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# Solving the Migrant Children Public School Enrollment Issue in Urban China: A Policy Study Perspective

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Exploring the Migrant Children Public School Enrollment Issue in Urban China:

A Policy Study Perspective

A Dissertation Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Hui Huang

May 2016

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Jianping Huang and Changying Xue, for their generous love and tremendous support.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my academic advisor, committee chair, Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon, for her guidance, caring, and patience for this long journey. The gratitude also goes to Drs. Yang Zhong, Bob Rider, and Clara Lee Brown who gave selflessly of their time and talent to help me on my way.

I would also like to thank the Rainbow Action summer camp core team members: Yameng Hu, Jundong Wu, Chenxiao Liao, Jingyun Yang, for their sharing of their insights on the migrant children education in China.

I also want to thank my colleagues Karl Schonberg, Kelley Lawson-Khalidi, Thadine Wight and Karen Smith at the Center for International and Intercultural Studies at St. Lawrence University, for their understanding and support toward my PhD dissertation writing.

And finally thanks to my husband Su Yao. He has always been there cheering me up and stood by me through the good times and bad.

## **Abstract**

This dissertation is designed to learn lessons from China's experiences of seeking to solve the migrant children's education issue, specifically, the city public school enrollment issue. In China, access to public schools is the main channel for migrant children to be well educated. With the hope to inspire education policy makers and researchers on solving this issue, it is important to find out how the central and local governments work out proper policies to ensure equal compulsory education for migrant children. Qualitative research methods including content analysis and historical analysis are deployed in this dissertation to review related policy documents for education, compulsory education, and migrant children school enrollment in China since 1981. Foucault's theory of power helps to understand the complexity of the migrant children education issue in China.

This dissertation first discerns the causes of the issue, Hukou, the permanent residential registration system and tax-sharing system in China. Through reviewing the policy toward migrant children education, the study reveals the guiding role of the central government and the efforts and the challenges from local governments in solving the issue. Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Changzhou provide four models to learn about experiences tackling the migrant children public school enrollment issue at the local level.

As a reference for education researchers and policy makers, a recommended model is developed that argues the central government and local government should be the policy makers to develop the education standards of school, curriculum and teachers to ensure quality education for migrant children. Additionally, the local governments should be responsible for mobilizing all social sectors to get involved in solving the issue in migrant children's education issue, including private sectors and non-governmental organization.

## Preface

I was a migrant child who, at the age of 10, failed to enroll in public school in the city where my parents were working. That was 1991, when my parents relocated to work in Shenzhen, the first city that quickly developed after the Open Door Policy. Many people, like my parents, flooded into Shenzhen from inner China, for an opportunity to earn more wages and change their lives.

The reason that I was unable to enroll in the public school was the tuition was too high for my parents to afford with their limited income. My mother decided to leave me with my grandmother in the rural countryside in the north part of Guangzhou province, 10 hours from where my mother worked. As the “left-behind” child, I grew up with my grandparents and for six years I went to the public school with broken walls and limited educational resources for only able to visit my parents during summer vacation and spring festival.

I grew up dreaming of being a teacher and studied education throughout my high school, college, and graduate school years. It is my hope to provide the best classroom education to children, regardless of their social class and background. The seed of quality education was deeply rooted in my mind.

After I received my master degree in Sociology at Nanjing Normal University in 2007, I moved on to pursue my PhD degree at the University of Tennessee. With Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon, I have been studying the cultural studies of education theory and have become fascinated with educational equality issues. The insight of education issues from my professors Dr. Allison Anders, Dr. Miriam Levering, and my cohorts Corey Kittrell, Katharine Sprecher, Tingting Qi and Nicholas Mariner from different perspective also inspired me. The migrant workers children’ education issue brought back many memories for me.

In 2010, I took a leave of absence from UT as an ABD student and pursued the Master of Theological Studies degree at Harvard University, completing it in May, 2012. While my UT doctoral experiences helped to build my scholarship at Harvard, the two years of study provided me with more understanding of my specialization area in Cultural Studies of Education at UT. The diverse major studies and student life at the Divinity school motivated me to finish my PhD at UT. My dissertation originated from the summer camp project that I organized for migrant children in China.

In 2011, I established a project called “Rainbow Action” summer camp program and led Chinese Students who studied in the U.S. to provide a seven-day capacity building workshop for the migrant children. Over the past four years, we have been teaching migrant children and “Left-over children” in the big cities and counties: Beijing, Changzhou in Jiangsu province, Sanmeng country in Zhejiang province, and Sanming in Fujian province.

From the eyes of the migrant children that we serve, I see a little me twenty years ago, one who was eager for a better education and bright future. The goal of the summer camp

project was to encourage these migrant children to be courageous to pursue their dream in spite of the fact that they cannot receive quality education.

I soon realized that the summer camp will not drastically change students' lives. In China, the best way to receive quality education is still through public schools, which is the main channel for these migrant children to change their life path. Receiving public school education means that they take classes with teachers from well-trained colleges, position themselves to take national entrance examinations, and have the chance to go to universities.

Through this opportunity, I also was able to meet with Chinese central and local government officers, education bureau officials, education researchers, and school teachers about the migrant children education issue. From 2011 to 2015, time with these policy makers, social workers, and migrant children kept me in the loop on the change of policies of central and local government toward migrant children. I was told by a local education bureau officer in my hometown that 100% of the migrant children enrolled in public school. Unfortunately, I heard some migrant children schools closed in Beijing.

I want to delve deep to understand what happened to the migrant children in China. In this vast country, what policy did the central government create and why are the questions I want to ask. In addition, I want to consider what specific strategy each city took for the migrant children to enroll at their public school system.

China is not the only country facing the migrant population challenge. I learned from my advisor Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon that the public schools system in California has been experiencing similar challenges when the migrants from Mexico flooded into California. How China handles it may also shed light on other countries or areas with the same challenge.

The quest now finally leads me to here, here I share with you all the China experience, and the quest has just started.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

### Overview and Research Objectives

Over the past thirty years, China has witnessed a rapid growth of urbanization and a rural population influx of laborers into cities. Rural laborers continue to leave their places of origin in order to earn a minimum city wage, as they become so-called “migrant workers.” Some of the migrant workers leave their children at home with the grandparents, while some bring their children along with them to the cities. These children are called “migrant children.” According to the 2010 National Population Census conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics in China (2010), there were 13,927,542 school age migrant children (6-14 years old, in accordance with the Compulsory Education Law from 1986) in year 2010. The number of school age migrant children enrolled in school is about 11,671,700. According to the National Educational Development Statistics Bulletin published by the Chinese Ministry of Education (2010), there are 8,643,000 migrant children in primary schools (grade 1-6), and there are about 3,028,800 migrant children in junior middle schools (grade 7-9). There are about 2,255,842 migrant children who could not enroll in urban public schools due to access. Furthermore, some enrolled students face various difficulties from over-school aged children, security issues related to the building, and low teaching quality. Duan and Liang (2005) conducted research and determined that migrant children enrolled in public schools are older than ordinary school-age children who come from the city. Among the enrolled migrant students in schools, 19.17% of 9 years old and 4.16% of 10 years old children are in grade one, 2-3 years older than the regular age group in grade one.

Scholars (Guo, 2013; Li & Chui, 2011; Liang, 2003) found that the lack of access to proper education was rooted in the *Hukou* (户口) system. In order to ensure the construction of a planned economic development, the central government issued the *Ordinance Regarding Household Registration* in January 1958, which was the foundation of the *Hukou* system. The

government enacted a limitation on population migration. Two categories of the household, agricultural registered permanent residence and non-agricultural registered permanent residence, were created.

There are two functions of the *Hukou* system. The first function is to record the population related information, such as demographic data, ethnicity, and household information. The other function is to manage the migration of the population. The first function is commonly practiced around the world, particularly for the purpose of recording the number of crimes in a specific area. The second function connects to the notion of a planned economy, the goal of which was to allocate appropriate resources to assure the development of cities and industry, including human resources and infrastructure.

*Hukou* is a permanent residential registration system, which not only draws a strict line between people born in urban areas and those born in the rural areas, but also creates a social caste system. People with non-agricultural registered permanent residence obtain urban citizenship while people with an agricultural registered permanent residence have rural citizenship. Urban citizenship entitles those who have it to access public services in the urban areas with better public facilities and social welfare. On the contrary, those with rural citizenship can only utilize public services in the villages with limited public facilities and social welfare.

Over the past three decades, China has witnessed an immense urbanization process. There has been a marked increase in demand for laborers in the cities. In 1985, with the goal of easing the demand, the Ministry of Public Security issued the *Interim Provisions for the Administration of Urban Residence*. In accordance with this provision, the temporary residential permit was created to allow “non-agricultural registered permanent residents” to move and temporarily reside in cities. Since cities provide more employment opportunities and higher salaries, even without the change from agricultural registered permanent residence

to non-agricultural registered permanent residence, millions of rural labors have been flooding into cities to earn a decent living, particularly those with the temporary residential permit. Many migrant workers end up working on construction sites and in the service industry. Big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou are facing challenges to provide social services to the large amount of migrant workers. Accordingly, the migrant children who come with their parents to the cities increase the pressure on the city government to accommodate the public's need for educational services for these children.

Since the cities must ensure public education primarily for the city residents, migrant children either attend the migrant children schools in the cities or stay in their hometowns as the "left-behind children" with their grandparents, only seeing their parents during the Spring Festival and the summertime. Liu (2010) found that most of the migrant schools in cities provide low-quality education to the migrant children. These schools are located in migrant worker-populated areas, which are usually far from cities and lack public facilities. The schools are usually built on old factory sites with potential safety hazards. The classrooms are only equipped with blackboard and chalk. Liu (2010) described that there are no science labs, no gyms, and no media classrooms, thus making it impossible to deliver the teaching content effectively. In terms of the faculty, it is a family business. The husband is the principal, the wife is in charge of the accounting, and some of the teachers are their relatives. Very few teachers receive formal education training, and most of them are retired teachers from public schools, new graduates from college, and migrant workers with high school degrees. Their salaries are low and without benefits and health insurance, thus bringing a high turnover rate for teachers. Therefore, these migrant schools are usually called training schools.

National policies have been created to mitigate the issues of migrant children's education due to the increased tensions surrounding the education of migrant children in cities. In April 1996, the Formal National Education Committee issued the first document

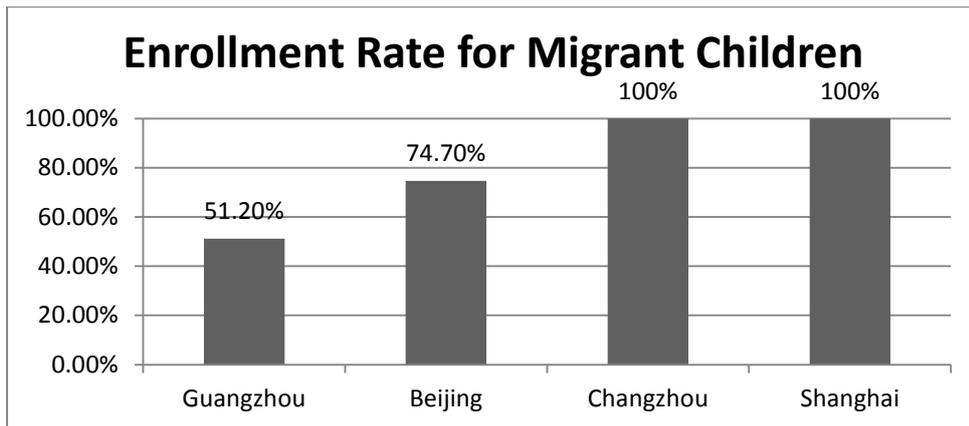
that addressed this topic: *An Interim Measure of Enrollment for School-age Migrant Children*. The document states that with the temporary resident permits, the parents of migrant children could apply to the local state owned public schools to enroll their children, and the children could be enrolled if the school agrees to do so. This document signified that for the first time, the Chinese government started to intervene on the issue of education for migrant children (He & Li, 2014; Wang & Liang, 2014).

In 2003, the General Office of the State Council of Chinese Government issued *The Suggestions on Solving Compulsory Education Challenge of Migrant Children*, which stated the specific responsibility lies with the local government to cope with the public school enrollment issue for migrant children. The cities where rural laborers reside should be responsible for opening capacities and bearing related costs for the migrant workers' children to obtain compulsory education. Additionally, the document encourages the local government to mobilize different resources to solve this issue. This document set the tone for provincial and local governments to further establish their own policies and regulations and find methods of implementing them.

In 2006, the government reinforced the legislation for the education of migrant children. Section twelve of the amended *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China* states that the local government should be responsible for the non-local *Hukou* school age children to be enrolled in local public schools (PRC, Tenth National People's Congress, 2006). In 2007, the State Council and the Ministry of Education reconfirmed in the *Eleventh Five-year Plan of National Strategy for Education Development* that it is the regions where rural laborers work and live that should be responsible for the education of migrant children. This policy is important in that the central government started to deal with this topic, and at the same time, started to delegate the enrollment of migrant children into public school to the local governments, which did not have an excuse to skip their responsibilities.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education issued *The Outline for Long Term National Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*. In the document, it is clearly stated that the local government should be the “leading force” and ensure the enrollment for the migrant children at their compulsory education stage at the state owned public schools. As a result, the migrant workers children’s enrollment in public schools increased. As previously mentioned, there were 13,927,542 migrant children between 6 and 14 years old in 2010 (PRC, Census Bureau, 2010). According to the report from the Ministry of Education, among all migrant children in China, 79.5% have been enrolled in public school in the cities in 2014 (Duan, 2014).

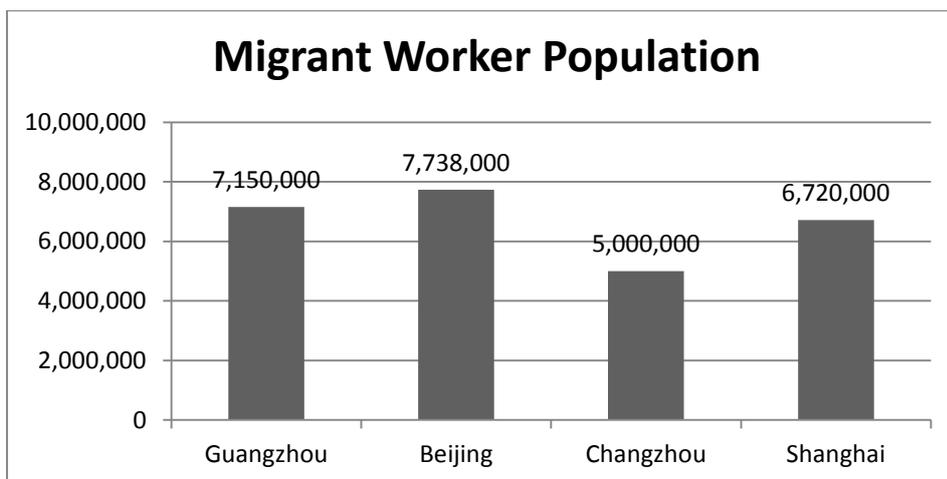
While the central government makes national policies, the local government makes its own policies as well. The variations in policies on the enrollment numbers, with some cities having successfully solved the migrant students issue, demonstrate that others are still struggling. In 2012, in Beijing only 74.7% of migrant children were enrolled in state-owned public schools (Deng, 2011), while Shanghai at the same time ensured a 100% enrollment rate for migrant children (Jiang, 2013). Another large city in the southern part of China, Guangzhou, is also struggling, with a 51.2% enrollment rate (Guangzhou Education Bureau, 2013), whereas a well-developed city with a population of five million in the southeast part of China, Suzhou, ensured a 100% enrollment rate for its migrant children population in 2013 (Xia, 2014). Beijing and Shanghai are both large, developed cities with a large number of migrant workers and abundant educational financial resources, but Beijing is still struggling.



*Figure 1.1*

*Migrant Children Public School Enrollment Percentage in Four Chinese Cities in 2012-2013*

*Note.* The data are collected from various governmental sources (Beijing Government, 2012; Shanghai Government, 2012; Guangzhou Government, 2012; Changzhou Government, 2012).



*Figure 1.2*

*Migrant Workers' Population in Four Chinese Cities in 2012*

*Note.* The data are collected from various governmental and mainstream media sources (Beijing Government, 2012; Shanghai Government, 2012; Guangzhou, 2012; Changzhou Government, 2012).

In a geographically and economically diverse country like China, each local government has its own social policies, financial structure, welfare, and educational systems. Therefore, it is difficult to observe a general pattern about how these local governments followed the central government policy and approach solutions in the same way. Moreover, existing research has not tapped into the scholarship about variation and the efficiency of local policies. Specifically, current scholarship has numerous research limitations.

The existing research lacks various perspectives on the issue. Researchers provide little discussion on how and why some local governments can solve the issue. In addition, current researchers do not focus on local governments solving the issues regarding the education of migrant children, but generalize that the challenge in enrolling migrant children in public school is the responsibility of the central government. Therefore, very few success stories have been revealed and studied about how the central and local governments are coping with the topic.

Additionally, the current research does not contain updated data and policies on migrant children education, as well as discussions on the effectiveness of the most up-to-date policies in place. To understand the Chinese policy in education, it is important to understand the policy operation mechanism in China. The central government outlines the policy, but it is up to the local governments to implement the policy, based on their own economic and social conditions. In fact, very few research studies assessed the policies of local governments in dealing with the education of migrant children, thus ignoring the policy nuances between numerous local governments facing diverse socio-economic challenges.

To understand how China has been dealing with educating migrant children, this dissertation will examine the policies both from the perspective of the central government and the local government, thus filling a research need. Over the last thirty years, it is important for us to understand how China, in light of rapid economic growth, allocates

limited education resources to provide educational opportunities for migrant children in urban spaces through studying policies. In addition, the dissertation will examine how central and local governments in China interact to solve the issue of migrant children's access to public school education.

