other hand, the government should accurately predict the population, adjust the urban planning, increase the supply of public services and infrastructure, comply with the "big trend"--population flow and rapid urbanization.

1 Comparison of economic integration between China and the world

The migration of population to large cities is mainly due to economies of scale resulting from population agglomeration. Large cities have higher labor productivity and wage levels and are conducive to creating more job opportunities. In other words, urban population growth is the result of economic development and is where the vitality of the city lies, rather than an indicator of government policy regulation. Studies have shown that concerning the extent of economic agglomeration, the problems in China are not too concentrated but too scattered. (Lu, 2016) Due to the limited free flow of labor, the size of most cities in China is below the best level. The economic concentration of developed countries is very high. The economic activities of the United States are highly concentrated on the east, west coasts and a few areas in the south. The Japanese economy is also highly concentrated in the three major economic regions, the most important being Tokyo. The UK's economy is highly concentrated in London. The French economy is highly concentrated in Paris. The same is right for emerging market economies such as India, South Africa, and Brazil. Among them, India's economy is highly concentrated in New Delhi, Mumbai and Calcutta; South Africa's economy is highly concentrated in Johannesburg; Brazil's economy is concentrated in several large cities on the southern coasts. (Lu, 2016)

Comparing China with other ten nations which have a total population over 100 million, we will find that other nations' population of the largest city as a percent of nation's population is far larger than China's one. The unweighted mean (excluding China) of such percentage is 12.9% while China only has 1.6%. (Chan and Wan, 2016)

This means China's megacities are able to contain much more population.

2 Why are schools in Chinese cities always “not sufficient”?

Over the past decades, the planning population targets of large cities in China have repeatedly been substantially exceeded. At the same time, the essential public services in the city are in short supply, and there is a shortage of school. In particular, the space offered by schools is insufficient. In the "Regional Reports" section, the problem of migrant children cannot attend school is more or less related to the city's inability to provide sufficient educational resources. Why is this phenomenon of "school not sufficient" produced? This is because urban planning is based on the changes in the household registration population and the restrictions on the target of migrants, which lags far behind the actual growth of the permanent population. In the era of the planned economy, this problem did not emerge because of the restricted flow of the population. However, with the re-introduction of the market economy in China and the large-scale migration of the population, the issue of "insufficient schools" caused by the hukou and urban planning problems caused by the planned economy suddenly emerged. In other words, because of the influence of the idea of planned economy, the government has never included migrant workers and their children in the scope of urban planning. Therefore, schools in Chinese cities are always "insufficient." This is also the reason that the issue of insufficient schools” can exist for so many years.

3 Is the migrant population a “liability” or an “asset”?

China's big cities are facing an ever-increasing aging and the coming labor shortage crisis. At the end of 2013, there are 2.77 million aged over 60 with local hukou in Beijing, which accounted for 21% of the total hukou population. This proportion is 27.1% in Shanghai. (Yang. 2016, p12-14) Therefore, the city needs a large number of

young laborers to reduce the speed of the aging of the city, and it is necessary to develop service industries such as pension services vigorously. Otherwise, if there are only a few young laborers in these two cities, in the words of Lu (2016): "The economy of Shanghai and Beijing has collapsed at the very beginning." On the other hand, although the development of cities requires high-tech industries and high-skilled personnel, the needs of low-skilled laborers must not be ignored. If all the residents in a city are so-called "talent" and "high-end population," then who will be engaged in vital affordable service industries? Therefore, the removal of low-skilled laborers from the migrant population as a "low-end population" is not only unfavorable to the development of urban service industry but also lacks the scientific basis. The government should treat the migrant population, protect their rights and interests, and help them to become new citizens. This is not only the basic requirement for achieving social equality but also the precondition for the healthy development of urban society.

4 Is the compulsory education for migrant children a fundamental human right?

The layout of the population in large cities and the provision of public services to non-hukou populations are two issues that are entirely different and relatively independent. The regulation of population in big cities should mainly remove urban functions through the adjustment of industrial structure, the establishment of a mechanism for the coordinated development of regional economy, and the reform of the hukou system. However, whether or not the government has to adjust its industrial structure or implement population control policies, these cannot be used as an excuse to hurt the right of migrant children to receive the education. Since migrant children

receive compulsory education as a fundamental human right determined by law, safeguarding this right is the primary responsibility of the government!

Summing up:

"Why is China's economy able to grow to such a huge scale today?" Some people may say that there are many Chinese people. Then I would like to ask: "China did have a large population before the economic reform in 1978. Why did China's total GDP fail to become one of the largest in the world?" The reason is straightforward. China's economic miracle is inextricably linked with China's re-introduction of a market economy. From the development of China in recent decades, we have already understood the role of the market economy. If during the Cold War, it was normal that people did not know that the market economy and the planned economy were good or bad, it would be foolish to not understand the truth today. It can be said that the successes of the old developed countries and the emerging economies, including China, are based on the market economy; the Soviet Union, with its planned economy, has failed in 1991. Of course, each country can choose to follow its own path, China included. However, these distinctive roads should be based on a market economy, with the characteristics and actual conditions of the country to achieve optimal economic development. China must not use "national conditions" and "characteristics" as an excuse to hinder the development of the market economy. We have understood that migrant children are not a burden but an asset. So why should we deprive them of their rights to receive an education? From another perspective, compulsory education for migrant children is a fundamental human right. Not anyone or any government institution has the power to deprive of their rights! There is one saying in modern China created by Liang Qichao: "If teenagers are

strong, then China is strong.” (*Shao nian qiang, Ze zhong guo qiang*) China should not make this sentence empty talk!

I want to end this article by quoting Professor Lu Ming’s words:

"The more you look at history,

The more I believe,

The universal law determines the path of human development.

The characteristics of each country will only become successful under the universal laws. ” (Lu, 2016, p1)

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