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Under The Dual System: Children of Rural-Hukou Migrants in China

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Abstract

Under The Dual System: Children of Rural-Hukou Migrants in China

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This dissertation examines the plight of children of rural-hukou migrants in contemporary China through using a rural-urban dual system perspective. Since the 1950s, after adopting the Stalinist development strategy, Chinese society has been divided into two parts: an urban society and a rural society through the implementation of the hukou system, which officially classifies Chinese citizens into two classes: rural-hukou holders and urban hukou holders. This dissertation contends that the rural-urban dual system has persisted through the present time and Chinese development is still based on the sacrifice of farmers. Unlike the Maoist Era when most farmers had no freedom of seeking urban employment, farmers are now allowed to work in the city. They are however “in the city but not of the city” because of the persisting dual system that still ties

them to the countryside. Consequently, studying the plight of children of rural-hukou migrants in China has to start from examining the Stalinist root of Chinese development.

This dissertation starts with outlining the root of Chinese development in the 1950s and elaborates the evolution of the dual-system-based development strategies under not only Mao but Deng. This dissertation explores under the rural-urban dual system, how a dual education system was created and maintained in one country and the education predicament of children of rural-hukou migrants in the major cities like Beijing and Shanghai. This dissertation further examines the “left-behind children” and argues they are “institutional orphans” in fact, pointing out that family-breakup is a new form of poverty. This study makes contribution to both the Third World development studies and China studies through shedding light on the political economy of Chinese development and rural-urban relations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	<i>iii</i>
List of Tables	<i>iv</i>
Glossary	<i>v</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1. A Mismatch between Promises and Reality.....	3
2. Behind the Hukou System: the “Invisible Walls”.....	11
3. Outline of Dissertation.....	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
1. A Review of the Migration Literature.....	15
1.1. The Hukou System and Chinese Development.....	15
1.2. The Social and Spatial Hierarchy under Hukou.....	16
1.3. Migrants under the Hukou System.....	18
2. Theoretical Foundations.....	24
2.1 The Rural-Urban Dual System.....	26
2.1.1 The Continuity of the Maoist Development Strategy.....	26
2.1.2 The Rural-Urban Dual System as the Foundation of Development.....	28
2.1.3 The Dual System since 1979.....	30
2.2 Rural-Hukou Children and Chinese Development Strategy.....	32
2.2.1 Rural-Hukou Children in the Literature.....	33
2.2.2 Rural-Hukou Children as the Reserve Army of Labor.....	36
3. Research Method and Data.....	38
Chapter 3: The Rural-Urban Dual System	43
1. The Origin and Evolution of the Dual System in China.....	44
1.1 The Rural-Urban Relations in the Pre-1949 Period.....	44
1.2 The Soviet Root of Rural-Urban Dual System.....	48
1.3 Adoption of Rural-Urban Dual System under Mao.....	51
1.4 An Outline of the Chinese Rural-Urban Dual System.....	56
2. The Persistence of Dual System in the Post-Mao Era: A New Format.....	61
2.1 The Making of the Mobile Labor: The Collective Land Ownership.....	61
2.2 The Making of the Migrant Labor: China Becoming the World’s Factory.....	67
2.3 Neoliberalism and Chinese Development: Dual System-Based Exploitation and Oppression.....	71
Chapter 4: Rural-Urban Dual Education System	74
1. “One Country, Two Systems”: National Education Policy.....	71
1.1 The Rationale: City (Industry) over Countryside (Agriculture).....	71
1.2 The Creation of Rural-Urban Dual Education System.....	79
2. The “Chinese Characteristics” of the Rural-Urban Dual Education System.....	83

2.1 The Dual Education System as Part of The Development Strategy.....	83
2.2 A Declining Rural Education System: Victim of the Reform only?.....	84
2.3 “Cherry-Picking” in Higher Learning Admission.....	87
3. Tied to the Countryside.....	93
3.1 “Educating New Farmers” Movements since the 1950s.....	95
3.2 Rural-Hukou Students: “Permanent” Farmers or Migrant Workers.....	100
4. Summary.....	102
Chapter 5: Migrant Children in the Major Cities.....	104
1. The Internal “Immigration” System in Shanghai and Beijing.....	106
1.1 Who are Eligible to Attend Public School in Shanghai?.....	107
1.2 Who are Eligible to Attend Public School in Beijing?.....	111
2. A Spatial and Demographic Analysis: Rural-Hukou Children in Beijing and Shanghai.....	115
2.1 Rural-Hukou Students in Beijing.....	117
2.2 Rural-Hukou Students in Shanghai.....	131
3. Summary.....	139
Chapter 6: The “Left-Behind” Children, Family-Breakup and the New Form of Poverty	142
1. The Left-Behind Children.....	142
1.1 The Profile of Left-Behind Children.....	142
1.2 Children Left-Behind: A Household Strategy?.....	147
2. The Nature of the Left-Behind Children.....	152
2.1 The Form of Family Redefined?.....	152
2.2 Forced Family Breakup Rather Than Voluntary.....	156
2.3 “Institutional Orphans” – Left-Behind Children.....	158
2.4 A New Form of Poverty: Family Breakup.....	177
3. Summary.....	180
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	182
1. A Summary of Findings.....	185
2. Limitations and Future Research.....	191
Bibliography.....	195
Appendix A: The Point System Implemented in Shanghai.....	212

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Urban Population Growth Trends and Projects (1980-2030).....	page 61
Figure 3.2 Spatial and Social Hierarchies in China since the 1950s.....	page 69
Figure 5.1 Social and Spatial Hierarchies in Chinese Society after 2014.....	page 105
Figure 5.2 Hukou Population and Non-Hukou Population in Beijing.....	page 118
Figure 5.3 Age Structure of Hukou Population vs. Non-Hukou Population in Beijing (2014)	page 121
Figure 5.4 Number of Schools and Population Increase in Beijing (1991 -2014).....	page 122
Figure 5.5 Number of Schools and Educational Land Use in Beijing (2004 -2014).....	page 122
Figure 5.6 Newborns in Beijing (1949-2014).....	page 123
Figure 5.7 Local Newborns and Number of Schools in Beijing (2000-2014).....	page 124
Figure 5.8 The Spatial Distribution of Non-Hukou Population in Beijing.....	page 126
Figure 5.9 The Spatial Distribution of Key Schools in Beijing.....	page 128
Figure 5.10 Educational Attainment of Migrant Children in Beijing.....	page 129
Figure 5.11 Educational Attainment of Children in Beijing.....	page 130
Figure 5.12 Age Structure of Population in Shanghai (hukou vs. non-hukou).....	page 131
Figure 5.13 Hukou Population vs. Non-Hukou Population in Shanghai.....	page 132
Figure 5.14 Number of Schools and Teachers Employed in Shanghai (1990-2014).....	page 134
Figure 5.15 Population Increase and Number of Schools in Shanghai (1990 -2014).....	page 136
Figure 5.16 Children's Education Attainment in Shanghai.....	page 138
Figure 5.17 Migrant Children's Educational Attainment in Shanghai.....	page 138
Figure 6.1 Composition of Chinese Rural Left-Behind Children by Sex and Age.....	page 146
Figure 6.2 Age Structure of Hukou Population Vs Non-hukou Population Beijing, 2014.....	page 172
Figure 6.3 Age Structure of Population in Shanghai Hukou vs. Non-Hukou Population (2010)	page 173

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 News Reports on the Children of Rural-Hukou Migrants.....	page 8
Table 3.1 Dual Economy and Dual Society under Mao (the 1950s – 1970s).....	page 58
Table 3.2 Differences and Changes in Social and Economic Characteristics between Rural and Urban Populations in China.....	page 58
Table 3.3 Hukou Types and Hukou Locations.....	page 59
Table 3.4 Non-Agricultural and Urban Populations and GDP (1949-2007).....	page 60
Table 3.5 Monthly Salary Differences in Major Provinces.....	page 70
Table 5.1 Population Increase in Beijing (Hukou vs. Non-Hukou).....	page 119
Table 5.2 The Increase of Hukou Population vs. Non-Hukou Population in Shanghai.....	page 133
Table 5.3 Numbers of Schools and Teacher Employed in Shanghai (1990-2014).....	page 135
Table 5.4 Population Increase and Number of Schools in Shanghai (1990 -2014).....	page 137
Table 6.1 Diaries of Left-Behind Children.....	page 171
Table 6.2 Beijing Policy on Enrollment of Non-hukou Elementary School Students.....	page 175

GLOSSARY

ACWF	All China Women's Federation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
NAA	Chinese National Audit Agency
NBS	Chinese National Bureau of Statistics
PRC	People's Republic of China
TVE	Township and Village Enterprise
UN	United Nations

Chapter 1 Introduction

In terms of the Third World development, the role of rural-urban relations plays a crucial role. For the Third World governments, it has been common that the growth of city-based economy is based on the sacrifice of the countryside and farmers. Compared with the city, less investment and infrastructure are made in the countryside. The latter, however, universally is always the supplier of raw materials and labor force to the former. Facing the grim reality in the countryside, Lipton (1977) famously argued that "...The most important class conflict in the poor countries of the world today is not between labor and capital. Nor is it between foreign and national interests. It is between rural classes and urban classes. The rural sector contains most of the poverty and most of the low-cost sources of potential advance; but the urban sector contains most of the articulateness, organization and power. So the urban classes have been able to win most of the rounds of the struggle with the countryside ...". In sum, the essential arguments Lipton made include 1. The development process in the Third World is systematically biased against the countryside and 2. This bias is deeply embedded in the political structure of these countries. In a word, the countryside is economically poor because it is politically powerless (Varshney 1993). Based on a global development perspective, McMichael (2012) observes that for the purpose of political and economic stability, Third World governments have widely adopted a development strategy that systematically privileges urban interests, from health care, education, employment to food supply.

As the largest developing country in the world, China and Chinese development are no exception to this Third World development norm in fact. What Lipton and McMichael have

observed in other developing countries also can be found in the contemporary Chinese development since the 1950s even though there are different approaches through which a variety of urban-biased policies are implemented. It is noteworthy that for Western development scholars, largely because China was closed to the West before the early 1980s, the trajectory of Chinese development under Mao was generally unknown to them until the beginning of the Era of Deng Xiaoping. As a result, in contemporary Third World development literature, China generally emerges as one of the newly industrialized countries and much of the literature only focuses on the Chinese ascendancy in recent years. In other words, to a great extent, the urban-biased foundation of Chinese development is commonly missing from the Third World development literature that is more focused on the impact of colonial history on the development of Africa, Latin America and South Asia, let alone the root of this foundation under Mao (see e.g., McMichael (2012)). There were just few scholars who studied Chinese development after the 1949 Revolution through the urban-bias perspective (see e.g., Nolan and White 1984, Oi 1993). Development scholars in the 1970s generally believed that the Maoist China was an exception to urban-biased development. For example, Lipton only noticed the rising of urban-biased development in China in as late as the 2000s (Eastwood and Lipton 2002). More importantly, much of the literature is more focusing on the description of existing rural-urban inequality instead of the political economy of rural-urban relations in China. Aiming to fill in this gap in the Third World development literature and China studies literature, this study examines the relationship between Chinese development and the political economy of rural-urban relations in China through the lens of children of rural-hukou migrants.

It is necessary to clarify that while the population of migrants in China consists of not only rural-hukou migrants but city-city migrants, the majority of them is rural-hukou migrants. For example, based on the latest Chinese Census data (2010), in Beijing and Shanghai, rural-hukou migrants largely make up from 75% to 80% of migrants living and working in these major cities. In this study, the focus is the children of rural-hukou migrants.

1. A Mismatch between Promises and Reality

The Chinese Communist Party and central government have claimed to promote a harmonious relationship between the city and the countryside based on equality and fairness for a while. On March 16, 2014, the State Council unveiled a long-awaited urbanization plan, which was for a period from 2014 through 2020¹. Since the date of release, the plan has drawn much attention from China scholars and observers because of its potential tremendous impact on not only China but the global economy. According to the State Council, the plan was “human centered” and stresses “fairness” and “equality” among all the Chinese citizens. In doing so, one of the major measures to be taken across the country in this plan was to “speed up the removal of rural-urban dual system” and let every Chinese citizen have a fair chance to enjoy the “fruits of urbanization and economic growth”, promising to allow approximately one hundred million migrants, including both rural and urban migrants, settle in the city. Specifically, the plan has made it clear that the *hukou* system as the major institutional arrangement that has created and maintained a huge rural-urban divide for decades will be reformed and essential social

¹ When the Chinese economy is eventually cooling down, promoting growth and stability through facilitating urbanization is considered one of the most effective approaches by the party and central government. The goal of allowing one hundred million rural migrants and others to settle in the city is to promote consumption and purchasing power instead of solely a harmonious society. http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-03/16/c_119791251.htm. Chan (2014), published by the Paulson Institute, has a more detailed review of this plan.

services/benefits will be provided to all Chinese people based on a principle of rural-urban equality.

For hundreds of millions of rural migrants, what really cheer them up are the following key improvements emphasized in the plan: *equal access to education, equal opportunity to employment service, equal social safety net, equal access to health care, and equal housing in the city* (Italics are mine). It is noteworthy that this promise is not something new for migrants, especially rural migrants. Since 2004 through 2014, in a row of eight years, the party's Central Committee has continuously issued eight central directives (i.e., *Zhonggongzhongyang yihao wenjian*) at the beginning of each year, explicitly requesting the reform or removal of "rural-urban dual system" and the reconstruction of rural-urban relationship². Accordingly, the Chinese State Council also has issued a series of development plans and administrative orders that require local governments to facilitate rural-urban "integration" to fulfill the requirements of ruling party³.

Facing a rapidly increasing population of children of migrants, as part of its "harmonious rural-urban relationship" policy, the Chinese authority has specifically emphasized the importance of providing rural-hukou children with quality education in its directives to local governments many times since the 1990s. For example, in as early as 1996, the Chinese National Commission of Education required the local government in migrant labor-receiving areas accept rural migrant children to their local public education system. In 1998, joined by the Ministry of

² Each year's party central directive No.1 is of extra importance because it is supposed to be used as a guideline for the entire year's work in China.

³ Since 2004, following party's directives, the State Council has kept requiring local government to improve the work condition and income for migrant workers in the city.

Public Security, the National Commission of Education reaffirmed the same instruction to the local governments. From 2001 through 2006, the State Council and the party's Central Committee continuously issued directives and administrative orders, requiring local governments to provide rural migrant children with access to public education in the city. In 2006, the *Education Act of People's Republic of China* was revised and specifically guaranteed the right to education for children who did not have local hukou. In rural areas, governments were required by the central government to establish boarding schools for children who are left behind by their migrant parents. Since then, many relevant regulative statutes and administrative orders have been passed and issued by the legislative bodies and governments at different levels across the country (Duan and Liang 2005, Han 2007, Yuan 2010).

The reality, however, has to be closely scrutinized. In fact, China is experiencing a crisis of migration-impacted rural-hukou children. A 2013 report released by *All-China Women's Federation* (ACWF2013), a government-backed national civil organization of Chinese women, unveiled a great deal of details about the status quo of China's migration-impacted rural-hukou children (i.e., persons aged 0-17), in which both children who lived with their migrant parents in city and children who were left-behind by their migrant parents in countryside were included⁴. According to the report, which was based on China's latest 2010 Census data, there were a total of 61 million rural-hukou children who were left behind by their migrant parents working in the city, making up 37.7 percent of rural child population and 21.9 percent of Chinese child population. As one of the earliest scholarly works on this special population group, Zhou and Duan (2006) defined "left-behind children" as "the child whose both parents or one of the

⁴ Officially, defined as "mass organization", ACWF is neither part of the party nor government. But the officials associated with it have to be appointed by the party.

parents have migrated”. The 2013 ACWF report specifically referred “left-behind children” to rural child who did not live with parents because parents migrated to other areas for work. Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has provided a more inclusive definition by defining child whose both parents or one of them had not lived with the child because of migration as “left-behind children” in general. And specifically, the children whose hukou were registered in the countryside were defined as “rural left-behind children”. In this study, in line with the NBS, the focus is the children of rural-hukou migrants. Of all the rural-hukou “left-behind” children, 54.1 percent of them were boys and 45.9 percent of them were girls. Geographically, the majority of rural-hukou left-behind children was distributed in major migrant labor-sending provinces such as Sichuan, Henan, Anhui, Guangdong and Hunan. Roughly 43.4 percent of them lived with their grandparents or other relatives when both their parents were in the city. For those who had single parent with them, they made up 53.3 percent of rural-hukou left-behind children. It is noteworthy that of the rural children whose parents were migrant workers, there were 2.1 million of them living alone without adult supervision, representing 3.4 percent of this quickly increasing population. At the same time, according to the report, there were 35.8 million migrant children in the city, 80.4 percent of whom, i.e., 28.8 million, were registered under rural hukou status. In some metropolitan areas the ratio between local children and migrant children has been unprecedentedly high. For instance, in Beijing, among every ten children, three to four of them are registered as non-local hukou. In Shanghai, this ratio has reached four out of ten. Among non-local children, the majority was rural-hukou migrant children.

The NBS 2013 report also provides us with some key figures about migration-impacted child population. First of all, no surprise, the absolute majority of migrant children came from the

countryside or was registered under *rural hukou*. And most of migrant children had been living in the city for a long time, ranging from 3.7 years to more than 6 years. Secondly, it was common that rural-to-urban migration was driven by chronic poverty in those remote less developed areas. As of 2010, it was estimated that there were approximately 70 million children living in 832 officially-defined poor rural counties, or in other words, the 832 poorest rural counties in China. In these counties, 36 percent of children were left behind by their migrant parents. Thirdly, based on the latest 2010 census data, there were 12.7 million children who were completely undocumented, having no any type of hukou registration since birth. The majority, up to 70% of this “undocumented” population, lived in the poorest rural counties (NBS 2013).

Obviously, the rural-urban relations in China are not as “harmonious” as government has promised. At this moment, an outsider can hardly help wondering what it means to be a rural-to-urban migrant child or a left-behind child in a poor Chinese rural village because these official reports do not give much detailed information and the central government is working so hard to promote the notion of “harmonious society”. Intuitively, it has been common knowledge among us that migrants, especially rural-to-urban migrants will inevitably experience some hard times when they arrive at the city and being a left-behind child without the care of parents definitely will not be something pleasant for some time. Some people might imagine that the hard times will be temporary and transitional and everything will be all right after migrants settle in the city. For example, in his influential 2011 book *Triumph of The City*, Harvard urban economist Edward Glaeser optimistically predicts that the plight of rural migrants will be a springboard for their prosperity in the future. Therefore migrating to a city will be the best solution for the poor in the Third World, according to him (Glaeser 2011). The future, however, is not that easy to predict and there oftentimes does not exist a simple linear relationship between migration and personal

development. In the Chinese case, even though these official reports I summarized above have provided some detailed descriptive statistics about China's migration-impacted rural-hukou children, the plight they are currently experiencing is far from being completely known to the public, not to mention to be systematically studied by scholars.

In addition, besides these reports exposing the dark side of rural-urban migration, the hard times rural-hukou children in China are suffering have never disappeared from Chinese and international media. The following (Table 1.1) is just a short list of forced school closures and sad stories of left-behind children reported by media since the new millennium, which to certain extent is able to reflect some aspects of these rural-hukou children's sufferings in not only the city but also the countryside.

Table 1.1 News Reports on the Children of Rural-Hukou Migrants

News Agency	Date	Title	Location
China.org.cn (中国网)	26-Jul-01	Shanghai to Close "Irregular Schools"	Shanghai
People's Daily (人民日报)	8-Aug-06	Which school to educate ten thousand migrant kids?	Beijing
Human Rights Watch	26-Sep-06	Beijing Closes Schools for Migrant Children in Pre-Olympic Clean-Up	Beijing
NPR	15-Nov-06	Chinese Migrant Children Face Educational Hurdles	Beijing
Asia News	16-Nov-06	300 private schools for migrant children to close down in Guangdong	Guangdong
New York Times	24-Jan-07	Shanghai moves to close private schools for migrants	Shanghai
The Guardian	14-Mar-10	Millions of Chinese rural migrants denied education for their children	Beijing

Reuters	11-Aug-11	Closure of migrant children schools in China sparks anguish	Beijing
Wall Street Journal	19-Aug-11	Will School Closures Prompt Migrants to Flee?	Beijing
Foreign Policy	1-May-12	China's left-behind children	China
South China Morning Post	6-Mar-13	Migrant families in Beijing forced to educate their children at unlicensed schools	Beijing
New York Times	2-Jun-13	Trade Schools Offer Hope for Rural Migrants in China	Beijing
Bloomberg	16-Jan-14	China Migrant Workers Face Hardship of Separation From Children	Guangdong
Wall Street Journal	17-Jan-14	Left-Behind Children of China's Migrant Workers Bear Grown-Up Burdens	China
CNN	4-Feb-14	China raises a generation of 'left-behind' children	China
Caixin (财新)	9-Sep-14	Gov't Again Cracks Down on Schools for Migrant Workers' Children	Beijing
Businessweek	10-Sep-14	The Change in China's Hukou Policy Hasn't Solved the Education Gap for Beijing's Migrant Children	Beijing
The Economist	17-Oct-15	China's Left-Behind: Little Match Children	Beijing
The Financial Times	27-Dec-15	China Migration: Children of A Revolution	Shaanxi
New York Times	29-Mar-16	China to Survey Children Left Behind by Migrant Workers	Beijing

According to the media listed above, it is clear that in fact migration-impacted rural children as part of China's massive migrant population are still experiencing many difficulties in their daily life, of which limited access to quality public education system is one of the most serious problems, despite central government's promise and endeavor to make improvements. It is

noteworthy that geographically, even though in some remote and less developed areas, migrant children who do not have local urban hukou are gradually allowed to enter the urban public education system and take the National Higher Learning Examination in the city, the door of big cities like Beijing and Shanghai are still tightly closed. For the majority of migrants and their children, who are concentrated in Eastern China, as a result, the door to the city is still tightly shut because those remote and less developed cities cannot provide them with sufficient employment opportunities even though their hukou policy has been relaxed.

For left-behind children in the countryside, the situation is even worse. In May 2015, in a rural township in Guizhou Province, four left-behind children of the same family who lived alone committed suicide (Xinhua News, June 11, 2015). On July 14, 2015, one of the most influential Chinese newspapers *New Beijing* reported that in the past three years, there were approximately 2,500 left-behind girls who were younger than 14 were sexually assaulted in Guangdong Province (New Beijing, July 13, 2015). The entire country was shocked by the news. After the accidents, central government immediately required local governments in labor-sending regions to take actions to prevent similar tragedies from happening again. Based on the directives, however, the major action to be taken is largely just creating a database for left-behind children and encouraging local governments to facilitate “the urban integration of rural migrants” at the same time (State Council 2016). Aiming to solve the crisis, rural governments have been using boarding schools as a solution for left-behind children in recent years. When old problems are still unsolved, new problems have quickly emerged, however. According to a recent report, a survey that interviewed more than 17,000 students revealed that bullying was rampant in rural boarding schools and left-behind children were commonly targeted by bullies

and village thugs (Caixin, May 10, 2016). Based on an investigation conducted by a NGO, among 33 million rural boarding school students, 60% of them are left-behind children. On average, they are 6-10cm (or 2.4-3.9 inches) shorter and 3-9kg (6.6-19.8 pounds) lighter than other children at the same age (Geluying 2015).

2. Behind Hukou: The “Invisible Walls”

Because the left-behind children related issues are already widely known in China, no exception, every time when there is a tragic story posted on the front page of media, China's hukou system is harshly criticized for impeding rural migrant children from receiving quality education in the city and forcing many of them to be left-behinds in the poor countryside. At this moment, however, while the problems caused by hukou have been increasingly known to the public, questions unanswered are emerging: why is it so hard for migrant children to attend public school in the major cities while hukou is under reform? Furthermore, if the hukou system were to be abolished soon across the country, would be rural-hukou children unconditionally granted equal right to quality education in the city? Why are so many rural children left behind by their parents in the countryside? Would left-behind children be able to live with their parents in those preferred major cities with no other barriers if hukou were to be removed? From a broader perspective, what might be the consequences upon Chinese society if the hukou system persists?

My review of the current migration literature in the second chapter shows that there is a blind spot among many insights. Specifically, even though the plight of rural-hukou children has drawn much scholarly attention and has been studied by China scholars since the late 1990s,

much of the literature is in a narrow alley: while criticizing the implementation of hukou or rigid bureaucracy, the nature of hukou and its broader relationship with . As a result, the mainstream view in the literature is commonly normative, equating the future of rural-hukou children to the reform of the hukou system and/or further calling for abolishing the system. For many, especially Western China scholars, hukou is seen as biased policy without seeing its deeper root in the Maoist development strategy. The “invisible walls” between city and countryside remain intact and even become stronger even though hukou is currently under reform (Chan 2008 and 2009). Current mainstream migration literature can barely explain why the reform of hukou cannot open the door of major cities to rural migrants even though the party and central government have been promoting “rural-urban integration”. Furthermore, when the Chinese development in recent decades is drawing increasing international attention among developing countries, the ignorance of hukou and the institutional arrangement behind it has caused various misunderstandings worldwide. For example, among developing countries, China is commonly portrayed as one that has successfully reduced rural poverty through facilitating cityward migration. If the impact of hukou and Chinese rural-urban dual system were taken into account, however, many would have a second thought. This study attempts to make contribution to understanding of Chinese development through focusing on what is behind the plight of children of rural-hukou migrants, or a perspective that is based on the hukou system in a broader context. From a broader sense, this study aims to reinterpret the Chinese development in the Third World development literature through examining the political economy of China’s rural-urban relations⁵.