The value of this dissertation is that this could not only be a lesson for Chinese local government officials, but may also shed light on countries with similar internal migratory patterns, which, when coupled with the education inequality challenges, poses a challenge to the well-being of society. This study has policy implications not only for China, but also for other developing countries in Asia, as well as some areas in the U.S., such as California, Florida, Arizona, Texas, and New York.

## **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study will provide a sociological and philosophical argument using postmodern analysis to deconstruct the traditional understanding of power dynamics in China, which is believed to be a single decision made by the central government, with no variations and diversifications among the local governments.

The matter of migrant children's education provides a foundation to understand how China handles education issues, particularly those issues associated with China's rapid economic development. A historical review of public school enrollment policy for migrant children from the 1980s to the present time will be laid out in Chapter Two, and a discussion about how China has been addressing this issue from central and local levels will be analyzed in Chapters Three and Four. My intention is to discern the pattern behind the change of policy over time. In addition, I want to discover what power dynamics are behind the central and local governments when they are trying to solve the issue.

Foucault's theory of power provides a theoretical framework to understand how China has been solving the topic of enrolling migrant children in public school, particularly the complexity of the issue through the analysis of the policy from central and local governments in China. Power relations between central and local governments in China have been widely perceived as a top-down mechanism in which the central governments rule and control the local governments. To understand how China is addressing the public school enrollment issue for migrant workers' children, it is important to understand that the power relation between the central government and local government is not a centralized mechanism, per se (Negri, 2014).

Foucault's discussion of power originates from his critique of the classic conception of power in his book, *Discipline and Punish* (1995). He believes that power is produced, instead of owned. He states "The means of correct training, we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes,' it 'represses,' it 'censors,' it 'abstracts,' it 'masks,' it 'conceals,' In fact, power produces; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (p. 194). His concept of power will be deployed as a theoretical framework to analyze the power dynamics between the central and local government in examining the topic of public school enrollment for migrant children.

Foucault denies that there is a central point of a sovereign power in modern society. He posits that at the social and state level, power is a process of negotiation instead of a top-down strategy or dictatorship. In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality--The Will to Knowledge* (1978), Foucault puts forward his unique idea about power. He defines the definition of power through three "nots": "I do not mean 'Power' as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation ... I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another" (Foucault, 1978, p. 92).

Different from the traditional concept of power, which was perceived as a constraint from the state and an external oppression, power could be productive and mobilize different sectors. Foucault (1978) believes that:

power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations imminent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support that these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another. (p. 92)

Foucault (1978) believes that power must be traced through power relations for “it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable” (p. 93). The omnipresence of power is produced from one moment to the next, at every point; or rather, in every relation from one point to another. “Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society” (p. 94). Echoing Foucault, Negri (2014) believes that power has concrete effects on both the central and local government, and it is the same when it comes to the macro and micro levels. This is not an existing domain, but a process of production and power itself that continues to constitute its organization through this process.

In the process of solving the public school enrollment issue, power in China operates in a multi-directional fashion; from top-down, as well as bottom-up. While the central government made the national policy, the local government produces power during the process, particularly when they are dealing with the issue based on local experiences. During this process, power is negotiated through the dynamics of power relations. Central and local

governments are in the constant process of negotiation. Foucault's theory of power helps clarify the power dynamics in China through the analysis of the central and local policies.

### **Definitions**

In this dissertation, the following concepts are important to grasp for discussion:

#### **Public Schools and Private Schools in China**

Public schools and private schools in China are defined through the source of funding and the principal administration (Lao, 2009; Zhou & Liu, 2006). Public schools in China are all state-owned schools, established by local governments, following the education policy and guidelines from the central government. These guidelines include the selection of teachers and design of the curriculum. The public schools are publicly funded, which include state financial educational funds and the local government financial funds. Therefore, the public school system is detached from the challenges connected to market mechanics. The principal administration units are part of the local government, and thus the public schools are subjected to the supervision of the local education bureau.

Private schools are established by non-government sectors such as social organizations or individuals. The main funding source is not from the public, but instead, heavily relies on the market system. Private schools make their own management decisions but are still subject to the supervision of the local government.

According to the 2013 National Educational Development Statistics Bulletin (PRC, Ministry of Education, 2011) for public schools, there are 21,350,000 primary schools, 5,280,000 middle schools, and 2,620,000 high schools in China. In China, middle school refers to 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and high school refers to 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders. For private schools, there are 5,407 primary schools, 4,535 middle schools and 2,375 high schools.

According to the *China Educational Finance Statistical Yearbook 2013* (PRC, Ministry of Education, 2011), 80% of the funds for public schools come from the state

financial educational funds expenditure and the income of supply fees, which makes up only 10%. Additionally, only 4% of schools that provide compulsory education in China are run by private funds. On the contrary, the private schools are funded mainly by tuition and supply fees with a percentage of over 70% and the state financial educational funds expenditure accounts for less than 10%.

Among the private schools, there are two categories: unlimited and limited (China Review, 2003). The first category of private schools is funded by corporate or international education groups, and they charge an expensive tuition rate and have sufficient funds to sustain development. These private schools are only open for children from the upper social class. The other categories of private schools are ones funded by individuals with limited funding and resources. The students are from low-income families because of the low quality of educational resources that were part of their historical schooling. This group of students cannot enroll in public schools in cities or in expensive private schools because of the expensive tuition rate. The quality of limited private schooling is much lower than the public schools and the unlimited private schools (Narada Foundation, 2012). The migrant children private schools fall under this category.

In this dissertation, the public school means the state owned public school. The public schools in this dissertation refer to the public schools compulsory education stage, from grade one to six at the primary school, and from grade seven to grade nine at the middle school. The urban public school refers to the public school in the urban areas of China. The private schools in this dissertation refer to the migrant children private schools.

### **Migrant Workers**

Regarding the definition of migrant workers, there are various expressions in newspapers, magazines, and other media platforms, such as exotic employed personnel, rural workers, mobile population, off-province population, off-province businessmen, and more. In

general, there are two categories: one category refers to those who receive higher education in the city and have decent jobs, but do not have city residency. The other category refers to the farmers, derived from farmers, who crowd into urban areas but keep certain economic ties to rural land and live on wages or income from off-farm work while having rural identification (Yuejin, 2007). The definition for migrant workers used in this paper refers to the official concept from the Development Research Center of the State Council, which reported that the group of migrant workers is in line with the Chinese traditional household registration system (Development Research Center of the State Council, 2011). It mainly covers those with a rural identity who live in the urban areas as off-farm labor. In a broad sense, migrant workers include those who work in the secondary and tertiary industry in rural areas.

### **Migrant Children**

Sun (2007) defines migrant children in four aspects:

- 1) Hometown: They come from rural areas but live and study in the city.
- 2) Identification: They are divided into a rural population in terms of the household registration system.
- 3) Age: They are school-age children of 6 to 14 years old at the time of the request of receiving compulsory education from grade 1 to 9.
- 4) Family income: Their parents are mainly engaged in low-paid jobs.

Therefore, based on the concept of migrant workers, in this dissertation, the migrant workers' children refers to those school-age (6-15 years old) children whose *Hukou* is not registered in the county or city where they currently live with their parents or guardians and they need to receive compulsory education in that city (Li, 2003).

## **Policy**

The policy in this dissertation refers to the public policy, including legislation, measures, and regulations issued by the central and local government in China.

## **Research Methods**

A mixed research methods approach will be used in this study. The approach will include historical analysis, a study of a selection of policy documents, and philosophical arguments will also be included.

The approach to analyze China's central government and local governmental policies for public school enrollment of migrant children is based on qualitative research. Policies are text documents that are embedded with information of the government's position toward ideology, as well as national policy changes. To understand the text and its underlying meaning, a descriptive analysis is used. Specifically, a descriptive analysis provides the research tool for education policy studies.

As Delaney (2002) notes in *Educational Policy Studies: A Practical Approach*, proper policy analysis relies on an accurate description and historical understanding, and descriptive analysis makes its own contributions. In the policy analysis model, one cannot move into the first step of identifying the problem if they have no idea about what the current policy contains and how this policy has developed over the time.

Delaney (2002) concluded that descriptive analysis includes both content analysis and historical analysis. Content analysis gives a description based on the observation of current public policies. It enables the researcher to know what is going on right now and makes the policy clear in every aspect. This allows the problem to be identified and solved in relation to the goals and measures.

On the other hand, historical analysis calls for a thorough examination of not only the recent events, but also the inception traced back to decades ago. Mahoney and

Rueschemeyer's (2003) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* points out that historical analysis has the function of explaining how to use available historical materials and to discuss certain topics in a systematic way. Historical analysis provides angles to understand policies by notifying how the existing policies come into place.

While content analysis is used for describing certain policies, specific provisions, and expected impacts, historical analysis describes policies from the origination and makes a comparison between the present and the past. Through the analysis of the existing policy in comparison with its earlier forms, the stages of the policy history will reveal the policy-making process regarding the challenge.

The migrant workers related policy texts will be collected in this dissertation. This includes primary sources such as government policy documents, and secondary sources such as articles, scholarly research papers, and newspapers. These texts will be sorted and analyzed through content analysis to reveal the changes, stages in the policy history, and the distinguishing features of central and local policies. Ordinary language analysis will also be used to explain and clarify key concepts in the project.

### **Dissertation Map**

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research, including the key issue of the study, the purpose of the study, the research approach that will be utilized to review the historical documents of education policy for migrant children, the key concepts identified for discussions, as well as a brief overview of the theoretical framework that will be deployed to analyze the power dynamics between the central and local government in China.

Chapter 2 situates the on-going topic of enrollment of migrant children in public school in its historical contexts. The origins and the root causes of the issue and the challenge of solving the issue will be discussed as background information to understand the

complexity of the reason why migrant children could not enroll in the urban public schools. A brief overview of how public school in China has been financed, and the reason why public school enrollment is the final solution in solving the challenge of the education of migrant children will be discussed.

Chapter 3 begins with the historical overview of the education policy of the central government and the focus on migrant children from the 1980s, followed by an analysis of its stages over the past 30 years. The chapter continues with a description of the patterns of these stages: 1) policy from block to drain; 2) streamline administration and delegation power to the lower levels; 3) one decision-maker to multiple decision-makers; and 4) separation of the powers of policy management, evaluation, and implementation.

Chapter 4 provides four representative cities in China that face the challenge of enrolling migrant children in public school. The background information of the city, as well as its city planning strategy, the local policy history and model of the four cities will be considered. The chapter will then examine the reasons behind the differences of the models.

Chapter 5 seeks to understand the lessons learned while China tackles the issue of enrolling migrant children in public school by applying Foucault's theory of power. The chapter summarizes the overall goal of the dissertation, possible solutions to the issue, the limitations of the research, and concludes with the arguments made in the previous sections, the lessons learned, and the suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter II: History of the Issue:**

### **Migrant Children and Their Education Challenge in Urban China**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to explain the causes of the challenges migrant children face when enrolling in urban public schools by analyzing how China's reform policies and the changes of the *Hukou* system enabled rural residents to work in the cities, how these residents are excluded from urban public services because of the *Hukou* system, and how migrant children are also excluded from enrolling in urban public schools. Recognizing that the *Hukou* system is the root cause of migrant children's educational challenges, this chapter also introduces China's compulsory basic education system and demonstrates that public school is still the dominant provider of migrant children's education. Consequently, this chapter shows how China's decentralized fiscal system has contributed to a lack of financial stability and a lack of incentives for local governments to support migrant children to attend urban public schools.

#### **How Migrant Workers and Migrant Children Came Into Being**

1978 marked a crucial turning point in Chinese history, as China began its process of Reform and Opening-Up and started to develop and implement a series of institutional reforms that had an enormous impact on the country's political, economic, and social development. The Household Responsibility System (HRS) was issued in 1981 and became one of the newly-established institutions that transformed the lives of rural populations and created migrant workers. Between the 1950s and 1970s, the People's Commune was a rural administrative system that managed rural labor and income of the state farms workers. Under this system, households were organized into teams, and teams then formed brigades, and brigades formed the commune. It was noted, "Each level of organization was responsible for certain activities: the team for organizing farm labor, the brigade for establishing small workshops and elementary schools, the commune for large-scale land reclamation projects, a

hospital, a high school, small factories, and other side-line industries, as well as a welfare fund to aid the poor communities within the commune” (Columbia University, 2009).

There were neither private plots of land nor private markets. All funds from welfare were equally distributed to farmers. For example, farmers dined at public canteens of their people’s communes regardless of how much they worked. This meant that the system failed to provide economic incentives for farmers to work hard for their own interests. Moreover, this system also locked the rural laborer to her/his duties within the teams, brigades, or communes. The HRS was officially introduced in 1981 by the Key Points of National Rural Working Conference (Chinese People’s Daily, 1982). It was adopted by about 95% of rural farming households by the end of 1983 (China.org, 2009). Under this system, rural collectives, which had the land ownership, “subcontracted land out to individual households for a certain period of time on the condition that they return a specified percentage of their output back to the collective...the household would then be able to keep any output that exceeded this quota and, importantly, have the autonomy to make its own decisions about production and land management” (Wong, 2014, p. 14). Therefore, the HRS effectively provided incentives for farmers and boosted agricultural output. Unfortunately, as the system allowed farmers to make their own farming plan, one household had to decide on how many laborers they needed for their own land, so it freed the other household members from the land. Therefore, the HRS freed rural laborers from their land and made labor surplus at the countryside possible.

In addition to the HRS, changes in the *Hukou* system in the mid-1980s further facilitated the rural Chinese to work in urban areas. Before the mid-1980s, rural residents were unable to survive in the cities because all resources were rationed based on the *Hukou*, namely they could not buy food and housing in the cities. In 1985, the Ministry of Public Security issued regulations for rural migrants to obtain “temporary residence permits” and the

National Congress allowed citizens to use their identity cards as proof of identification so that rural residents were able to access basic commodities in the cities (Yusuf & Saich, 2008).

While the establishment of the HRS and the changes in the *Hukou* system provided possibilities of migration, urban-rural inequality further promoted this process. Since the socio-economic Reform and Opening-Up in 1978, urban areas witnessed rapid development of private enterprises and rural villages in the coastal areas had increasing numbers of rural collective enterprises (Yusuf & Saich, 2008, p. 50). Higher income and more employment opportunities traditionally are created in the cities, especially in the coastal areas. Figure 2.1 shows the increasing income gap between rural and urban residents.

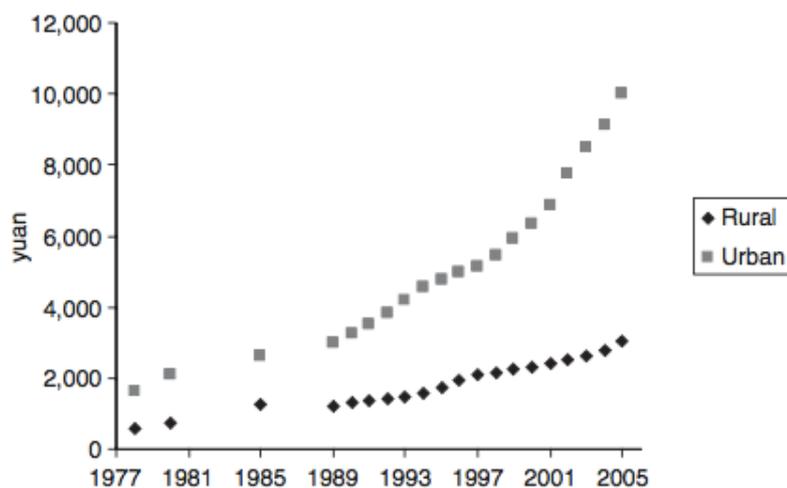


Figure 2.1

*Rural Urban and Rural per capita Income: 1978-2005*

Source: (Yusuf & Saich, 2007, p. 42).

Therefore, under the influences of the HRS, changes of *Hukou* system, and urban-rural inequality, more and more rural residents moved to cities to find employment. However, as most of them lacked the education and skills for jobs in the cities, more migrant workers worked in the service industry or in the construction field, where they contributed their labor.

In 1992, Deng Xiaoping, who retired from the position of the Chairman of the Central Advisory Commission of the Communist Party of China and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission, gave his famous speech during his southern China tour, in which he reasserted his economic policies. This speech gave confidence to all types of enterprises and inspired large numbers of Chinese to earn a better living through personal hard work. After Deng's speech and tour, China's economy stepped into another golden age with remarkable high-speed development. Correspondingly, the number of migrant workers rose to a notable extent. In the year 1993, the reported number was up to 62 million, with an increase of 32 million compared with that of 1989 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 1989; 1993). In 2004, the number in the workforce working for more than three months outside their hometown was 118 million, and the number of people who worked at township enterprises was 136 million (Feng, 2007).

When the migrant workers settled down in the cities, some of them brought their children to live with them. However, because of the *Hukou* system, public school system, and the decentralized fiscal system, migrant children face several challenges for enrolling into urban public schools.

### ***Hukou* System and the Basic Educational System**

This section explains how the *Hukou* system, China's permanent household residential registration system, leads to unequal access of public services for urban and rural populations, including limited access of public schools to rural migrant children. The section also introduces China's basic educational system and explains why public schools are the dominant channel for migrant children to receive basic education.

## **The *Hukou* System**

The permanent household residential registration system, generally known as the *Hukou* system, is one of the most influential institutions in China. The *Hukou* system, promulgated by the government of China in the 1950s, dates back thousands of years. Family registers and management systems first came into being during the Warring States Period. By the end of the Qing Dynasty, which was the year 1912, China issued its first modern household registration law. From the 1930s to 1940s, the government of the Republic of China also legislated laws to regulate family registers. However, the national *Hukou* system designed by the People's Republic of China in 1958 was controlling over these previous laws because of its well-organized implementation, wide coverage, admirable outcomes and high efficiency. Therefore, this *Hukou* system is viewed as the first systematic management of population in China, the world's most populous country (Wang, 2008).

The document, *Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Household Registration of 1958*, requires all Chinese citizens to perform household registration at birth and registration shall be handled by the local police stations (Article 3). According to the regulation, a citizen's permanent household record should include information of classification (urban or rural), location, and employment (Wang, 1998). A rural *Hukou* provides access to farmland, while an urban *Hukou* provides access to jobs, housing, food, and state-sponsored benefits in the cities. The *Hukou* location specifies where one is entitled to receive benefits (Yusuf & Saich, 2008). The rural population is unable to access urban social services in the cities where they do not have their *Hukou*. The urban social services include public education, housing, healthcare, etc. Moreover, changing *Hukou*, especially from rural *Hukou* to urban *Hukou*, has numerous requirements that vary between the cities.

Li and Wan (2014) point out that the original purpose of China's *Hukou* system is a tool for proper resource allocation during the planned economy era. Subsidies like education

funds are based on the *Hukou* system and this system is also implemented by the state to put restrictions on population flow from rural to urban areas. During the development of this system, various social benefits were attached to *Hukou*, which helped to equalize the interest distribution. The local government fulfills its mandate in offering regional public goods according to the number of registered residents. Police and civil service, funds for schools, hospitals and other social facilities, and investment for public financing are all closely tied to the household registration system.

### **China's Basic Education and Public and Private Schools**

China's basic educational structure is a nine-year compulsory educational program funded by the government for all school-age (age 6-14) children. The nine-year compulsory education is a public service that, by law, every child in China is entitled to receive. At the same time, the nine-year compulsory education is of great importance regarding the proper protection of the value the state wants to teach its future citizens. After the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the central government abolished the old education system and built the new public school system that was in accordance with the planned economy.

According to *The Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China* issued in 1986, "compulsory education is education which is implemented uniformly by the Nation and shall be received by all school-age children and adolescents. It is a public welfare cause that shall be guaranteed by the State. No tuition or miscellaneous fee may be charged in the implementation of compulsory education" (Article 2). *The Compulsory Education Law* stipulates that under the leadership of the State Council, local authorities shall assume responsibility for providing compulsory education, and it shall be administered at all government levels; local people's governments at various levels shall establish schools at locations where children and adolescents can attend schools near their homes. Public school

enables the authorities to spread certain thoughts, such as core social values, and therefore students can be trained and cultivated as successors of the ideology, and good citizens for the State. It should be noted that in this dissertation, capital State refers to the Chinese central government, and lower case state refers to the Chinese province. According to the statistics from the Ministry of Education in 2013, there was an enrollment of 93.61 million students at public primary schools (6-11 years old) and about 94.85 million students at public middle schools (12-14 years old).

Private education has a long history in China. Traditional Chinese private schools are called Sishu (私塾), and originated in the Western Zhou period (1046–771 BCE). The retired Western Zhou government officials started this kind of school in their local areas to promote the principles and the ideology of the society (Qin, 2007). Since then, Sishu became a popular educational institute in ancient China to prepare students for the Imperial Exam Keju (科举) and the exam to enter traditional Chinese higher education. The Sishu existed in China until the 1950s when the government of the People's Republic of China took over the schools and reformed them into public schools (Chai, 2007). Another type of private school, including K-12 to universities, founded by foreign churches and foundations around the 1900s, also had been reformed into public schools after the foundation of the People's Republic of China (Zhang, 2014). Not until 1983, after the open door policy, were private universities revived in China by a group of retired university faculty, which revealed the beginning of education privatization in China (Tang, 2006).

After Deng Xiaoping's 1992 speech, private K-12 schools started booming in China (Gou, 2003). These private schools focus on students from affluent families. They charge much more tuition and fees than regular public schools in order to provide high quality facilities and qualified faculty. These schools include international schools and elite private local schools where they have better facilities and more manageable student-teacher ratios.

The migrant population gravitate toward local areas where there is not the responsibility of providing basic education to every migrant child (Zhang & Zhao, 2002). For migrant children whose parents work in the service industry, high-end private schools are impossible. The monthly income for migrant workers in China in 2013 was 2,609 yuan, 31,308 yuan a year, or \$5,000 (Yang, 2014). Urban private schools charge more in tuition and fees which are far beyond the income of migrant workers. In Tianjin in 2012, according to the local Bureau of Commodity Price, private schools in the downtown area charged from 8,000 to 11,000 yuan, or \$1,270 to \$1,750 per academic year for primary education with 5,000 to 15,000 yuan, or \$800 to \$2,400, for secondary education (Development and Reform Commission, 2013).

With a limited number of urban public and high-end private schools and with an increasing demand of migrant children enrolling in schools in urban areas, private schools for migrant children increased in the areas where the migrant populations reside. Consequently, these schools are a product of the market that is usually out of the supervision of the educational management system and has with no official school permits (Han, 2001).

According to research conducted by Bai Wenyu (2000) of the Washington Times and a Ford Foundation Fellow, these migrant schools are mostly in poor physical condition as they generally take houses, factories, or warehouses as temporary teaching buildings and do not have unified desks, blackboards, or lab equipment. In terms of qualifications, most of the teachers have just finished high school and some even just graduated from middle school. However, migrant children schools only charge one student 300 yuan, or \$36 per semester. In order to differentiate from the high-end private schools in China, these migrant private schools are called low-end private schools.

Private education is not a public good, so neither the State nor the local governments are responsible to fund it. The low-end private schools, compared with the public schools, do

not get the same level of subsidies from the government. In comparison to the high-end private schools, they cannot afford to maintain high quality facilities and teachers since they can only charge moderate tuition and fees to migrant families.

The original basic educational system was designed for a fixed population structure in which the domiciliary authority served as the responsible party. When the Reform and Opening-Up increased population mobility and broke the strict boundary of urban and rural areas and their populations, the basic educational system could no longer meet the needs of school-age children (Zhang & Zhao, 2002). As schools for migrant children are out of supervision by the government, they have various problems such as a lack of qualified faculty, no proper facility, and no extra curricular activity. Xu Li (2010) pointed out that most schools for children of migrant workers failed to meet the national standards.

Hence, while the *Hukou* system and the basic educational system make it nearly impossible for rural children to enroll in urban public schools, the high tuition and fees of high-end private schools also block the channel for migrant children from medium to low-income families. In addition, it is also challenging that private schools for migrant children are unable to provide adequate teaching resources.

### **Decentralized Fiscal System**

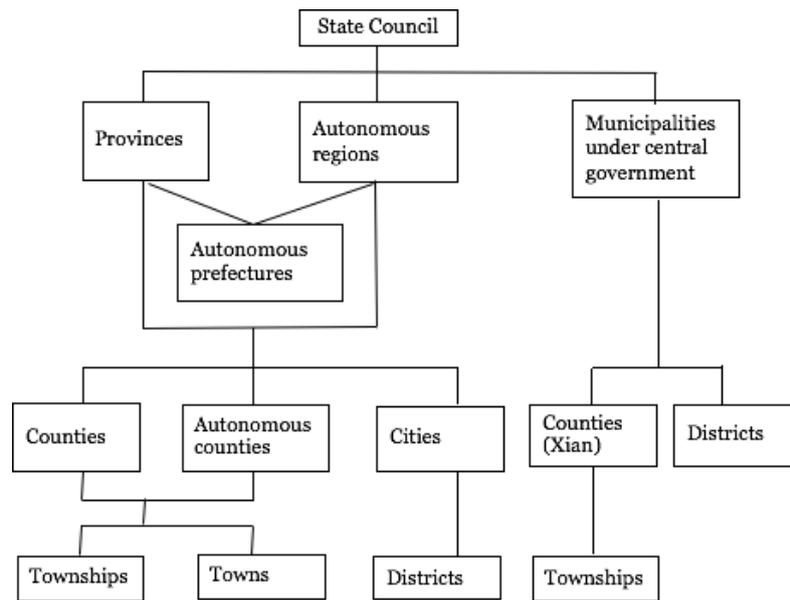
In the basic educational system, local governments are responsible for providing nine-year compulsory education for children whose *Hukou* is registered in their area. The *Hukou* system is generally regarded as the root cause of educational issues related to migrant children (Wei & Hou, 2010). This section explains how China's decentralized fiscal system hinders the progress of urban governments having to provide basic education from a financial perspective.

In the 1980s, China was determined to reform and open up to the world. Coastal provinces worked out a series of policies for a more comprehensive economy and a tax-

farming system was adopted by both the local and central governments. In essence, the tax-farming was a way to ensure profit and avoid loss. Under the tax-farming system, local governments paid fixed taxes to the central government. Consequently, local fiscal departments implemented tax deduction policies upon enterprises in order to retain the development outcome in local companies (Zhao, 2003). Thus, the ratio of government revenue to GDP and the ratio of central revenue to total tax revenues decreased sharply, leading to a weak central government. The poor central financial condition could be from the insufficiency in the defense budget, basic research funds, and other essential national expenditure (Zhao, 2003). In response to this fiscal crisis, the Central Committee of the Party and the State Council were determined to reform by bringing China the tax sharing system.

The goal of the tax sharing system is to distribute revenues proportionately at the central level and at the local level through implementing fixed types of taxes. Under the current tax sharing system in China, taxes are divided into three categories: central tax, local tax, and shared tax. Among different types of taxes, value-added tax (VAT) is of the largest scale and is designed as a shared tax with 75% of collection going to the central government and 25% going to the local government. Taxes collected by the central government include all taxes on enterprises. The income taxes reform in 2002 also turned enterprise income tax and personal income tax, which used to be local revenues, into central-local shared taxes with a half-to-half ratio in 2002 and 60% to 40% (central-local) from 2003 (Sun & Zhou, 2013).

The ratio in 1994 to total tax revenues was up to 56%, 34% higher than the previous year, while the rate of finance expenditure to total expenditure only increased by 2% over that of 1993 (Wu, 2013). Theoretically, the tax sharing system could be seen as a federal fiscal system. Most countries implement tax sharing systems in their market economy but the tax sharing system is implemented by the Chinese central government as a way to achieve economic centralization.



*Figure 2.2*  
*Levels of Government Under the State Council of China*

Source: (Saich, 2011, p. 181).

Figure 2.2 shows the formal administrative structure of the state, which could help understand the challenges brought by the decentralized fiscal system. The first challenge is that there is no clear clarification between power and responsibility. The central government passes most of the public expenditures on to county governments or township governments. In 2004, the ratio of local tax revenue to total revenues was about 45% while local governments paid about 72% of total national expenditure. In terms of education funds, the central government paid 21.964 billion yuan in 2004 while the number paid by the local was 314.63 billion, more than 14 times of the central government. As the central government holds back some provincial power in financial issues, lower-level authorities follow in a similar way. Taxes are collected from the county to the city, and from the city to the province. Therefore local governments, subservient to provincial government, retain only 17% of the

revenues but are responsible for over 80% of livelihood spending and most public service expenditures (Lei & Qian, 2015).

Generally, operating funds to public schools for compulsory education are from the treasury and provided by the people's governments at all levels (central, provincial, and local), education surtax, donations from enterprises, profits of school-owned enterprises, social services, social donations, and other budget revenues. Among all of these sources, education treasury funds from the government provide most of the money. Some scholars made use of the government budget and estimated that in 2005, the central government offered 2% of the total education funds, the provincial government offered 11%, and county government, who has the least financial power, contributed the remaining 87 % (Zhao Lei, 2005).

Yuan Liansheng (2011) pointed out that the proportion of education funds sources could be divided as 10%, 17%, 17%, and 56% in respect to the level of central, province, city, and county or below. Other scholars estimate that the central government paid 8% or more of total funds for compulsory education (Sun & Du, 2010). The *Statistical Communiqué on National Educational Development in 2013*, published by the Ministry of Education, National Bureau of Statistics, and the Ministry of Finance (2014), showed that the central government contributed 18% of total treasury funds for public education of all stages. Since the central and provincial government spent more on higher education, the real percentage of spending for compulsory education was less than 18% which again proved that in China, funds for public schools were mainly granted by government at county, township, or village level.

Table 2.1 compares public schools in China and the U.S. It helps understand the source of compulsory education funds in China.

Table 2.1

*The Collection and Sources of Education Funds for Public Schools in the USA and the People's Republic of China*

Level of Government	USA	Source	Ratio	Level of Government	PRC	Source	Ratio
Federal	Policies and partial funds	Federal tax	8.3%	Central Government	Policies and guidelines	Ministry of Finance: total revenues	10%
State	Partial funds	State tax	45.6%	Province	Regional coordination (Formulate and implement plans of transfer payment for the compulsory education from central and provincial level to local level. Formulate and implement plans of expenditure for compulsory education undertaken by local governments.)	Provincial revenues	17%
Local government	Education tax in accordance with the scale of real estate	Real estate tax	37.1%	County	Responsible for most education funds	Transfer payment from central and provincial government, local fiscal budget, and education surtax.	73%

*Note: There are no available official statistics ratios. These data are collected from other scholar's research. The latest available statistics is from Yuan Liansheng's study in 2011 on the source of education funds of 2006.*

The revised *Compulsory Education Law* from 2006 put forward a new system of provincial planning with education funds and county-level government as the main organizer. This policy requires the central and provincial government to pay more for education bills, but still required the government at the district or county level to be the primary contributor. With no clear responsible party and no specified duties of provincial and local governments, the central and the provincial government increased their spending on compulsory education, although this was ineffective as the county or district government needed to undertake more.

Under the current tax sharing system and education finance system, local governments must pay all of the educational costs of migrant children within its jurisdiction.

Many primary and secondary schools in cities refuse to enroll migrant children. For students without local household registration, an expensive temporary schooling fee will be charged which further prevents numbers of migrant children from entering public schools.

Meanwhile, due to the decentralized fiscal system and the centralized political system, economic development is generally valued more than education to local officials. Under the basic educational system guided by the county, local governmental preferences in expenditures may negatively influence the education budget. In fact, local governments prefer infrastructure rather than education, city problems that are more immediate rather than country issues, and facility construction rather than teacher recruitment (Lei & Qian, 2015). Local governments tend to step back when governments at a higher level put an emphasis on certain issues, and very often local governments promote a local protectionism (Lei & Qian, 2015). Lei and Qian (2015) described the infrastructure rather than education preference not as the larger ratio of productivity expenditure than that of education, but the small share of educational investment of the total revenues. Stepping back when the superior government does more refers to the crowding out effect during the transfer payment for education. The crowding out effect is a macroeconomic concept. It is used to explain the situation when expansionary fiscal policy reduces investment and consumption by the private sector. Here, the crowding out effect refers to the trend when central and provincial governments increase educational transfer payments, local government is inclined to pay less attention to the education issue and may reduce its original budget for educational purposes. To migrant children, the most influential behavior preference is that the decentralized fiscal system usually intensifies intergovernmental competitions, subsequently resulting in increasing local protectionism. To governments accommodating migrant populations, the increasing influx will bring heavier financial burdens.

Since education may not be the priority for local government's strategic plans, in regards to children out of their jurisdiction, local authorities may not be willing to pay the bill since there is no direct profit incentive. Thus, local governments occasionally have some conservative attitude in resolving the issues of education for migrant children and some even set administrative barriers for these children to enter public schools, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

This chapter explains the causes of educational issues for migrant children. It first elaborated the phenomena of large-scale migrant workers as a result of being freed from land due to land reform, the change of the *Hukou* system, and being attracted to higher earnings in cities. This chapter then analyzed that it is extremely difficult for migrant children to go to schools in the cities because of the existing public school system, decentralized fiscal systems, and the educational financing system.

### **Chapter III: National Policy Toward Migrant Children's Education**

Over the past 35 years, the Chinese central government has made great efforts in solving migrant children's education problems in the cities. Chapter 3 sketches the evolution of national strategies and corresponding policies. First, a legislative history is presented as an overview of the policy. Second, I describe four stages of policy changes, including the blank stage, the initial stage, the developmental stage, and the advancement stage. Finally, this chapter summarizes national strategies that guide the making or changing of the policies.

#### **A Historical Review of National Policy Toward Migrant Children's Education**

There is existing scholarship on the education policies for migrant children's education. Some studies focus on the policy stages, while some focus on the policies of certain cities. Nonetheless, no scholarship has covered a complete history of the policies. The following section aims to cover the policy history from 1980 to 2014 that addresses the migrant children educational issues from the central government of China.

Between the mid-1980s, when the urban migration began, and the early-1990s, most rural migrant workers in the cities were individuals, with the number of children migrating to cities with their parents increasing in later years. Thus, the issue of migrant children's education was not of concern for the society and the policy makers during this time period. The policies and measures of the government rarely involved the field of migrant children's education. This period can be basically named as "the blank stage" (Yang, 2007), as there was almost no policy regarding migrant children education.

The most important document relating to education during the 1980s is the *Compulsory Education Law* (1986) adopted by the Sixth National People's Congress, because the law ensures every school-aged child in China is entitled to receive their free education until the end of junior middle school. In accordance with this law, regional authorities shall assume responsibility for compulsory education, and it shall be administered

at different levels, which means that local governments such as urban districts and towns are in charge of the primary and junior secondary education of the children in their administration areas (Dong, 2010). This decentralization, however, gave rise to a practical difficulty: financing. According to the 1986 law, the funding of compulsory education is decentralized to the regional governments of cities, towns, and villages, and the amount of available funding varies with the region's economic level.

From 1992 to 1998, there were certain policies made to solve migrant children public school enrollment issue. This is called the initial stage.

After the establishment of a socialist market economy in 1992, the status of rural migrant workers transformed from working in the countryside on their own to migrating to the cities with their families. The number of children migrating into cities with their parents increased dramatically, and while the education system in the cities was set up to accommodate the city population, it was not ready to address the needs of migrant children.