3. Outline of Dissertation

⁵ In terms of Chinese development and the political economy of rural-urban relations in China, Yang and Cai (2000) have provided great insights by conceptualizing the Maoist development through three perspectives: the hukou system, People’s Commune and the State monopoly of grain purchase and sale.

The major research questions that constitute the main thread of this study are listed as follows:

1. Why is it so hard for children of rural-hukou migrants to attend public school in the major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai?
2. What is the nature of being left-behind and what contributes to the making of so many children left behind in the countryside? And
3. What is the relationship between the plight of children of rural-hukou migrants and contemporary Chinese development?

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. This chapter has introduced background information, research questions and the goals of this study, while briefly outlining the contribution this study will make to the literature. The second chapter reviews relevant migration literature and uses a theoretical framework that sees China's mega rural-urban dual system as part of the state development strategy. . The third chapter locates the history of the rural-urban dual system in China, pointing out that the rural-urban dual system was the result of the implementation of Stalinist state industrialization in the 1950s. This chapter also demonstrates the dual system has persisted after the Maoist Era. More importantly, the chapter points to the expansion and transformations of dual system in the post-Mao era. In chapter four, I argue that a rural-urban dual education system is one of the most important components of China's mega dual system. Through a thorough study of government education policy from 1949 to the present time, the chapter focuses on the creation of China's rural-urban dual education system in the 1950s and the consequences and how it works to buttress the dual system. The fifth chapter

presents an empirical analysis and illustrates how migrant children are segregated in Beijing and Shanghai. This chapter also provides a detailed introduction of dual system–based “floating population” management in these major cities. Chapter 6 focuses on the plight of left-behind children in the countryside, linking the tragedy of left-behind children with the implementation of rural-urban dual system. In this chapter, I perform a qualitative content analysis and discuss the nature of left-behind children and family breakup. Furthermore, while many believe that cityward migration has successfully alleviated poverty in rural China, I argue that as the consequence of dual system, a new type of poverty has emerged. In chapter seven, I will present the summary of conclusions and a brief research agenda for further study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

1. A Review of Migration Literature

Since migration-impacted rural-hukou children as dependents to their parents are part of China's population of rural-urban migrants, it is necessary to review the general literature on migration in China as the starting point of this study. Starting from the 1990s when rural-to-urban migrants began to flood the cities, especially those located in the coastal areas where foreign direct investment (FDI) was concentrated and the demand for cheap labor was high, there has been an increasingly large body of literature on this unprecedented phenomenon in both Chinese and international development and migration research community.

1.1 The Hukou System and Chinese Development

In general, there are primarily two lines of scholarship that study the issue. Overall, the first line of scholarship focuses on the hukou system as a representative of China's special institutional design. In this line of scholarship, rural-to-urban migration is viewed as the major driving force of China's industrialization and urbanization after the 1978 reform and therefore is an analytical variable of great importance when discussing the essential functions of the hukou system. Drawing on the special trajectories of urbanization and migration in China after 1949, Chan (1994) is one of the earliest scholarly works that shed light on and identify the unique characteristics of China's rural-to-urban migration and industrialization through studying China's unique institutional arrangement: the hukou system. According to Chan, the major

purpose of implementing hukou is not limited to population mobility control and demographic statistics as it used to be in traditional Chinese society. In fact, starting from the 1950s, it has been the foundation of the Maoist state development strategy. In other words, one of the most important insights in Chan (1994) is calling for scholarly attention to the Stalinist root of the Maoist development strategy which prioritized industrialization over agriculture through a rural-urban dual system. The goal of implementing such a system in China, according to Chan and Zhang (1999) that suggest a connection between hukou related policy-oriented research and rural-to- urban migration, is to serve “multiple state interests” through squeezing the natural and human resources of the rural sector to subsidize industrialization. Chan (2009) further links hukou with China’s tremendous success in facilitating economic growth (i.e., China became the World’s Factory) after the 1978 reform. It is noticeable that in recent years, it has been widely believed that decentralization is one of the main trends in China’s policy of urban governance. Consequently, the media commonly believes that China is about to abolish the hukou and allow completely free migration between the countryside and the city. Chan and Buckingham (2008), however, point out that the hukou system as one of the most important tools for the authoritarian state is not to be abolished. On the contrary, the hukou system is to be improved and strengthened at local level. This observation and conclusion are widely accepted in hukou-migration literature and by the media now (Wang 2014).

1.2 The Social and Spatial Hierarchy under Hukou

Cheng and Selden (1994) document the origin and evolution of the hukou system, suggesting that one of the critical consequences of it is the creation of new spatial hierarchies in Chinese

society after the 1950s. Treiman, Mason and Lavelly (2001) observe that before the 1978 Reform, China had demonstrated a unique way of urbanization on which the growth of the registered urban population was far from being synchronized with the growth of non-agricultural GDP and non-agricultural employment. After the 1978-Reform till recent years, even though rural-urban migration became comparatively easier than before, changing hukou status from “agricultural” status to “non-agricultural” status remained very difficult⁶. Exploring how farmers with rural hukou can change their hukou status, Wu and Treiman (2002) find that education is the key in one’s effort of changing hukou status and it is one of few channels for obtaining urban hukou status that the state allows. In a word, they argue that Chinese society is far from open due to low social mobility under the hukou system even though migration between the rural and urban has been common after the 1978 reform. Wu and Treiman (2007) confirm this finding again through their study that only a small portion of “rural men” could achieve higher social status and many were even not able to take advantage of their father’s achievements. Otherwise stated, through the state intervention, i.e., the implementation of hukou, the openness of Chinese society basically depends on the will of the state. Lu (2003 and 2004) trace the history of hukou in not only ancient but contemporary China and reviews the relationship between hukou and the emergence of migrants as a new social class. Lu (2003) points to the fact that China had a long history of using the labor force of rural migrants between the 1950s and 1970s. Interested in knowing whether people of different social classes in China have enjoyed the overall economic achievement differently, Treiman (2011) at first hypothesizes that the rural sector (i.e., population) would be greatly benefited because of the expansion of urban job market and

⁶ Based on a 2014 policy, China has stopped using the annotation of “Agricultural Hukou” and “Non-Agricultural Hukou” imprinted in the hukou book. Instead, a universal “Resident Hukou” is implemented across the country. The details about how to transfer the hukou status from “Agricultural Hukou” to “Non-Agricultural Hukou” before the 2014 reform are elaborated in Chan and Buckingham (2008).

massive rural-urban migration even though the industrial sector might have done better. But he soon notices that for “those who grew up in towns or cities but had rural hukou as children”, the situation is not that optimistic when both the countryside and the city are demonstrating a trend of upward growth though in different degrees. And therefore this special population should be studied outside the previous two sectors. Although due to the limit of his data size, Treiman is not able to give further explanation, the key issue has emerged: hukou seriously matters for migrants seeking personal development, especially rural migrants.

1.3 Migrants under Hukou

Another line of scholarship from mostly an empirical studies of the status quo of migrants, elaborated issues such as age, gender, income, marriage, origin of birth, history of career, and family life, etc., with the hukou status of migrants used as one of the variables in the analysis. Scholars in this line have studied the following questions:

Who are migrants? Since the beginning of the 1980s, when the “floating population” began to appear in Chinese cities across the country, as Chan (2012) points out, the study of China’s migration trends has been “plagued by misinterpretations and problems in the key data”. In other words, when doing research on China’s population of migrants, the first question that cannot be avoided no doubt should be “in terms of the hukou status, who are migrants?” Liang and White (1996) and Liang (2001) are two early articles that provide some detailed introduction about China’s population of rural migrants. The first one that primarily relies on a fertility and birth control survey provides a basic trend of population of migrants but without classifying who were

“floaters”. Liang (2001) makes some improvement and classifies “migrants” as “permanent” and “temporary”. This article, however, is still not able to clarify what “migrants” really means in the Chinese context. The authors have overlooked the centrality of the hukou system in shaping and defining migration in China. In other words, without knowing the role of hukou in Chinese society, one is not able to explain why migrants have to keep migrating between city and countryside. As a result, the conclusions of this paper become questionable. For example, there are seven tables about “migrants” used in this paper. While a couple of them have differentiated rural “migrants” from urban “migrants”, others are obviously only referring to urban to urban “migrants”. And sometimes, it is very hard to understand what category the author really refers to. It is clear that before any serious research on China’s population of migrants, the first thing to do is to clarify and categorize who are migrating. Aiming to present a workable foundation for the research of Chinese rural-urban migration, in a series of articles, Chan, Liu and Yang (1999), Chan and Zhang (1999), Chan (1999), and Chan (2012), Chan provides a useful classification of China’s migrants from the vantage point of the hukou system.

Why migrate? It is evident that because 1. the 1978 reform in China, based on the official definition, was basically an “economic system reform” that aimed to push China to adopt a market-oriented economic mechanism, and 2. population of migrants is widely acknowledged the backbone of China’s economic prosperity, much of the literature on the population of migrants is based on the perspectives of economics. For instance, Zhao (1999) argues that the decision of migration is purely market-driven and “based on comparing marginal returns to labor in farming and alternative employment”. To be specific, the author argues: 1. “the shortage of farmland and the abundance of household labor are among the most important determinants of

labor migration”; and 2. “rural taxation has a statistically significant effect on the migration decision”. In an earlier article, using migration data from Guangdong Province, Fan (1996) also draws the same conclusion by arguing economic opportunities are important explanations for the size and directions of population movement. Du et al (2005) however, point out that whether to find employment in the city also depends on other factors such as health conditions and economic status. For example, the authors find that the poorest “do not migrate” although for their marginal return might be even higher because they cannot afford the cost of cityward migration. Paying unique attention to the details of rural life, Zhao (2003) suggests that the social network in rural villages also is one of factors that facilitate outward migration. In recent years, it seems there has been less scholarly interest in studying the motivation of rural-to-urban migration in China and an agreement based on pure economic rationality has been unanimously reached. I would argue that at the micro-level, economic rationality is correct. But they have ignored the larger social contents in which those conflicts are created. , It is true that rural migrants move to the city for better income. Their lived experience in the city cannot be explained solely by income, however.

Stay in the city permanently or temporarily? For those new arrivals in the city from rural villages, do they intend to settle in the city permanently? Due to the increasing size of population of migrants and its potential impact on the city, there has been increasing interest in knowing whether migrants want to settle in the city. Some findings are beyond what many might have expected, i.e., migrants desperately want to permanently settle. Through extensive ethnographic investigation of migrant workers’ intentions in Fuzhou, Zhu (2007) suggests that due to “the combined effects of the intrinsic demand of the industrial society for temporary migrants” and

migrants' desire to maximize their economic profit, circular migration is their "voluntary" choice. After a large-scale survey in Beijing, similar to Zhu's findings, Zheng et al (2009) find that it is common that migrant workers in Beijing prefer smaller apartment units for the purpose of saving money and in general they are reluctant to spend too much cash in the city. On the contrary, they would like to send money to their rural home or invest in their family-based businesses in the countryside. The authors argue that different from what many have assumed, migrant workers consider the city where they could increase their income only rather than where they want to settle permanently. Fan et al. (2011) concur with this observation by commenting that the social relations in rural areas deserve attention in terms of studying the migration decision by farmers. In other words, while migrant workers are seeking more incomes from urban employment, the social network in their home village is still valuable asset to them and cannot be abandoned. For rural migrants working in the city, their household in rural villages can work as type of life-long security measure, argue the authors.

Where to stay in the city? The interest in studying the places where migrant workers can stay in the city is evident in the hukou-migration literature. It is well known that countless so-called *chengzhongcun* (i.e., villages-in-the-city) have mushroomed in major Chinese cities as a result of China's rapid economic growth, which is characterized by massive outward expansion of urban territory and the influx of cityward migrants since the late 1980s. Primarily working as a temporary shelter for migrant workers seeking employment in the city, these *chengzhongcun* have become where the city and the countryside interact, demonstrating a variety of conflicts in a transitional society. Such a unique scenario has been noticed by many scholars who are interested in China's urbanization in recent years (Zhang et al 2003, Lan 2007, and Wang et al

2010). In the literature, firstly, in explaining the incidence of chengzhongcun in the city, differentiating the experience from the West and Latin America, some scholars point out that chengzhongcun as the product of China's urbanization has to be studied from some unique perspectives. Specifically, land use system, policy of urbanization, and hukou, etc., from both the urban side and rural side must be taken into account to get a complete picture of chengzhongcun (Zhang et. al. 2003, Zhang 2011, Wu. et. al. 2013, Chung 2013). Secondly, various surveys have been conducted in chengzhongcun across the country and empirical data about life in chengzhongcun are quite rich now (Zheng et. al. 2009, Du and Li 2010, Hao 2015). Thirdly, there has been a long line of arguments about whether chengzhongcun should be demolished or kept for migrants (Song et. al. 2008, Liu et. al. 2010). Lastly, many have shown interest in delineating the spatial mobility of migrant workers that is primarily determined by the presence and geographic distribution of chengzhongcun.

Integrating into the cities? How migrant workers get used to the life in the city has been interesting to many scholars and China observers since the beginning of the waves of migration. Due to China's great urban-rural divide that has been lasting for more than a half century, no doubt it will be not easy for migrant workers to join urban society quickly and smoothly. Because it is not possible for rural migrants to be part of urban life immediately after migration, normally a transitional period and place is needed for those newcomers. Ma and Xiang (1998) is one of few earliest works that have systematically analyzed the emergence of chengzhongcun, or put simply, a special channel through which migrants gradually integrate themselves into urban life. Using the famous *Zhejiang Village* and *Henan Village* in Beijing as an example, the authors point out that a migrant's geographic origin, or native-place, plays an important role in the

process of the formation of clustered dwellings and social networks. Migrants from Zhejiang Province and Henan Province normally would go to where current residents are also from the same province to live and work because “people experience and develop affective bonds with geographic space and then turn it into place through long-term involvement in a particular locale” and “place has meanings whereas space is sterile”. While seeking employment opportunities in the city, finding a place where people could share the same cultural and living habits is another important method that can significantly contribute to developing the feeling of belonging. The process of integrating into the city, however, is not straightforward.

Can poverty be reduced through cityward migration? Although there has been an increasing interest in poverty-related issues in China, less attention is paid to the relationship between rural-urban migration and poverty reduction (Du et al. 2005, Adams and Page 2005). This is easy to understand: while poverty in either cities or rural villages can be quantitatively measured, it will be a tough job to track migrants who are highly mobile across the country and sometimes even across international borders. As some have acknowledged that rural poverty is being “urbanized” in some countries, however, in the Chinese context, the spatial distribution of poverty is different because of the hukou system. In the migration literature, there are just some scholars who have carefully studied whether migration is directly reducing poverty in poor rural areas in China while many just assume that there is already a presumptive positive correlation between migration and poverty reduction. Using two survey data sets, Du et al. (2005) suggest that on the one hand, for families that have relatives working in the city, they are more likely to be lifted out of poverty through migration. On the other, however, for the poorest, it is common that they just cannot afford to migrate and have to remain being poor. Therefore, according to the authors, to

what extent migration can help poor families in the countryside is actually unknown. Besides the economic factors, the effect of hukou as a key variable also deserves further study. Wang and Cai (2008) argue that when evaluating urban poverty, it does not matter if the income of rural-to-urban migrants are included because the change caused by it is just a minor. In other words, that means the income of rural migrants is close to that of average urbanites. This conclusion, however, might be misleading. In an earlier piece, Li (2004) has pointed out that if only income is measured, there are almost no migrants who are living under the official poverty line. If the capability of daily consumption is measured, however, in his study, normally more than fifty percent of migrants are living below the poverty line. At the same time, urbanites do not show such a pattern, however. The finding of Li (2004) reminds us of thinking about why migrants have to save so much or the role of hukou in their life.

2. Theoretical Foundations

In sum, it is clear that in the Chinese context, rural-to-urban migration and hukou are interwoven together and cannot be split, differentiating the Chinese migration from its international counterparts. Specifically, without using the hukou status as a pivot variable, analysis of rural-to-urban migration will go nowhere because China's internal "floating population" is a direct product of the hukou system. On the other hand, without using migration as the analytical context, the essential functions of hukou cannot be effectively understood and explained.

Since adult migrants in the city have been carefully studied, how about their children?

No doubt, children are our future and what they experience today can definitely reflect the future of a society. There is no way we could imagine a society in the future when today's children are not well educated and taken good care of. Specifically in the Chinese case there is no way by which the importance of one hundred million rural-hukou children to the stability and development of Chinese society can be overestimated. Children are related to their parents but they are also different from their parents in many aspects, e.g., their special educational and psychological need as children. For example, there has been a rich body of literature discussing how the experience of migration impacts children's physical and mental health (Wong et. al. 2008, Guo et. al. 2012, Wen and Lin 2012). In terms of education, unlike adults, for the purpose of a normal society, children of schooling age need to be educated. When their access to quality public education is denied in the city, the life of them and their parents is changed accordingly. As a result, the meaning of migration is not simply about those adults selling labor force in the city anymore. Accordingly, urban life becomes complex after the arrival of rural migrants, especially for those who have children. For children who are left behind in the countryside, physically and psychologically, they will definitely need parental care, supervision and normal family life. Obviously, facing an ocean of migrant children and left-behind children and their special needs, mainstream economism-based migration theories cannot offer any further help. In the following, I will use a theoretical framework, drawing on the work of Chan 1994, Chan 1999, Solinger 1999, Wu 2011 and Chinese scholars, a rural-urban dual system as the state development strategy (). Leaning on the insights in these scholars' works, specifically, I will expand the scope of current migration research: 1. from adult migrants to migration-impacted rural-hukou children and from hukou as simply a policy issue to the rural-urban dual system as the state development strategy. And 2. Based on this theoretical framework, rural-hukou children

are further analyzed. I argue that they will form the reserve army of migrant labor force, for the state and capital. As I mentioned before, this study begins with asking why rural-hukou migrant students are denied access to quality education in the cities and why so many children are left behind in the countryside. Without taking the dual system as the base for an in-depth analysis, one will not be able to answer these questions. An analysis of children of rural-hukou migrants will point to a fact that China cannot abolish the hukou system without dismantling the dual system. . Based on the use of the dual system as the framework, this dissertation will further elaborate how rural-urban dual system makes children of rural-hukou migrants next generation of migrant labor.

2.1 The Rural-Urban Dual System

2.1.1 The Continuity of the Maoist Development Strategy

In recent years, as a response to China's unprecedented rural-urban migration since the 1980s, there has been an increasingly large body of literature studying hundreds of millions cityward migrants and the impact of this great influx of rural migrants on the Chinese society. However, there are only some scholars who have shown research interest in interpreting and theorizing such an unprecedented phenomenon through analyzing the political economy of Chinese development, leaving a blind spot in the literature. Specifically, although hukou is frequently mentioned and discussed in migration studies literature, questions such as why the hukou system was implemented in the 1950s and if rural-urban dual system is a Chinese tradition remain unnoticed and ignored by some scholars. In other words, much of the literature automatically

draws a line between the Maoist years and the era of reform, assuming the two historical periods have nothing to do with each other. I contend that hukou is not simply a policy issue and the dual system behind it deserves more scholarly attention. Particularly, it is worthy to mention that the majority of the literature on the children of rural-hukou migrants finally falls in the category of normative narrative and treats hukou as a policy issue only, ignoring its roots and close relationship with the state development strategy.

To be specific, the continuity of the Maoist development strategy is ignored by many scholars studying migration in China. It is well known that it was in the Maoist era that China was divided into two systems: urban vs. rural, a start point of Chinese rural-urban dual system. Drawing on the Soviet experience, the former as the base for industrialization was supported at the cost of the latter through certain institutional arrangements, i.e., collectivization, state procurement of agricultural produces and hukou as the so-called “three chariots” (Yang and Cai 2000). But how this Stalinist-Maoist strategy that aimed to facilitate industrialization has persisted and its relations with migration and hukou are largely unnoticed in the literature. On migration, some research has completely ignored the current presence of the dual system (see e.g., Murphy 2002 and Fan 2008). As a result, they can neither accurately explain why there has been a massive circular migration since the 1990s nor why rural-urban migrants have to finally go back to their rural villages. Without realizing the role of the dual system, forced circular migration is described by them as a reasonable strategy based on pure economic rationality to avoid hukou or a completely voluntary personal choice. At the same time, the split-household is being described as a valid strategy in which both migrant parents and left-behind children are playing a win-win game at nobody’s cost (see e.g., Murphy 2014).

Without knowing the long-time effect of dual system in China, migration is commonly considered as an effective way of avoiding hukou and poverty (see Zhang 2004 and Meng et al 2010). Studies supported by International institutions such as the United Nations are also overoptimistic about how migration can improve mobility of the poor and the prospect of global poverty reduction. Adams and Page (2005) claim that they have used longitudinal data from seventy-one countries and conclude that remittances can effectively reduce poverty. However, for cityward migrants, either Chinese or international, a short time period will not be able to predict their future. In the Chinese context, even though migrants could have more income through taking up urban jobs in the city for some time, for the migrants, their future has not been fundamentally changed. I contend that much of the literature has ignored the possibility that cash income is not able to offset the cost imposed by the dual system on rural migrants.

2.1.2 Rural-Urban Dual System as the Foundation of Development

In a word, China's rural-urban dual system can be defined as a mega architecture of industrialization and state development through which the country is officially divided as the city and the countryside through the implementation of hukou and other institutional arrangements. Accordingly, the country is governed by a dual system even though there is only one central government and ruling party. For one who is not familiar with China and this "Chinese Characteristic", South Africa's past apartheid could serve as a useful starting point (Alexander and Chan 2004). The difference between the former and the latter lies in that China's dual system is not about race or the color of the skin. Instead, in appearance, it is based on if one's residential address is in the city or the countryside, and one's occupation. In nature, it is based on

the Stalinist-Maoist development strategy against the countryside and peasantry. In practice, since 1958, almost a decade after the Chinese Communist Party took over the power in China, under the significant influence of the Soviet experience of industrialization, classical theory of centrally planned economy that viewed managing economic activities as a highly structured board game, an ideology of anti- bourgeois urban lifestyle, and due to high rate of unemployment in the cities in the late 1950s as well, a household registration system (i.e., the hukou system) that differentiates all the Chinese nationals as either “agricultural hukou” or “non-agricultural hukou” has been in use till today (Cheng and Selden 1994, Chan 1994 and 2009). Simply put, at that time one who lived in an area where major economic activities were agriculture-centric would fall into the category of “agricultural hukou” and would be required to be self-support of housing food, and services, etc., while one who lived in an industrialized area would be assigned a “non-agricultural hukou” with which employment was guaranteed and housing, food and services, etc., would be rationed by the state. In addition, until the centrally planned economy was officially abolished in the early 1990s, one of the defining characteristics of this rural-urban dual system was the strict prohibition of rural to urban migration. Based on the 1954 Chinese Constitution that divided the country into two parts: the city and the countryside, later it was the hukou system that split Chinese people into two groups in 1958. Gradually based on this sharp rural-urban divide, in terms of political, economic and social life at not only macro level but micro level, the Chinese government has developed and implemented a complex system of state control upon Chinese nationals since then (Chan 1994 and 2009, Wang 2005). Again, the ultimate goal of this Stalinist design has been to facilitate urban-based economy at the cost of the countryside and farmers since its birth. The dual system in China had remained unknown and a political taboo in research literature until the 1980s when some Chinese

scholars, government officials and China observers began to be outspoken about the causal relationship between the plight of Chinese people and the country's rigid institutional arrangements, especially the disastrous effect of the hukou system on the life of farmers in the countryside. In *Unbalanced China (shiheng de zhongguo)*, a collection of nation-wide investigation reports, for the first time a government official and a scholar, described how the life of Chinese people especially farmers were strictly constrained by hukou in fourteen aspects. After Guo and Liu (1990), in the 1990s and 2000s, more research interest in the dual system quickly emerged in both Chinese and international research community (see Lu 1991, Chan 1994, Chan and Zhang 1999, Chan 1999, Solinger 1999, and Wu 2011).

2.1.3 The Dual System since 1979

It is noteworthy that while various institutionalized segregation systems has been universally recognized illegal, Chinese rural-urban dual system still stands firmly nowadays and rural dwellers as the majority of Chinese population are still suffering from institutionalized discrimination in many aspects (Chan 1999, Wang 2005, Chan and Buckingham 2008, Chan 2009). More importantly, because of the extraordinary economic growth in China in the past three decades, it seems that the effect of rural-urban dual system has been largely forgotten in the literature on China and Chinese development. For many scholars, the hukou system is already not a matter because of an overall increase in income and increasing geographic mobility for the Chinese, let alone the dual system. While many scholars and their research, of whom Vogel (2011) stands out as a typical example, are hailing for the great achievements of Deng's reform since the late 1970s, it is undeniable that Deng's reform never touched the rural-urban dual

system although he advocated a political strategic line advocating shared wealth among Chinese nationals in his remarks. After Deng, there have been many official calls for reforming dual system in the Party's directives many times, they are, however, not able to eradicate the system because the entire state development is already tightly bundled with the dual system and cannot survive without it (Chan 2009 and 2010, Wang 2005 and 2010).