In 1992, *The Enforcement Regulation of Compulsory Education Act of People's Republic of China* was issued, which stipulates that “the school-age children who go to the non-household registered locus to study can apply for temporary study in the accommodating city according to the accommodating city's related regulation” (Art. 14). Migrant families had to pay a large fee every semester for their children. Therefore, children from low-income migrant families could not enter local public schools. Han (2009) pointed out the fee collected from the migrants created a barrier to gain equal educational opportunities. This regulation created the policy vacuum in migrant children's education, but still left a heavy task for the government to meet the needs of migrant families.

In 1993 and 1996, additional documents were issued. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China confirmed in the *Outline for Reform and Development of*

*Education in China*, “the decentralization position and defined that the state would assume a general role of ‘macro-management’ through legislation in 1993” (Dong, 2010, p. 143).

In April 1996, the State Education Commission issued *Interim Measures of Education for School-age Children of Mobile Population in Urban Areas Among the Rural Migrant Population*, marking the first special regulation pursuant to the issue. According to this document, with temporary residence certificates, parents or other guardians can send their children to study at local primary or secondary schools if the application is permitted by the school administrators. While the Chinese government was actively carrying out measures to promote migrant children’s education, the dropout rate of these children was still high, due to policy limitations.

In March of 1998, the State Education Commission and the Ministry of Public Security jointly enacted *Interim Measures of Education for Children of Mobile Population*, which stipulated that migrant children could attend school in the accommodating areas (referring to areas where they accept migrant children to their local public schools) when there was no legal guardian available in the *Hukou* locality. The migrant child could only attend school in the hosting city when there was no legal guardian available in the *Hukou* locality (Article 3). Moreover, the law required the migrant child not to move with their parents, but instead stay in their hometown if possible, and the school of their *Hukou* neighborhood should be the legal education provider (Dong, 2010).

From 2000 to 2005, the Chinese government developed a series of policies towards migrant children in cities and stressed that it was the local government’s responsibility to accommodate migrant children in the local public schools, as well as allocate a budget for the tuition and fees. This is the developmental stage, as more policies were developed to improve the education quality of migrant children.

When the temporary study proved to be insufficient in respect to the immense need of migrant children, and as the poor quality of temporary schooling concerned the public, in 2001, the central government introduced the *State Council's Decision of Basic Education Reform and Development*, emphasizing that

Priority should be given to resolve the problems of providing compulsory education to migrant children and governments in accommodating areas have main responsibilities for administrating migrant children's education, with full-time public primary and secondary schools being the major education providers of migrant children; and various measures should be adopted to ensure the right of migrant children to receive compulsory education in accordance with the law. (Art. 12)

The decision also makes clear that governments in accommodating areas have the main responsibility to resolve the problems of migrant children's education. It was the first time that the decision provided the principle of "two-oriented," meaning that the accommodating local government should be responsible to solve the migrant children's education and the local public school must be the driving force to accept the migrant children.

Following this decision, migrant children should be accommodated mainly in local schools, and mainly in public schools, where they can be provided with nine years of compulsory education. The decision also determines that local governments and local full-time public primary and secondary schools should acknowledge the right of temporary migrant children to receive a nine-year compulsory education (Shen & Green, 2014). However, this decision made no difference in terms of the temporary study fees charged to migrant children by public schools. The extra fees were one of the major obstacles that prevented migrant children from equal access to urban formal education (Dong, 2010).

In September 2003, the General Office of the State Council issued the document *Further Suggestions on How to Do Well with Migrant Children's Compulsory Education*,

which was issued by six government ministries, including the Ministry of Education. It emphasizes the policy of two-oriented (local government oriented and public school oriented) and announces the new goal of “bringing migrant children’s compulsory education into the local education level.” Through clarifying concrete targets, the government comprehensively deployed the efforts of tackling the problems of migrant children receiving compulsory education, built up “ensuring migrant workers' children to receive a compulsory education system” and furthered reinforcement in terms of fund guarantee and policy guarantee and thus, further improved policies on migrant children’s education.

This document required the urban governments to treat migrant children equally, in terms of providing compulsory education and other factors, such as charges and administration. It not only reclaimed the responsibilities of governments in accommodating areas, but also emphasized that these governments should “bring migrant children’s compulsory education into local education development plan as well as bring it into education financial budget,” and financial departments should “fund schools according to the actual students in schools” (Han, 2009, p. 6). These measures could be seen as a milestone in the policy history of education for migrant children.

The responsibilities of the accommodating governments to secure the education of migrant children were reconfirmed in the series of following documents from 2003. *The Instructions on Further Improving Compulsory Education Provision to Migrant Children in Urban Areas* stated that urban governments should regulate the tuition fees for migrant children, that they should reduce or waive fees if necessary, and that migrant children should pay the same tuition fees as local pupils (Art. 6). It urged urban local governments to build up a fundraising system to subsidize migrant children, and to reserve money for the education of migrant children (Art. 5), as well as urged urban local governments to “support and inspect” private migrant schools, and to integrate such schools into the Minban (private school)

education system. However, the 2003 policy did not articulate the financial support from the central government to local governments for migrant children education. Even though it was clear that the 2003 regulation stipulated that the migrant and the local pupils were equal in how much they would be charged for schooling, the local government often shifted these financial responsibilities onto migrant individuals (Dong, 2010). Finally, the National Congress of the People's Republic of China issued *Two Exempts and One Allowance* targeting compulsory education-aged children in the west of China who became exempt from tuition, miscellaneous fees, and received an additional small stipend. As of today, this policy has been extended to rural areas across China. Policies such as the “two exempts and one allowance” are necessary for disadvantaged migrant children to ensure an equal opportunity in their educational career, especially in the early childhood years (Hu & Szente, 2010).

Since 2006, the Chinese government specified that migrant children should be guaranteed to receive compulsory education equally nationwide. This is the advancement stage, when the central government made a series of bylaws and regulations to reinforce the implementation of the policies issued prior to 2006, especially the two-oriented policy. In addition, as many migrant children finished their primary and secondary schooling in the accommodating areas, problems arose when they wanted to further their study in high school and take the college entrance exams locally, due to the limitations from the household registration system and national matriculation examination system. Therefore, the government's policies towards migrant children's education began to extend to the aspect of non-compulsory education.

In January 2006, *The Notice to Solve the Problems of Rural Migrant Workers*, published by the State Council stipulated that “Full-time public elementary and secondary schools should play a major role in receiving migrant workers' children and allocate a budget from school funds depending on the number of migrant children to be educated at school”

(Art. 11). Local governments became obliged to add the compulsory education of rural migrant children to their educational development plan, and allocate an educational budget accordingly. The notice also clearly emphasized that public schools are not allowed to charge migrant children for extra schooling fees in any form (Shen & Green, 2014). This policy from the central government ensured education rights for migrant children and reinforced the responsibility of local government.

The *Decision of the Ministry of Education on Revising and Abolishing Some Regulations and Rules*, published on December 24<sup>th</sup> 2010, re-emphasized the principle of “two-oriented” (local government-oriented and public-school-oriented) and brought the issue of migrant children’s education into the conversation about the public educational system. Local governments were required to add support for educating rural migrant children to their education development plan. They were required to do so by allocating a budget from school funds, depending on the number of migrant children to be educated, and charge no tuition, temporary study fees, and other costs from migrant children that complied with certain regulations. The existing content of “to charge temporary schooling fees according to relevant provisions” in Article 12 and other relevant provisions in *The Regulations on Primary School Administration* were cancelled in 2008. This meant that migrant children were ensured the same equal opportunities as local children to receive compulsory education. This was a government action with legal protection and policy guidance.

The *Outline of the National Program for Long- and Medium-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010-2020)*, published in July 2010, stated that research would be done to work out the plan for migrant children to take the local entrance examination for post-compulsory education. In August 2012, the Ministry of Education put forward the *Notice to Improve the Process for Rural Migrant Workers’ Children Taking Entrance Exams to Receive Higher Education in Receiving Cities after Compulsory Education*, which made

strategic arrangements to the potential plan of allowing migrant children to enter senior high schools and sit for college entrance exams locally. By the end of 2012, over 30 provinces and regions in China had successively issued specific measures to enable these children to anticipate the National Higher Education Entrance Examination in their current residence (Shen & Green, 2014). From the legislation perspective, the central government has ensured the local government will take responsibility of solving migrant children public school enrollment in the cities.

### **The Strategy from the Government**

Existing scholars have laid out the policies, but a limited amount of research has dug deep into the policies that explore the strategy that the central government has been utilizing to solve the issue. In this section, I will generalize the strategy and challenge it by analyzing the policies. Through the discussion of the policies and its stage in the previous sections, five government strategies will be presented that may resolve the educational issues for migrant children.

### **Ensure Migrant Children's Access To Local Public Schools**

In contrast to the decentralized fiscal system, China's governance structure is centralized with strong top-down mandates. The appointment of Chinese cadres is determined by higher-level government officials instead of the local registered residents, resulting in direct administrative fiat from the central government. This is a critical means to get migrant children enrolled in public schools. Various nation-level policies have indicated that central orders serve as a main role in educating migrant children in cities, since most policies operate under the support of the State apparatus.

At the same time, due to the top-down political structure, lower-level officials tend to take measures before instructions from the upper-levels come to them. Quite often, they choose to positively carry out new policies to please the central authority and earn a

promotion. Yang et al. (2011) state that competition among local governments actually promotes the advancement of institutional reform related to migrant children's education. The policy improvement of migrant children's education suffers from the "low-lying land effect," which is an economic concept extended from geographical phenomena. The further development of the economy and social environment, the more investments or resources they can obtain. Some Chinese scholars use this term to explain the challenge of solving migrant children's education. When a local government performs effectively in educating these children, more rural workers will flow into the city, resulting in further challenges for the government to handle the issue. Therefore, in regards to the central government's emphasis on migrant children's education, local officials struggle to work out the problem in order to develop a strong reputation in the inter-governmental competition. This is especially true when educational issues count for more in their performance evaluation. Yang et al. (2011) believe that the remarkable policy changes in favor of migrant children's education in Beijing and Shanghai from 2008 could be seen as a result of this incentive.

Besides enforcing compulsory executive orders, the central government pushes forward institutional reforms in fields like the *Hukou* system and education financing system, and produces a set of fiscal stimuli, so as to ease multi-layer pressure in the process of educating migrant children in cities. These enable policies like the "two-oriented" to operate effectively in local places.

### **Guarantee Basic Education Rights Through the Reform of the Household Registration System**

The reform of the *Hukou* system concerning the access for migrant children to public schools involves two aspects. First, the removal of limits on *Hukou* requirements in townships and smaller cities is necessary so that more rural residents are able to register their

*Hukou* in cities. Second, the acceleration of the separation of basic public service benefits and the registration of the *Hukou* locality is required.

In terms of the first aspect, the central government issued the *Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform* in 2013. The decision stipulates that the authorities should introduce new population management methods, accelerate the reform of the *Hukou* system, completely lift restrictions on new residence registration in administrative townships and small cities, relax restrictions on new residence registration in medium-sized cities in an orderly manner, lay down appropriate conditions for new residence registration in large cities, and strictly control the population size of megacities. Furthermore, on July 30, 2014, the central government issued the *Notice of the State Council of China to Further Promote the Reform of Household Registration System*. The decision instructed officials to unify the *Hukou* system in rural and urban areas, which means the dual-household system that has divided people into urban or agricultural households will be phased out. This hallmark document has guided systematic operations to further adjust the migration policies, set a unified rural and urban *Hukou* system, completely implement a residence permit system, accelerate the construction and sharing of a national population database, and steadily promote basic public services - including compulsory education, employment, aging population care, healthcare, and housing assurance to all permanent residents (State Council, 2014).

In terms of the second aspect, to separate the provision of public services from *Hukou* in July 2012, the State Council launched the *12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan on National Basic Public Service System*, clarifying the institutional design for basic public service. In the past, public spending was tied closely to the registration system, and the population scale determined the number of specific distributions of the budget to different programs. For example, in fields of

public service such as education, culture, sports, social security, employment, health and medical care, and housing assurance, the budget for local governmental administrative operations and staffing was determined by the number of its permanent residents.

The establishment of *The Plan* set goals to accelerate the basic public service system where the local authorities play a leading role in taking into concern the migrant workers' public services benefits. Specifically, this was done to expand basic services to both temporary residents and permanent residents gradually; to allow qualified migrants to enjoy equal urban services; and to work out efficient ways to have qualified migrant workers and their children involved in the local basic public service system in phases with certain focuses (State Council, 2012).

### **Streamline Administration and Delegate More Power to Provincial Governments in Terms of Education Financing**

The central authority has been putting efforts to streamline administration for future education development. The core function of the streamlined administration is to delegate more power to lower-level authorities. During the process of institutional reform, educational equality hinges on the extension of provincial planning.

Chapter 15 of the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)* identifies the content of education reform in three respects: to establish an effective, unified management system with well-defined power and responsibility; to strengthen provincial planning on education; and to transform governmental education functions. The document stated that the government should “establish effective, unified management system with well-defined power and responsibility; take function transformation, administration curb and power delegation as priorities; deepen education management reform; improve public education service” (Art. 45).

This document first clarifies the duty of central and lower-level government. The central government leads and manages national education in general and local governments and is responsible for the implementation of laws and policies, the practice of pilot innovations, and the overall reform, development, and stability of education within their jurisdictions. Province-level governments are asked to manage compulsory education as a whole, and to support and urge city, township, and county governments to discharge their responsibilities in developing different types of education (Liu & Wu, 2014).

Compared with the past county-based compulsory education system, the document empowers the provincial governments to become the planners of compulsory education, instead of the central government. The local authority further promotes the balanced development of compulsory education. As province-level governments understand local conditions better than the central government, policies that pertained to regional economic performance could be ignored. Provincial governments fulfill their mandate more effectively than township governments, due to the hierarchy structure. Serving as the senior administrative institute, provincial governments could make full use of limited regional resources and provide funding to poor districts. In addition, provincial funding is prioritized to cities or townships embracing heavy fiscal burdens, such as having migrant children enrolled in local schools. With this kind of policy support, these districts could allocate enough spending on migrant children to ensure their equal education rights. Without the support from the provincial government, it would be hard for these cities or townships to allocate funding from already short local governments to help the migrant children enroll in public schools.

### **Establish a Scientific and Standardized Evaluation System for Education**

For a long time, the central government has been the player and the judge on the effectiveness of the educational policy, which causes tardiness and ineffectiveness in

delivering educational services. The *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)* calls for separation on supervision, evaluation, and management on education. On May 4, 2015, the Ministry of Education further published the *Opinions on In-depth Promoting Separation of Regulation, Management and Evaluation of Education and Transformation of Government Functions*. The document emphasizes the goal of establishing an evaluation system for education by the supervision institute or a third party, instead of the central government, so that more independent and scientific assessments can be made to judge the central and the local governments' performance in education. The document requires the authority to strengthen state supervision over education, enhance the work of educational supervisors at all levels, promote a management system, improve teachers' professional levels, cultivate specialized education service agencies, integrate rating groups, optimize assessment standards relating to education, publish regular monitoring reports, encourage industry associations, professional societies, foundations and other social organizations to participate in education evaluation, and set entering qualification standards for these social groups. By strengthening supervisor power and getting third parties involved in the evaluation system, central policies can better implement to ensure the right for migrant children to receive compulsory education.

### **Financial Support from the Central Government to Local Government**

A decentralized fiscal system places an extra financial burden on local administration costs for education, which leads to the inclination for the government to implement education policies under local protectionism. This sets up obstacles to migrant children's access to public schools. To ease local financial burdens and resolve the migrant education problem, fiscal incentives are provided to provincial governments by the central government based on the current decentralized tax system. On December 19, 2008, the Ministry of Finance launched the *Interim Measures of Central Fiscal Incentives for Migrant Children to Receive*

*Compulsory Education*, which clearly stated that extra funds would be rewarded to provinces whose work performance on migrant education ranked highly.

### **The Challenges of Central Government's Policy**

Challenges remain for China's central government policy, even if the central government takes the above actions to promote migrant children education.

### **The Contradiction between The Relaxed Household Registration System and the Slow Development of Public Facilities and Service**

As expected, the urban-rural dual household registration system will not fundamentally change. The national urbanization strategy requires decades of step-by-step development. In 2013, China's urbanization rate of permanent residence reached 53.7%, while the urbanization rate of registered (*Hukou*) residences were only about 36% (New National Urbanization Plan, 2014). The statistics show that migrant children's access to compulsory education and other public services in cities will remain a serious problem for a long time, due to registration limits. Meanwhile, China's urbanization level still falls far behind, with an urbanization rate of population far from the average level of 80% in developed countries and an income rate lower than the average level of 60% in similar developing countries. In the foreseeable future, China will have more people flooding into cities, burdening urban public service (New National Urbanization Plan, 2014).

Whether small and medium cities or townships can boost industry prosperity to attract the flow of migrant workers remains unknown. However, as the population of major cities has nearly reached a saturation point, governments in these major cities will not be able to provide education or other public services pertaining to registration for newly arrived migrants

One issue that hampers the household registration system reform is the lag time between relaxed residence registration and correlated social constructions in public facilities

and services. The challenge for the *Hukou* reform is not the elimination of differences between rural and urban, but the equality in basic public services related to the *Hukou*. As the comprehensive urban capacity fails to catch up with improved political conditions, the central government needs to work out further solutions to support institutional reforms.

### **The Imbalance Between Central and Local Government in Respect to Management Responsibility and Education Finance**

Compulsory policies made by the central government to ensure migrant children's access to public schools face challenges when it comes to local implementation, mainly because of the struggle between the central and local authorities regarding management responsibility and education finance. The promotion of the "two-oriented" policy focuses on clarifying and specifying the local government's responsibility. Guided by the "two-oriented" policy, the central government only raised requirements for education investment and management without empowering the local governments with the related fiscal authority, and it also gave them no financial support. Nonetheless, since 2008, the central government produced incentivizing funds for migrant children education. The amount of these extra funds counts little, compared with the large input from local government to work out the issue (Liu & Wang, 2013).

#### **Education Finance System**

As the current education finance system is decentralized, the financial support to migrant children education is at the bottom of the governmental spending pyramid. Governments of counties (prefectures, districts) are responsible to raise education funds within their respective jurisdictions, while central and provincial governments are only in charge of regional coordination. County-level authorities receive no financial support from the higher level government for compulsory education of local registered students. Although

there are related measures from the central government to provide supporting funds to the accommodating area governments, the accommodating government assumes the financing responsibility for migrant children (Liu & Wang, 2013).

### **Imperfect Student Registration System**

Student registration is the legal reference to prove one's student identification or qualification of a school. Usually a student's school archive is the brochure that records names of enrollment. A good student registration system records a student's educational background with a clear and specified timeline. Such a system could serve as the national information database in terms of education input allocation. However, as the current student registration system is imperfect, national funds are granted to specific local governments according to the household registration system. Thus, the governments generally lose initiative in educating migrant children locally.

Policy analysis has shown that the receiving government undertakes heavy tasks in respect to the investment and management responsibility of migrant children's education, which almost requires equal efforts to that of its household registered children. On the contrary, the central government has not defined and clarified the responsibility for the government where laborers move out. Since 2006, China started the reform of its education finance system for rural compulsory education. In the mid-west area, education funds are supported by the central and local governments together. In the east area, funds are raised mainly by local governments with incentives provided by the central government (Liu & Wang, 2013).

Theoretically, incentivizing funds from the central government should be given to local governments who cope with the migrant children education problem. However, not until 2010 did the State officially require schools nationwide to set up a student information management system, with no specific measures put forward. In August 2013, *Measures for*

*the Administration of Registration of Primary and Secondary School Students* was produced by the central government, stipulating “one student one registration record,” and to record moves as a student transfers to from their hometown schools to the school where their parents work. In China, migrant workers move less frequently, therefore making the tracking system possible. Two reasons contribute to less frequent moving. First, migrant workers are usually introduced to the job opportunities in the cities by their hometown people, and they prefer to stay together so they can help each other. Secondly, it is not easy to find other jobs and survive in another city.

The student registration number contains the key information in the management system, as it is associated with the resident’s Hukou identification number. One student will have only one student registration number for a lifetime. A student will have the number as soon as they get enrolled in preschool or primary school, and will have this unique number accompany him/her during study for basic education, higher education, vocational education, or adult education. If the student registration information changes, for example, when a student transfers to another school or finishes his/her study, the school should update it in the electronic registration system. China began the establishment of a national student registration management system (China National Radio; Ministry of Education, 2013).

Though regulation concerning student information management was enacted in 2013, the system is still at the preliminary stage and remains imperfect. Due to the long-lost management of student information, the national education finance system is unable to fund schools in terms of the number of registered students, so funding is provided to lower-governments in accordance with household registration in each jurisdiction. In other words, in the case when children of migrant workers have already entered a school locally, the related education fund from the state level still goes to governments where they have their *Hukou* registered. This leads to criticism about these governmental freeloading behaviors

from local governments in east China, where the economy boosts attract millions of migrant workers and thus local governments face the urgent issue of resolving compulsory education for migrant children.

### **Human Factors: Negative Influence of Local Governmental Competition**

#### **Mechanism**

As mentioned above, the top-down power structure with Chinese characteristics results in intergovernmental competition and lower-level governments are positively involved in the political “tournament.” The competition may lead to different outcomes. If a leading local official wants to fulfill his/her mandate, they would move forward to work out innovative solutions for migrant children’s education. On the contrary, a risk-averse local official will turn the competition into a vicious one among different areas, being afraid of the “low-lying land effect.” Since the power and responsibility of the education issue is not unified for governments in areas where laborers move out and governments in areas where laborers flow in, the latter governments sometimes appear negative in dealing with this education issue and also raise concerns of the “low-lying land effect”(Guo, 2011) brought by migrant children on current local education quality. The “low-lying land effect” will generate negative governmental actions and intergovernmental competitions at lower levels toward the issue of migrant children’s education.

To accommodating governments of migrant workers and their children, the increasing population influx will put heavier financial burdens on them, and consequently, they are not willing to pay the bill. Chinese scholars Lei and Qian (2015), as well as Lei and Wang (2012) have made psychological analyses of the accommodating governments on the issue of education for mobile populations and came up with the conclusion of “waiting, being afraid and demanding.” “Waiting” refers to the strategy a local government adopts to implement policies negatively as they expect the movement of population to be a temporary trend. Local

government is also afraid of “low-lying land effect” – that is, if they provide qualified education to migrant children, more people will flood in and bring further pressure. The attitude of “demanding” indicates that local governments are eager to get more funds from higher-level government, so as to ease their financial burdens.

Local protectionism increases as the central government asks the locals to ensure migrant students’ access to public schools. Some local governments set administrative barriers for children of migrant workers to enter public schools. After studying 177 policies nationwide, scholars Lei and Jia (2015) and Lei and Wang (2012) found public schools in different places all have complex procedures regarding student enrollment, with no unified guidelines. The results of their analysis shows that references or proofs are attached to different importance from city to city. Most schools demand materials like service contracts, temporary residence permits, residence booklets, housing contracts, and study proofs from original schools. The top five references rank as followed: service contract: 87.2%, temporary residence permit: 83.7%, residence booklet: 76.1%, housing contract: 66.7%, and study proof from original schools: 50.4%. (Lei & Jia, 2015). The research also found that provincial capitals and municipalities have more stringent administration requirements, when compared with counties (prefectures, districts), implying an even stronger local protectionism (Lei & Wang, 2012).

### **Summary**

This chapter reviewed the Chinese Central Government’s policy history for migrant children. The policies made in the 1980s aimed to provide administrative support and financial conditions for migrant children enrolled in local public schools. According to the Two-Orientation policy, the responsibility to ensure the local public school enrollment has been placed at the local government level.

The chapter also analyzes the strategy for solving the issue of migrant children's education through the overview of the policy history. Specifically, it addresses the top-down administrative order from the central government to the local government, the *Hukou* reform to ensure the education rights for migrant children, streamline the procedure and delegate powers to local government to have their own approach solving the problem, as well as the financial support from the central government. The chapter also discussed the following challenges: the incompatible public service, decentralized financial system, and the local protectionism that the central government has encountered.

## **Chapter IV: Models on Solving Public School Enrollments for Migrant Children**

### **Lessons from Four Cities**

#### **Introduction**

Since 2001, China's central government has implemented policies for both local governments and public schools that address compulsory education for migrant children. In addition, local governments and the Education Bureau have taken other measures. Local governments have also adopted specific strategies for migrant children's education in accordance with their own economic development and city planning. I examined Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Changzhou, four cities with very different approaches to accepting migrant children in local public schools.

Three of these cities, Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, are very large metropolitan areas that attract migrant workers in large numbers. Each of these major cities has a different approach to the education of migrant children, and these approaches may offer models for solving problems in other cities. Changzhou, on the other hand, is a mid-size city on the southeast coast of China. Its prosperity attracts a smaller but significant migrant population. Changzhou's approach to migrant children in schools differs from larger cities because of its size; it is included in this study to serve as a model for similar cities like Suzhou and Wuxi.

In my analysis, I will first provide an overview of each city's size, economic development, and social history. I will then explain the current educational policy for migrant children in local schools. Because local and public-school policies have been in place since 2001, I will only examine policies and practices from 2001 and later.

#### **Definitions of Concepts**

**Large City, Megacity and Super-Mega City.** To understand the challenges facing different cities, it is crucial to know the size of each city. According to *The Notice of the Revision of City Size Classification* issued in 2014 by the State Council (2014c), a city with a

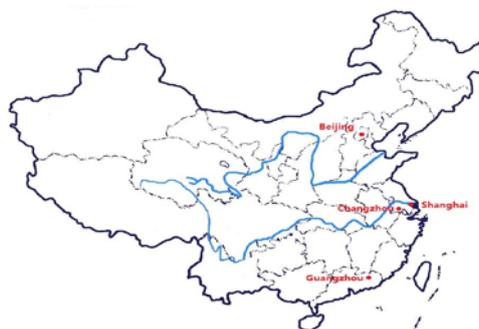
population between 1 million and 5 million is a large city. Cities with 5 million to 10 million people are megacities, and those with over 10 million are classified as super-mega cities.

### **Three-Sector Industry**

Understanding the structure of the industries in a city helps the government to predict the demand for migrant workers. A city's industrial structure also informs the strategy for future development. In China, industries are frequently categorized into one of three sectors based on Fisher (1939). Primary-sector industries are extractive industries that use raw materials to produce goods. These include farming, mining, and forestry. Industries in the secondary sector manufacture raw materials and bring components together into a product (Datta, 2001; Blair & Hitchcock, 2001). The tertiary sector includes diverse residual activities. Tertiary-sector industries provide services, such as catering, communications, and education (Datta, 2001).

### **Basic Information of the Cities**

The location and basic demographic information of each city in this study informs its educational policies toward migrant children.



*Figure 4.1*

*Geographic Location of the Four Cities in China*

Table 4.1

Basic Information about the Four Cities

City	Location	Total Population	Migrant Population	Area (Acres)	Major Industry	GDP 2014
Beijing	North	21 million	8 million	4 million	Third (77% of overall productions)	2.13 trillion yuan (13.85 trillion USD)
Shanghai	East	24 million	10 million	1.5 million	Third (64.8% of overall productions)	2.36 trillion yuan (15.34 trillion USD)
Guangzhou.	South	13 million	4.6 million	1.8 million	Third	1.67 trillion yuan (10.86 trillion USD)
Changzhou.	East	4.7 million	1 million	1 million	Second and Third	409 billion yuan (2.66 trillion USD)

Source: Beijing Statistical Bureau. (2014, June 18). An analysis of 2013 Beijing population. Beijing Statistical Information Net. Retrieved from [http://www.bjstats.gov.cn/sjld/jjxs/201406/t20140618\\_274964.htm](http://www.bjstats.gov.cn/sjld/jjxs/201406/t20140618_274964.htm);  
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<http://data.stats.gov.cn/easyquery.htm?cn=E0102>;  
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[http://sh.xinhuanet.com/2015-02/28/c\\_134025948.htm](http://sh.xinhuanet.com/2015-02/28/c_134025948.htm);  
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[http://www.gzstats.gov.cn/tjgb/qtgb/201504/t20150430\\_37572.htm](http://www.gzstats.gov.cn/tjgb/qtgb/201504/t20150430_37572.htm);

[http://www.gzstats.gov.cn/tjgb/qtgb/201504/t20150430\\_37572.htm](http://www.gzstats.gov.cn/tjgb/qtgb/201504/t20150430_37572.htm);

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## **Beijing Model**

Beijing, as the capital of China, acts as its political and cultural center. There are sixteen districts and counties under the jurisdiction of Beijing. By the end of 2013, the permanent population was around 21 million. Beijing's migrant population is around 35-40% of the total migrant population of China (Q. M. Li, 2009). It should be noted that there is no official data on the number of migrant workers. For the purposes of this paper, the migrant population includes migrant workers and those with high-income. According to a report from Beijing Evening News, the number of migrant population in Beijing is around 7.5 million.

Due to resource limitations, the government has always restricted the number of migrants in each city so as not to overwhelm the city's ability to absorb them. Currently in Beijing, for instance, the land area per capita is less than 1/6 of the national average, and the water per capita is less than 1/10 of the national average and 1/35 of the world average. Beijing relies on the stored resources of other provinces, including 100% of the gas it uses, 100% of its oil, 95% of its coal, 64% of its electricity, and 55% of its oil products, all of which are transferred into Beijing from different provinces (Zhang, 2014).

In the eleventh Five-Year Plan (2006-2010), the government of Beijing proposed the goal of controlling the "permanent resident population" to no more than 16 million. However, by the end of 2004 the population more than 15 million, while in 2013, the number reached 21 million. According to the Implementation of Beijing Urban Planning 2004-2020, a report proposed in the twenty-first meeting of the thirteenth session of the Beijing Municipal Committee, this rapid expansion of the population outstripped the resources capacity, which has become a severe challenge for both the city of Beijing and the county government (Deng, 2010).

Controlling population growth has become a major priority for the local government. In the third meeting of the eleventh session of the Beijing Party Committee in 2013, Wang

Anshun, the mayor of Beijing, listed “coping with the current dilemma between population and resources, and controlling rapid growth of population” as the first important tasks for government in the next year. In addition, in a meeting of the central government’s work arrangement at the end of 2013, President Xi Jinping raised six tasks for urbanization in China, the first of which was strict control of the population growth in megacities (Liu, 2013). Therefore, limiting population has become one of the most significant concerns for Beijing in the future.

### **Overview of the Policies**

After experiencing a drastic growth in population, Beijing has faced pressure to provide education for migrant children, particularly in light of inadequate resources and negative effects from policies at both the central and local levels. In 2000, there were 80,000 migrant children in Beijing’s school system. Four years later, the number increased from 280,000 to 380,000 in a year because the local government waived the temporary schooling fee for migrant children. In 2006, the number of migrant children was almost 370,000, or 1/4 of the total number of students in Beijing (Lin, 2006). According to the 2008 census results, there were 504,000 migrant children in total (Yuan, 2010).

To face this challenge, Beijing’s local government has been using local public schools as well as special schools for migrant children to provide public education for migrant children. In order to enroll in public school, migrant workers must submit credential documents for their children. Since 2002, Beijing’s government has implemented *Interim Measures of Beijing on the Compulsory Education of School-Age Children and Adolescents of Migrant Population*, a statement that outlines qualifications, procedures, fees, and admission exams for migrant children who would apply for public schools (Chen, 2013). In the statement, at least five documents are required before a migrant child can be admitted into a public school: parents’ or statutory guardians’ local temporary residential permit, proof of

actual local residence address, employment letter, certificate from the local government of *Hukou* (registered permanent residence) showing that there is no guardianship, and *Hukoubu* (registered permanent residence booklet), etc.

After the *Notification from the State Council on Exemption Compulsory Education Fee of Urban Students* was issued in 2008 (State Council, 2008), migrant children paid neither tuition fees nor extra schooling fees. However, during the policy's implementation, there were no government rules to prevent a school from charging migrant parents a "sponsorship" fee. Different from the temporary study fee, the sponsorship fee could be very expensive.

In 2011, the requirements for non-Beijing children to be admitted into public schools were reduced from five documents to two: proof of actual local residence address and a registered permanent residence booklet. In 2010, *Measures for Management of Students' Status in Primary and Middle Schools in Beijing* (Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, 2014) clarified that:

For a student who is at the stage of compulsory education, without a local registered permanent residence, he or she needs to use parents' actual local residence, registered permanent residence booklet and other credentials to apply for the certificate of temporary schooling confirmed by the temporary residence neighborhood offices or township government. Then, he or she could submit application to the nearest schools. If he or she could not be admitted because of inadequate quota, the district and county education administrative departments are responsible for coordinating and solving this problem. (Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, 2014)

Nonetheless, some districts still requested five credentials in 2012. Additionally, some districts and counties added additional requests, such as a social insurance payment confirmation and a household ownership certificate.

In 2015, the *Opinion of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education on the Administrative Work of Compulsory Education* was issued (Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, 2015). The policy of requiring five credentials could be extended even into requesting twenty-eight separate documents (Sun, 2015). This policy has been an obstacle for migrant families, as few of them were able to get all of the documents prepared (Shi, 2012). In some cases, parents did not know about the process or understand how to interpret the information. Some parents would stop the application because they had heard it was troublesome and expensive, while in some areas the government stopped processing documents before the start of a new semester, resulting in delays. For some documents, such as the guardian certificate, parents had to go back to their birthplaces. The expense and the inconvenience would make this document collection impossible for many parents. Even having all documents on hand does not guarantee that the children can enroll in a local public school. Some public schools set a cap for migrant children (Hai et al., 2014). According to one report, a migrant worker parent said: “the Education Committee of Daxing District gave us a copy of the Summary Sheet about Migrant Population Schools in Daxing District, and asked us to contact schools by ourselves. If we could not contact a school to enroll in before August 29, the Education Committee will coordinate a school without the guarantee that it is a public school” (X.Y. Chen, 2013).

Migrant schools have now become an option for migrant children in Beijing. In Beijing, the first migrant children’s school was founded in 1993. Until 2012, only 157 schools were recorded by the Office of Social Sectors as under the management of Beijing district governments (Hai et al., 2014). According to the *Notification on Further Improving the Security of Unauthorized Schools Run by Migrants*, in Beijing, there were 239 specialized schools without authority (Hai et al., 2014), where around 100,000 students studied (Lin,

2006). Allowing schools for migrants helps the Beijing government to relieve the stress from migrant children on the city's educational system.

Reports from official media revealed the potential risks and poor conditions of these unauthorized schools. These included unsafe school buildings, inadequate fire control, overloaded school buses, and unclean food. "According to a survey, among the unauthorized schools, 132 of them had severe safety problems, and 52,000 students were exposed to risks at school. In one security inspection, 67 students were crowded into a "school bus" with only 17 seats. Academic quality also did not meet standards. All schools were lacking the basic conditions: no credentials for head teachers and teachers, small campuses, no arrangements for exercise during the break, and no essential teaching equipment and facilities. Most of them did not set course schedules in accordance with national standards, curriculum plans, or syllabi, which are crucial guarantees for education quality" (Li, 2006).

In order to ensure the quality of education and safe school environments for migrant children, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education issued *Implementation of the Opinion from the Office of the State Council for Further Improvement on Administrative Work of Rural Migrant Children's Compulsory Education* in 2004 (General Office of Beijing Government, 2004). Beijing district governments took action immediately and set a goal to make sure that all specialized schools for migrant children in Beijing would be qualified within three years.