One of the most noted scholarly works that define China as a country embracing neoliberalism is Harvey (2005), in which China is viewed as the Eastern counterpart of Reagan-Thatcher's neoliberal revolution in the West. Harvey is definitely right in attributing the plight of Chinese working class to China's capitalist turn after the market-oriented reform. There is no way that one can deny that the reforms under leaders like Deng Xiaoping and later Zhu Rongji betrayed the interest of the Chinese working people. Succumbing to the requirements of the World Bank, IMF and WTO, it was the Chinese Communist Party and government that eventually legalized the exploitation and oppression of foreign/domestic capital upon Chinese working class. Of course, the exploitation and oppression of working class especially farmers was also legal in the Maoist era though implemented in a different way. In the line with Harvey and other critical scholars, there has been a long line of China scholars who study China's neoliberal turn and its impact on the Chinese society (e.g., Pun 2005, Kipnis 2007, Yan 2008, Wu 2010, and Ren 2013). While agreeing with these scholars in that China's neoliberal capitalist turn has to be responsible for increasing exploitation and oppression, I argue that the exploitation and oppression over working class, especially farmers actually dated back to the 1950s. In other words, today's rural migrants are not only the victim of capitalist political economy but also the victim of the persisting Stalinist-Maoist state development. Such a fact is often unnoticed by

some scholars. In this study, one of the major goals is to shed some light on the persistence of rural-urban dual system and to unveil a fact that even though China has adopted market economy, the dual system is still a determinative factor in Chinese people's life in many ways.

2.2 Rural-Hukou Children and Chinese Development Strategy

Thanks to the scholarly works by China scholars from a variety of disciplines and angles. Now we have greatly improved our empirical knowledge and understanding about Chinese migrants and rural-urban relations during China's unprecedented social, economic and political transformation. In terms of the children of rural-hukou migrants, since they are dependents to their migrant parents, it is fair and reasonable to assume that to a great extent, based on our knowledge about adult migrants, empirical studies are able to statistically explain much of the status quo of this special group. We have known that the majority of migration-impacted children are registered with rural hukou, just like the absolute majority of migrants are registered with rural hukou. We also have known where they came from, why they migrate, why children are left behind, their housing condition, how they are treated in the city, whether they have integrated into the city, etc. Scholars and policy makers now are able to take advantage of currently available knowledge and insights for further research and policy actions. Compared with the already huge body of literature on adult migrants and hukou, even though there is only limited amount of literature regarding the lived experience of migrant-impacted rural-hukou children at this moment, research interest on this topic has been quickly increasing in recent years. In the body of recent literature, there have been several lines of scholarship with a variety of focuses, of which the educational predicament of migrant students stands out immediately.

2.2.1 Rural-Hukou Children in the Literature

The marginalization of rural-hukou migrant students in the city has attracted extensive criticisms. Wang (2008) examines the increasing tension amidst urban residents, migrant students and limited educational resources, suggesting that the state take the responsibility of balancing the biased distribution of educational resources. Otherwise the consequences of the conflicts might endanger the stability and prosperity of Chinese society. Koo (2012) observes that although many migrant students have shown strong desire to achieve high educational attainment, they are still impeded by the hukou system and other discriminatory rules. Based on her years-long fieldwork in Beijing and Shanghai, Ming (2014) points out that even though some progress have been made in recent years, the hukou system is still the biggest barrier that obstructs migrant students from receiving quality education in the city. Investigating the experience of migrant students in Shanghai, a city which has been eager to sell its image of an open society, Lan (2014) points to the “segmented incorporation” as a strategy implemented in Shanghai’s public education system. While many have praised Shanghai for its openness to migrant children in terms of open public education system, Lan argues that hukou still seriously matters and the openness actually is quite limited and conditional in many hidden aspects. Furthermore, scholars are interested in knowing what the consequences would be in the case that migrant students are discriminated and have limited access to quality public education system in the city. There have been many “compare-and-contrasts” done by scholars. Using survey data and test scores collected from Shanghai, Chen and Feng (2013) study the difference between educational performance of migrant students and that of local hukou students. Their findings suggest that access to public education system is the key for a better educational performance

because the distribution of educational resources is seriously unbalanced between public schools and private schools for rural migrant children. In Chinese cities, private schools for the children of social elites are very expensive and are not covered in this study. On the other end, even though relatively cheap, private schools specifically for rural migrant students are widely believed the worst in the worst in terms of management, reliability and availability of educational resources. In a comparative study conducted by Lai et.al (2014), the educational performance of rural migrant students in Beijing is compared with that of rural students in Shaanxi Province. The authors surprisingly find that for those who just arrived at Beijing, they could easily outperform those students in rural Shaanxi. But gradually they were even outperformed by those rural students due to the lack of sufficient progress when living in Beijing. In other words, in this case study, it is the poor educational condition that obstructs migrant students from making necessary progress though they live in Beijing, the capital city of China, argue the authors.

In the literature, there are also other previously unnoticed aspects of migrant children that is drawing scholarly attention. Some scholars notice that there are some promising changes emerging in China's urban politics because of waves of migrants in recent decades. Kwong (2004) suggests that a brand new state-society relationship might be under development because of the educational hard times migrant students have suffered. But Migrants and their children are not just waiting for an answer from the government side. On the contrary, they have mobilized and taken advantage of a variety of resources to push the boundary line between different types of hukou through negotiations and other available strategies. Finally, she suggests the possibility of emergence of a civil society through the struggles of migrants, mostly middle class migrants.

A gender-based perspective has begun to draw much attention as well in recent years. While much of the literature on adult migrants is gender based, similar interest in migrant students is increasing. Goodburn (2014) contends that although many believe that children will be benefited through migration because of the increasing access to better health care, her research finds that the result of migration actually is highly gender-based. Specifically, the benefits obtained in migration applied to boys are not automatically applied to girls.

Based on my review of relevant literature, even though left-behind children in China had already appeared when the first wave of rural-to-urban migration hit the city in the late 1980s, it is only in recent years that more and more scholars are interested in studying the phenomenon, and the majority of relevant studies came out around and after 2005. In general, the research effort put in this field is still limited, in terms of the theorization of the plight of left-behind children. In the literature, at the beginning state, left-behind children were normally studied as part of left-behind population. There was less literature focused on left-behind children until recent years. For instance, Xiang (2007) summarizes that according to surveys, not only many individuals, including women, children and elders, are left-behind in the countryside, but also many rural communities as a whole are abandoned in the waves of cityward migration. Like other scholars, the author finally calls for a reform of China's rural-urban divide and free migration. The health condition of left-behind children, not only physical but psychological, has been the focus in this line of study. Jia and Tian (2010) link the strong feelings of loneliness as an abnormal mental status to left-behind rural children in China, suggesting that these who are left behind in the countryside are more likely to be at the highest risk of developing severe feeling of loneliness. Wen and Lin (2012) suggest that left-behind children are highly

disadvantaged in health, behavior, and school engagement after a comprehensive survey in which children from families of migrants and those from families of non-migrants are studied. In sum, even though there has been an increasingly large body of literature, what is lacking is a useful perspective to guide the development of a systematic theory on this urgent issue.

2.2.2 Rural-Hukou Children as the Reserve Army of Labor

In sum, these lines of scholarship are strong in portraying the hard times migration-impacted rural-hukou children are experiencing and relevant consequences. That said, from the perspective of the political economy of Chinese development, I argue that we also need to pay attention to the role of rural-hukou children in the production and reproduction of migrant labor force in Chinese development, which is a highly labor-intensive one. As Marx famously pointed out in *Capital*, unemployed and underemployed people were the *reserve army of labor* in capitalist society. Without the reserve army of labor, capitalist model of production would not be able to continue, let alone making profit. In his original words, Marx argued “if a surplus labouring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus-population becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalistic accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production” (Marx 1867). Following the insights of Marx, I suggest that when Chinese economy rapidly turns to a complicated hybrid economic model: state-led and market-driven, following their migrant parents, rural-hukou children are in fact the reserve army of labor for the state development as well. Even though migrant children are not in the market at this moment, the rural-urban dual system has predefined them as the next generation of migrant workers. In this sense, they are the reserve army of labor for the state and

capital. To be specific, for most of the children of rural-hukou parents, either migrant children in the city or left-behind children in the countryside, to be a migrant worker when they grow up will be the only career option. Without producing and reproducing a cheap and stable supply of migrant labor, the miracle of Chinese economy will not be able to survive (Chan 2009). On this issue, the Chinese state and capital have found a common ground in accumulating wealth. In practice, the government control over access to education becomes one of the most important approaches through which the formation of the reserve army of labor is guaranteed. During this process of the state-capital alliance, hukou and dual system play an important role even though originally they were not designed to be the accomplice of capital.

In this study, a focus of rural-hukou children is capable of reflecting how the rural-urban dual system, which I will elaborate later, has persisted generation after generation instead of having disappeared as many have assumed. The presence of the problems of the children of rural-hukou migrants is the undeniable evidence of the persistence of rural-urban dual system. Under the dual system, rural-hukou children have no other options but follow the life trajectory of their parents and become next generation of migrant workers for capital. When Chinese economy turns to state-led market, the hukou system and dual system can make the formation of the reserve army of migrant labor possible and effective. Without the help of the state, Chinese capitalist development cannot be that successful, and vice versa. Secondly, as I suggested before, studying the role of rural-hukou children helps us better understand the highly exploitive and oppressive nature of Chinese development, which I suggest is still upon the foundation rooted in the Stalinist-Maoist development doctrine, while market is another force of exploitation and oppression. In other words, I suggest that both Chinese migrant workers and their children are

the victims of China's state development and capitalist production. Thirdly, theorizing rural-hukou children as the reserve army of migrant labor force for Chinese development will expand our understanding in the reproduction of the increasing precariat class in not only the Chinese context but also the global context.

3. Research Method and Data

In this study, my contribution to Third World development studies, China Studies and geography, especially migration literature, will be made through answering these research questions by using a rural-urban dual system perspective as the analytical framework. I suggest that a thorough understanding of China's rural-urban dual system as the analytical framework and the foundation of analysis will help us better understand the nature of this crisis of rural-hukou children. Aiming to fill the gap in the literature, this dissertation interprets and theorizes Chinese rural-hukou children and their plight through examining the education predicament of migrant children in the city and plight of left-behind children in the countryside, respectively. Furthermore, I study rural-hukou children through analyzing and theorizing the political economy of Chinese development, i.e., hukou and rural-urban dual system as the state development strategy.

As part of my research plan, I spent summer 2013 in Shanghai to do some preliminary work, talking to rural migrant workers, rural-hukou children, urban-urban migrants, their children, urban-based social activists, rural migrant business owners and Shanghai-based scholars. Even though it was a field work before IRB approval and as a result, I cannot use the data I collected

during that trip, the theoretical framework of this dissertation was successfully tested at that time. Their identity as an outsider group is permanent for not only adults but also children who were born and raised in this city even though the hukou book has been redesigned. It was common that rural-hukou children had no interest in education because local key public schools would not accept them and they were not allowed to attend high school in Shanghai no matter how hard they had studied. When talking to some Shanghai-based local scholars, the information I received was the same, i.e., even though non-local hukou were accepted by public schools, which school and which class they could attend was planned rather than random decisions. For those who wanted to finish high school education, the only way to go was going back to the countryside and becoming left-behind children. The majority of them I interviewed, however, had chosen to stay in Shanghai and follow the career path of their parents, i.e., working as such as restaurant servers, hotel maids, security guards and street vendors, etc. When asked if they would like to stay in Shanghai permanently, the most common answer I received from adult migrants was “we do not belong to Shanghai and will go back to the countryside sooner or later”. Migrant children, however, were mostly confused when being asked the same question because they had no interest in moving back to the countryside but they also knew that they had no local urban hukou and it would be big problem for them sooner or later.

While using longitudinal data collected from adult migrants has been a popular research approach in the literature, I believe studying rural-hukou children will be a more productive approach in unveiling the persistence of rural-urban dual system. This study is not intended to record the details of rural-hukou children’s plight because their lived experience has been carefully recorded by many scholars. What I am more interested is studying how rural-urban

relations or the dual system has impacted their life. The logic applied here is clear: if children have to follow their parents' career path, which normally are associated with low-end urban jobs, it will be hard for us to believe that cityward migration has permanently changed the fate of rural-hukou people. In addition, witnessing the low social mobility of migrant children in Shanghai, a so-called world/global city in China and famous for its openness, also lead me to think about what the consequences in the future might be. Otherwise stated, what we can see is a social class that has limited future. How to theoretically understand such a social class is one of the key themes in this study.

For the purpose of a better understanding of rural-hukou children, at that time when visiting Shanghai, I also created a social media-based network that consisted of rural migrants, social activists, journalists and scholars. Through using this network of informants, I could effectively collect real-time information regarding the life of rural-hukou children, changing government policies, and scholar research findings to build stronger arguments for this study.

An important component of this study is education policy analysis. Aiming to find valid evidence that was able to prove the existence of rural-urban dual education system in China, reading page by page, I studied more than four thousand government education documents ranging from 1949 through the present day in the East Asia Library, University of Washington. Fortunately, many government education documents are already available on the internet as part of China's "open government" policy, I could conveniently compare and contrast all the key documents to make sure they were all accurate and valid. The online databases I frequently used

include the Chinese Communist Party News⁷, China Reform Data⁸, and The Ministry of Education⁹. The data sources listed above and analysis performed later helped me understand the role of dual education system in the Chinese development.

In this study, I also performed quantitative data analysis and data visualization through using China's latest Census data (2010) and the statistical yearbooks published and posted on the internet by Beijing and Shanghai. In addition, I also created maps showing the spatial distribution of certain populations and the changes of land use in Beijing, based on the data I collected from government agencies in Beijing. When studying the spatial distribution of so-called "key elementary schools", I collected the addresses of more than 100 "key elementary schools" in Beijing and geocoded them manually. Quantitative data analysis helped me explain how education policy is implemented and why migrant children are experiencing hard times in the major cities.

Lastly, content analysis is one of the research methods I am particularly interested. According to Krippendorff (1989), it is a research approach that aims to analyze data within a specific context in view of the meanings someone attributes to them, making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context by using either qualitative or quantitative methods. Weber (1990) has outlined major purposes for content analysis: for example, describe trends in communication content, reveal the focus on individual, group and societal attention, and identify the intentions and other characteristics of the communicator, etc. Stemler (2001) further suggests that technically, content analysis can be effectively performed through compressing many words

⁷ The Chinese Communist Party News can be accessed at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/>

⁸ China Reform Data can be accessed at <http://www.reformdata.org/index.html>

⁹ The Ministry of Education can be accessed at http://www.moe.edu.cn/jyb_xxgk/moe_1777/moe_307/

into few categories based on the rules of coding. In recent years, the plight of rural left-behind children has drawn increasing attention in China. As a result, besides government-led surveys and relevant publications, many scholars, reporters, NGOs and individuals also have invested much time on the issue and have either published prolifically or posted their findings on the internet. As a native Chinese speaker, Chinese materials-based content analysis has been a particular productive tool in my research. Specifically, in this study, the documents I am interested include 1. Relevant government documents; 2. Media reports, 3. Essays and investigation reports posted on the internet by NGO, activists, and individuals; and 4. Published diaries of left-behind children. Through using data from these four sources, I am able to provide a broad analysis to answer one of my major research questions: what is the nature of being left-behind and what contributes to the making of so many left-behind children in the countryside?

Chapter 3 The Rural-Urban Dual System

After the 1978 reform, there has been a popular trend in the literature to claim that China has turned to capitalism through its market reform (e.g., Huang 2008, Coase and Wang 2012). This line of scholarship, however, has seriously underestimated the path dependence of social and political transformation in China. No doubt, China has adopted market economy and some principles of neoliberalism in certain sectors since 1978. This is not the whole picture of the Chinese transformation, however. I contend that there is no way that we can simply equate Chinese development to that in the North America and Europe. Based on the study of rural-urban migration and particularly labor migration in China, we can see clearly that Chinese farmers are not only exploited and oppressed by international and domestic capital but the Stalinist-Maoist socialist state. In this study, I will focus on the role of the latter, hoping to light on the nature of Chinese development. I maintain that understanding the origin and role of rural-urban dual system as the foundation of the Stalinist-Maoist state development strategy is critical in correctly interpreting contemporary China's rural-urban dynamics and disparities, e.g., the educational predicament of rural-hukou children in the city and the plight of left-behind children in the countryside. I further suggest that even though it was the former Soviet Union that pioneered the rural-urban dual system as the fundamental state development strategy during its unprecedented industrialization in the 1920s - 1930s, in certain ways, the Chinese version of the dual system, which was borrowed from the Soviet development experience, has gone far beyond its Soviet precedent since then. More important, how the dual system in China has persisted for decades till the present time will be discussed in details. In a word, while much of the literature has paid attention to how China has dramatically transformed through adopting a capitalist model of production since 1978, much less scholarship has shown interest in studying what has remained

unchanged in the country. As a result, when interpreting the current crisis of rural children in China, the mainstream literature is confined within a narrow space that either only deals with policy issues (e.g., hukou) or criticizes the dark side of market transition. I, however, argue that as what Chan (2009) and Tang (2014) have pointed out, Chinese history cannot be simply split into two separate unrelated periods, i.e., the first thirty years (1949-1978) and the second thirty years (1979-the present). On the contrary, many of current issues in Chinese society can only be accurately understood and interpreted by looking at the Chinese development in the first thirty years. We have to carefully study the root of rural-urban dual system planted sixty years ago before we can comprehend contemporary Chinese development.

1. Origin and Evolution of the Dual System in China

1.1 Rural-Urban Relations in the Pre-1949 Period

Before the 1949 Communist Revolution, generally speaking, China's rural-urban relationship was quite different from what it appears nowadays. Instead of being divided, city and countryside were closely integrated to each other in terms of not only economic activities but also social mobility. Since the Shang Dynasty (1600s BC - 1046 BC), according to archaeological evidences collected in Sit (2009), life in cities had been tightly tied to agricultural activities in surrounding areas till the Song Dynasty (960-1127) when city-based commerce gradually grew and the size of cities kept increasing. In other words, in the early stage of Chinese civilization, when agriculture was the dominate role in Chinese economy and politics, the major function of the city was to facilitate agriculture in countryside and provide state government with stable revenue through a prosperous agricultural economy.. Investigating the evolution of

Chinese city system in the late nineteenth century, based on an economic and geographic perspective, Skinner (1977) famously argued that besides a well-known official administrative system, i.e., the Chinese provinces or in his words “official China”, there were also many regional economic systems that were centered by cities of various sizes across the country, i.e., the “natural structure of Chinese society”. For him, the Chinese Empire was supported by these two systems simultaneously. Specifically, applying geographer Walter Christaller’s theory of central place, his research emphasized the intimate relationship between the city and the countryside: the urban-rural continuum. In his view, administrative/capital cities were just “a subset of economic central places” and therefore mainly performed economic functions. Focusing on the relationship between arable land and population in the history of China, Chao (1986) interpreted how the changing ratio between arable land and population had impacted the process of urbanization in ancient China. He pointed out that when the population kept increasing, there were only limited amount of arable land available after the twelfth century. Consequently, surplus population emerged quickly and the efficiency of agriculture gradually became lower and lower. Compared with European societies, Chao suggested that conventional Chinese families found a different way of absorbing surplus population and as a result, migration was “minimal in Chinese society”. In terms of the major function of the city, Chao argued that Chinese cities were different from their European counterparts in that 1. While the European cities were mainly economic centers, Chinese cities had multiple functions: grid points of administrative network, strategic posts, markets and centers for manufacturing production; and 2. While there was a clear “rural-urban dichotomy” in Europe, to some extent, Chinese cities were “integrated with the countryside” through a “high degree of freedom” enjoyed by people when

choosing between “agricultural and nonagricultural occupations” and free migration between the two sectors.

Deviating from the economic and geographic factors, Deng (2012) has provided us with a unique perspective to understand the rural-urban relations in contemporary China through tracing the history of how the hukou system was created in Shanghai after the 1949 Communist Revolution. For Deng, the rural-urban relationship in China was completely changed under the Mao regime after 1949. In other words, the rural-urban relationship in contemporary China is unprecedented: for the first time, Chinese people are divided as two groups by the political ideology of a Leninist party-state system. Deng argues that “urban status”, which was created through the implementation of the hukou system, was granted to insiders, which generally meant party members, cadres and urban workers. With the “urban status”, insiders formed a new class that was politically trusted by the party and state. Based on this political reliability, insiders were entitled a variety of benefits. Farmers and other undesired people, however, were treated differently. Based on the ideology held by the party, they were labeled as a backward class and therefore were not politically advanced. Consequently, they became outsiders to the party and state, deprived of many rights in the 1950s such as private land ownership, which was promised by the party before 1949. In sum, what Deng believes is that the rural-urban relationship in China was politicized in the 1950s. In other words, unprecedentedly, Chinese people were categorized into two groups by using a political standard: people who were politically trustable and people who were politically non-trustable. Clearly, in Deng’s interpretation, the hukou system was the direct result of the implementation of class-struggle theory in Chinese society.

Besides economic, geographic and political factors, another critical perspective that can be used to assess rural-urban relationship in a society is social mobility measured between city and countryside. Fortunately, there is a rich body of literature on education and social mobility in ancient and modern China before 1949, even though not directly examined through the perspective of rural-urban relationship. Ho (1962/1967) is a seminal scholarly work that pioneered in studying social mobility between different social groups in Chinese history, investigating from 1368 to 1911, “the ladder of success” through measuring geographic origin and social status of jin-shi. For Ho, the major analytical variable used in his study is the number of jin-shi produced in the Imperial Examinations since the fourteenth century, specifically in the Ming Dynasty (1368 -1647) and the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). In general, even though Ho’s work primarily focuses on the changes of social mobility among major social groups in a historical period as long as five centuries, it is obvious that the geography of the production of jin-shi also plays a critical role in his analysis. In this sense, traditional rural-urban relationship in China can be assessed by using his data and conclusions. Based on his analysis, from 1368 to 1911, in the pool of jin-shi, i.e., soon-to-be appointed government officials, more than forty percent came from families that had no any relatives holding any office in three generations. Geographically, Hebei Province, including Beijing, the capital city of both the Ming Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty, never outperformed some provinces in the Southeast China, in terms of the number of jin-shi appointed. In the Ming Dynasty, the top three provinces were Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Jiangxi, respectively, which were far away from country’s political center. In the Qing Dynasty, the top three provinces were Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Hebei. For Ho and other scholars who study social mobility and the production of jin-shi in Chinese history, two of the widely acknowledged factors that had contributed to the outstanding performance of intellectuals

in the Southeast China were 1. the wide dissemination of early-ripening rice and 2. free migration across the country.

To summarize, it is clear that before the 1949 revolution, rural-urban relations in China were definitely not antagonistic and free rural-urban migration was part of people's life. If examined from the perspective of upward social mobility, generally speaking, since the creation of the Imperial Examination in the seventh century, one's social status, either rich or poor, and physical residence, either rural or urban, would not be a problem for being eligible to take the examinations and getting appointed by the royal court if proven qualified. It is worthy pointing out, fundamentally, in traditional Chinese society, both geographic and social mobility was low. When compared with the history of pre-modern period, the changes in today's China are unprecedented.

1.2 The Soviet Root of Rural-Urban Dual System

Shortly after the October Revolution in 1917 and taking over the largest country in the world, for the leaders of the Bolsheviks, the biggest crisis they had to deal with was how to create and maintain a socialist country. Party's leaders realized that socialist regime would not survive without the support from the peasantry because the importance of grain could never be underestimated in Russia (Erlinch 1950). In other words, geographically, the importance of rural-urban relationship had merged: when urban-based economy was already basically nationalized after the revolution and therefore defined as a socialist one, in the countryside the Bolsheviks had not been able to figure out what to do with the petty peasants that made up the absolute majority of the population.

The great industrialization debate ensued in the mid-twenties between party's major economists and political theorists, mainly Bukharin and Preobrazhensky. Advocating a "dynamic economic equilibrium", the former argued that only "balanced, steady relationship between the interests of industry and agriculture would secure healthy economic development" (Boettke 1990). For Bukharin, the New Economic Policy (NEP) that allowed the private economic sector to grow under the dictatorship of proletariat was not just a makeshift after the period of War Communism. Rather, it was supposed to be the essential long-time development strategy for the Soviet state. In his view, the growth of industry could be done only through the development and support of agriculture (Boettke 1990). In his *The Politics and Economics of The Transitional Period*, Bukharin argued that "a new society cannot suddenly appear like a deus ex machina. Its component elements develop within the old society, ... the elements of the new society must be sought in the relations of the production of the old." Then he asked "the question must be put thus: which aspects of the relations of production in a capitalist society can form the basis of the new production structure?" For him, the answer was clear: it was the "maturity" of capitalist society that would serve as the step stone in the transitional era between a socialist society and a communist society (Bukharin 2007).

Preobrazhensky however was more concerned about the growth of private economic sector after the civil war. For him, a growing capitalist economy in the countryside would not help industrialize the Soviet state that was surrounded by hostile capitalist countries. Against Bukharin's gradualist development theory, he contended that an undercapitalized heavy industry would not be able to satisfy the increasing demands of peasants. Further, he believed that since agriculture in Russia had been backward and low-efficient when compared with that in advanced

capitalist countries, it would take long time before it could catch up and be able to support industry (Boettke 1990). For him, the internal and external situation that the Soviet faced in the 1920s would not allow any delay in rapid industrialization. Therefore he argued that “fixed capital had to be increased before the output of manufactures could be expanded and therefore it was necessary to make a commitment to heavy industry” (Burdekin 1989). Specifically, in his *The Law of Primitive Socialist Accumulation*, Preobrazhensky argued that for the realization of rapid industrialization in the Soviet Union, it was necessary to directly get surplus product by using force from the private economy, i.e., the peasantry, through a distorted pricing mechanism, -non-equivalent exchange-, between industrial products and agricultural produces rather than through market (Preobrazhensky 1980). For Preobrazhensky, the socialist accumulation of capital that was critical for industrialization had to be accomplished at the expense of the peasantry.