In October 2005, the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education issued *Notification of Reinforcing Management on the Schools Run by Migrants*. It proposed supporting some migrant schools if those schools adhered to the government education qualifications, accrediting some schools that already meet government education qualifications, and closing some schools that struggle to meet the qualifications (Li, 2005). In August 2011, Beijing closed 24 migrant schools. According to Deputy Director of Beijing Municipal Commission

of Education, there are still 114 unauthorized migrant schools. Among them, 1/4 of the schools would be relocated and resettled (Wu, 2011).

After closing the unqualified schools, reallocation of students is the first priority. According to policy, students should be redistributed to the nearest public schools or other private schools. But in practice, this is challenging. According to a news report, each classroom was crammed with students because there were not enough seats for all relocated students at authorized migrant schools (Hai et al., 2014). Students may suffer unequal treatment or discrimination at the hands of teachers or other students. The news report described that on August 2011, one migrant school was closed by the government and nearly 200 students were diverted to the other migrant school (Hai et al., 2014). However, the public school did not arrange seats for those migrant students in regular classrooms. Rather, students were divided into five groups and placed in a row of sheds behind the teaching building.

At the same time, the Beijing government provides those qualified and authorized migrant schools with a small amount of money to improve school conditions. The government also provides licensed private schools subsidies equivalent to that of public schools. Indeed, education quality improved after receiving support from the government. According to news reports, teacher income greatly increased after merging schools from 200 to 700 students in some schools (Shi, 2012).

There is no large-scale support for migrant schools from the Beijing government. Nearly 100 migrant schools were closed, reducing their number from 241 to 157. Based on a journalistic investigation, after 2011 “Education Reallocation” was enacted, only 10% of migrant children could access public schools, while 30% went back to their hometown of registered permanent residence and 50% were accepted by other migrant children’s schools (Lu, 2012).

The Beijing model lacks government support for migrant education. Researchers believe that the government's goal was to force migrant workers to leave as a part of re-urbanization in the national strategy (DW, 2014). Historical trends indicate a tighter policy for migrant workers in Beijing, not allowing most migrant workers to stay.

### **Shanghai Model**

Shanghai, another super-mega city, is the center of economy, finance, and trade in China. By the end of 2014, the total population was 24 million; among them, 14 million were permanent residents and 10 million were migrants (Sina Shanghai, 2015). These migrants are mainly of working age, and 80% of them work in production, manufacturing, processing, construction, and commercial service (Shanghai Statistics Bureau, 2011).

In the face of this rapid growth in migrant workers, *Measures for Management of Residence Permit in Shanghai* was implemented in July 2013. Migrant workers could participate in the new resident registering score program, which allows non-residents the opportunity to become a Shanghai resident based on their educational background, job title, and professional experience, and thus enjoying the same welfare—including children's education, social insurance, certification, housing, and basic public health—as city dwellers (Liao, 2013).

### **A Historical Review**

The number of migrants in Shanghai has increased drastically in past years, with about 3.5 million migrants living in Shanghai for more than half the year in 2000. More than 23 million were workers from rural areas. In 2010, the number of migrants went up to around 9 million, an increase of 159% in ten years. While in 1990, only 2.3% of migrant families chose to give birth to babies in Shanghai, that number increased to 58.8% in 2011. As a result, the number of migrant children increased from 286,000 in 2001 to 538,000 in 2012 (Jiang, 2013). It was estimated that in 2015, the overall number of school-age children in Shanghai

will reach 934,000, including resident and migrant children. Thus primary schools need 23,000 classes (40 students per class). This is an even greater number than in 2013, when Shanghai primary schools were short of around 8,100 classes according to the data from the Blue Book of Shanghai Migrant Children (Jiang, 2013).

In accordance with the *Opinion from the Office of the State Council for Further Improvement on Administrative Work of Rural Migrant Children's Compulsory Education in 2003* (State Council, 2005), Shanghai's government made the education of migrant children a crucial part of its educational plan. It proposed that responsible departments make it part of their social development strategy and compulsory education planning. There must be effective solutions, including guidance, coordinated management, financial support, and establishment of authorized quota (Wu, 2011). Every district in Shanghai provides free compulsory education for migrant children. Most of these children are accepted by local public schools (including the existing public schools) and the migrant schools that have been converted and certified by the government. Shanghai provides strong financial support and seeks help from the existing migrant schools and social organizations (Jiang, 2013).

### **Reallocate Educational Resources in Suburban Areas**

In Shanghai, 80% of migrant workers live in suburbs or towns; thus, these regions face population pressure, with a shortage of school buildings, teachers, and other educational resources. According to statistics from 2008 to 2010, the Shanghai government invested 10 trillion yuan, equal to 159 billion USD, on the construction of 363 schools of various types. Current shortages were eased by distributing more resources in suburban areas and towns (Wu, 2011).

### **Increase Seats for Migrant Children at Local Public Schools**

According to the *Blue Book of Shanghai Migrant Children*, in order to offer more opportunities for migrant children to access public education, the Shanghai government

simplified the conditions for admission to public schools in 2008, and required public schools to accept more migrant children (Jiang, 2013). To accommodate these needs, most public schools in urban and rural areas increased class sizes from 40 to 46 or 48. Since 2010, the Shanghai government has simplified the process for a migrant child to enroll in public school. As long as the migrant children can provide parents' rural Hukou, Shanghai residential certificate, or rent certificate and employment letter, they will be allowed to enroll in Shanghai public schools (Qiu, 2010).

### **Encourage Social Sectors to Build More Migrant Schools**

According to Wu (2011), the Shanghai government plays an active role in attracting more social sectors to help solve the educational issues of migrant children. The Shanghai government includes migrant schools in the public education system so that the teachers get their pay through the public school payroll system. From 2008 to 2010, governments at different levels invested 1 billion yuan (160 million USD) on the transformation of private elementary schools. During these three years, governments approved 162 schools for migrant children (88 were previously established schools while 74 were new schools). To improve the facilities for each school, the government granted 500,000 yuan (79,000 USD) for each school. In addition, the government would give 1,000 yuan (159 USD) per student as subsidies. This was increased to 1,500 yuan (238 USD) per student in 2009. Schools with poor conditions, potential safety concerns, and low teaching quality were required to make improvements or face closure.

### **Provide Financial Support to the Migrant School and the Migrant Children**

As explained in Chapter 2, the tax system in China makes local government responsible for the expense of educating migrant children. Unlike other city government, the Shanghai government shares the financial burden of supporting compulsory education with each district (Yuan, 2012). In 2008, the *Opinion from Shanghai Municipal Education*

*Commission to Further Improve the Administrative Work of Rural Migrant Children's Compulsory Education* notified the local district and county government that the education of migrant children must be included into the planning of local educational development (Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, 2008). The Shanghai government confirmed that every qualified school, if included in the management system, would be granted a one-time subsidy of 500,000 yuan (79,000 USD) for facility improvement. The Shanghai government also requires the migrant schools to waive extra fees for textbooks and drill books, as public schools do. The Shanghai government allocates 1,000 yuan (150 USD) per student every year; the remainder is to be covered by the local county government (Yuan, 2012).

### **Mobilizing Domestic and International Non-Governmental Organizations**

Shanghai's government also encourages non-governmental organizations to get involved in solving the issue of migrant children's education (Xiong, 2012). Social work organizations, such as Shanghai Lequn Social Work Service, cooperate with local governments and set up offices in schools, providing professional psychological counseling and emotional support. Civic groups, such as Juqian Volunteer Center and Grassroots Community, focus on civic education, arts, extra-curriculum instructions, using financial resources from government and donations from public foundations or enterprises. Public Offering of Funds, such as Narada Foundation, provide financial support for schools that admit migrant children. They also fund Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) or other projects that support migrant schools. NGOs funded by foreigners, such as Hands-On Shanghai and Compassion for Migrant Children, are also involved in helping migrant children. NGOs' involvement signifies that the Shanghai government is open to different approaches. Shanghai mobilizes multiple social sectors.

Based on statistics from the *Blue Book of Shanghai Migrant Children*, by 2010, 70% of the primary school migrant children and 100% of middle school migrant children were accepted to public schools (Jiang, 2013). By the end of 2010, there were more than 180 migrant schools that have been included in the government public school system with financial support guaranteed. As a result, migrant children enjoy free and high-quality compulsory education subsidized by government. In 2012, there were 538,000 migrant children (including preschool-age children) and 400,000 of them were admitted to public schools in Shanghai.

The Shanghai government played a major role in solving the issue of providing public education to migrant children by providing strong support and developing a diversified approach. The strength of Shanghai model lies in its strong financial support from the local government, efficient administrative power, and flexible and diversified approach. The inclusion of migrant schools in the public education management system of the government and the NGO model are creative and effective methods to solve the issue.

## **Guangzhou Model**

### **About the City and the City Development Policy**

Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province, is the largest city in the southern part of China. It is a center of economy, culture, science, and education as well as the oldest trading port in the country. By the end of 2014, the total population was 13 million, but the city's permanent resident population was only 8.4 million (Guangzhou Statistical Bureau, 2015). Most of the population lives in old towns, such as Liwan, Tianhe, Haizhu and especially Yuexiu, a district of 12 square miles with a density of over 134,000 people per square kilometer (Jin, 2014).

After the Open Door policy in the late 1970s, third-sector industries have become the cornerstone of Guangzhou. The third sector is service-based, requiring cheap labor from the

surrounding rural areas. The migrant population has been growing while social resources, environmental resources, and spaces are still limited (Office of Guangzhou Government, 2007). A high population density in Guangzhou also caused problems with public service and traffic, along with a housing shortage. In 2015, the Public Security Bureau of Guangdong Province announced the latest policy on reform of the household registration system in Guangdong: strictly control the population in Guangzhou and relocate 13 million migrants currently in the large cities to other small cities in Guangdong province (Liao, 2015).

### **A Historical Review**

At present, there are 1.5 million migrant workers in Guangzhou, and among them are 520,000 migrant children. In some districts, the migrant population exceeds the local population and the number of migrant children almost equals that of local children (Liang, 2011). Limited by the *Hukou* system, dozens of migrant children have to compete for one seat in many public schools. In the Tianhe District, for example, there are a total number of 69 public schools and primary schools. However, only 72% of migrant students are accepted in those schools.

One major problem is that local governments simply do not have a large enough budget to educate all migrant children. A government official of the Tianhe District said that the government had invested 1.2 billion yuan (190 million USD) in education in 2012. If the local government complied with the Two-Oriented policy, a one-time budget of nearly 100 million yuan (16 million USD) would be needed (Liu, 2012). Because of these financial limitations, there are not enough seats in public schools for migrant children. Public schools in the city accept less than 50% of the migrant children in the city. In addition, migrant children at the city's public schools have to pay for their school fee as well as a school sponsorship fee.

To make sure that migrant children receive an education, Guangzhou relies on private migrant schools by utilizing the market economy (Protecting Migrant Children's Rights, 2012). Because it was one of the pioneers of economic reform, Guangzhou was the first city that experienced large amounts of rural workers coming to the city. In order to ease the stress on educational and financial resources, the Guangzhou government opened a private education market at the early stage after the Open Door Policy. Private schools have existed in practice in Guangzhou since the 1980s (Zhang, 2009).

In 1993, the People's Congress Committee of Guangzhou issued the *Regulations on Setting up Schools by Social Sectors in Guangzhou*, which clarified the conditions, approval procedure, and management for private schools (Guangzhou Bureau of Education, 1997). The policy contributed to a rapid development of private schools for migrant children. By 2007, there were a total of 293 private migrant schools, most of which had been authorized with a license.

These migrant schools only require the migrant children to submit their rural Hukou; other documents are not necessary. Data reveals that 60% of migrant children in Guangzhou have been accepted in these schools (Tian & Wu, 2010). Although private migrant schools assume the responsibility for migrant children's education, only 33% of them get financial support from the Guangzhou government (Chen & Ma, 2011). Therefore, the school must charge tuition. For primary school migrant students, tuition and fees amount to about 4,000 yuan (635 USD) a year (Protecting Migrant Children's Rights, 2012), which is a large amount for migrant worker's family.

### **Model and Solutions**

The Guangzhou model can be summarized as a big market and small government. The free market plays a major role, and the government tends to remain backstage. Private business sectors act as major forces in migrant children's education, and the government

guarantees the legal status of migrant schools and ensures a free market for private migrant schools (Chen & Ma, 2011). Nonetheless, neither the public schools nor the private migrant schools receive appropriate funding from the Guangzhou government. Consequently, migrant families have to take on the financial burden of their children's educations. Migrant children in Guangzhou still have difficulty accessing an education from the public schools (Chen, 2014).

## **Changzhou Model**

### **About the City and the City Development Policy**

Changzhou is located in southern part of the Jiangsu Province at the center of the Yangtze River Delta, a famously affluent area in China. Changzhou has developed an equal model of the three sectors of industry, with the third sector and the second sector as the cornerstones (Changzhou Government, n.d. c; Changzhou Statistic Bureau, 2014). Both of these sectors require cheap laborers in order to develop.

In 2010, the permanent resident population of the city was about 4 million (Changzhou Government, n.d. b). Data from Changzhou Bureau of Statistics shows that in 2010, the migrant population was 167,000, making up 36.4% of the population (Changzhou Government, 2012). The overall level of education among them was relatively low; most of them had junior high school-level education. Most of the migrant workers are working in second- or third-sector industries. Around 184,000 migrants are between the ages of 1 and 14 (Changzhou Government, 2012).

### **A Historical Review**

In 2003, the Changzhou government proposed that migrant children should receive the same treatment as resident children. According to its development proposal, the *12th Five-Year Plan of Changzhou National Economic and Social Development*, the “Blue Sky Plan,” would bring the acceptance ratio of migrant children into public school to no less than

95% (Changzhou Development and Reform Commission, 2011). The Changzhou government has been taking a series of measures, including increasing financial support for migrant education, simplifying the transition process for migrant children, promoting equal treatment for migrant children, and monitoring the mechanism of enrollment for migrant children in order to better respond to demand.

### **Increasing Financial Support on Migrant Children's Education**

In 2014, Changzhou's public budget expenditure was 42 billion yuan (6.7 billion USD). Within this, education is the largest expense: six billion yuan (952 million USD) (Changzhou Government, n.d. c). In areas with concentrated migrant populations, the government built schools based on the ratios of one primary school for every 16,000 to 32,000 migrants, and one junior high school for every 45,000 to 72,000 migrants. Since 2006, Changzhou's government also placed one million yuan (158,000 USD) every year into a special fund for renovating facilities, equipment, and teacher training in order to accommodate migrant children in schools. In 2014, the local government invested 16 million yuan (2.5 million USD) on 44 primary and secondary schools as well as the expansion of 8 kindergartens (Geng, 2015).

### **Simplify Enrollment Process for Migrant Children**

According to the Changzhou Education Bureau (Zhang, 2012), there are only four documents required for migrant children to enroll at public schools in Changzhou: temporary resident certificate (no less than a year); employment letter (more than a year); proof of the family's permanent residence in their hometown; and child vaccine record. These documents are easy to obtain for the migrant workers who have a stable job at the Changzhou city.

### **Equal Treatment**

According to Geng (2015), the Changzhou government has been taking a leading role requiring public schools to admit all migrant children. Meanwhile, the government closed all

unqualified private migrant schools in 2014, and adopted sixteen private schools to its public school system. In accordance with the policy, the government set up strict requirements of all schools on fees and standards, and make sure that these were the same as that of local students. The government also implemented a “Five Unified” Plan in education management for migrant children: unified security management, unified curriculum, the same textbook, unified teacher training, and unified quality control. Additionally, migrant children and local students could enjoy a policy of “two free and one subsidy”: free tuition, free textbooks and exercise books, and a subsidy towards compulsory education for students from low-income families. In addition, migrant children who studied in Changzhou for a year can enroll in the Senior High School Entrance Exam, and enjoy the same admission policy as local resident students, even though high school education is not included in the nine-year education.

#### **Population Flow Monitoring for Future Migrant Children Education**

In 2014, in cooperation with the Public Security Bureau and Women’s Association, Changzhou Education Bureau has started to carry out the registration for migrant population aged from 3 to 16 years old (Geng, 2015). After registration, the data showed that there are about 190,000 migrant children in the city, which enhances the ability for better managing and planning the resources to build schools for migrant children. By the end of 2014, 100% of migrant children received compulsory education in Changzhou, 90.22% of them went to local public schools, and the rest went to migrant schools (Geng, 2015).

#### **Model & Solutions: Active Government, Full Acceptance, and Equal Treatment**

The solutions of the Changzhou government on the migrant children public school enrollment issue are: active government, full acceptance, and equal treatment. Active government refers to a major role played by the Changzhou government in strong education management planning, budget allocation, resource implementation, and administrative capacity. The number of school-age migrant children in Changzhou is significantly smaller

than in other cities. Thus, in a medium-sized city that has stable financial standing, the government faces less of a challenge.

### **Analysis of the Four Models**

In previous sections, I introduced the models of four cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Changzhou and how they solve issues related to migrant children in public school. This dissertation intends to unfold and explain their policies, and how those impact the goal of providing education for China's migrant children. The following section analyzes the reasons for these different models and reveals the complexity of the problem. The four models and the explanation are generalized in Table 4.2.

#### **City Size**

A large population brings pressure for infrastructure, public welfare, and city public security management. Controlling city size has become a priority for mega cities in China. Two policies issued by the Chinese Central Government, *Communist Part of China Central Committee: Decision on Deepening Reform of Major Issues in Overall Aspects* in 2013 and *National Planning on New Urbanization (2014-2020)* in 2014 made it clear that there was a need to strictly control population size at mega cities which have populations over 5 million (Xinhua Beijing, 2013; State Council, 2014a, b). These cities have to change their industry structure, especially moving labor-intensive industries out of the city. The cities must reform their household registration systems to control population. The 5 million threshold has become a benchmark for the planning of city and industry population.

Of the four cities described above, Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou have over 5 million people. Therefore, population control is the priority for their city planning in order to prevent them from becoming super mega cities. There is a difference in terms of the policy for migrant children's education between these three cities and Changzhou, which has only 4.7 million people.