Preobrazhensky’s “New Economics”, however, was just an abstract theoretical model when it was introduced in the debate. The reality soon became what later was called “Preobrazhensky’s dilemma” by Soviet scholars and observers (Day 1977). Specifically, when the “price scissors” policy was carried out to facilitate industrialization in the 1920s, the supply of agricultural produces decreased very quickly as a response to the manipulated low price of grain. In 1927, the Fifteenth Party Congress finally decided to establish a centrally planned economy model and required the Soviet state government to accelerate the accumulation of capital for industrialization through an artificial economic dualism: socialist urban-based industry vs. capitalist rural-based agriculture (Boettke 1990). The procurement of grain, however, did not get improved at once after party’s decision. Following a series of rural-urban relationship crises in

the 1920s, i.e., the sales crisis of 1922, the scissors crisis of 1923, and the goods famine of 1924, the ensuing year of 1928 was famously called the year of “grain crisis” (Narkiewicz 1968). Even though Preobrazhensky’s theory became dominant policy at that time, clearly, he did not provide a solution that was able to solve the resistance of the peasantry.

In history, it was Stalin who put Preobrazhensky’s theory into practice. After the nationwide establishment of state-owned collective farms in the early 1930s, rural-urban dual system was formally implemented in the Soviet Union (Fitzpatrick 1996). The contribution of Preobrazhensky to the Soviet state development lies in that he was among the earliest theorists who realized the *Law of Value* could be manipulated through a planned economy and resources necessary for industrialization could be quickly transferred and accumulated through a non-equivalent exchange between industry and agriculture. It was Preobrazhensky’s design of rural-urban dual structure that laid down the foundation of the implementation of centrally planned economy in the Soviet Union. The role of Stalin, of course, cannot be underestimated. Had the collectivization been not implemented, there would have been no chance for Preobrazhensky’s theory to be put in practice.

1.3 Adoption of Rural-Dual System under Mao

As Chan (1994), Chan and Zhang (1999), Solinger (1999) and Wu (2011) have pointed out, rural-urban dual system in the Chinese context is not just simply a rural-urban divide in terms of the allocation of social benefits. Rather, it is a state development strategy that has a deep Russian/Soviet root. In recent years, even though there has been an increasing body of migration literature in China studies and international development studies, the relationship between the

Soviet development experience and Chinese development is largely ignored. In the literature on the educational predicament of migrant children, as I reviewed in the previous chapter, criticisms of the hukou system and local government's reluctance of obeying and implementing "good" policies issued by central government are very common. Of course, it is correct to criticize that it is the hukou system that has prevented rural-hukou children from attending local public schools in major cities and it is the government of Beijing and Shanghai that refuses to carry out the law. But when interpreting why it has been so hard to reform hukou, we have to look at its role in the historical trajectory of Chinese development.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, under the leadership of Mao, China's development strategy adopted the model of Stalinist industrialization instead of seeking a Bukharian balanced development model between the city and the countryside. Facing a country that had only a small industry after decades-long wars with foreign countries, Mao and other party leader soon reached a unanimous decision that China had to be industrialized as soon as possible and the Soviet Union would be the best role model of China. Calling the Soviet Union "the best teacher", Mao directly told his colleagues that China would follow the development strategy the Soviet Union had been through (Meisner 1999). Mao (1949) indicated to the party officials that *"it was through the Russians that the Chinese found Marxism. Before the October Revolution, the Chinese were not only ignorant of Lenin and Stalin, they did not even know of Marx and Engels. The salvoes of the October Revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism. The October Revolution helped progressives in China, as throughout the world, to adopt the proletarian world outlook as the instrument for studying a nation's destiny and considering anew their own problems. Follow the path of the Russians -- that is the conclusion."*

In terms of implementing the Stalinist development strategy in China, i.e., rural-urban dual system, although Mao realized some negative effects of Stalin's policies, he accepted Preobrazhenski's theory of "primitive socialist accumulation" and socialist "exploitation" (Meisner 1999). He held a hardline on the issue and harshly criticized some high-rank party officials who were reluctant to implement the price scissors in the countryside. Some officials were demoted or even removed from their offices because they failed to demonstrate sufficiently what he called "passion for socialism" (Bo 1991).

Meisner (1999) notes that after the land reform in the early 1950s, agricultural production in the countryside did not increase immediately as many had expected. On the contrary, a crisis of grain emerged quickly in the following years because of high procurement of grain at low price, which was at the core of rural-urban dual system. Mao and his colleagues already knew the crisis of grain procurement during the period of New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union and believed that China was in the same situation: the interest of small peasants was against the interest of the socialist state. At that time, Mao followed the principles of the classical Stalinist textbook *History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course* in which peasants were defined as capitalists whose interest was always against the proletariat (Li 2006). More importantly, when the Soviet leaders publicly declared that the "grain problem" had been permanently solved through collectivization in 1952, Mao and his colleagues were deeply impressed and decided China needed to implement collectivization in the countryside as soon as possible, believing socialized mode of production must replace the economy of small peasants in order to solve the crisis of grain procurement (Gao 2003). In the following years after collectivization, however, exactly like what happened in the Soviet Union after the collectivization, agricultural production continued to decline and supply shortage of grain in

cities became a serious problem because of the resistance of the peasantry. To solve the problem, before every year's harvest, the quota of grain procurement was determined by the state. This approach was originally adopted in the Stalinist collectivization and then copied by China. For peasants, the state procurement of grain became the highest priority instead of their own life. After every year's harvest, peasants were supposed to get grain and petty cash income from the production brigade they worked for only after the goal of state procurement was met. Starting from 1958 when People's Commune system was adopted across the country, the last stage of collectivization was ultimately finished in China. Compared with collectivization in the Soviet Union that cost eighteen years before it was finished, China only used six years to collectivize land and property from the peasantry (Gao 2003). As a result, a system called by Whyte (2010) "Socialist Serfdom" was created in China.

As Yang and Cai (2000) points out, collectivization, state monopoly of purchase and distribution of grain, and hukou were "three chariots" adopted by the state as its major strategy to facilitate the development of heavy industry in the 1950s. The first two measures were used to guarantee the supply of grain needed by urban-based industry and foreign trade, following the Soviet experience, while the third measure, hukou, was used to constrain mobility of the peasantry. Strict control of population mobility as part of development strategy was not something new. Instead, population immobility was already one of the major characteristics of Stalinist era. Under Stalin, peasants fleeing to cities to escape from collectivization were seen as a threat that could endanger not only cities but also labor force needed in collective farms. The Soviet reinstated internal passport system (or *Propiska* in Russian) and limited the eligibility of application to urban dwellers only (Fitzpatrick 1996). Mao agreed with Stalin that on the one hand, labor force for agriculture had to be guaranteed and on the other hand, migrants would

significantly increase the cost of urban-based industrialization and urban governance (Li 2006). Therefore, for Mao, the best solution turned out to be using hukou to control rural-urban population mobility. According to Wang (2011), since 1957, central government issued a series of directives to regulate population mobility, particularly between city and countryside. It is clear that at the moment when Mao started control of rural-urban population mobility, the basic measures adopted were from the Soviet experience. However, the divergence between the Stalinist strategy and the Maoist strategy emerged after the mid-1950s when Chinese economy, both rural and urban sector, was in crisis. In other words, a failed effort of industrialization and planned economy differentiated the Chinese development strategy from that of the Soviet Union. To be specific, as Wang suggests, on the one hand, nationalization of private businesses implemented in Chinese cities greatly reduced the size and capacity of job market. On the other hand, peasants were against collectivization in the countryside. As a result, A great influx of peasants began to stream to cities to make a living when there was actually already no jobs available for many of them. In 1957, the State Council authorized the Ministry of Public Security to deport “blind floating” peasants in cities back to countryside and prohibited state-owned units in the city to hire peasant workers (State Council 1957). Despite the same phenomenon happened in the Soviet Union, in terms of control of migration, the Maoist China went much further than its mentor. In the Soviet Union, while rural-urban migration was under state control, a successful industrialization created great demand of labor force from the countryside and state-owned manufacturing units were actually allowed to hire rural migrants (Fitzpatrick 1996). As a result, in the entire history of the Soviet Union, rural-urban migration actually never stopped and in as early as the 1960s the Soviet Union was already an urbanized country. In China, however, since the late 1950s, after the implementation of hukou, rural-urban migration was strictly prohibited

by hukou as the “invisible walls” (Chan 1994) for more than three decades. In the late 1970s, urban population made up approximately only 17.92% of Chinese population (NBS 2009).

1.4 An Introduction of the Chinese Rural-Urban Dual System

To a great extent, the role and characteristics of the Chinese dual system has long been unclear to the world and as a result, for many Western scholars and observers, the Maoist China was pictured as one that had successfully avoided the urban ills that were common in many other countries and an alternative model to classical “urban-biased” development models (Chan 1994). In the Mainland China, even after the death of Mao in 1976, there was very few scholarly works shedding light on the urban-biased rural-urban dual system until Guo and Liu (1990), which openly pointed out that 1. The Chinese society was based on a biased rural-urban system; and 2. Even after the 1978-Reform, the dual system remained unchanged. For Guo and Liu, arguing that a rural-urban dual system was the most essential characteristic of China, the Chinese dual system was mainly made up of fourteen sub-systems: hukou (i.e., household registration), housing, food supply, fuel supply, raw materials supply, education, health care, pension, labor protection, marriage, etc. In other words, every sub-system of the dual system was based on a sub-“dual system”. It is noteworthy that in this list, the hukou system was the first major component of the Chinese dual system. The fact is that even though China has adopted a market-oriented reform under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping since the late 1970s and some of the sub-systems listed in Guo and Liu (1990) have been marketized or transformed, the hukou system as the foundation of Chinese dual system remains unchanged for decades (Chan 2008 and 2009).

In a series of papers, i.e., Chan and Zhang (1999), Chan and Buckingham (2008), Chan (2009), and Chan (2012), a very detailed introduction of the configuration and characteristics of the Chinese rural-urban dual system has been presented. Broadly defined, the Chinese rural-urban dual system is an institutional arrangement that privileges the interest of urban sector at the cost of rural sector. First of all, the dual system has been implemented through the implementation of hukou and other institutional arrangements since the 1950s. In practice, under the Mao regime and in the early years after the Deng reform, there were two types of hukou: non-agricultural hukou and agricultural hukou. For the holders of non-agricultural hukou, mainly urban dwellers, the state was responsible for providing them with basic services such as housing, food, and health care, etc. But for the latter, mainly farmers, it was their own responsibility to be self-support on these issues. Another example was education. Under one national education system, there were also two sub-systems: an urban education system and a rural education system, which were treated differently. It is worth mentioning that one's hukou status remained unchanged no matter where this person moved unless he or she could go through a hukou conversion (Chan 2009). Table 3.1 shows the basic economic structure and social hierarchy of dual system under the Mao regime.

Table 3.1 Dual Economy and Dual Society under Mao (the 1950s – 1970s). Source: Chan and Zhang (1999).

Dual Economy and Dual Society in the Pre-reform Era	
<i>Economy</i>	
<i>Industry</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>
Priority sector	Non-priority sector
State owned	Non-state sector
State support and control	Self-reliance
Monopoly profits through unequal sectoral exchange	As provider of cheap resources for the state sector
<i>Society</i> (based on <i>hukou</i> classification)	
<i>“Non-agricultural” households</i>	<i>“Agricultural” households</i>
State protection; subject to political control	Self-reliant; subject to less central control
State-provided employment and welfare	Employment and welfare based on local collectives
Restricted entry	Tied to land and agriculture

Table 3.2 Differences and Changes in Social and Economic Characteristics between Rural and Urban Populations in China. Source: Chan (2009)

Period	Specific differences
1949-1952	Occupations (agricultural vs industry) and residence locations (rural vs urban).
1953-1957	In addition to the above: Food rationing imposed; only urban population had state-guaranteed food grain supply.
1958-1965	In addition to the above: Rural to urban migration strictly banned. Urban population had access to state-provided employment, housing, education, and other welfare.
1966-1976	New change: Rural population allowed to develop and work in non-farm enterprises in the countryside.
1977-1984	New change: A limited number of rural laborers contracted to work in cities.
1985-1992	New changes: Rural laborers allowed to work in some jobs in cities without the urban hukou and eligibility to receive urban services and welfare.
1993-2000	New change: Food rationing lifted.
2000-present	New changes: Hukou migration to small towns permitted (2002); nongzhuanfei gradually phased out in some locales; rural population in some outskirts of cities given urban hukou status, mainly in exchange for giving up the individuals' rural land use rights.

Table 3.2 shows the timeline of key policy changes in the past sixty years, with a focus on the differences between rural and urban sections or in other words, the evolution of a rural-urban dual system.

Secondly, the implementation of dual system was closely tied to one's residential location. In other words, a person's place of hukou registration was considered by the state his or her official and "permanent" residence. In addition, this location-based hukou registration would define one's rights and eligibility for benefits and services. As a result, in the Maoist years, most Chinese people remained where they were required to stay. The table below shows the interweaving relations between hukou types and locations.

Table 3.3 Hukou Types and Hukou Locations. Source: Chan (2009).

Major Constituent Groupings of Agricultural and Non-agricultural Populations by <i>Hukou</i> Status and Location		
<i>Hukou</i> location	Agricultural <i>hukou</i>	Non-agricultural <i>hukou</i>
	A	C
Urban areas	Rural migrant workers Farm workers Dependents	Urban workers State cadres and professionals Dependents
	B	D
Rural areas	Rural (industrial) workers ^a Farmers Dependents	State farm workers ^b State cadres and professionals Dependents of above

^aIn township and village enterprises.

^bIn state-run agricultural enterprises.

Based on Table 3.3, it is clear that for anyone who wanted to change his or her hukou status to urban and Non-agricultural, it was originally assigned Agricultural hukou status and lived in a rural area, it would be tough job because the official channels for the conversion were limited¹⁰. Thirdly, as a result of the implementation of rural-urban dual system, which has persisted to the present time, China has developed a unique “incomplete urbanization” since the 1950s. Compared with the classical model of urbanization in the West, which was characterized by one-way cityward migration and increasing population in the city, the percentage of non-agricultural population actually declined slightly between 1958 and 1980 in the Chinese city while the country was industrialized (Chan 2009). In addition, the dual system also has created a unique non-hukou urban population in the city, which means migrants who work in the city but are not entitled benefits and services local hukou population enjoy. Table 3.4 and figure 3.1 below show the details:

Table 3.4 Non-Agricultural and Urban Populations and GDP (1949-2007). Source: Chan (2009)

Year	A. Non-agricultural population ^a	B. Urban population ^b	C. GDP of non-agricultural sectors	A – C	A – B
1949	17.4	10.6			6.8
1955	15.2	13.5	53.7	-38.5	1.7
1958	18.5	16.2	65.9	-47.4	2.3
1965	16.7	18.0	62.1	-45.4	-1.3
1970	15.3	17.4	64.8	-49.5	-2.1
1975	15.4	17.3	67.6	-52.2	-1.9
1978	15.8	17.9	71.8	-56.0	-2.1
1980	17.0	19.4	69.8	-52.8	-2.4
1985	20.1	23.7	71.6	-51.5	-3.6
1990	21.1	26.4	72.9	-51.8	-5.3
1995	23.8	31.7	80.1	-56.3	-7.9
2000	26.1	36.2	84.9	-58.8	-10.1
2005	32.0	43.0	87.5	-55.5	-11.0
2006	32.5	43.9	88.3	-55.8	-11.4
2007	32.9	44.9	88.7	-55.8	-12.0

^aBased on *hukou* classification.

^bBased on *de facto* population.

¹⁰ For more details about the history and current policy on hukou status conversion, see Chan and Zhang (1999), Chan (2009) and Chan (2012).

Urban Population Growth Trends and Projections, 1980-2030

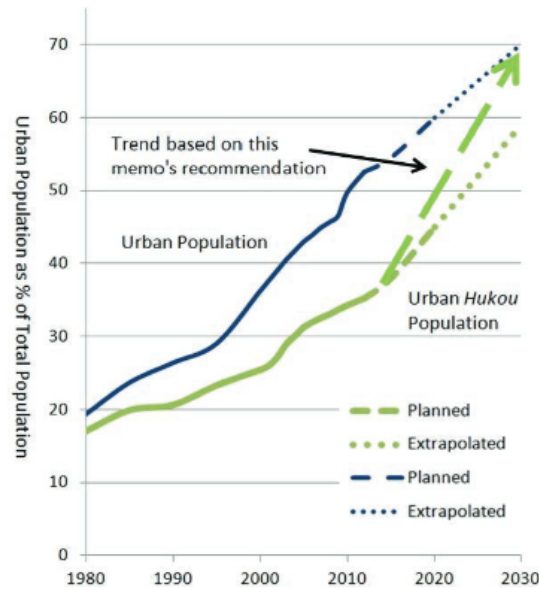


Figure 3.1 Urban Population Growth Trends and Projects (1980-2030). Source: Chan (2014)

2. Persistence of Dual System in the Post-Mao Era: A New Format

2.1 The Making of Mobile Labor: Collective Land Ownership

Huntington (1968) famously argues that the gap between countryside and city “is the primary source of political instability” and it is a problem for “national integration” in “changing societies”. In the Chinese case, however, while the gap between countryside and city has been increasing for decades since the 1950s, the state is still politically stable while experiencing largest ever human migration in history. There is neither political turmoil caused by an ocean of cityward migrants nor large-scale slums built by them in cities. Obviously, Huntington’s conclusion has to be modified for China, which is definitely one of the “changing societies”. In other words, compared with other “changing societies”, institutional arrangements made between

city and countryside in China must be quite different to avoid the political instability that Huntington had observed and predicted.

I contend that Chinese rural-urban dual system is based on two formal institutional arrangements: the first one is, as we have discussed, the hukou system, which officially splits Chinese people into two categories: rural hukou holders and urban hukou holders. The second one, relatively less known to many, is the rural-urban dual land ownership, which physically divides the country into two formal administrative units: urban land and rural land. In drawing a complete picture of China's rural-urban relations, we have to examine not only hukou but also its unique dual land system, which is the indispensable supporting role to the functions of hukou in defining who is supposed to hold rural hukou and who is eligible for an urban hukou. More importantly, when hukou has been widely criticized for the plight of rural-urban migrants, the role of dual land system is largely ignored in the literature. Specifically, when explaining why rural-urban migrants have to be a so-called "floating population" circulating between city and countryside, besides paying attention to hukou, it is necessary to take into account the role of collective land ownership in the countryside as well. In recent years, although many scholars have called for privatizing collective land ownership in the countryside, a series of directives issued by the ruling party and central government have responded with a tough tone that rural collective land ownership as one of the essential institutional arrangements must be maintained (Sohu News April 29, 2016). I suggest that there is a reason for doing so. As we discussed before, Yang and Cai (2000) argue that it was the "three chariots", i.e., people's communes, state monopoly of grain purchase and distribution, and hukou that founded rural-urban dual system in the 1950s. I expand these insights and suggest that it is hukou that prevents migrants from settling in the city and equally important, it is the collective land ownership that indirectly

prevents them from leaving the countryside. In this sense, these two institutions are the essential base of China's rural-urban dual system, which underpins China's rapid economic growth, and are directly responsible for the emergence of unprecedented "floating population", which actually is an efficient solution for the state to keep the cost of urbanization low.

The rural-urban dual land ownership system as an essential part of Chinese rural-urban dual system has remained to the present time since the 1950s. The latest 1982 Chinese Constitution explicitly rules that urban land belongs to the state and rural land is collectively owned by farmers. In addition, for the public interest, the state has authority to expropriate the land from rural collectives. *The Administrative Law of Land*, issued in 1999, further confirms that land in China is public property and managed in two forms: owned by the state and owned by rural collectives (People's Congress 1999). In *the PRC Property Law*, issued in 2007, entire chapter five (article 45 through article 69) was used to clarify the boundary line between city and countryside in terms of property rights (People's Congress 2007). In other words, collective land ownership as one of the most essential institutional arrangement has to be remained. Why does this collective land use system have to be maintained? Yu (2002) argues that even though rural land has been officially allocated to so-called rural collectives after the 1949 revolution, who is actually responsible for the use and management of land is still not clear. Specifically, while the 1982 Constitution rules that rural land is collectively owned and the 1988 Administrative Law of Land defines the owner of rural land as farmers in collective economic organizations, as a legal professional, the author points out that the laws, however, have failed to provide detailed information about the relationship between the collectives and individual farmers in terms of land as crucial property and allocation of land-generated income. In a word, collective ownership has been a vague concept for decades. Who is the owner and who can benefit from land property

are unknown in fact. Firstly, “rural collectives”, according to the author, is even not a legitimate term for property rights-related legal issues. Secondly, under collective land ownership, farmers actually do not have control their land. And thirdly, the state has absolute power over farmers when taking land from them. Under the current dual land ownership system, rural land can be converted to industrial and commercial use only after it is nationalized. Farmers, even though defined as the owner of their land, actually are not allowed to use land as they wish. When the state is to expropriate their land, farmers have no right to refuse. Yu finally concludes that this is how farmers have lost their land under the collective land ownership. Li (2010) also points out that the collective land ownership actually has suspended and deprived the legal rights of farmers through creating a vague image of collective ownership because in fact no one can represent the “collective”. More important, Li argues that the implementation of rural collective land ownership actually works as a channel through which rural economic resources are transferred to cities. To be specific, after collectivization of land, the state does not have to negotiate with individual farmers when land is needed. On the contrary, the state only needs to issues orders to rural collectives, which actually are under control of local government. After the 1978 reform, when People’s Commune system was abolished, collective land ownership was remained, however. Li suggests the channel that extracts economic resources from countryside to city has been remained even after the Maoist era was over.

The importance of collective land ownership cannot be underestimated at any time for one who is interested in knowing the relations between rural-urban dual system and Chinese development in the past sixty years. Since the 1990s, the fees collected through urban land leasing have been the most important income source for local governments and has created so-called “land finance” (Tao et.al. 2010). Evidently, the question many might ask is: where did the

government get that much land for lease? According to the Chinese law, only state-owned land can be legally leased in the market. Collectively owned land in the countryside, however, can only be used for agricultural purposes such as cultivating crops or farmers themselves, e.g., personal housing need or public space for their village. In other words, when the city keeps expanding in size and has an increasing stream of income from land lease, more and more rural collectively owned land is being expropriated and transferred to the hand of the state. As Yu (2002) and Li (2010) have pointed out, on the one hand, in fact, individual farmers have no control over their land because of the collective land ownership. As a result, they are extremely vulnerable when dealing with governments that are actively seeking financial source from land expropriation and resale of land to developers. In recent years, the number of disputes and conflicts caused by land taking in rural areas between the government and farmers has been increasing rapidly across the country (Whiting 2011). On the other hand, for the government, the administrative cost of land expropriation can be kept as low as possible when land belongs to rural collectives because the process of negotiation can be simplified as one between the government and just few head villagers. For the government, the mechanism of profit making is straightforward: keeping the compensation to farmers as low as possible while selling land in the market at a price as high as possible.

Besides heavily relying on the so-called “land finance”, the government also takes advantage of collective land ownership to keep the root of farmers in the countryside. Such a fact is less known to many. Dr. Qiu Baoxing, the former head official of the Ministry of Housing and Rural-Urban Development, once said “had farmers lost their root in the countryside and settled in the city”, the government would not have been able to handle the situation during the global financial crisis in 2008-2009, by which he meant the extremely high rate of unemployment

among migrant workers in the coastal areas at that time. He frankly admitted that China's special collective land ownership is an important "stabilizer" for the government (Sina Finance, Dec 22, 2014). As Chan (2011) points out, Chinese migrants are actually "in the city but not of the city". Besides hukou, the secret is that: for farmers, even though they have no legal rights to sell their farmland because of the collective land ownership, they can cultivate land and harvest crops to make a basic living in their rural home. Therefore, when economic recession occurs, intuitively, the first thing rural-hukou migrants are able to do is leaving the city immediately and going back to their life land, instead of seeking assistance from the government and employers they work for. As such, this is how their roots are involuntarily and permanently kept in the countryside through an invisible chain. During the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, there were roughly 20 million migrant workers who lost their jobs during a short period. When interviewed by *Financial Times*, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, however, showed no concerns. He claimed that millions of migrant workers unemployed was not a serious problem because they could just "go home and cultivate land" again (Financial Times 2009). Clearly, the state did not have any intention to take the crisis seriously because of the collective land ownership as the "stabilizer". On the contrary, for the government officials, there were no other solutions better than letting migrant workers themselves bear the cost of the crisis. At this moment, how dual system works should be clear: on the one hand, migrants are not allowed to settle in the major cities because of their non-local hukou status even though they are encouraged to work there; on the other hand in the home village, there is always a piece of land tantalizing them with some so-called minimum protections such as free housing, social network, low cost living, stable income though quite low, and more important, a feeling of security. During the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, although many migrants went back to their villages, they did not stay long at home. Just one month later,

after the Chinese Spring Festival, there were 56 million migrants came back to cities for work. By the end of August, 2009, 95% of return migrants already returned to cities (Cai 2009). According to Han and Wang (2009), who conducted a nationwide survey after the financial crisis, most of migrants merely view returning to rural home as a makeshift because it is hard to making a living in the countryside.