Table 4.2

Four Models

City	Model	Explanations
Beijing	Lack of government support and elimination as the main approach	Beijing local government's policy towards the migrant children public school enrollment issue was not very active: migrant children have limited options to pursue public school education in the city, which summarized by some scholars as "a combination of block and distribution, preferences of block as the main stream". Historical changes and the mode indicate a tighten policy of Beijing, no longer allowing more migrant workers to stay, which is probably the interpretation for this more strict policy.
Shanghai	Strong government support and diversified approach	Shanghai government played a major role in solving the migrant children public school enrollment issue by providing strong support and developed a diversified approach, including strong financial support, efficient administrative power, and other flexible approaches. The inclusion of migrant schools in the public education management system of the government and the NGO model are both creative and effective methods to solve the issue.
Guangzhou	Big market and small government	The Guangzhou model can be summarized as big market and small government. Private business sectors have been acting as major forces in solving the migrant children education issue and the government guarantees the legal status of migrant schools and ensures a free market for private migrant schools. However, neither the public schools nor the private migrant schools receive appropriate funding from the Guangzhou government and migrant families have to take on the burden of extra costs.
Changzhou	Active government and equal treatment	The solutions of Changzhou model on the migrant children public school enrollment issue are: active government, full acceptance, and equal treatment. Changzhou government play a major role in a very strong education management planning, budget allocation, resources implementation and administrative capacity, so that migrant children can be fully accepted and equally treated by all schools within the jurisdiction of Changzhou.

## Demographic Structure

Population is generally considered as the engine of the economic and social development of a city. To be more precise, the ability of a city's economic development depends on the amount of labor force available. On the contrary, the scale of non-aged labor force serves as a negative factor for a city's development. Thus, the demographic structure has a rather important influence on a city and determines the city's residential attitude toward migration. The concept of "dependency ratio" refers to an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labor force and those typically in the labor force (the productive part). The lower the ratio, the more a city will benefit from its population. This lowers the need for migration. The higher the ratio, the more a city will suffer from population pressure. This leads to greater need for migrant workers.

If we compare the dependency ratio of Changzhou with Guangzhou, the former city's ratio is significantly higher than the latter. In 2014, the dependency ratio of Changzhou was 28.8% (Changzhou Statistic Bureau, 2015), 4.65% higher than that of Guangzhou, which was 24.15% (Chen, 2015). Changzhou was in greater need for migrant workers to serve as the city's labor force and help its construction, while Guangzhou was not. This reflects the fact that unlike Guangzhou, Changzhou administers a more flexible education policy towards migrant children.

The old-age-dependency ratio signifies a clearer story. While minors are a potential labor force, the elderly are no longer able to serve as a working force. The higher the old-age-dependency ratio is, the more immigration a city will need. According to *Beijing Public Health and Population Health Report 2014* published by Beijing Municipal Commission of Health and Family Planning (2015), the number of people with an age above 60 in Beijing was 3.01 million in 2014, 22.6% of the total number of registered residents. The aging problem is even more serious for Shanghai. By the end of 2014, the ratio was up to 28.8%,

which means one out of every three people was over 60 years old. From this aspect, it is clear why Shanghai, compared with Beijing, implements a more flexible education policy toward migrant children.

Mega cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou have attracted incredible numbers of workers. Due to migrant workers, their dependency ratio of permanent residence is far lower than other cities. If we count permanent migration into the case, the aging issue is not so urgent in Beijing and Shanghai (Beijing Municipal Commission of Health and Family Planning, 2015). In Beijing, the number of permanent residents above 60 was 3.216 million in 2014, 14.9% of the whole, which is lower than the national average of 15.5%. This number demonstrates that Beijing is not in need of migrant workers as expected, and that the migrant workers of Beijing are sufficient for the city's development.

Unlike other cities, Shanghai has kept a negative population growth since 1993 (Yu, 2015). Since 2006, Shanghai's registered labor population began to decrease with a low youth ratio of registered residents, meaning that the government has to bring in more young immigrants as a supplemental labor force. This is the reason why the local government created a policy to solve the public school enrollment problem for migrant children.

### **The Industry Structure of the City**

Different industries have different requirements for the amount of workers and their educational background. A city's industry structure will directly influence the type of immigrant population it needs and, by extension, its educational policy. For mega cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, tertiary industry accounts for a large proportion of economic growth (Beijing Science and Technology Statistics Information Center, n. d.). In the case of Beijing, the city needs talent for high-end service industries such as environment management and information delivery, computer service, and software. These are the sectors with the highest growth, with a percentage of 15.5% and 15.3%, followed by real estate,

commercial service, science research, technical service and geological survey, with the percentage of 7.2%, 7.1%, and 5.3% respectively (Beijing Science and Technology Statistics Information Center, n. d.).

After the financial crisis in 2008, the industry development of Beijing has become more high-end and urbanized. Commercial service and scientific service are taking a larger proportion of the tertiary industry, and have become a main industry like finance, wholesale and retail sales, information services, and real estate. As Beijing continues to transfer toward non-capital functions, its industry will tend to be more advanced, with modern high-end services taking a larger proportion and creating greater demand for high-level talents. However, in the case of Guangzhou in 2014, a considerable amount of job opportunities were service positions related to residential service, repairing, renting, commercial service, wholesale and retail, community and transportation, storage and postal services. This will influence the two cities' attitudes toward low-end industry workers as well as their attitudes toward migrant workers involved in tertiary industry.

In Changzhou, although tertiary industry is quite developed, community and transportation, wholesale and retail, residential service and other traditional services account for a large proportion of the service sector. In 2011, these traditional service industries lead 37% of the whole service sector, while emerging services like information services, finance, commercial services, and scientific services only accounted for 27.5% (Changzhou Statistic Bureau, 2012).

### **The Conflict of Policies**

Education policy for migrant children varies over the years. One reason is that the policy lags behind in responding city resources. For example, the policy for migrant children in Beijing and Shanghai reflects this situation. Beijing loosened education policy to migrant children but began to control the issue after accommodating a huge rush of migrant workers.

In the case of Shanghai, the quick increase of the migrant population has brought great pressure on the city's public services. Even for cities that need migrant workers as a supplement to the labor force, the resources of the city, especially the financial resources supporting public service, are a key factor regarding the issue of educational policies toward migrant children. Since the central government does not provide funding for migrant children, it is the local government's responsibility to solve the budget issue.

While education is considered one of the most important issues in public affairs and a priority for education policy makers, it may not be the priority for city legislators. In Beijing, during the 11th Five-Year Plan (from 2006 to 2010), Beijing's expenditure on education, science and technology, and social security and employment increased by 22.9%, 41.6%, and 18% respectively-- higher than local expenditure growth (Beijing Statistic Bureau, 2011). The data shows that the growth in expenditure for technology and science is larger than education, which implies that the priority for Beijing is economic transition.

Besides increased investment in technology and science, Beijing began to focus on the environment as the city faced issues of air pollution. Compared with 2013, Beijing's expenditure growth on education was 8.9% in 2014, while the growth on energy conservation and environment protection was up to 54.4%. This demonstrates that there are many issues for policy makers to consider regarding the growth of the economy. This situation also increases the challenge for the local government to use limited financial resources for the education of migrant children.

### **History, Positioning, Culture Traditions, and Value Preferences**

Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou in China carry important political purposes. The planning of these cities needs to be approved by the State Council, thus, the central government can optimize major resources. Therefore, the policy for educating migrant children is influenced by the positioning of the city. Beijing is a case in point.

While Beijing and Shanghai both have healthy financial standings, Beijing's approach to migrant education has been much less successful than Shanghai's. Some of the reasons for this are their different political roles within China. Beijing is a political center, and its main responsibility is to maintain political stability. The entrance of floating populations, especially migrant workers, to Beijing, creates challenges for the government. Officials are hesitant to enroll more migrant children in public schools in order to prevent the low-lying land effect, which attracts more migrant workers to come and stay in Beijing.

Shanghai faces less political pressure because it is a world financial center, rather than a political center. Compared to Beijing, political stability is not a major role for the city. Migrant workers could live in rural areas of the city. The Shanghai government adopts a more welcoming policy to migrant workers and is willing to work with NGOs to solve issues related to public school enrollment of migrant children.

Similar to Shanghai, Guangzhou does not have major responsibilities to maintain political stability. Far away from Beijing and close to Hong Kong, Guangzhou is mainly influenced by western thoughts and the market-based economy. Guangzhou is one of the first cities that also benefits from the economic reform and open door policy. With a high market economy, Guangzhou has primarily relied on a business model of private migrant schools to solve the issue of public school enrollment for migrant children.

Yang (2011) pointed out that the value preferences of local government leaders as well as historical and cultural traditions affect the local policies and approaches to solving these issues. Changzhou and Shanghai are located in the Yangtze River Delta, which is famous for valuing education and respecting intellectuals. Guangzhou, located in the Pearl River Delta region, has a long history of foreign trade instead of focusing on education.

The value preferences of local government education administrators also matter. In 2011, I interviewed Weiming Ding, the Director of Changzhou Education Bureau. Ding said

that the central government issued the two-oriented policy, but from his heart, he would try whatever he can to solve the problem, because, to him, there is no difference between migrant children and any other local children. Changzhou is famous for being the town of scholars, with a strong cultural and historical tradition based on education. Changzhou's heritage, in addition to the administrators' insistence on solving the issue, contributes to its solution model (W.Ding, personal communication, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011).

### **Discussion of the Models and the Recommendation of Model**

Understanding the differences of the models and the reasons behind them reveals the complexity of the issues related to the education of migrant children. Even though China is well known for its strong government roles in solving social issues, the four cities still illustrate four different approaches to the enrollment of migrant children in public schools. The migrant-children issue is not just an education issue. It is an issue associated with the development of society and the economy. It is a social issue. Therefore, challenges vary across cities, based on the different geographic locations, economy development levels, and local government leadership styles. It is not realistic to use one policy or a standard solution to solve this issue across the board.

Roughly, the Changzhou model may be applicable to cities with populations less than 5 million and with healthier financial standing. If this model is going to be adopted, we have to assume that the government officials of the city are willing to invest in education so that the legislation and measures can be made accordingly.

Meanwhile, when local government tackles the issue, they have to consider their financial budget and positioning. If there is any city with over 5 million people, they will have their own development priorities. It is increasingly difficult to use the Changzhou model due to the number of variables present, as well as the multiple city-specific issues that local government officials have to face. The policy may vary like a pendulum according to the

central government strategy and the changes of the development model. The local government has to rely heavily on other related policies and cannot develop a long lasting solution.

The model that I am advocating is similar to the Shanghai model. The Shanghai model allows the market and NGOs to get involved in the process of educating migrant children. The Shanghai government utilizes all possible social resources. However, during the process, since there are no uniform standards, migrant children experience different qualities of education at different schools. More recently, the Shanghai government has unified safety, teacher, and curriculum standards, which will ensure the migrant children receive quality education just like local children.

The Shanghai government later decided to adopt all-migrant schools to its public schools system. Nonetheless, the model that I am advocating does not have to take this step. The model that I propose includes a certain level of local government involvement. It is important for the local government to make the education standards for migrant children based on the general education circumstances. It is the free market system that involves all of the social sectors to solve the issue. Therefore, even though the economy and societal development vary greatly. There are local education standards that can ensure that migrant children receive the same quality of education as local children. In addition, the free market allows private schools to utilize a business method to solve the issue, as well as NGOs philanthropic institutions. The role of the government is to supervise these private schools and NGOs.

Money matters. Guangzhou opens the free market system to private sectors so private schools for migrant children become a business. Since the schools are profit-oriented, some of the migrant families cannot afford the expense for the private migrant schools. I suggest that the government allocate certain funds for migrant families. Similar to the education

voucher system in the U.S., the local government can provide funding for migrant families who cannot afford private school tuition and fees.

In sum, the recommended model is to utilize the free market system to involve all social sectors to help educate migrant children, including private sectors and NGOs. Local government, instead of the central government, should be responsible for making legislation to ensure the quality of the migrant schools and the education they provide.

### **Summary**

In Chapter Four, I focused on the models used by four cities that have each faced the migrant children education challenge. Three of them are large cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou; while Changzhou is a midsized city. After describing their basic population and land size as well as their economic wealth, I analyzed the four cities' different solutions to the issue of educating migrant children and aspects of these solutions caused by different orientation strategies, locations, and the population of migrant people. In the next chapter, I will summarize what I have done in the previous chapters. I will also elaborate on why we need to focus on migrant children education, and how this issue has been resolved through central and local governments in China. In addition, I will share my advice for public policy makers, the limitations of this dissertation, and a call for future research to build upon the foundation I have established here.

## **Chapter V: Solving Migrant Children Public School**

### **Enrollment Issue in Urban China**

In this final chapter, I will give an overview of the research in this dissertation, and apply Foucault's theory of power to understanding the complexity of the issue in this research. I will also share suggestions for policy makers and education researchers, discuss the limitation of this study, and call for future research.

### **Review of the Dissertation**

The overall goal of this dissertation was to better understand China's experience solving migrant children education issues, specifically the issue of city public school enrollment. The research aimed to investigate how the central and local governments create proper policies to ensure that migrant children can be enrolled in the local public education system, which is the main channel for these migrant children to receive quality education in China. Qualitative research methods, including content analysis and historical analysis, were employed in this dissertation. Policy-related documents at both the central and local governmental level have been reviewed to reflect the development of the *Hukou* system, compulsory education, and migrant children school enrollment challenge in China since 1981.

In Chapter 1, I began with a description of the critical issue of migrant children's public school enrollment in China by presenting the latest population data, and clarifying the difficulties of educating migrant children. The *Hukou* system is generally regarded as the direct cause of these difficulties. The *Hukou* system holds two functions: one is to record population-related information and the other is to manage the migration of populations, which is a product of China's unique planned economy. A more flexible *Hukou* system has come into being since 1978 as a response to the urgent need for a workforce in urban areas.

This change enables rural workers to work in cities regardless of their residential status, and their children are either brought to the city with them or left behind in their hometown.

The original Chinese basic educational system was designed for a fixed population structure, and under this old system the local city government where the migrant workers work at had no responsibility for providing education services to children without a local household registration. Beginning in 1996, to response to this challenge, the Chinese central government started to develop national policies to mitigate this local government responsibility issue. Step-by-step, the central government has developed specific regulations and laws stating that local government should be the “leading force” to ensure the enrollment of migrant children at the compulsory education stage in state-owned public schools. Nonetheless, challenges related to the enrollment of migrant children in public schools still exist.

This dissertation dove deeply into how the migrant children’s education issue has been addressed in major cities in China, with the hope of inspiring education policy makers and researchers to continue working to solve this issue. Existing scholarship usually focuses only on the guiding role of the central government, and looks into the issue mainly through the perspective of *Hukou*. Thus, scholars ignore the important role of local governments and fail to discuss efforts and struggles at the local level.

Through this research, I point out that China’s decentralized fiscal system hinders the progress of local governments from providing basic education to migrant children from a financial perspective. The decentralized fiscal system in China is a tool for the central government to maintain a strong administration on taxes. The tax sharing system is the key function to maintain the actual “centralized” system. Under this tax sharing system, taxes are collected from the county to the city, and from the city to the province. In addition, the local government is responsible for most public service expenditures, while they actually reserve a

small share of the revenue. Therefore, the financial standing of the local government determines how much of its budget it can spend on educating migrant children.

Additionally, I compared China and the United States in terms of the collection and sources of education budgets for public schools. In the case of the US, the government at the level of state (equivalent to China's province) grants the largest part (45.6%) of funds for public schools. But in the case of China, the government at the level of county is responsible for most education funds with a percentage of up to 73%. Local governments in China suffer a much heavier financial challenge in managing compulsory education. The budget for public schools is mainly provided by the local government, in accordance with the size of the registered population within their jurisdiction. The cost for migrant children public school enrollment is an extra expenditure and has to be paid completely by the local government. Consequently, the local government lacks the motivation to solve the migrant children education issue. Under the background of expedited development, the local economic development is generally valued more than education to local officials. This explains that under the decentralized fiscal system, even after the nation has implemented a more relaxed household registration system, the migrant children's access to local public schools remains a challenge.

An understanding of the *Hukou* system and the decentralized fiscal system in China provides the background to see how the central government and different local governments are addressing the issue. In Chapter 3, I conducted a historical review of national policies towards migrant children education by analyzing each related national policy, stating its contributions, as well as pointing out its limitations. From existing scholarship, the development of national policies for migrant children education could be divided into four stages, including: the blank stage, the initial stage, the developmental stage, and the advancement stage.

Changes in national policy show China's trend toward putting more effort into migrant children education. The central government has made efforts to resolve the issue mainly through five strategies. The first strategy was to enforce executive orders and make institutional reforms. In China, the appointment and promotion of government officials is determined by higher-level government officials instead of locally registered residents. Thus, a top-down power structure exists. Such centralized power dynamics provide the local officials an incentive to carry out orders from the higher-level government, as they want to increase their performance evaluations and earn promotions. In this way, the central government's emphasis on the migrant education issue has inspired local government to perform better so that they can develop a strong reputation in the inter-government competition. Orders, such as producing a set of fiscal stimuli, enable policies like the "two-oriented" to operate effectively in local areas.

The second strategy was to reform the household registration system, pursuing a system that is more equal in terms of identity and separates basic public service benefits from the registration of the *Hukou* locality. To achieve a more equal *Hukou* system, policies have been created to remove *Hukou* requirements in townships and smaller cities. Therefore, more rural workers are able to register their *Hukou* in cities. To separate the provision of public services from *Hukou*, the central government worked out the *12th Five-Year Plan on National Basic Public Service System*, in which the state set goals to reform the basic public service system by clarifying local authority as the leading force in providing public services to immigrants. This plan required the local government to expand basic services to both temporary residents and permanent residents gradually, to allow qualified immigrants to enjoy equal urban services, and to have qualified migrant workers and their children involved in the local basic public service system in phases with certain focuses (State Council, 2012).