2.2 The Making of Migrant Labor: China Becoming the World's Factory

Chinese migrant workers are not only the backbone of China's manufacturing sector but also the base of the global supply chain. As a result, the up and downs of the global economy are closely interwoven with Chinese migrant workers. In other words, China's status as World's Factory is directly related to the making of cheap migrant labor, which can be interpreted through two perspectives: demography and the hukou system (Chan 2010). It is well-known that China has the largest population in the world and consequently, a surplus rural population problem has been the reality for a while (see. e.g., Chao 1986). The second issue, i.e., the role of the hukou system in the making of the largest cheap labor in the world is not clear to many, however. Hundreds of millions of migrant workers did not just appear suddenly after the 1978 Reform. Instead, it was the hukou system that created such an ocean of migrant workers for the Chinese state and global capital.

Firstly, I argue that taking advantage of low-cost rural labor force through the implementation of dual system in the state development strategy has been changed since the 1950s. Without noticing the in-depth nature of Chinese rural-urban relations has led many to wrong conclusions. When Naughton (1995) claimed that Chinese rural economy had been "growing out of the plan"

after the 1978 reform, he would have been less optimistic, had he noticed the main thread of the rural-urban policy at that time, which explicitly required farmers to “leave farmland without leaving the countryside, work in the factory without entering the city (*lixiang bu litu, jinchang bu jincheng*)” (Guo and Liu 1990). In other words, as part of country’s labor force, farmers had never been allowed to go across the boundary line between city and countryside to obtain further chances of personal development, even though their great contribution to Chinese economy was undeniable. The plan was still the plan that drew a line between city and countryside. From this sense, in the countryside, opposite to what Naughton (1995) argued, at that time the fact was nobody is “growing out of the plan”. The heyday of TVEs that ended in the 1990s, as Huang (2008) observed, also proves that rural-urban dual system was not uprooted. Rural labor force was used as cheap labor source in the state development at different historical stages while the rural-urban boundary line remained firmly. TVEs did not grow into giants, though many scholars had predicted so. On the contrary, they eventually failed and disappeared because the state adopted a new pro-urban policy in the late 1990s. Most farmers were still in the countryside until the late 1990s.

The making of the migrant labor is key to understanding China’s status of World’s Factory. As Chan (2009) puts, the goal of reforms in the early years of the post-Mao era was to improve the command system instead of abolishing it. When facing a large surplus of rural population in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the first reaction by the government was continuing control over rural-urban migration. Then later, a small breakthrough was finally made by allowing migrant workers who were with “self-supplied food grain” to seek employment in small towns in 1984. In other words, government was not responsible for any of the welfare of the migrants in these

small towns even though they were allowed to temporarily work in the places which were not their “permanent” hukou address. At the same time, it is noteworthy that China implemented programs to decentralize fiscal and administrative powers to local governments. As a result, local governments obtained more control over hukou related issues since the late 1980s. With more control over hukou policy, local governments also gained the power to set up the criteria upon the hukou transfer. In sum, Chan (2009) argues that in the post-1984 period, the one substantive change made by the government was the removal of obstacles to geographical mobility **outside the hukou conversion framework** (bold are mine). In other words, for migrants, no matter where they move, their hukou status remains the same and this is the most essential difference between them and urban workers. As of 2015, the hukou system has created approximately 277.47 million migrant workers in China (NBS 2016). Figure 3.2 below explains how the migrant workers as a special population are created under China’s dual system.

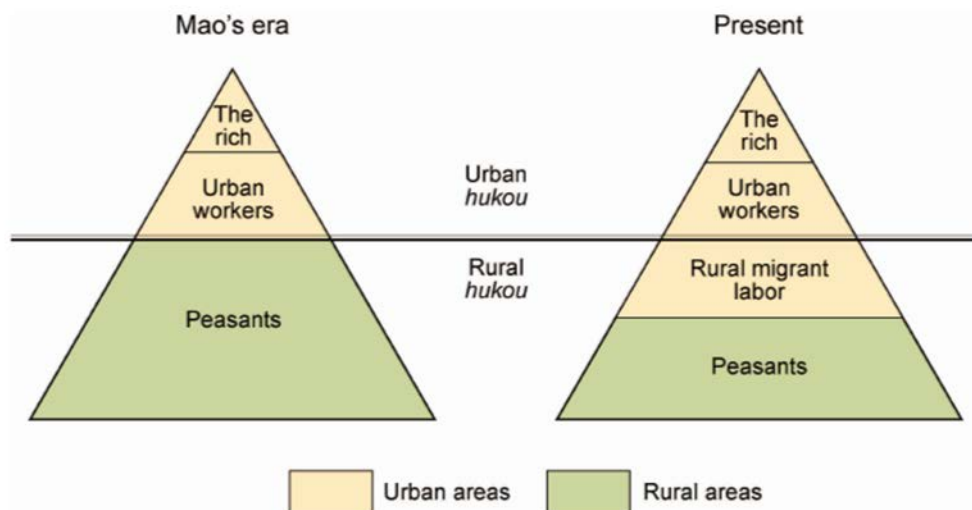


Figure 3.2 Spatial and Social Hierarchies in China since the 1950s.

It illustrates how rural-urban dual system works in the past sixty years. Specifically, during the Maoist era, the boundary line between city and countryside was clearly defined. After the reform, even though farmers are allowed to seek urban employment opportunities, their identity is still constrained by their hukou status. Source: Chan (2009)

Being a migrant worker is not just about a different title. Chan (2010) further explains the meaning of being migrant workers in the World's Factory. Migrant workers in those manufacturing zones specifically refer to industrial and service workers with rural hukou and they are legally considered not urban workers. As a result, they are not eligible for regular urban welfare benefits including education, pension, housing, etc. They are treated as part of the rural hukou population no matter how long they have been working in the city. In the city, rural-hukou migrants have formed a new social group – the new and true urban poor. Violations of labor rights are common in the factories where migrant workers are concentrated. In sum, Chan argues that using “free” migrant labor without urban rights has been the most efficient strategy for facilitating Chinese economy and has created the miracle of “China price” in the World's Factory. Pointing to the role of rural-urban dual system in the Chinese development, Wu (2011) observes that it has been common that the government-required minimum salary is used as the ceiling salary for migrant workers who have a “differential citizenship”. As a result, to maintain a basic living, migrant workers have to work extra hours each week. While some scholars and observers have claimed that migrant workers are already better off, their conclusion overlooks the real cost migrant workers have to pay. Table 3.5 shows the some details about the income of migrant workers in those major manufacturing zones.

Table 3.5 Monthly Salary Differences in Major Provinces. Source: Wu (2011)

Monthly Salary Differences in Major Provinces (2008)				
	Salary(State-Owned)	Minimum Salary	Difference	Ratio
Beijing	4,947	800	4,147	6.2
Shanghai	5,192	960	4,230	5.4
Jiangsu	3,277	590-850	2,687-2,427	3.9-5.6
Zhejiang	4,456	690-960	3,766-3,496	4.6-6.5
Fujian	2,758	480-750	2,278-2,008	3.7-5.7
Guangdong	3,398	900-1,000	2,498- 2,398	3.4-3.8
				In Chinese Yuan

2.3 Neoliberalism and Chinese Development: Dual System-Based Exploitation and Oppression

In recent years, the relationship between China's reform and the global expansion of neoliberalism has been in a lasting debate. As I introduced before, David Harvey is one of the influential scholars who have categorized China as one of the countries adopting a radical neoliberal turn (Harvey 2005). On the cover page of his famous book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping is flanked by Reagan, Pinochet and Thatcher. In terms of the relationship between Chinese development and neoliberalism, however, I agree with Ong's critique of Harvey in that neoliberalism definitely is not just a "mobile technology" that can be easily applied everywhere and will produce the same results and transformation everywhere (Ong 2006 and 2007). In other words, I contend that on the one hand I agree that China has adopted the certain basic principles of neoliberalism, such as marketization and privatization. On the other hand, China's "radical" transformation cannot be correctly understood and interpreted by simply looking at its neoliberal turn.

Pun's work focuses on the neoliberal impact on Chinese society and economy. Using Foxconn and other manufacturers as the target of research, based on a gender perspective, her research examines the labor-capital relations in China's great era of transformation, arguing that the economic miracle of China is a product of neoliberalism and based on its exploitation and oppression upon working class (Pun 2005). In one of her recent articles, the neoliberalization of Chinese society and economy is specifically characterized by marketization, privatization of previously state-owned factories, mass layoff of workers, cut of employment-based benefits,

wide use of temporary workers, and the rise of private economic sectors and FDI, etc. (Pun 2016). At the same time, Pun also notices that during the neoliberalization of China, the role of government cannot be ignored because there is no way for so many farmers to become migrant workers without the permission of government.

I agree with her that it is true that state-owned enterprises are also using capitalist model of production to make profit, even though they still wear a socialist “red hat”, let alone private companies like Foxconn. Her theory of Chinese development, however, is not able to explain why Chinese Communist Party and government are always sided with capital instead of the interest of workers. She argues that China’s significant contribution to the global expansion of neoliberalism is undeniable, without explaining why China could so easily embrace neoliberalism. She points out that the goal of development of Chinese Communist Party and government has changed from “serving the people” to “serving the capital”. The mechanism behind this change or the common ground that China and capital share, however, is missing from her analysis.

I argue that to better understand the relationship between Chinese development and neoliberalism and to avoid simply characterizing China as capitalist, especially how the Chinese Communist Party and government have made such a dramatic change, we have to understand the development strategy implemented by the party and government. In other words, while the exploitative and oppressive nature of capital is well known, many have ignored the nature and historical trajectory of Chinese socialist development. Specifically, the development strategy that has penetrated through the history of Chinese development must be unveiled before we can

correctly evaluate the relationship between Chinese development and the global expansion of neoliberalism.

As I have discussed before, following Stalin, China adopted the Soviet development model, which was based on the theory of Preobrazhensky in the 1950s. The most important theoretical contribution Preobrazhensky made to Chinese development strategy, was announcing that the exploitation and oppression of farmers and other backward classes was part of socialist development. At this point, for anyone who is confused about the alliance between Chinese ruling party/government and capital, the answer should be crystal clear: the exploitation and oppression of farmers has been the foundation of Chinese development for more than sixty years. For global capital, ironically, China is the largest gold mine that cannot be found anywhere else because of its socialist development strategy. In a word, without the help of Chinese rural-urban dual system, capital can never be that successful.

Chapter 4 Rural-Urban Dual Education System

Economist Theodore Schultz's theory of *Human Capital* has been influential in developing countries for decades since it was introduced in the 1960s. Based on his study of the US experience of rural economic development, in his seminal 1961 paper *Investment in Human Capital*, Schultz pointed out that "investment in human capital accounts for most of the impressive rise in the real earnings per worker". He famously argued that human capital was more important than other types of capital goods such as land in promoting economic growth, and investment in education would play a key role in rural development (Schultz 1961). One of Schultz's students, Chinese development economist Lin Yifu has been dedicated to applying Schultz's ideas in China's rural development for a while, arguing that because the key problem in China's rural development is the lowness of income in the countryside, therefore the key solution to rural poverty is encouraging rural labor force to work in non-agriculture economic sectors. However, he further suggests that the low quality of rural laborers has prevented them from mastering new knowledge and skills. As a result, only continuous investment in rural education can guarantee the sustainability of China's economy growth in the future (Lin 2004). However, China's rural education system is in a crisis even though government has started investing in rural education in recent years. On the one hand, investment that rural schools have received is still comparatively much less than that of urban schools. On the other hand, the quality of education in rural schools has been left far behind by urban schools. At the same time, rural schools are being closed across the country because of rural-urban migration and the decline of fertility in rural areas. As a result, a considerable amount of investment in rural education is actually wasted (China Youth 2013). In 2013, the National Audit Agency (NAA)

investigated a total number of 25,127 schools in 1,185 counties of 27 provinces (NAA 2013).

The investigation report found five major problems:

1. Among 12.57 million students, 0.49 million need to walk up to 3km (1.86 miles) to their schools when 0.1 million needs to walk 5km (3.1 miles) to go to schools.
2. School bus system is less regulated and has caused many problems. Traffic accidents are common.
3. The overall condition of boarding schools is below the government-required standard. Among 12,533 boarding schools investigated by the agency, 4,515 schools (36%) were found overcrowded, 4,990 schools (40%) had no bathrooms in their dorm buildings, and 8,113 schools (64%) had no dorm administrative staff.
4. The cost of education keeps increasing and as a result, the rate of dropout has significantly increased. The agency investigated 1,155 schools and found the number of school dropout increased from 3,963 in 2006 to 8,352 in 2011. And
5. Some county schools are increasingly overcrowded because students are streaming to just few schools that have better condition.

The rate of school dropout in rural areas is astounding. In a survey conducted between 2002 and 2003 in six rural counties in six provinces, Yuan et. al. (2004) found the dropout rates were as high as 3.78%, 54.05%, 28.06%, 3.66%, 35.55%, and 20.97%, respectively. Zhao (2003) investigated rural schools in three Northeast provinces and found the government reports that surveyed the rate at province-level were problematic. For example, in a school in P County, during a 4-year period, 57.2% of students in a class dropped out. The government reports, however, only provided an “average value” of the dropout rate, which looked quite low. Based on 2010-2012 official data, a recent WSJ report confirms that only 6% of rural Chinese students enroll in high school and only 3% can graduate (National Superintendents Roundtable, May 16, 2016).

In this chapter, through examining China’s rural-urban dual education system, I argue that Schultz’s Western experience-based theory of *Human Capital* cannot be simply applied to China. Instead of focusing on the existing crisis in rural education, I am more interested in examining

the mechanism behind the crisis. I maintain that Chinese rural-urban dual education system has to be understood on the basis of China's state development strategy, as Chan (1999 and 2008) have pointed out. The Chinese national education system is different from the education system adopted in many other countries in that there are actually two different education systems under one government, i.e., an urban education system and a rural education system, and each one has different goals. More importantly, it is a dual education system that privileges the urban system over the rural system.

On China's dual education system, I used the archives of Chinese government education documents in the last two years, aiming to outline how two education systems in one country was created and has persisted till today. The major data sources include He (1998), which is collection of more than 4,000 government education documents (since 1949 through the 1990s), an online databased hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Education, which provides users with 8,298 government education documents (from 1970 to 2016), and the Chinese Communist Party News (Archives), an online database hosted by the party's media *People's Daily*.

1 “One Country, Two Systems”: National Education Policy

1.1 The Rationale: City (Industry) over Countryside (Agriculture)

As I pointed out in the previous chapter, the general principle of rural-urban dual system as the fundamental state development strategy was determined by Mao and other major party leaders in the 1950s. In 1949, right before taking over entire mainland China, Mao Zedong

indicated to party officials that “from now on, we will enter a new era, in which city will lead countryside and the focus of our work has to switch to the city”. In the early years of the People’s Republic of China, the country was described by the state leaders like Mao as one that was not only “poor” but also “blank”(Meisner 1999). In terms of state development, the Chinese leaders interpreted what Marx said in their own way: “in the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure..... (Marx 1859)” Put simply, the economic base will determine the superstructure. In practice, what Mao and other party leaders believed was since China was a “poor and weak country”, the highest priority had to be the development of heavy industry, which was supposed to locate in the city only. In other words, it was the status quo (i.e., economic base) of China that had decided what state development strategy (i.e., superstructure) had to be adopted, even though the context in which Marx made such a statement might be quite different from what they thought. With the development of heavy industry in the city as the highest priority in place, Mao (1956) explained how it could be achieved. He particularly indicated to the central government and Chinese people that for the purpose of facilitating heavy industry effectively, rural development could not be ignored.

In terms of city-countryside relations, firstly, Mao (1956) made it clear that heavy industry was the focus of Chinese state development. Secondly, he was also clear that rural development was supposed to be a stepping stone for the heavy industry and that was the reason why rural

development was crucial to Chinese state development. In 1949, Liu Shaoqi, one of five major party leaders, visited Tianjin, which was one of few industrial cities in North China. In his famous “Tianjin Speech”, Liu indicated that “city is where industry and commerce concentrate. Therefore city is supposed to lead countryside” (Li 1999). As one of the party’s head political theorists, he further explained to his colleagues that because city represented advanced model of production and the goal of revolution was to facilitate production, city must lead countryside and urban working class must lead farmers. In Liu’s speech, obviously, the role that city would play in state development definitely was more important than that of countryside. And thirdly, I suggest that we need to scrutinize how the “rural development” was to be done under Mao. In 1949, during the second plenary session of the party’s seventh Central Committee, Ren Bishi, who was a Soviet-educated theorist and also one of party’s five top leaders, indicated to party officials that to promote industrialization, primary financial source would be agriculture. He demanded that “when we switch the focus of our work to city, we can never ignore countryside” because “to guarantee raw materials that industrialization needs, to accumulate capital, to get foreign currencies and machines, we have to push the development of agriculture. Promoting agriculture is for the purpose of industrialization. Without the development of agriculture, it is not possible to realize industrialization” (Ren 1949). In short, following the Stalinist strategy of industrialization, the Chinese “rural development” under Mao was pushed by the implementation of a rural-urban dual system instead of an egalitarian approach. Some scholars, for example Riskin et. al. (2001), argue that China has significantly retreated from equality after the reform. They, however, have failed to recognize that there was actually no equality between city and countryside in the Maoist years. In this study, I suggest that a rural-urban dual education system

was one of the direct outcomes of this development strategy. The details are to be discussed in the following sections.

1.2 The Creation of Rural-Urban Dual Education System

Based on He (1998), the creation of two education systems under one government can be traced back to as early as 1950, when the State Council issued an order on next fiscal year's budget. It indicated clearly that while urban public schools were to be covered by the government budget, rural county governments were responsible for the running costs of rural schools. To find income sources and be self-financed, county governments were authorized to collect extra grain from farmers after the state grain appropriation plan was finished to offset the cost. In 1953, the Ministry of Education selected 8,000 elementary school teachers to be trained in higher learning institutions. Rural school teachers, however, were excluded. In the same year, the Ministry of Education reported its new educational development strategy to central government and party's Central Committee. The major contents in the strategy included: 1. the focus of national education had to be urban elementary schools, factory-affiliated elementary schools, mine-affiliated elementary schools, and complete elementary schools and central elementary schools in rural areas. 2. In general, rural elementary schools should be developed only when necessary and should be financially supported by farmers. 3. the state budget would cover public elementary schools. 4. the cost of rural elementary schools should be covered through collecting extra grain from farmers. The report was approved soon and later, besides the major points listed in the report, in an administrative directive signed by Zhou Enlai, the Premier of the State Council, the stance of central government was clear: "in mining areas, factories, and cities, especially major

cities, public schools should be developed in a reasonable manner...In rural areas, we should advocate schools to be supported by people....for rural public schools,... in general no development is to be made”. In 1955, the State Council issued an order requiring the rural-urban boundary line to be drawn because “city and countryside should be governed in different ways”. While city and countryside can be found as kind of universal social and economic phenomenon in every society, artificially creating two education systems in one country has been unprecedented in Chinese history.

It is clear that the early 1950s was a turning point for Chinese national education system. Since 1950, following the Soviet experience, many “Fast Middle School for Workers and Farmers” were created in major cities and the original goal was “serving workers and farmers”. Most of students were either urban-based workers or farmers working in the city. Starting from 1954, however, the Ministry of Education explicitly indicated that these schools should recruit “more workers”. In the same year, central education authority indicated that “bigger cities should have a higher quota than smaller cities; smaller cities should have more quota than the countryside; bigger cities, factories and mining areas should have a higher percentage of admissions; and these principles should be kept as internal information”. In 1955, all the “Fast Middle School for Workers and Farmers” stopped recruiting new students. In 1958, *People’s Daily* called for “developing agricultural middle schools” in rural areas. According to Liu, Guang, a high-rank government official at the time, agricultural middle schools were not part of public school system and they were collectively owned and financially supported by farmers. In the same year, party’s Central Committee and central government appointed 16 universities as the key universities. All of them were located in major cities, primarily in Beijing and Shanghai.

After the failure of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, the rural-urban boundary line was strengthened as part of the state development strategy and rural-urban divide was greatly tightened as the strategy of relief to this man-made disaster. In 1960, the State Council issued an order to raise the salary nationwide for teachers in middle schools and elementary schools. The raise was for public school teachers or urban-based teachers only, however. In 1962, facing an economic recession and increasing rate of unemployment, the Ministry of Education indicated that while schools in cities should be maintained and developed, some of rural schools were required to be released from government budget and become rural “collectively-financed” schools. In other words, they became the burden of farmers from that point on. Specifically, teachers and staff working in these schools would no longer be supplied with grain by government. In the same year, the State Planning Committee and the Ministry of Education jointly issued an order that required higher learning institutions and middle school to “primarily take care of big cities” when admitting new students. At the same time, the order required local governments to do as much as they can to prevent rural students from attending city-based schools and in addition, vocational schools were required to admit urban students only.

After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), abandoning Mao’s radical ideology of class struggle, Deng Xiaoping declared that the focus of state development would be economic growth and the center of economic reform would be the city (CCP 1984). In standard textbooks of contemporary Chinese history, this change is called “the second time at which party’s work focus switched to city since 1949”. Unfortunately, while Deng’s achievement has been widely recognized, how this “switch to city” policy has impacted rural China remains unnoticed in literature. Clearly, the reform advocated by Deng, though hailed by many and changed Chinese

society dramatically in many aspects, had no intention to make any change on the rural-urban divide. On the contrary, when city was declared to be the center of the reform, countryside was marginalized again and rural-urban dual system was consolidated again. In 1986, the *Chinese Law of Compulsory Education* was passed by the People's Congress and created a milestone in Chinese education: from this point on, local governments were required to take full financial responsibility of local education (People's Congress 1986). For poor rural governments, it was almost a mission impossible, however. In 1992, the Ministry of Education indicated to urban government that they "must guarantee the quality of nine-year mandatory education (in urban areas) and guarantee the extent of education in urban areas is greater than that in rural areas". In the same year, the *Detailed Rules of Law of Compulsory Education* was passed and issued by the Ministry of Education, requiring that when building new schools or repairing schools, rural villages had to pay for the cost while urban schools were to be covered by government.

After the new millennium, Chinese party and government finally realized the decline of rural education had evolved into a crisis (Pepper 2000a and 2000b, Yang 2006). Starting from 2005, government media has claimed that rural education system had entered a new era of "from 'people-run' education to 'government-run' education", which meant government was going to assume the full responsibility of national education in the countryside. It seems that finally rural education system is catching up with its urban counterpart, in terms of funding and policy related issues. However, there are two crucial issues I would like to emphasize here: 1. since the rural-urban gap has been there for decades, it is not easy to fix it in a short time period; and 2. more importantly, since China has entered an era of rural-urban migration, simply investing in rural

education has encountered an unexpected circumstance: hundreds of millions of rural residents are leaving for the city.

2. The “Chinese Characteristics” of Rural-Urban Dual Education System

2.1 Dual Education System as Part of Development Strategy

Scholars have studied the creation of Chinese national education system from the 1950s to the present from various perspectives, particularly the rural-urban dual education system. Exploring the relationship between changing politics and rural-urban gap in education during the period of 1949-1990, Hannum (1999) argues that since 1949, Chinese government has been trying to find a solution, seeking a balance between economic prosperity and the socialist ideology of egalitarianism. Further she claims that the Chinese experience can illustrate the difficulty of reconciling radical social goals and economically pragmatic policies. What happened in China, in terms of rural-urban gap in education, in her view, was “policies designed to promote rapid economic development” competing “for resources with policies designed to expand social opportunities to traditionally disadvantaged groups”. Her interpretation of rural-urban dual education systems and the causes of backwardness of rural education system is problematic, however. Specifically, the key problem in her analysis is that her understanding of socialism is different from what party leaders had planned in the 1950s. From the speeches of Mao, Liu and Ren introduced in this chapter, it is clear that there was definitely no struggle or conflicts when they made decisions to create a rural-urban dual system because they believed such a system would be necessary for the state industrialization and it was what the socialist development was

supposed to be. Moreover, they believed that when industry became advanced, agriculture would be automatically benefited and catch up through using modernized tools provided by the industry. Mao (1957) clearly stated that “the development of industry and agriculture must be synchronized so that the industry can have materials and market, and we can accumulate more capital for a strong heavy industry”. When making this statement, evidently his unspoken assumption was industry would compensate agriculture in the future. The biggest problem, however, in Mao’s idea was that in the rest of his life, he was never able to find a way to let industry compensate agriculture, let alone a synchronized development of the former and the latter. In fact, the “price scissors” that favored the industry sector was the basic relationship between industry and agriculture in China and was applied for decades (Lin and Yu 2008). Almost 30 years later, Deng Xiaoping made his famous announcement on his theory of “socialist market economy”: policy was to allow some people and some regions to get rich first, then to let them help others to get rich as well, and eventually to realize the goal of shared prosperity. Like Mao’s plan, this promise of a shared prosperity by Deng also was not kept, however. Nowadays, China has the highest income inequality in the whole world (Xie and Zhou 2014). The same problem remains: even though Deng was able to allow some people and regions to be rich first through his market-oriented reform, as the “great architect of reform and opening-up”, he also failed to design a mechanism that could make the city help the countryside instead of leaving the latter far behind. As a result, a rural-urban dual education system is the product of such a long-standing belief held by Chinese leaders. It was meticulously planned rather than the product of the struggle or conflict between “social goals and economically pragmatic policies”.

2.2 A Declining Rural Education System: Victim of the Reform Only?

Romanticizing rural education and development in general under Mao is not uncommon in literature, as (Chan 1994) pointed out. Pepper (2000b) argues that the crisis of rural education is not something that just happened in the 1990s. Rather, it is the direct consequence of the reform in the late 1970s and 1980s. Specifically, she argues that because of the centralization of educational resources after the reform, the educational resources distributed to the countryside under Mao are re-distributed to cities through creating a city-based “key school” system and has made cities the biggest winner against the interest of countryside. By 1991, when rural fiscal system was reformed, rural villages were required to assume full responsibility of financing their elementary schools and junior-high schools no matter if they could or could not afford. At the same time, local governments became more interested in investing in the market instead of in education after Deng’s famous “Southern Tour”. In Hannum and Park (2007), one of the key themes is examining how China’s market-oriented reform has caused increasing rural-urban inequality in education because of the emergence of a profit-seeking Chinese society, which has betrayed the original socialist ideology. The authors claim that “many who would not have previously had access to schooling did gain access in that period (i.e., the Cultural Revolution)”. In Hannum et. al. (2008, in Brandt and Rawski 2008), on the education during the Cultural Revolution, the authors further claim that “when schools reopened after the initial chaotic years, the ideological agenda of eliminating class differences, whether urban-rural, worker-peasant, or intellectual-manual, dominated the classroom and the curriculum”. They praise education policies at that time because “direct costs of schooling were rarely borne by families, even in rural communities” and “an essential goal of the Cultural Revolution was to undercut differences between the peasantry and the remainder of the population, and, at least

quantitatively, this appears to have happened.” Further, they argue that “data through the 1970s, during the Cultural Revolution, show that the ratio of rural junior high school entrants to primary school graduates hovered between .78 and .92. Census data also show dramatic increases in access to education for rural cohorts during the Cultural Revolution.”

While I agree that national education system was rapidly expanded under Mao, especially in rural areas, I contend that the Maoist education was based a rural-urban dual system, which was completely ignored in these scholars’ works. Even though more schools were built and more students enrolled than before, there was one thing that did not change during Mao’s lifetime and has been extended to today: rural-urban boundary line was maintained and rural-urban migration was strictly prohibited in general. More importantly, entire rural education system was designed to serve city-based state development strategy. In terms of career opportunities, while rural graduates had no other options but to stay put in the countryside, based on the policy of “from the commune, back to the commune”, even those rural students who finished college in the city also were required to return to the countryside (He 1998). I argue that the dual system is also responsible for the crisis in rural education in later years instead of just because of the market reform. Studying the historical trajectory of dual education system, Wang (2010) points out that under Mao, Chinese education system was established on two tracks: 1. a formal standardized (urban) education system that emphasized the implementation of science and engineering in state development. This system was basically borrowed from the Soviet education system. Even during the Cultural Revolution when entire education system was paralyzed, Mao indicated to government media that “we will keep universities open for sure. Of course, I mean science and engineering universities” (Mao 1968) and 2. an informal grass root (rural) education system that

was managed under a half-day study and half-day work principle. The latter was based on the experience Mao and his colleagues obtained when they spent thirteen years (1935-1948) in Yanan. According to Wang, it was Liu Shaoqi, one of the major party and government leaders at that time, who advocated a “two-leg walking” strategy. Later, based on this “two-legs walking” strategy and the Soviet experience as well, the national education system was eventually divided into two systems: urban and rural, in which urban system was assumed to be responsible for supporting industrialization and rural system was assumed to be responsible for supporting agriculture. From the 1950s on, this strategy was emphasized many times in party and government documents and administrative directives except during the Cultural Revolution when Liu was purged (Wang 2010). Clearly, had the history of rural-urban dual system been taken into account as an analytical perspective, these scholars who have solely criticized market reform for creating a crisis in rural education might have a different view.

2.3 “Cherry-Picking” in Higher Learning Admission

Liang et. al. (2012) is one that has triggered a lasting debate regarding China’s educational equality/inequality, calling the creation of contemporary Chinese higher learning admission system a “Silent Revolution” since the 1950s. By “Silent Revolution”, the authors mean after the success of the Maoist revolution in 1949, students from traditionally disadvantaged social classes, such as farmers and workers, have had unprecedented opportunities to be admitted to city-based elite universities. The authors argue that in Chinese history, for thousands of years, people of disadvantaged social classes were excluded from elite educational institutions. After the Maoist revolution, however, more and more students from low social classes have been admitted to top

universities and this “revolution” has continued till the present time. Using the student registration data (1952-2002) collected from Peking University, a national elite university and Suzhou University, a local elite university in Jiangsu Province, the authors analyze the geographic origin of students, i.e., city or countryside, and their original social class, i.e., if their parents were party/government official, worker or farmer, etc. According to the result of data analysis, they find that during the time span of 1952-1999, of students that Peking University admitted, 15% of them were from rural families. At the same time, there were more rural students admitted by Suzhou University, representing 25% of its student population. The authors contend that since 1949, Chinese education system has been completely changed, when compared with traditional education systems in history. Because of the implementation of a set of new progressive policies, they point out that student population in elite universities has demonstrated great diversity that never happened before. The authors also express their concerns about declining number of rural students admitted to elite universities in recent years, calling for effort to “keep the fruit of the silent revolution”. Even though they also have noticed some problems inside this “revolution”, generally speaking, they have strong inclination towards the Maoist equal access to education.

That article has triggered a long debate since it was published in 2012. One of the most comprehensive critiques of the book is Ying and Liu (2015). The authors argue that first of all, even though the general principle of education advocated in the Maoist era was “serving the people”, who were “the people” remains an undefined term in the book. In addition, they further point out that how the book has defined “worker” and “farmer” also is highly questionable because the meaning of these terms kept changing in the Maoist years. Therefore, the data used

in the book could be misleading and biased. They point out that the authors failed to pay attention to the related historical background when this “silent revolution” happened. As a result, “though sometimes numbers are convincing, other times they might be misleading”. Specifically, they ask that if it was fair or revolutionary when more students from traditionally low social classes were admitted to elite universities, many students were rejected by the universities simply because the class status of their parents did not fall in the category of “working class”. What really happened when more and more students from families of workers and farmers were admitted to elite universities simply because of their family background? Was this strategy a real revolution? Ying and Liu find the fact is on the opposite side. For example, among students majoring in English, in 1970, most of them only finished middle-school (i.e., junior high level) education before they were admitted to Peking University. Among 56 students in the History Department, only 10 of them had finished high school education. Some of them only finished elementary school education. As a result, many of them were actually not able to finish the curriculum required by the university. Ying and Liu argue that it will be incorrect to define such a policy as a revolutionary one because the quality of higher learning education was actually significantly lowered.

The most important contribution made by Ying and Liu (2015) is their critique of the so-called “key school” strategy, which is highly praised by the authors of *Silent Revolution*. In the article, using their data collected from two elite universities, the authors claim that the “key school” in rural areas has provided rural students a channel through which many of them were admitted by elite universities such as Peking University and Suzhou University. Therefore, they strongly suggest that the “key school” strategy as the fruit of educational revolution be

maintained and further developed. Ying and Liu, however, argue that instead of a channel that rural students can take advantage of, on the contrary, the “key school” actually works as an exclusive institutional arrangement against common rural students. First of all, who can enter those “key schools”? Ying and Liu point out it is the local social elite class that could take advantage of this system, in not only the countryside but also the city. While students from working families could enter “key schools” through hard work, students who have stronger social status can make it happen much easier. More importantly, even though the “key schools” system was hoped by policy makers to be able to give a hand, in terms of teaching and management, to “common schools” through being a role model, in fact they are competing educational resources with “common schools” and squeezing the space of them all the time. I suggest that even though Ying and Liu have known that the “key schools” are neither able to improve the quality of rural education nor to eliminate rural-urban gap in education, they have not realized that the real role of “key schools” in rural areas or the role of rural education system under the rural-urban dual system. I argue that on the one hand, “key schools” are actually a channel through which talented rural students are picked by the state. On the other hand, more importantly, entire rural education system has been doing one thing for decades: when supplying the city-based state development with valuable rural talent, preventing the remainder of the rural students from leaving the countryside. The authors of *Silent Revolution* erroneously assume that the more rural students admitted by city-based elite universities, the more equal between city and countryside. The fact is that after graduation, most of them would join urban labor force and would have nothing to do with their villages from that point on. At the same time, those students who were not selected, i.e., the absolute majority of rural students, can never find a way to migrate to the city, trapped in a vicious circle. The only result of such a “cherry-picking” dual

education system is a wider and wider rural-urban gap. From this sense, the so-called “*Silent Revolution*” is not a valid argument because the authors have failed to recognize the most essential function of rural-urban dual education system.

What happened to a poor rural village located in Guizhou Province can be a good example to demonstrate the essential function of rural education system in China (Sina News, April 12, 2006): although Nongchang Village was located in a remote mountainous area in West Guizhou, it became famous for having had almost 500 students admitted by colleges and universities since the late 1970s. In 2006, impressed by the high educational performance by students in such a rural village, reporters visited this village with great curiosity. The village, according to the village leader, had a long tradition of valuing and supporting education. In the 1970s, when local government failed to provide sufficient funds for a proposed school in the village, villagers volunteered to build the school for their children. In 1999, a new school was built in the village. When the reporters visited the school, it had approximately 1,000 students and 34 teachers. Many of students came from other villages because of the reputation of this school. The village leader proudly told the reporters “we pay for children’s education because we live in poverty and we believe education is the only way to escape from poverty”. Zhao family, for example, had been a legend in the village for six children admitted by universities. The oldest son was admitted by one of China’s top engineering universities in 1982. For anyone who is familiar with Chinese higher learning entry exam in the 1980s, no one can deny it was a great achievement for a rural student. Influenced by him, five brothers and sisters of this family were admitted by universities one after one. The reporters, while impressed by villagers’ passion for education, were shocked by chronic poverty in the village as well. Noticing extreme poverty in the village,

the reporters became so confused and finally wrote a report titled as “why a village that has sent 500 students to universities is still trapped in poverty?”

Interested in knowing why the village was still trapped in poverty after sending some many students to universities, the reporter who wrote the story asked Hu Xiaodeng, a scholar who worked for the Academy of Social Sciences, Guizhou Province for an answer. The latter, who obviously knew the nature of rural education system, responded, “in fact, it is not just Nongchang Village’s problem. We are all working hard to educate students for developed areas”. Hu was right. All six students from the legendary Zhao family of Nongchang Village, for example, had settled in major cities such as Shanghai, Beijing and Guiyang after graduation. And actually all other students who left the village for colleges and universities did the same thing, according to the reporter.

In 2013, Xi Jinping, the leader of Chinese Communist Party and central government, visited a poor rural county in Hebei Province. He was shocked by serious poverty in this county, which was just 170 miles southwest of Beijing, the Chinese capital city. He immediately indicated to local government officials that “for the purpose of reducing poverty, education has to be the first step. The ultimate solution to poverty will be working hard on next generation’s education and having children in remote areas educated” (Ministry of Education 2015a). Based on his instruction, the Ministry of Education immediately requested some key universities to admit 50,000 rural students from certain poor rural areas starting from 2015. Specifically, the designated areas that were covered in this plan were so-called “832 Counties”, which means the poorest 832 rural counties identified by the central government. In addition, provinces such as Hebei, Henan,

Anhui, Shanxi, Guangdong, Guangxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Gansu, etc., were also included this plan because they all had large number of rural poor population. For “key universities” that were directly run by the Ministry of Education, they were required to admit rural students, who worked hard, had excellent performance, especially from “remote, poor and ethnic areas”. And the pool of rural students has to make up at least 2% of the total number of to-be-admitted students in 2015. For local “key universities”, this quota is set at 3% of the total number of new students (Ministry of Education 2015b).

In terms of rural poverty and rural education, at this moment, many might be wondering how much this well-intentioned plan will work. Clearly, when Nongchang Village is still trapped in chronic poverty after sending 500 hundred students to city-based colleges and universities, whether these 832 poor counties and provinces can have a different outcome through sending more students is not very hard to predict. For these talented rural students, when they finish higher learning education, the majority of them will definitely join urban-based labor force and permanently settle in major cities for sure. For the countryside, however, the gain through this educational initiative is obviously limited because the majority of poor population is still trapped in the countryside without the real freedom of migration. The story of Nongchang Village suggests that under the rural-urban dual education system, there is no guarantee that investing in rural education will reduce rural poverty, even though a tiny portion of rural-hukou students could change their life by taking advantage of this chance.

3. Tied to the Countryside

The story of Nongchang Village and the latest government plan of admitting 50,000 rural students to key higher learning institutions in 2015 also have shed light on a less-known side of China's rural-urban dual education system. When students with great talent are picked by the state and sent to urban-based colleges and universities, where do those who were not selected go? While suggesting more rural students admitted by elite universities actually does not mean rural-urban gap is becoming narrower, I argue that paying attention to the fate of those rural students who were not admitted by higher learning institutions is the key to understanding another major goal of Chinese dual education system: keeping the majority of rural people in the countryside. To be specific, since the rural-urban boundary line was officially drawn and *hukou* was implemented in the 1950s, the major goal of rural education system has been different from that of the urban education system. Two education systems that have different goals of education have made Chinese national education a unique one (Wang 2010). In the literature, while the gap, in terms of funding and educational performance, etc., between two education systems has been carefully studied (Rong and Shi 2001, Hannum and Park 2007, Wu and Zhang 2010), the goals of two education systems, however, have remained less noticed. Wang (2010) is one of the few scholarly works in the literature, directly pointing out there are two national education systems with two sets of different goals. As a result, for many scholars and policy makers, the only solution for the crisis in rural education is more investment. No one can deny the great effort that the Chinese party and government have put in rural education in the past decades. The reality, however, is that rural education is still in crisis. Why the mainstream literature and policy have failed to explain such a paradox? I contend that this is because the hidden goal dominating the rural education reforms is still unknown to many. For instance, following Schultz, Wang (2003) suggests that investing in education will increase human capital in rural areas and therefore will

have a decisive influence on rural development. In sum, Wang's thought is a reflection of the mainstream scholarship and policy on this specific issue: rural development is the dependent variable that completely depends on the investment from government. In other words, For Wang and many other scholars, pouring more money into rural education will ultimately solve the problem. When more investments have been made but the problems are still serious, this line of scholarship obviously is not capable of correctly interpreting the reality. In a word, deciphering such a paradox, we need to take a close look at the unique goal of rural education system and how this goal is achieved.

3.1 “Educating New Farmers” Movements since the 1950s

Based on He (1998), since the 1950s, the major goal of rural education system has been encouraging rural students who are not admitted by higher level schools to stay put in their home village and participate in agricultural work. In 1953, *People's Daily*, the party Central Committee's newspaper, issued a special editorial titled “organizing elementary school graduates to participate in agricultural work”. For those who are familiar with contemporary Chinese politics, *People's Daily* is equal to the voice of the party and therefore has to be always taken seriously. The editorial pointed out that “many rural elementary school graduates want to enter middle school, and their parents also have the same hope. This is understandable. However, because our country's economy is still less developed, limited resources have to be used for the development of heavy industry. As a result, we do not have sufficient human, material, and financial resources to build more schools and the demand cannot be fully met at this moment. Therefore, encouraging rural elementary school graduates (who are not admitted to middle

schools) to participate in agricultural work is the essential approach for their future”. The editorial also used the Soviet collective farms as an example to convince its readers, claiming “many of the Soviet farms have their own scientists and technicians” and there would be plenty of opportunities for recent graduates. For local party committees and governments, the editorial warned that directing students to participate in agricultural work was their main task at that time. One year later, in 1954, the Ministry of Education indicated to local urban governments that all the “Fast Middle School for Worker and Farmers” should admit more workers rather than farmers. In 1955, the Party’s Central Committee approved a report that clearly defined rural school graduates as “an important workforce of agricultural production, rural cooperative movement and rural educational work”. In the same year, the party’s Guangdong committee suggested to the Central Committee that all rural middle schools in the country be changed to agricultural technical schools. The Central Committee, even though rejecting this suggestion, allowed Guangdong committee to change all rural middle schools in Guangdong to agricultural technical schools because “most of graduates will work for agriculture”. In another *People’s Daily* editorial issued in 1957, Liu Shaoqi, the president of central government, explicitly indicated to those who were not admitted by high level schools, “it is the countryside that has the largest capacity for more people and it is agriculture that can absorb more labor force”. In “*the Principles and Guide of National Agricultural Development, 1956-1967*”, the goal of rural education system was clearly defined as “educating rural youth” to “love the countryside”, “study agricultural techniques”, “learn experience of agricultural production from older and experienced farmers”. And “rural youth should become the task force of agricultural production and development of agricultural technology”. In a directive issued to the rural local governments, the Ministry of Education asked certain courses of agriculture technology added to their

curriculums because “most of rural graduates will participate in agricultural work”. In 1958, the Ministry of Education issued an order requiring rural schools to “organize students to participate in agricultural production” and urban schools to “organize students to work in factories, construction sites and services”. One month later, *People’s Daily* issued a high-key editorial calling for “the great development of people-run agricultural schools” across the country. In a report submitted by the party’s Jiangsu Committee, the goal of setting up the agricultural schools was explicit: “stabilizing rural youth, no more blind flow of cityward migrants”. In 1961, a report approved by the Party’s Central Committee stated that agricultural middle schools, regular rural elementary schools and middle schools should teach agricultural technology courses and graduates should stay in the countryside and work for communes. In 1962, the Ministry of Education indicated that science and engineering technology schools should admit urban workers and agricultural technology schools should admit rural commune members. After graduation, students of rural origin must return to their communes.

The radical reform in the late 1970s did nothing to change the course of this dual education system. In 1978, continuing the “two-legs walking strategy” adopted by the central government in the 1950s, the State Council even approved a report prepared by the Ministry of Education requesting approval of establishing “farmer-run higher learning institutions”. In 1983, the Party’s Central Committee and the State Council jointly issued an order that defined the goal of rural education system as “improving scientific capability and education of next generation rural youth and facilitating socialist development in the countryside”. The order also required the establishment of vocational schools in rural areas. Students were required to return to where they came from after graduation. Following this order, the National Committee of Education

(formerly the Ministry of Education) stated in a report that “rural education should primarily serve local economic growth and social development”. Starting from the late 1980s, Chinese central government has adopted several national strategies to reform deteriorating rural education system. All the strategies applied, however, have no intention of promoting the mobility of rural population. On the contrary, all of them have inherited and continued the Stalinist-Maoist view of development that considers the countryside one that has to be stabilized for the interest of city-based state development. The director of National Committee of Education, Li Tieying once said “of our eight hundred million people, 80% lives in the countryside. The stable growth of agriculture, especially the supply of grain, is the foundation of our national economy. Promoting the development of agricultural economy is the primary task we face....Such a circumstance requires further development and reform of rural education system”. If compared with the words of Mao and other party leaders in the 1950s, obviously, Li’s understanding of rural development and the goal of rural education was completely identical to that of the party and central government leaders in the 1950s.

In 1988, the State Council approved a proposal prepared by the National Committee of Education and decided to promote “Liaoyuan Plan” across the country. The basic goal of this plan was to improve the quality of rural education through providing basic technical training to rural laborers so that they could contribute to local economy and agricultural production. Aiming to realize the goal of “facilitating agriculture through technology”, the “Liaoyuan Plan” was just one of a series of ambitious rural economic development plans central government promoted at that time and specifically it was used as a foundation for other two ensuing rural economic development plans, which were “Xinghuo Plan” and “Fengshou Plan”, respectively.

The plan first criticized existing rural education system for not teaching rural students with sufficient knowledge and skills that agricultural production needed. The policy makers pointed out that “one of the major problems that prevent rural economy from further development is the low quality of rural population and their low capability of applying modern technology. As a result, 70% of advanced agricultural technology are not applied in agricultural production; two third of arable land is not productive; and every year 10% of farm animals die because of diseases. Therefore, the key step for rural development is to improve the quality of farmers”. Then the plan required rural education system to be reformed and development of vocational education in different forms such as distance learning. The key point was, according to the plan, to improve the “quality of farmers” through teaching them applied agricultural technology. According to the Ministry of Education, the “key areas” of this project were 852 poor rural counties and most of them were located in the West China. After the completion of the first term, central government launched the second term of this project by investing 50 billion Chinese Yuan (USD 6.05 billion) and according to the government media, 90% of the funding was used in the West China again. During this period, a total number of 10,663 rural middle schools and elementary schools were rebuilt and almost half million school staff received training. After the new millennium, the National Development and Reform Commission took the lead of rural education reform. In 2004, it launched “Liangji Plan”, which aimed to promote 9-year compulsory education and wipe out adult illiteracy in the West China. The plan pointed out that by 2002, there were 372 counties that were not able to implement 9-year compulsory education and reduce adult illiteracy. And as a result, chronic poverty in those areas and low quality of education had created a vicious circle. Therefore, the plan required 9-year compulsory education

to be realized and adult illiteracy to be eliminated by 2007 in these areas (National Development and Reform Commission 2014).

3.2 Rural-Hukou Students: “Permanent” Farmers or Migrant Workers

In terms of the crisis in the rural education system, I argue the key issue is rural-urban dual system instead of the lack of funding. Accompanied by hukou that prevents those who are not admitted by urban schools from leaving the countryside, all the efforts are actually strengthening the rural-urban boundary line through keeping undesired rural population in the countryside. In a word, the goal of rural education system has never changed. For the rural youth, their future has been predefined and there are no other options for them.

Since the 1990s, when more and more rural-hukou migrants were moving to cities for employment, migrant children’s need of education has become a big problem for the city. Because migrants were not part of urban hukou population, therefore they were not covered by the government budget at both central and local level. As Wang (2005) has pointed out, for Chinese people, hukou was designed to be a life-long identity. In other words, in spite that the geographic mobility in the country has significantly increased after the 1990s, for Chinese citizens, no matter where they go, they are still subject to the jurisdiction of the local government holding their original hukou. This institutional arrangement also applies to education. According to *the PRC Law of Compulsory Education: Details for Implementation* (National Commission of Education 1992), with the approval of the government with which hukou was registered, migrant children may submit application for fee-based temporary school enrollment to the local

government of their current residence. It is clear that even though migrant children, mostly rural children, had left their home village, they were still being treated as rural population and more importantly, were under the control of not only an urban government but also a rural government that was far away. In 1996, the National Commission of Education issued *Temporary Regulations for Migrants (Children) Schooling* and stipulated that migrant children would not be allowed to attend public school unless there was no guardians available at home (Yuan 2010). In 1998, the Ministry of Education issued *Temporary Regulations for Migrant Children's Schooling*, in which local governments holding hukou registration were required to “strictly control migration of children” (Ministry of Education 1998). Specifically, article #3 ruled that “if guardians are available at where hukou registration is held, children should receive education in the same place”. Article #4 stipulated that the length of education for migrant children was to be determined by the education authority of hukou-holding government. Article #5 held that the government that held the hukou registration of migrant children should cooperate with the government of migrant children's current residence; the former was required to create a registration system for children who had migrated, and the latter was required to create temporary school registration for migrant children. Article #8 repeated the rule of *the Chinese Law of Compulsory Education: Regulations for Implementation*, i.e., for the purpose of receiving education at where current residence was, the parents of migrant children must submit application to the government that held their hukou registration for approval. Beijing has been actively implementing these regulations for years. In 2002, city's education authority issued *Temporary Regulations of Compulsory Education for Migrants (Children at Schooling age)*, which required district governments to check with migrants and assure if their children had other guardians available at home. For those who had guardians available, they were defined as not

eligible to attend schools in Beijing and were required to be sent back to where they came from. Otherwise, their parents would be prosecuted. In 2003, as more and more migrant children were moving to cities, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Security and other four central government ministries jointly issued a policy memo regarding migrant children's schooling issues. The memo required hukou-holding government to cooperate with urban government through sending their inspectors to where migrant children lived (State Council 2003). Under such a policy, in major cities where rural migrants were concentrated, many so-called "tracking schools" were created by remote rural county governments. In Shanghai, because many migrants came from rural areas of Anhui Province, some rural counties of Anhui had to create "tracking schools" in Shanghai specifically for the children of Anhui migrants. For these rural counties, besides providing funding for "tracking schools" in the city, sometimes, they also needed to send teachers to teach students in these Shanghai-based schools (Yuan et.al. 2013).

4. Summary

As part of China's rural-urban dual system, two education systems in one country has been implemented in China for more than six decades. Following the Soviet experience of industrialization, the countryside was required to make contribution to the city and such a development strategy was considered what the socialist development was supposed to be by Chinese leaders such as Mao in the 1950s. As a result, two education systems were created under one government and each system had its own goal of development. For urban education system, the goal of education was to prepare labor force for city-based industrialization. At the same time, using a strategy that I call "cherry-picking", the major goal of rural education system was to pick

talented students through so-called “key schools” and make the remaining students agricultural labor force for the countryside permanently. While cityward migration through education is common in the world, the crucial part of Chinese dual education system is the prohibition of rural-urban free migration for rural-hukou students who were not selected. I argue that admitting more rural students to city-based higher learning institutions does not mean the rural-urban relations are ameliorating and the countryside is becoming prosperous. Rather, if we look at the fate of rural students who are not selected, the absolute majority of rural-hukou students, we know the function of dual education system has remained the same in the past sixty years. In recent years, even though the party and government leaders have required higher learning institutions to admit more rural students, the fact is that only a tiny portion of rural students actually finished high school education¹¹.