The third strategy was to streamline administration and delegate more power for financing education to provincial governments. This strategy advocates provincial planning for basic education because the government at the province level generally has a better understanding of local conditions than the central government. This is because their higher position in the decentralized fiscal system and centralized power structure enables them to develop balanced compulsory education by making full use of regional education resources. Funding can be provided to districts where education service is poor and provincial grants could be given with priorities to cities or townships embracing heavy fiscal burdens in having migrant children enrolled in local schools. Subsequently, cities with greater migration pressure could allocate enough spending on migrant children to ensure their right to equal education.

The fourth strategy was to strengthen supervisor power over education issues in a promoted evaluation system. The central government is now establishing a more scientific and standard evaluation system for education to eliminate the tardiness and ineffectiveness caused by the evaluation system implemented by the government. The strategy should be practiced by a professional supervisory institute or a third party, who could make a more independent assessment to judge the central and local government's performance in education. Thus, central policies can be better implemented to ensure the right for migrant children to receive compulsory education.

The fifth strategy was to provide fiscal incentives to the local governments to ease the extra financial burdens caused by the decentralized fiscal system. Specifically, extra funds would be awarded to the government of the province who ranks highest in the evaluation for the performance on migrant education.

Additionally, there are limitations of the central government's policies. The first challenge is that loosening the *Hukou* requirement is far from sufficient since the problem lies

in the need for the same quality of public services. The second challenge is the financial issue resulting from the education finance system. The incentive funds and transfer payments for migrant children education from the central government are inadequate, since the local government has to pay the extra bill from its own budget. The third challenge is the human factor. If the local officer in charge of education tends to take some risks, they will probably perform positively in solving the issue. On the contrary, an officer with risk aversion holds a conservative attitude and is afraid that better education service for migrant children will encourage more migrant parents to bring their children to the city.

To further study the issue from the perspective of the local government, I chose four cities to examine their own education policy toward migrant children in Chapter 4. These four cities all use unique strategies in dealing with the issue. Beijing is risk-averse and has implemented tight policies aiming to eliminate the migrant education problem, such as complicating the application process to public schools. Shanghai serves as an example of strong support and has created a good solution involving different sectors in the society. Guangzhou adopted a “big free market and small government” strategy, meaning the local government allows the issue to be handled mainly by the market and leaves a high financial burden to migrant parents. Changzhou, a medium-sized city, accepts all migrant children and provides them with equal quality education with the government as a strong backup. I analyzed how these different strategies evolved from the policies published by each city. For each city, my study started with the basic information, then I reviewed the education policies over the recent years, and summarized their features.

In the case of Beijing, since it is the capital of the country and suffers from a large increase in population, the city adopted a quite conservative attitude and even set administrative barriers because it wants to control the number of migrants. The current demographic structure of Beijing is already able to maintain an ideal dependency ratio (which

includes permanent migration) and, thus, it needs no more migrant workers. Stability is Beijing's No.1 priority and as migrant populations are thought to be an unstable factor, the government is reluctant to play an active role.

In the case of Shanghai, since this national economic center is going through a serious aging problem, its migrant policy is more open and flexible. It seeks to solve the problem rather than eliminate it. The local government has invested considerably in migrant education by making a budget for migrant children. Additionally, Shanghai's highly developed market economy also results in the welcoming of funds from other social sectors.

As for Guangzhou, being a pioneer of a market-based economy with a long history of accommodating migrant workers, the government leaves the issue to be solved mainly by private schools in a free market, indicating a well-developed market-based economy like Shanghai and an ideology that is influenced by western thought.

In the case of Changzhou, where the government has almost perfectly solved the issue, I explained the two reasons why the local government promotes positive policies towards migrant children education. One is that the city is of medium size with no urgent need of controlling the population, and even needs a stronger labor force to match its development. The other reason is that Changzhou, like other cities in the Yangtze River Delta, has a tradition of valuing education, which leads the city to adopt a more positive policy than Guangzhou, as the latter city has a long history of doing foreign trade instead of focusing on education.

By comparing the four cities' strategies and analyzing the reasons why they react differently to the same migrant education issue, I have found that size, demographic structure, industry structure, and resources, as well as the history, positioning, cultural traditions, and value preferences of a city are factors that the local government will take into consideration

in the decision-making process. These factors determine how much importance will be attached to the education issue in a city's overall planning.

The study of the local government policies further confirmed that the *Hukou* system is not the only cause of the migrant children education issue, but it hinders the solution. The tax sharing system regulates that local governments allocate a certain amount of the annual revenue from the city for education expenses. While each city has its own priorities on providing its public services and has limited financial support from the central government, it still has to solve the migrant children public school issue with its limited resources in face of the influx of migrant children.

The *Hukou* system has been reformed to support the implementation of a "two-oriented" policy ever since the introduction of the State Council's Decision of Basic Education Reform and Development in 2001, but some (or even many) local governments still fail to ensure that migrant children are enrolled in local public schools. The issue is that local governments may not have enough funding to provide for the extra cost of migration. Since each city has its own priorities, education may not be so critical for a particular local government's working plan, let alone the education issue for migrant children. As education does not necessarily rank near the top on a city's planning list, and each city has different development priorities, the local government's spending on the migrant children education issue is largely determined by its financial condition and its values.

The four models provide insight when designing a proper solution for a city facing the issue of migrant children education, especially for public school enrollment. To develop a long lasting solution to the issue, the local government should first make legislation to ensure the quality of the migrant school. This is the common point in all of the cases and is clearly stated by the central government. I suggest a new model where local governments serve as

the supervisors that set up education standards based on the local situation, and fully mobilize the free market system to involve all social sectors, including private sectors and NGOs.

### **Foucault's Theory of Power and Understanding Policy Differences**

Power relations between central and local governments in China have been widely perceived as a top-down mechanism in which the central government controls the local governments. Nonetheless, this study reveals how the implementation of central policies differs from city to city. There is resistance from the local level in face of central government policy on one hand. On the other hand, there is also innovation on the policy from the local government level. Furthermore, there is diversification of policies for solving migrant children's education from different local governments. All of these phenomena challenge this claim that there is no autonomy from the national government for the local governments to make their own policies to solve the migrant children's education issue. The local governments have the power to solve the issue in their own way.

Foucault's (1995) concept of power provides a tool for us to understand the power dynamics between central governments and local governments, as well as the diversification and innovation for local governments. For Foucault, modern power is a process of negotiation instead of a top-down strategy or dictatorship, so that solving the issue of enrolling migrant children in public schools is an ongoing power creation and negotiation, instead of a one-time dictatorial policy.

The concept of modern power helps us to perceive the power operations at the local government level. Foucault's (1978) study on the genealogy of modern power provides a broad view of power, positing that power is not only limited within the sovereign power. Modern power is created through everyday social practice. When applied to the complexity of the migrant children's education issue, the variation of policy implementation and innovation of solutions from local governments are the manifestations of the creation and

operation of powers from the local government level. In this dissertation, policy has become another name for power.

Secondly, in this dissertation, I attempted to apply Foucault's concept of modern power to understand the complexity of the solutions to the migrant children's issue. We need to confine the power discussion in the public service area not solely to areas such as national defense or national securities, but to issues that the local governments are not major actors in solving. It is important to understand the particularity of the migrant children issue because it is a public service issue. The central government will not and cannot solve the actual issues on site so they have to rely on local governments to tackle the issue. The policy documents that I reviewed in Chapter 3 support this claim that the policies that the central government issued provided a guideline for local governments. Specifically, the two orientated policies set up the major approach to solve the issue but also leave space for local governments to be innovative. Therefore, the policy creates the possibility of the creation of power in the local government for this social issue. Yang (2011) also mentioned that the central government provides policy value, principle, and political resources, but it is the local governments who face public pressure to innovate while provide public service.

Thirdly, power is a process of negotiation instead of a simple top-down strategy. In the process of reviewing the policy from local governments solving the issue of enrolling migrant children in public schools, we see flexibility on how each local government handles the issue. Beijing is trying to limit the enrollment of migrant children in public schools due to limited public resources. Shanghai is mobilizing all social sectors to solve the issue. Guangzhou relies heavily on the market mechanism, where private sectors are actively involved in the solution process. In Changzhou, through the relocation of public resources, the government takes care of every aspect of the migrant children's education issue.

In other words, the variation of policies reflects that the power in China operates in a multi-directional fashion. While the central government makes the national policy, the local governments produce power during the process, particularly when they are dealing with the issue based on local experiences and local resources. There is heavy consideration on local interests. The diversity of the models based on the diversity of the local resources signifies that their power has autonomy and can be created.

Lastly, power is a process of production and thus power itself continues to constitute its organization through this process. Traditionally, power is thought of as “owned” because of governmental hierarchy. The modern concept of power perceives power as dynamic, not static. In the migrant children’s education situation, when the central government faces real world challenges, because of a lack of flexibility and specificity, it is impossible for it to make one policy to fit every city. Consequently, the local government is the real problem-solver, and during the problem solving process, it creates its own power. The local government understands its background and creates policies that are targeted to the people affected by the issue in the area. In other words, they know what is really happening on site. On the other hand, since it is a local issue, it is the local government that invests most of its resources into it, both of which helps them strengthen the local government’s power and authority on the issue.

### **Suggestions for Policy Makers and Education Researchers**

Based on the research surrounding the issue of migrant children education in China that I conducted, here are some suggestions that I would like to propose to policy makers and education researchers.

1) Hold a holistic view. For education researchers, solving the migrant children enrollment issue is the priority but it may not be for the government policy makers. For the government policy makers, they have to use a holistic view to look into the issues. In other

words, they have to evaluate the social background, the interested parties, and how each policy will trigger other social issues in the society. Especially for education policy makers, the migrant children education issue is not the only education issue. Public policy is the art of balancing powers. To see issues in a holistic way will actually help to promote the progress of solutions and lessen the pressure on education policy makers.

Using the Chinese government for example can help. The ten years concerning the migrant children education issue are ten years of rapid social development, but also coupled with various social issues. Central governments and local governments have been trying to catch up regarding the development of public services. Education is just one of them, as public health, employment, housing, and recent attention to environmental protection have also been concerns. Policy makers have to face the pressure from migrant workers, but also other stakeholders, such as the aging population, unemployed youth, etc. Making progressive policies may not help solve the challenge, but instead it may hurt the interests of other stakeholders. In addition, aggressive policies may create new social issues, because social resources can vary over short amounts of time.

Therefore, during the process of making education policy, I recommend that the policy makers start from a holistic view of city development, and not solely focus on immediate solutions or advocate for just solving the issue in education. Rather, I encourage them to evaluate the influence of the current education policy on other public policies at the same time and foresee how these education policies may affect future generations.

2) Understand the policy making process. The importance of education as a public service varies according to different countries, cities, and leaders, partly because of the local history and culture, and partly because of the uniqueness of the leaders. Education researchers and policy makers need to learn to be resilient and flexible, to consider the history and culture of the country and the background of the city, and to avoid rushing into the issue

to come up with a hasty solution. Understanding the maneuvering of the policy-making process will help the promotion of policy change. The discussion in previous chapters reveals that individual opinions of key Chinese government officials play crucial roles in the policy making process. Therefore, understanding the interests and goals of the key government officials will help policy makers solve the issues.

Admittedly, different countries have different political systems. Being aware of the social environments, the interests of policy decision makers, campaign models, and the development plans of the country will help the policies become developed and promoted. Pursuing help by turning to the media may not be a productive solution in China to solve social issues, but it may be very influential in the United States. Therefore, understanding the complex policy making process under these unique social conditions will help education researchers and education policy makers to promote the progress of social issues.

3) Focus on local solutions. Not only in China, but also in many other countries, every city is unique. Solving education issues does not mean using one single policy to fit into all places, but rather to understand the specificity of the local conditions, and to tailor policies to fit into the needs of the area.

In China, Guangzhou and Beijing both have a migrant children education issue. Nonetheless, because Guangzhou is adaptive to a free market economic model while Beijing is more conservative in social policy, the policy solutions vary greatly. Education researchers and policy makers have to be aware of this kind of information to develop the appropriate policy. For example, in China, journalists may bring their own perspective or bias into the local area and the report may not reflect the big picture of the issue. Therefore, it is crucial for education researchers and policy makers to solicit information from multiple perspectives and sources including site visits and conversations with the local people and government officials to have firsthand information and an overall perspective.

## **Limitations of the Study**

This research provides an overview of the policy toward the migrant children urban public school enrollment in China, presenting a starting point for understanding the migrant children's education issue in China. It was neither the goal of this research to investigate how the policy was created, nor to look into a specific city to delve into the struggle of power relations in solving this issue. For a dissertation, it is impossible to cover every topic in one research project, so the focus of this research project is to develop an overview of policies and discussions.

Although this research has reached its goal, I am still aware there are some unavoidable limitations. My biggest struggle came from my lack of understanding the complexity of the issue. It is during the research process that I found out the migrant children issue has many layers. For example, I did not realize that even within the city of Beijing, different districts have different approaches to solving the migrant children issue. A detailed analysis of how each district handles the issue needs to be examined to fully comprehend the complexity, and thus my research has limitations on its observation, for my study only applies to the city level and not to the individual districts. The second challenge that I ran into was restricted access to data related to city population and number of migrant children. These numbers are not public information published from an authority department in China, so some of the numbers are based on calculations that I collected from the national and city Bureau of Statistics. There is a risk that these numbers may not be accurate. For researchers who are interested in the migrant children issue, I would recommend another round of calculations to verify these numbers, as the population data has been updated each year. The last, but perhaps most important challenge is that the model that I recommend for public policy makers may not be applicable to other cities in China. Furthermore, the model cannot be duplicated in other areas around the world as it is rooted in the Chinese background.

Finally, when I discuss the power relations between the central and the local governments, I only discuss the power issue within the parameters of migrant children education solutions. There is indeed a limitation in that this specific situation may not be applicable to other power dynamic situations in China; however, it may provide some information for future research. Future researchers have to be aware of the limitations of this study.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

As this dissertation focuses mainly on the central and local government policies toward local public school enrollment for migrant children, other meaningful topics are left to be discussed further. For additional research, my suggestions include:

1) Acknowledge the difference among districts of the city. This dissertation aims to find out how central and local governments deal with the migrant children education issue. Nonetheless, it only gives a historical review of related policies from a macro perspective, and thus pays less attention to any particular city or even district-specific situations. It is important to consider that the migrant population is unevenly distributed within the city. This means each district may face different challenges when solving the same migrant issue. For example in Beijing, some district governments closed migrant schools even as the municipal government took out policies requiring migrant children to be enrolled in specialized migrant schools in the district where they live, while some districts continued to accept students in their local public schools. The disparity of the policies calls for further study. In addition, as each district has its own characteristics, it's essential to find out what factors matter during the decision-making process, and how different each district government will react toward the same policy. Future research work could also involve looking at what other cities within China have done.

2) Investigate power dynamics among stakeholders. This research is about the content and implementation of the policy itself. With a hope to better understand the complexity of

the migrant education issue, it would be meaningful to look into the decision-making process rather than simply present the policy outcome. Digging into the power dynamics among stakeholders, especially the relations between the central government and local government will help us better understand the incentives of policy-making. I would also suggest qualitative research, especially conversations and interviews with the policy makers and government officials. My colleague, Tingting Qi (2011) provided a certain perspective in her dissertation.

3) Data Collection. The data collection was the most challenging part of this study as most of the statistics of migrant workers could not be found in official documents. As a result, the statistics used in this research are mainly collected from news reports which imply the need for more solid research on the data collection. Using a content analysis method, this dissertation views the policy and its implementation through a descriptive approach. To further understand the policy development, field research and interviews would be needed, which will enable us to see the consideration a government holds when struggling to solve the migrant education issue.

4) A financial perspective. The study of public expenditure is the best way to observe a local government's preference regarding public policy. A quantitative analysis of expenditure can reflect the financial condition of different cities over time. The expenditure structure reflects the city's priorities from time to time and can show how the government balances education with other social services. As a result, we can further identify what kinds of resources are essential in solving education problems and have a better understanding of the basic factors that determine a city's development. This financial perspective needs further attention.

5) The role of NGOs. In the fourth part of this dissertation, NGOs are considered a meaningful method as they provide education services to migrant children in Shanghai. It is

necessary to find out to what extent NGOs exist in China right now that deal with the education of migrant children and how they may improve education conditions for migrant children. In addition, it is important to research how NGOs work with the central and local governments in China to solve the issue. Future research should be done in this area.

6) Comparison between China and other countries. This research only looks at the migrant children education policy in China. Future research can draw on comparisons between China and other countries that are facing similar migrant children education issues from a macro level. The lessons that can be learned from other countries can also be resources for policy makers in different countries including China.

7) Free Market system and its function in the migrant children education issue. As we learned in this study, Guangzhou has been mobilizing private schools to help solve the migrant children school enrollment challenge, and relies heavily on the free market system to tackle the issue. It is worth looking into how the free market system may be able to help solve the issue. An in-depth study is needed to look at both the pros and cons of the free market system in solving education issues, as well as the effectiveness of private schools in solving migrant children education issues; especially, whether the free market system can ensure education quality for migrant children.

### **Conclusion**

The issue of enrolling migrant children in public school, to some degree, reflects the short supply of education resources in cities with a population influx. As the government holds a limited financial budget to solve the problem, the government needs to involve all social sectors. Since public education is still the main form of education in China, the education supply is therefore determined by the governmental financial condition. Additionally, the local government education budget is created in accordance with its registered population, leading to another systematic obstacle that prevents migrant children

from going to local public schools. As a reference for education researchers and policy makers, a recommended model has been developed that both the central government and local government should develop the education standards of school, curriculum, and teachers to ensure quality education for migrant children, and local governments should be responsible for mobilizing all social sectors to get involved in solving the issue of migrant children's education, including private sectors and NGOs.

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