¹¹ According to China scholars and a recent WSJ report, the percentage is merely 2% - 3%.

Chapter 5 Migrant Children in the Major Cities

It is well known that since 2014, in accordance with an administrative directive issued in the State Council (2014), almost all major cities and provinces in China have announced that the hukou registration policy will be gradually reformed and from 2014 on, the old hukou book that classifies Chinese people as either “Agricultural hukou” or “Non-Agricultural Hukou” will be replaced by a new “Resident Hukou” across the country. That means everyone in China will have the same hukou registration that classifies them as “Resident”. While some media hails for the reform and claims that China is saying farewell to the rural-urban dual system, there is a basic fact that cannot be ignored: even though a new “Resident Hukou” is to be implemented in both city and countryside, the registration is still tied with local registration place. As a result, after the divide between “Agricultural hukou” (farmers and rural migrants) holders and “Non-Agricultural Hukou” holders (urbanites) is removed, in the era of great cityward migration, the gap between local hukou holders (urbanites) and non-local hukou holder (primarily rural migrants) emerges, specifically like what Chan and Buckingham (2008) have pointed out. It is worth mentioning that because the majority of migrants is former “Agricultural Hukou” holders. Therefore, the deep rural-urban divide is still the reality in Chinese society and free rural-urban migration is still a dream for the people of rural origin. Even though farmers are not classified as “Agricultural Hukou” holders anymore, they are still officially “Non-Local Hukou” holders to the city. For a migrant who wants to migrate to a city from countryside, for the city authority, his or her “Resident Hukou” immediately becomes “Non-local hukou” and as a result, he or she will be treated differently accordingly. In this sense, the widely-hailed 2014 reform actually is not very helpful for migrants.

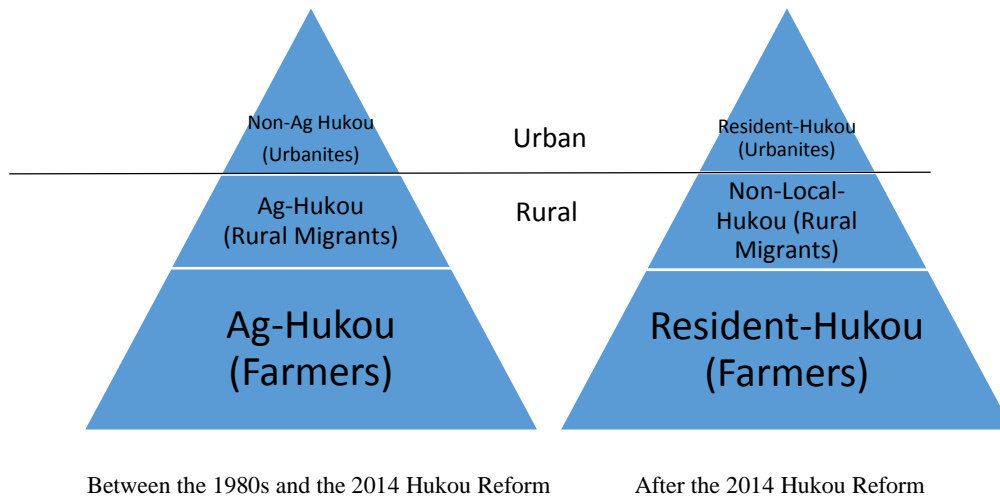


Figure 5.1 Social and Spatial Hierarchies in Chinese Society after 2014

The figure shows the nature of China’s hukou reform from “Ag-Hukou” vs. “Non-Ag-Hukou” to “Local Hukou” vs. “Non-Local Hukou”¹², adapted from Chan (2009 and 2012). The major rural-urban divide in China remains firmly even after a series of reforms. Please note: even though there are urban-urban migrants, they are not included in this graph. The focus of this study is rural-urban relations in China. Compared with rural migrants, urban-urban migrants are a minority.

This chapter explains the details how the “invisible walls” persist between the city and the rural migrants, especially rural-hukou children, even after a series of reforms in the past years. Through exploring China’s internal “immigration” system, i.e., a point system implemented in major cities, I will examine why the education policy in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai is so harsh to common rural-hukou migrant students while the party and central government has been publicly promoting a city-countryside “integration” development strategy.

I studied relevant government directives and city ordinances, which help me understand the evolution of policies regarding so-called “floating-population” management. At the same time, the 2010 Chinese Census data and a series of statistical yearbooks (Beijing and Shanghai) are

¹² The reform was started in 2005 and formalized in 2014. More details are in Chan and Buckingham (2008).

also used when performing demographic and spatial analysis. All these data sources can be accessed through the internet. Geographic information system (GIS)-based mapping and spatial pattern analysis are also used in this chapter to demonstrate the injustice imposed upon migrants. My spatial analysis in this chapter was inspired by “the Invisible Walls” defined in Chan (1994) and Edward Soja (2010)’s seminal research of “Spatial Justice/Injustice” in the Greater Los Angeles area. This chapter will demonstrate the substantive existence of spatial injustice in major Chinese cities.

A background information, the Chinese Census data show that the basic trend of Chinese rural-urban migration in the past decades has not changed: there are three regions that are the magnets to rural-urban migrants: Beijing-Tianjin, Shanghai (Yangzi River Delta) and Guangdong Province (Pearl River Delta) (Chan 2008 and 2012, Liang 2012)¹³. Therefore, for the majority of hundreds of millions rural migrants, whether those remote and economically backward provinces are about to relax control over hukou actually has little to do with them. In other words, when studying China’s hukou and dual system, we have to pay extra attention the policy implemented in these three regions.

1. Internal “Immigration” System in Shanghai and Beijing

When more and more rural-hukou children are moving to the city with their parents (ACWF 2013, NBS 2015), the urban benefits and services that are available to them depend on the status of their parents. In practice, for a rural-hukou child whose parents do not meet the requirements

¹³ According to the National Bureau of Statistics 2015 Monitoring and Investigative Report on Migrant Workers, there are 164.89 million migrant workers, making up 59.4% of the population of migrant workers. Even though there is an increase in the westward flow of migrant workers, the majority is still in the East China.

for certain certificates required by government, he or she will not be eligible for receiving public education in the city. First of all, a local hukou is normally required. Then how can a migrant get it through a procedure called hukou transfer? It is well known that in major Chinese cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, even though there are few existing official channels through which local urban hukou can be obtained by migrants, for most of them, especially rural-urban migrants, neither Shanghai hukou nor Beijing hukou, which is closely tied with local services and social benefits (e.g., access to public education), is easy to get because of the highly selective conditions set by the government in these cities (see Zhang and Tao 2012). I argue that what these major cities have implemented amounts to an internal “immigration” system, which is based on the hukou system and rural-urban dual system. In general, while *immigration* is defined as “process through which individuals become permanent residents or citizens of a new country” (Encyclopædia Britannica online edition) and “the movement of non-native people into a country in order to settle there” (Collins English Dictionary online edition), in the Chinese context, it is hukou and dual system that has made internal migrants like immigrants.

1.1 Who are Eligible to Attend Public School in Shanghai?

The Chinese law unconditionally guarantees nine-year compulsory education for all children. In those major cities, however, public education is only open to some migrant children who meet certain requirements. Furthermore, after the nine-year compulsory education, for anyone who is a non-local hukou holder and wants to attend high school (i.e., grade 9-12), policy is completely based on the discretion of the local government. In Shanghai, for anyone who just arrived and hopes to send children to public school, the first thing required by the city government is to apply

for a *Shanghai Certificate of Residence*. According to the *Regulatory Measures for Shanghai Certificate of Residence* (City of Shanghai 2013), a non-Shanghai hukou holder is required to go to the community service center serving his or her residence to apply for the certificate, which will bear information including name, sex, ethnic origin, ID number, photo, permanent address, current address, government agency of issuance and the date of expiry. The eligibility of applying for such a certificate is defined as follows: 1. An applicant must have formal residential address in the city, and 2. Must have legal and stable employment, have had employment-based social security insurance for at least 6 months, or for the purpose of family reunion or study, or training, and need to stay at least 6 months in the city. It seems that it has been quite easy for a migrant to get such a certificate. However, what “formal residential address” and “legal and stable employment” mean are tricky in practice. Local authorities could change the definition anytime based on their discretions and needs. As a result, many migrants actually are not eligible for such a certificate. The certificate has to be renewed each year after issuance. If any of the information changes, the certificate holder is required to report to the community service center and update relevant information in 30 days. Otherwise, the certificate will become invalid. Only with a valid certificate, a migrant can legitimately prove that he or she has lived in Shanghai and can request civil services such as public health, social insurance, education and more important, eligibility of transferring his or her original hukou to Shanghai hukou in the future if further requirements are met. To a great extent, the certificate issued by the government of Shanghai is very much similar to a visa system implemented by a sovereign state to regulate immigration. What Shanghai’s certificate system regulates, however, are Chinese citizens. Having a “permanent address” in their home province and a temporary “current address” in Shanghai at the same time, certificate holders are just like long-time nonimmigrant visa holders living in their

own country, ironically. As for migrant children who are in the school age, they can only apply for admission to vocational schools in Shanghai after their 9-year compulsory education in Shanghai. (Of course, there is also no guarantee that a migrant child could attend public school in Shanghai after meeting certain conditions.) According to this city ordinance, in general, migrant children are not only ineligible to attend government-funded public high schools in Shanghai but also ineligible to take the National Higher Education Examination in Shanghai unless the status of their parents meets certain conditions through a merit-based point system.

With *the Regulatory Measures for Shanghai Certificate of Residence* as the start point, there are two related key issues to address: 1. how a migrant certificate holder can transfer his or her non-Shanghai hukou to Shanghai hukou, which is crucial to a child's access to public education and is defined by Zhang and Tao (2012) as the #1 hukou in China, and 2. how the point system, which is bundled with social services and benefits, works for migrants. That requires us to read two more ordinances issued by the city of Shanghai for details. According to *the Regulatory Measures for Shanghai Certificate of Residence*, there are already one city ordinance issued in 2009 that explicitly explains the official procedure of transferring hukou. According to this ordinance, the basic goal of this legislation is to “attract talented people to Shanghai”. But who are the “talented”? First of all, only current holders of *Shanghai Certificate of Residence* are eligible for applying for Shanghai hukou if they meet ALL the required conditions at the same time. The conditions are highly selective however¹⁴. Meanwhile, migrants are encouraged to

¹⁴ The conditions include 1. have had a valid *Certificate of Residence* for seven or more years, and 2. have participated in a city-run social insurance program for seven or more years, and 3. have paid city income tax, and 4. is currently hired at middle-level or advanced technical position or have technician certificate (state government-certified, rank 2 and above) and the certificate is directly related to the current work position of the applicant, and 5. have no violation of the planned birth policy and 6. no criminal record.

apply for Shanghai hukou if they have made significant contribution to Shanghai and have been acknowledged by the city government, or have been hired at advanced technical position, or have been working in city's remote areas in education or public health for five or more years, or have paid more social security tax than the average amount paid in the city in the past three years, or have invested in the city, paid taxes and hired local Shanghai-hukou holders in the past three years. That said, there is no guarantee that everyone who is qualified can be granted Shanghai hukou because how many qualified migrants can be allowed to settle depends on a black box, which is "annual quota" controlled directly by the city government. It appears that Shanghai is trying to be more transparent in migration management. In fact, however, information about this "annual quota" has never been made public. There is no any information regarding what the quota is and how it is determined (Chen 2012).

How many migrants, especially rural-urban migrants could reach the last rung of this ladder? The answer cannot be clearer. For most migrant children, especially children of rural-hukou migrants, since their parents can hardly go through hukou conversion, their chances of attending public school completely depends on the discretions of local government.

Then if applying for a direct hukou conversion is not easy, how about the point system, which also guarantees a child's rights to public education in Shanghai if an applicant could have a score of 120 or higher? The key part of this issue, which is also stated in the *Regulatory Measures for Shanghai Certificate of Residence*, is about how the points are calculated or simply put, who "the talented" are for Shanghai. In sum, only applicants who have at least college degree and long time work experience can be granted higher scores by the point system. In 2013, Shanghai issued

the *Temporary Administrative Measures of Certificate of Shanghai Residence-Based Point System*, stipulating that the social services and benefits a migrant can receive is closely tied to the points he or she could accumulate. The more points, the more civil services and social benefits. The points a migrant can be granted, no matter how high it is, however, will not lead to the obtainment of Shanghai hukou, which is bundled with more civil services and social benefits. According to the ordinance, the calculation of point system is based on several variables such as one's age, education background, rank of professional skills, the length of career and contribution to the social security system of Shanghai, and the social and economic needs of Shanghai. For the certificate of residence holders who meet certain conditions, they may apply for the points through their employer to a government office called "Service Center for the Talented". Specifically, for the *Certificate of Residence* holders who have reached a high score (i.e., 120 points), their children are allowed not only to attend the public high school in Shanghai but also take the National Higher Education Learning Examination in Shanghai. It is well known that the eligibility of attending the exam in Shanghai means a much higher probability of being admitted by an elite university, especially Shanghai-based. At the same time, their spouse and children will be allowed to participate in a city-run social insurance program. In the case the score of a certificate holder drops and becomes lower than the bottom line, all benefits will be cancelled accordingly. According to the ordinance, the total score of a migrant applicant can get is based on the sum of the score of basic variables, the score of bonus variables, and the negative score caused by certain behaviors. In addition, the planned birth policy will have a final say on one's application. A summary table of the details about this point system is in the appendix.

1.2 Who are Eligible to Attend Public School in Beijing?

In Beijing, the eligibility of children for public education is also tied to the hukou status of parents. For local hukou holders, their children's access to education, from the nine-year compulsory education to high school, is normally guaranteed. For millions of migrants in Beijing, however, Beijing hukou is commonly a mission impossible for them. In addition, existing policies have been very complicated and kept changing all the time. Similar to the requirements in Shanghai, for one who just arrived in Beijing and wants to live and work in the capital city, a *Beijing Certificate of Work and Residence* is required and children's access to public education also is tied to the certificate. (Another option is the *Beijing Certificate of Temporary Residence*, which will be introduced shortly.) With this certificate in hand, migrants can apply for a seat for their children in public school if other requirements are met at the same time. After the nine-year compulsory education, generally migrant children are not eligible for high school unless their parents meet certain highly selective requirements. To apply for such a certificate, similar to Shanghai's requirement in general, an applicant must be highly educated, experienced and working for a high-tech industry, which is identified by Beijing's long-term development plan¹⁵.

With a valid *Beijing Certificate of Work and Residence*, a migrant is allowed to create personal business, buy a house, participate in a city-run social security insurance program, apply for passport in Beijing, participate in city-hosted training programs, apply for driver's license

¹⁵ The requirements include 1. Have education background and skills that are needed in Beijing, and 2. Have worked for a qualified employer for at least 6 months, and 3. Have at least 2-year work experience and a bachelor's or higher degree, or middle level or higher professional certificate, and 4. Have a Beijing address, and be younger than 60 (male) or 55 (female), and 5. Have a sponsoring-employer that is a legally registered entity such as state-owned enterprise and institution, (domestic) corporation, NGO, and the Beijing office of a multinational company, and 6. Have a sponsoring-employer that is with an industry identified by government as a desired one according to Beijing's long-term development plan.

and register personal vehicles, (children) enroll in public school system for the compulsory education period, and apply for city-certified certificate for professional skills. Compared with Shanghai's *Certificate of Residence*, Beijing has imposed stricter requirements on not only the qualification of sponsoring-employers but also applicant's personal income. Similar to applying for a job in the United States, which requires employers seeking to hire foreign nationals to prove the beneficiaries will not be paid lower than the prevailing wage paid by the relevant industry in the US, Beijing government requires applicants to prove that their income is higher than the average income of Beijing hukou holders. When Shanghai has linked its certificate of residence system to the transfer of hukou, Beijing's certificate system has nothing to do with Beijing hukou. As of this year, Beijing still does not have a point system for migrants except a trial conducted in its Tongzhou District, even though it has been required by the State Council since 2014. With Shanghai's Point System, for those who have been granted 120 or more points, their children can enroll in high schools and take the National Higher Learning Examination in the city. Beijing's "green card style" certificate, however, even does not guarantee such a right. For Beijing certificate holders, the only good news is, if compared with Shanghai, they only need to renew their certificate every three years, while migrants in Shanghai have to renew the certificate each year.

While the *Beijing Certificate of Work and Residence* obviously is for migrants who have middle-level or high income to apply, for those who work at low-end urban jobs, what they can apply is the *Beijing Certificate of Temporary Residence*. It is noteworthy that even though the Ministry of Public Security has required the removal of *Certificate of Temporary Residence* system in early 2015, on the website of Beijing Bureau of Public Security, it is still one of the

major “administrative services” (Beijing Bureau of Public Security 2016). According to the introduction of application procedure posted on the Bureau’s website, it is clear that this certificate is specifically for low-end rural laborers. The following population of migrants is required to apply for this type of certificate: if one is

1. living with a Beijing urban household or a rural household, or
2. living in a rental property, or
3. living in the workplace of institution, organization, armed force, enterprise, and construction project, or
4. living in hotel, restaurant, and guest house.

Normally, migrants who live in their employer’s house are domestic helpers. For these living in hotels, restaurants, and guest houses, obviously, they are simply either hotel maids or restaurant workers. Simply put, none of majority of migrants, are of the talented that is wanted by Beijing, let alone getting Beijing hukou.

Besides money, Beijing is also interested in “attracting the talented” through offering a hukou. In 1999, Beijing launched its *Certificate of Work and Temporary Residence* program to regulate who were eligible to live and work in Beijing. As I have mentioned before, the eligibility of application was strictly confined to employees working for high-tech enterprises and the HQ and/or Center of R&D of multinational companies. The certificate would be valid for two years and must be renewed when employment was to be continued. In 2003, the *Beijing Certificate of Work and Temporary Residence* was changed to the *Beijing Certificate of Work and Residence* (Xinhua News, July 1, 2003). However, only migrants who had at least a bachelor’s degree, or middle to advanced-level professional skills, or could make significant contribution to Beijing were eligible to apply. Please note: the key word “Temporary” was removed from the new certificate. For low-skilled migrants, however, the only option for them, i.e., the *Beijing*

Certificate of Temporary Residence, still had the key word “Temporary”. In 2012, a new policy came out, stating that one could apply for Beijing hukou through a city program called “attracting the talented” if 1. his or her employer was classified as one of the following industries: high-tech, software and microcircuit, finance, HQ of a multinational company, center for R&D, FDI-receiving, and 2. if he or she had at least a bachelor's degree and had received state-certified advanced professional rank certificate, or had received a foreign master's or doctoral degree, and he or she must be younger than 45 (Xinhua News (Oct 22, 2012). To a great extent, there was nothing new in the policy because it just repeated the major requirements of Beijing's strategy of “attracting the talented”. In 2013, Beijing issued its “*Administrative Measures for Openly Attracting and Hiring the Talented*” as a directive guide for its development strategy (Beijing Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security 2013). Based on this policy, while much of the content was to identify what industries and what positions were the key for the development of Beijing, the only benefit offered to “the talented” to be hired was Beijing hukou. In general, the to-be-promoted industries identified by Beijing included high-technology, modern manufacturing, finance, culture, services, and modern agriculture. The positions identified were “advanced management or core technical position”, “department supervisor”, “deputy general manager”, “technical expert”, “chief scientist”, and “chief engineer”. Applicants had to be 50 or younger and in good health condition.

2. A Spatial and Demographic Analysis: Rural-Hukou Children in Beijing and Shanghai

While much empirical work has been done on the characteristics of the hukou system and consequences, the hukou system also can be understood as a space-based tool that has significant impact on people holding different types of hukou. More broadly, this section studies and

explores the spatial effect of the hukou system: this work was initially inspired by Chan (1994) and Soja (2010). As Edward Soja (2010) points out, although space and spatiality has traditionally been given attention in very few academic disciplines such as geography and urban planning, today they have been widely accepted and used by scholars associated with other major social science disciplines, and “a critical spatial perspective...has become increasingly relevant to understanding contemporary condition, ...whether we are...trying to understand the multiplying geopolitical conflicts...or seeking ways to act politically to reduce poverty, racism, sexual discrimination , and environmental degradation”. For Soja, a geographer and planning theorist who had long advocated the importance and critical role of space and spatiality in the domain of critical thinking, a spatial turn “raises new possibilities for discovering hidden insights, alternative theories, and revised modes of understandings”. In the specific domain of China, Chan (1994) long ago pointed out the significant impact of institutional arrangements on the space in both physical and social sense. Chan argues that under the hukou system, the Chinese society has been a dualistic one since the late 1950s when hukou was implemented nationwide. Between rural China and urban China, there are “invisible walls” that have prevented migration from occurring. In that sense, China’s urbanization in a great extent is an “incomplete” one when compared with general pattern of urbanization, as observed in the West. Before the 1978 economic reform, the Chinese landscape was physically classified as two disparate parts: urban vs. rural. Different from the experience of many other countries, during the 1950s through 1970s, while China was industrialized, urbanization was very limited and the size of urban population remained unchanged. After the 1978 reform, when migration from rural villages to the cities became possible, the dichotomy of the Chinese society remains the same, however. When rural to urban migrants are allowed to seek employment opportunities in the city, their legal status

remains unchanged. In other words, while they are allowed to sell their labor in the city, urban government is not responsible for providing social benefits to them because their identity is still with the rural household registration system. As Chan (2011) has summarized, because of the hukou system, China's rural to urban migrants are "in the city but not of the city". At this point, it is clear that although rural to urban migrants have been granted geographic mobility, maintaining a basic living in the city is still not easy, let alone upward social mobility.. For rural-hukou migrant children who even do not have access to public education in the city, there is no way for us to believe that they are on the right track to a better future. This section aims to demonstrate the spatial injustice upon rural-hukou migrant children.

2.1 Rural-Hukou Students in Beijing

After the early 1990s, population in the major cities such as Beijing has been quickly increasing. Particularly, non-local hukou population (i.e., primarily rural-hukou migrants) has grown much more quickly than the hukou population (i.e., local hukou population's natural increase and hukou transfers).

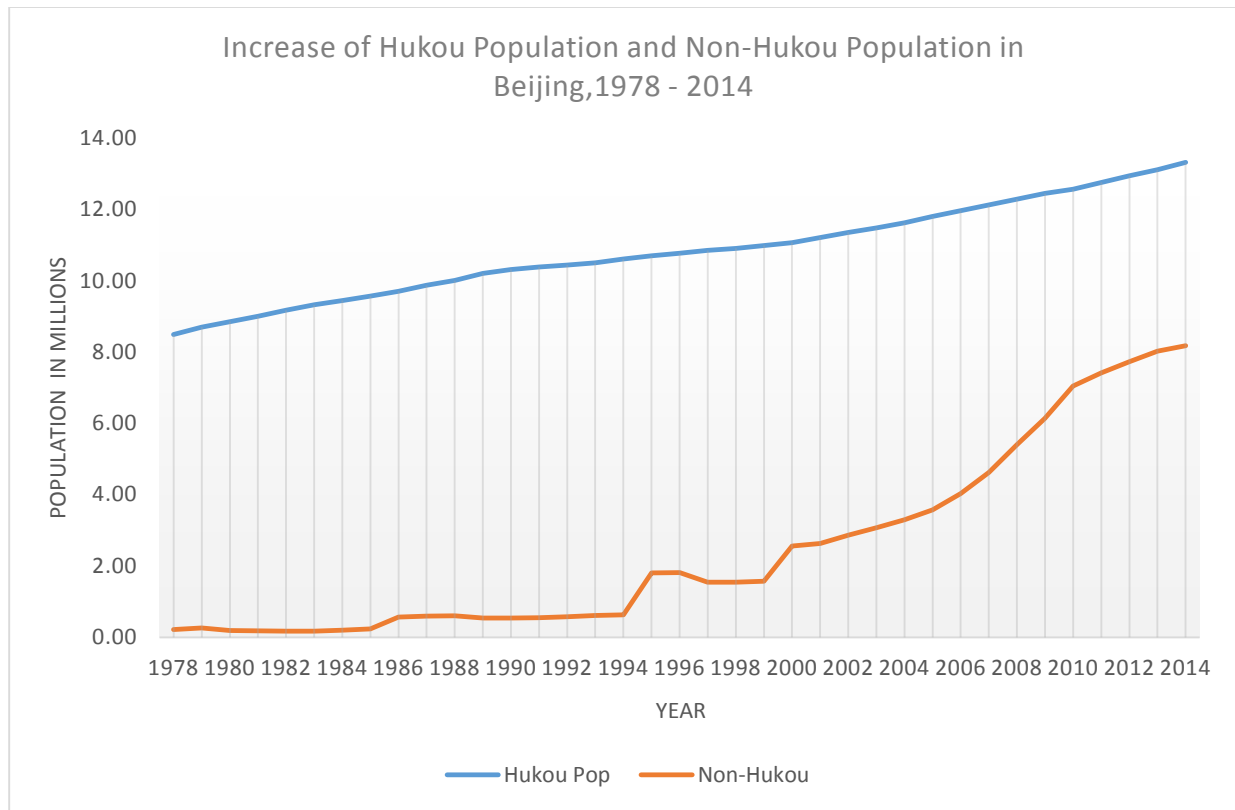


Figure 5.2 Hukou Population and Non-Hukou Population in Beijing. Data source: Beijing Bureau of Statistics;

Table 5.1 Population Increase in Beijing (Hukou vs. Non-Hukou). Data Source: Beijing Bureau of Statistics

Population Increase in Beijing (in millions) 1978-2014					
Year	Total Population	Local Hukou	Increase %	Non-Hukou	Increase %
1978	8.72	8.50		0.22	
1979	8.97	8.71	2%	0.27	22%
1980	9.04	8.86	2%	0.19	-30%
1981	9.19	9.01	2%	0.18	-1%
1982	9.35	9.18	2%	0.17	-7%
1983	9.50	9.33	2%	0.17	-2%
1984	9.65	9.45	1%	0.20	18%
1985	9.81	9.58	1%	0.23	17%
1986	10.28	9.71	1%	0.57	146%
1987	10.47	9.88	2%	0.59	4%
1988	10.61	10.01	1%	0.60	1%
1989	10.75	10.21	2%	0.54	-10%
1990	10.86	10.32	1%	0.54	0%
1991	10.94	10.40	1%	0.55	1%
1992	11.02	10.45	1%	0.57	5%
1993	11.12	10.51	1%	0.61	6%
1994	11.25	10.62	1%	0.63	4%
1995	12.51	10.70	1%	1.81	186%
1996	12.59	10.78	1%	1.82	0%
1997	12.40	10.86	1%	1.55	-15%
1998	12.46	10.92	1%	1.54	0%
1999	12.57	11.00	1%	1.57	2%
2000	13.64	11.08	1%	2.56	63%
2001	13.85	11.22	1%	2.63	3%
2002	14.23	11.36	1%	2.87	9%
2003	14.56	11.49	1%	3.08	7%
2004	14.93	11.63	1%	3.30	7%
2005	15.38	11.81	2%	3.57	8%
2006	16.01	11.98	1%	4.03	13%
2007	16.76	12.13	1%	4.63	15%
2008	17.71	12.30	1%	5.41	17%
2009	18.60	12.46	1%	6.14	14%
2010	19.62	12.57	1%	7.05	15%
2011	20.19	12.76	2%	7.42	5%
2012	20.69	12.96	1%	7.74	4%
2013	21.15	13.12	1%	8.03	4%
2014	21.52	13.33	2%	8.19	2%

It is clear that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, migrants were just a tiny portion of Beijing's total population. After the new millennium, however, the pace of internal migration towards

Beijing became faster and faster, usually showing a two-digit annual increase rate. At the same time period, it is noteworthy that the increase of Beijing local hukou population has been remaining stable and slow, merely changing in a range of 0.7% - 1.6%.

When more and more migrants, especially rural migrants, are coming to Beijing, more and more rural-hukou children are coming to the capital city. Figure 5.3 shows that there is one migrant child among every three children in Beijing. In addition, obviously Beijing's local hukou population has been aging quickly. The majority of local hukou population is between 25 and 65 years old while the cohort of children (0-17 years old) is just a small size portion of the total population. At the same time, most of migrants are at middle-aged or younger in the range of 20 and 50. It is noteworthy that among migrants, the cohort of children also is just a small portion, which suggests some children of the migrant families have been left behind.

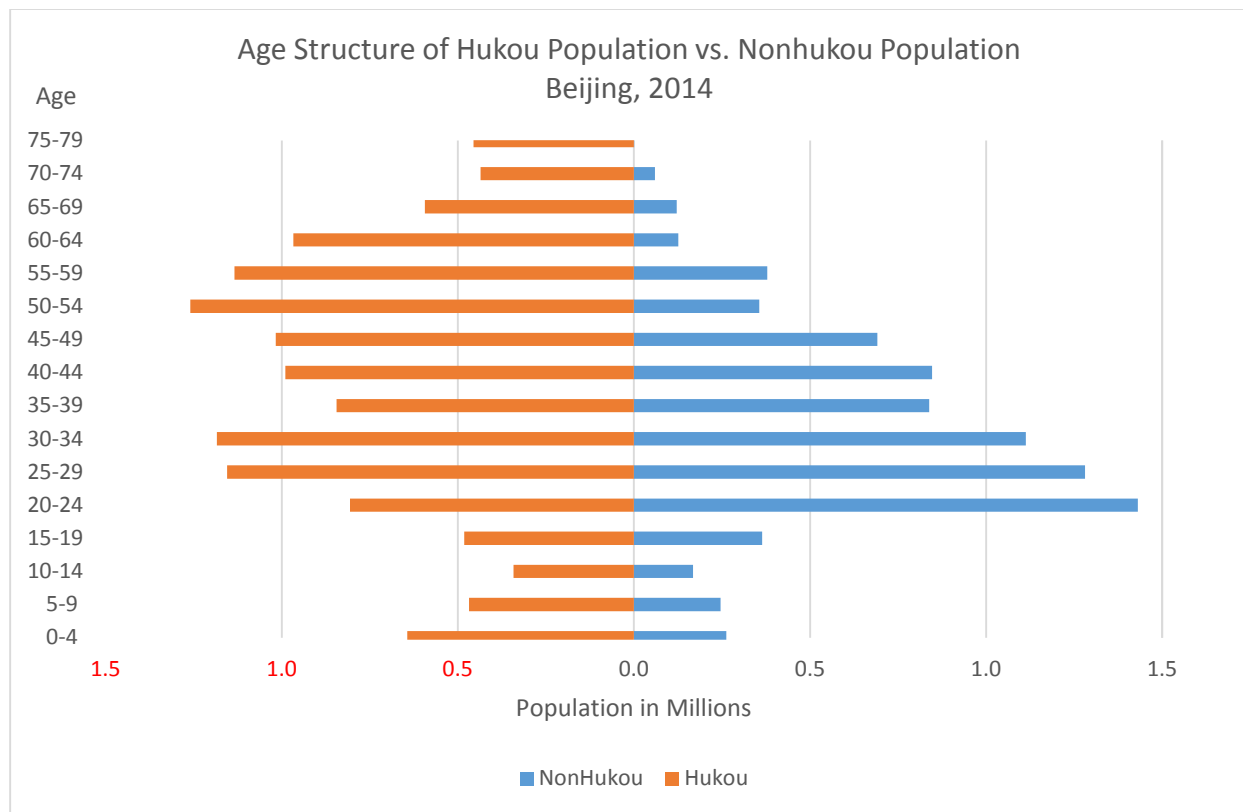


Figure 5.3 Age Structure of Hukou Population Vs. Non-Hukou Population in Beijing (2014).
Source: Beijing’s Bureau of Statistics

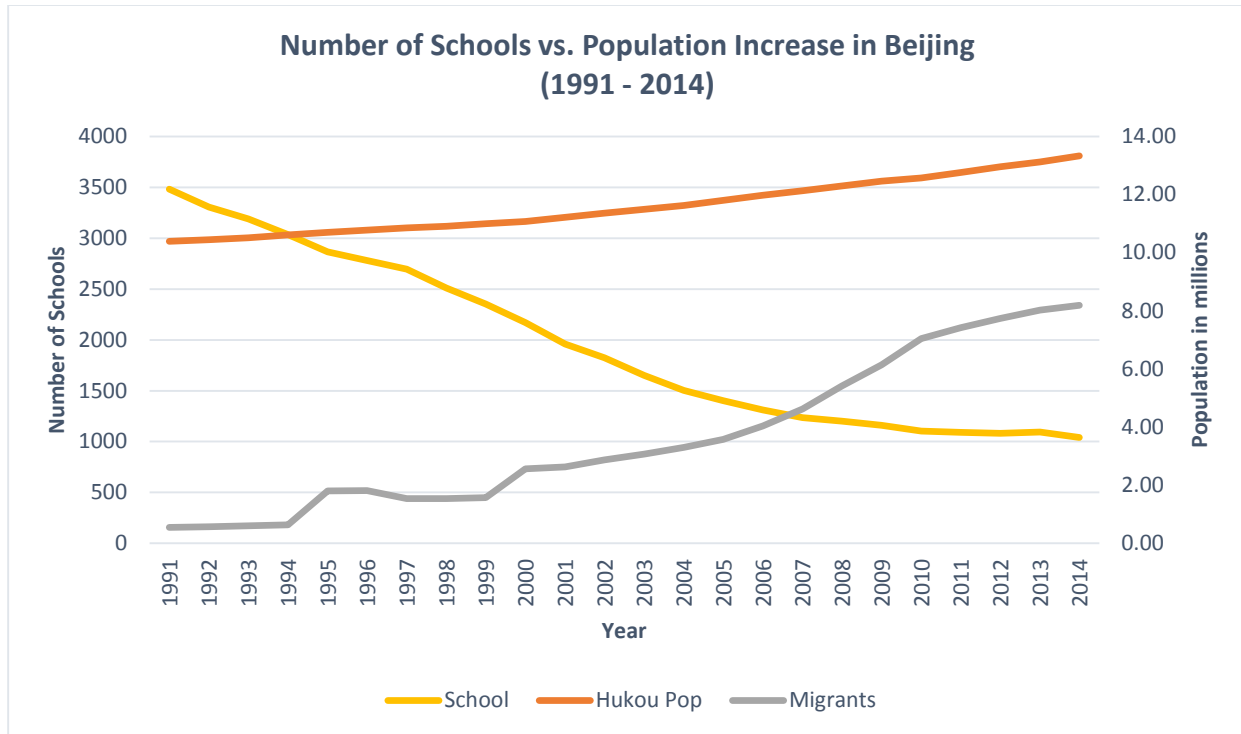


Figure 5.4 Number of Schools and Population Increase in Beijing (1991 -2014)
Data Source: Beijing Bureau of Statistics

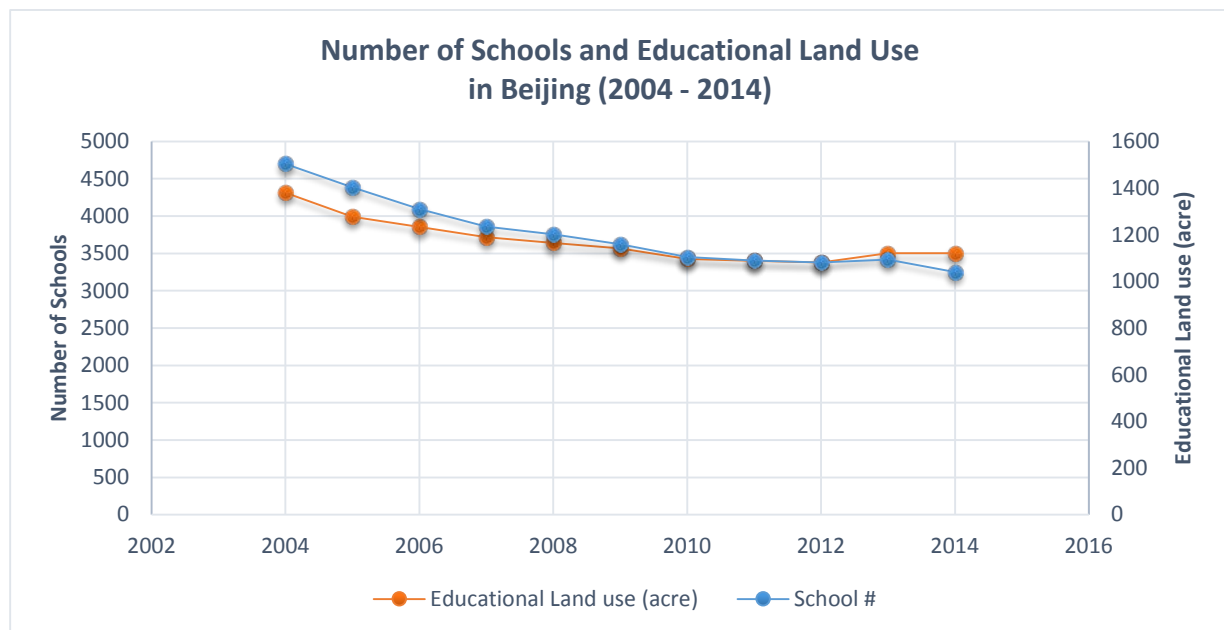


Figure 5.5 Number of Schools and Educational Land Use in Beijing (2004 -2014). Data Source: Beijing Bureau of Statistics

Based on the rural-urban dual education planning, urban education system is only responsible for local-hukou students. Therefore, when the population of local-hukou students is declining, schools are being closed every year despite that there are millions of migrants coming to the city. In figure 5.4, we can see when population is increasing (from 1991 through 2013), approximately 2,500 elementary schools were closed in Beijing (indicated by the yellow line). Based on figure 5.5, from 2004 to 2014, the total area of elementary school land use in Beijing dropped by 23%. It is clear that the closing of schools and the decrease in educational land use are highly correlated.

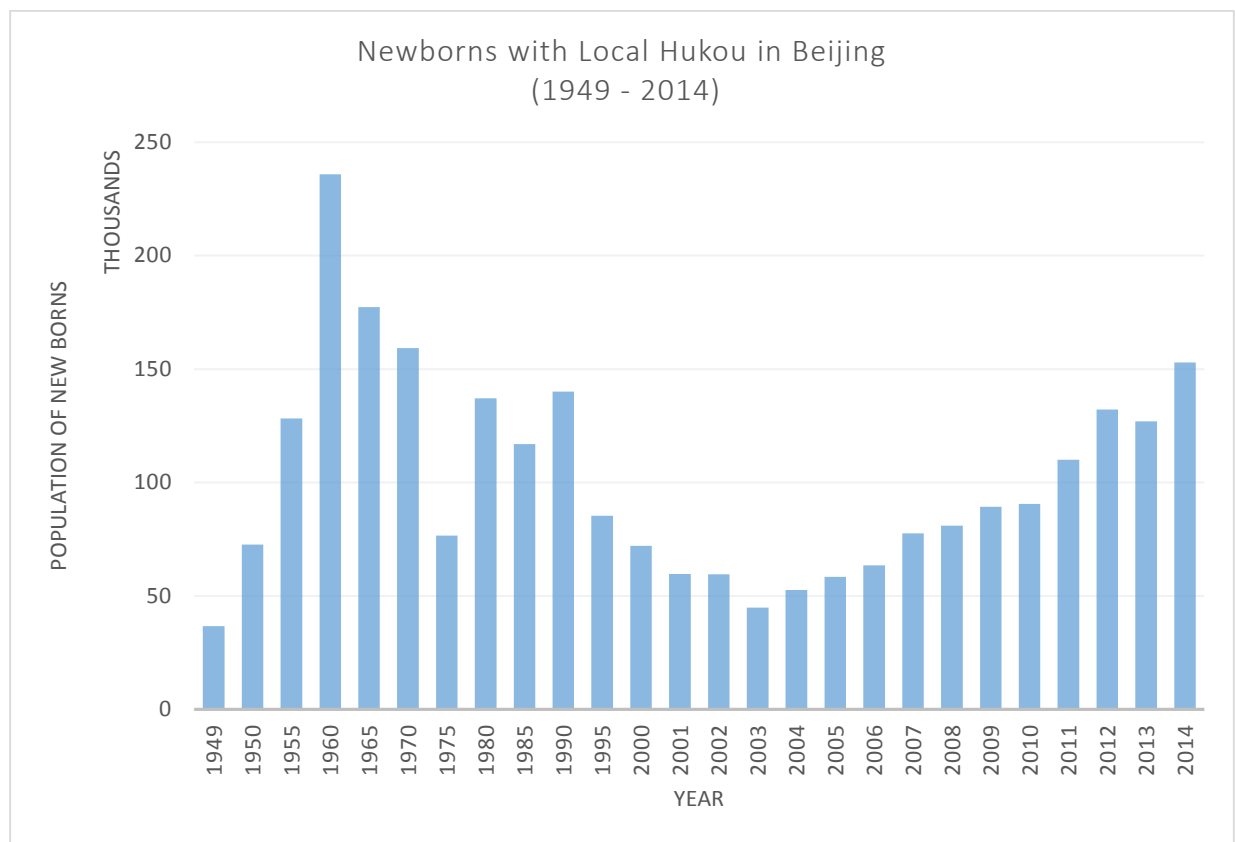


Figure 5.6 Newborns in Beijing (1949-2014). Data Source: Beijing Public Health Information Center.

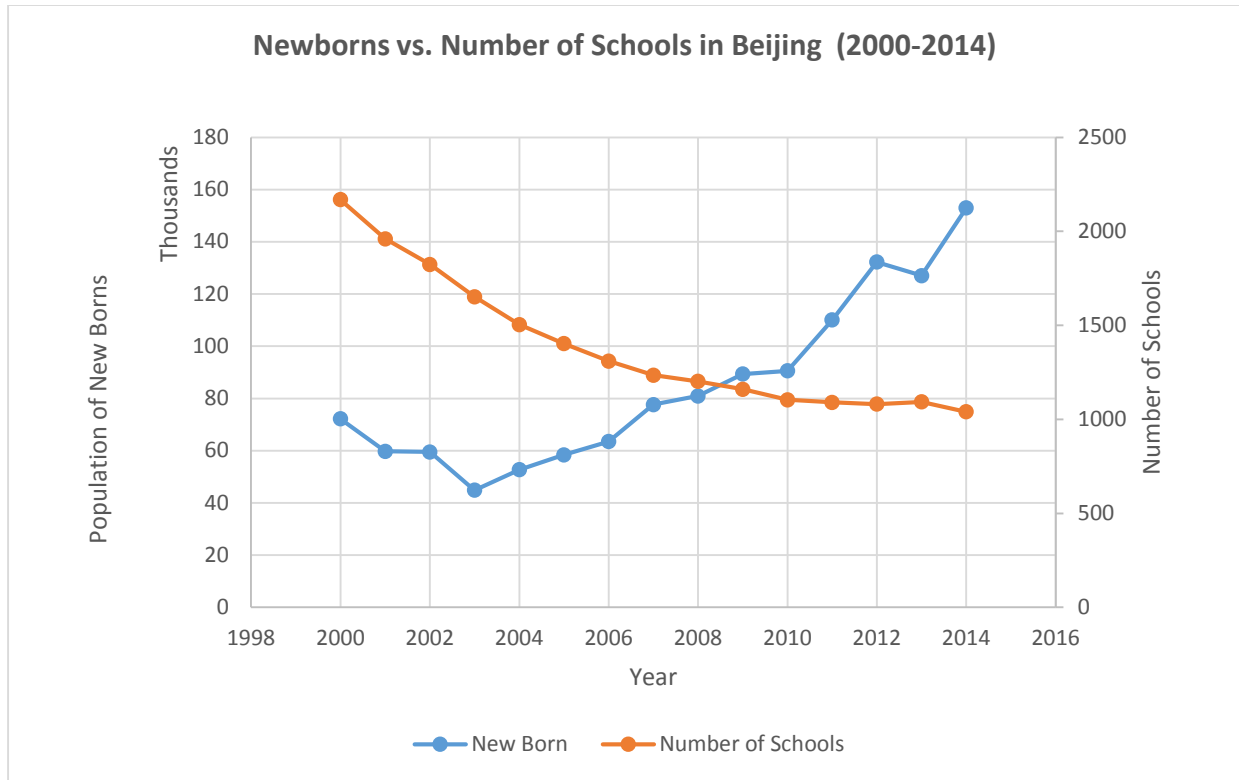
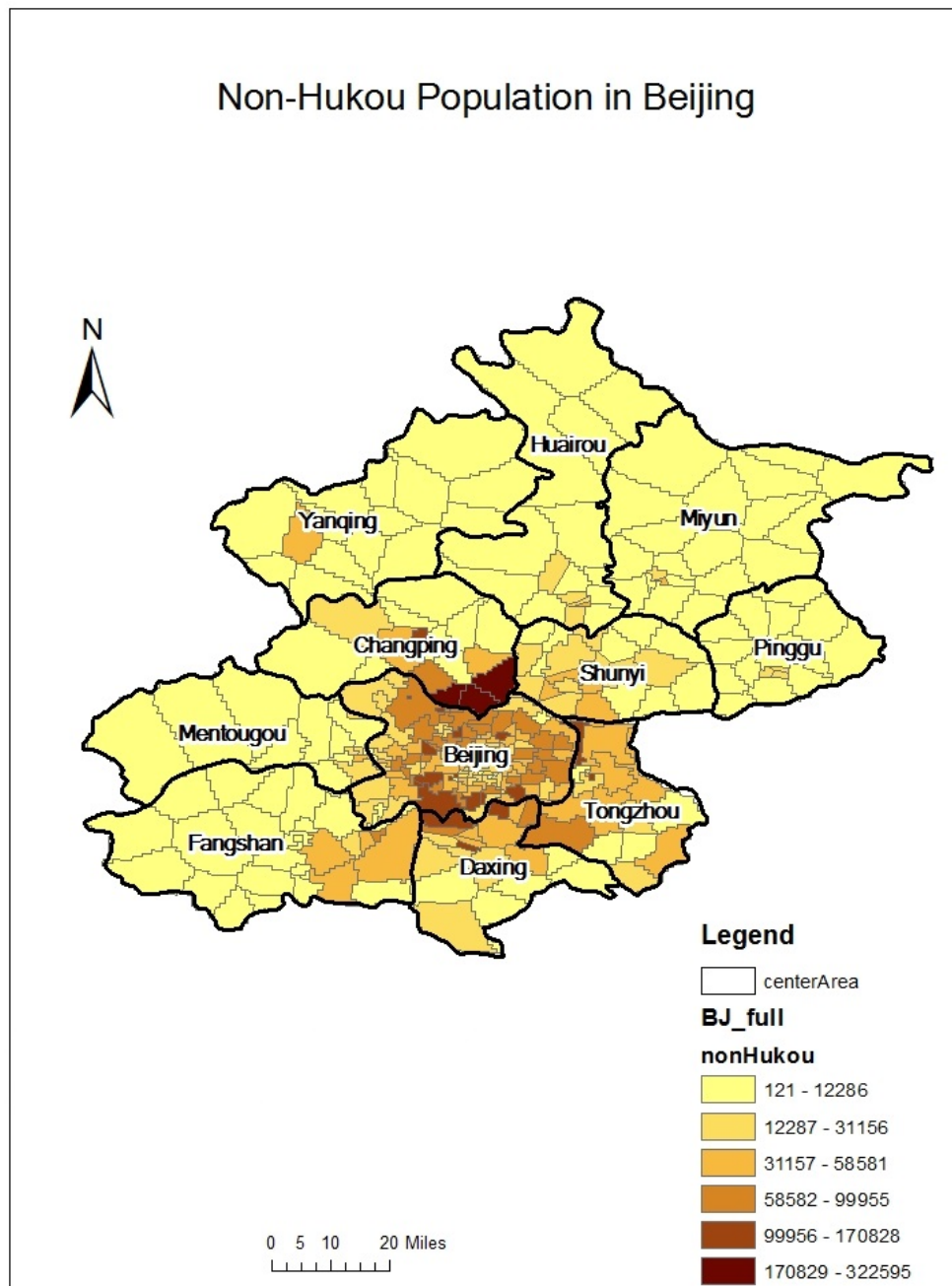


Figure 5.7 Local Newborns and Number of Schools in Beijing (2000-2014). Data Source: Beijing Public Health Information Center and Bureau of Statistics

Figure 5.6 and 5.7 show that from 2000 to 2014, when the fertility rate in Beijing began to rise, elementary schools were still being closed every year¹⁶. No doubt, such an education planning has directly led to the increasing tension between the public school system and the parents (both locals and migrants). When the seats for local children have to be the highest priority for city's education authority, migrant children become a problem for the city. It is noteworthy that when many elementary schools are closed each year, the total area of educational land use in Beijing also decreases accordingly.

¹⁶ Based on the data available, it is hard to explain why the education authority in Beijing keeps closing elementary schools despite that the fertility in the city has been increasing in recent years. One of the explanations is that many families will choose sending their children to developed countries like the US and Canada for education. As a result, the local-hukou student population keeps shrinking.

The spatial distribution of migrants in the city is an important indicator that we can use to understand how migrant children are treated in the city. In recent years, GIS and spatial analysis have been widely used in analyzing the spatial pattern of allocation of such as educational resources and health care services across the space. As Soja (2010) argues, there is a geography of justice and injustice. In other words, there are always some areas that are better served than others. Some people are more privileged while others are underprivileged. In the Chinese context, Chan (1994) points out that between city and countryside, there are “invisible walls” that prevents outsiders from entering the city. Otherwise stated, there must be a reflection of unjust social relations in the physical world and this is where GIS and spatial analysis can help us understand and interpret the reality.



Author: Yanning Wei
Data source: data collected and geocoded by author in 2015

Figure 5.8 The Spatial Distribution of Non-Hukou Population in Beijing. Data Source: Census 2010.

Figure 5.8, using the Natural Breaks (Jenks)¹⁷, shows the spatial distribution of non-hukou migrants in Beijing, based on the Chinese Census 2010. Data were reclassified into six groups based on the similarity of values. The darker color shows the higher population density of migrants. The major city districts where migrants are concentrated include: Changping, Tongzhou, Daxing, Fengtai, Shunyi, Chaoyang, Haidian, and Shijingshan.

¹⁷ With Natural Breaks (Jenks), data class breaks are identified that best group similar values and that maximize the differences between classes. The features are then divided into classes whose boundaries are set where there are relatively big differences in the data values (ESRI).

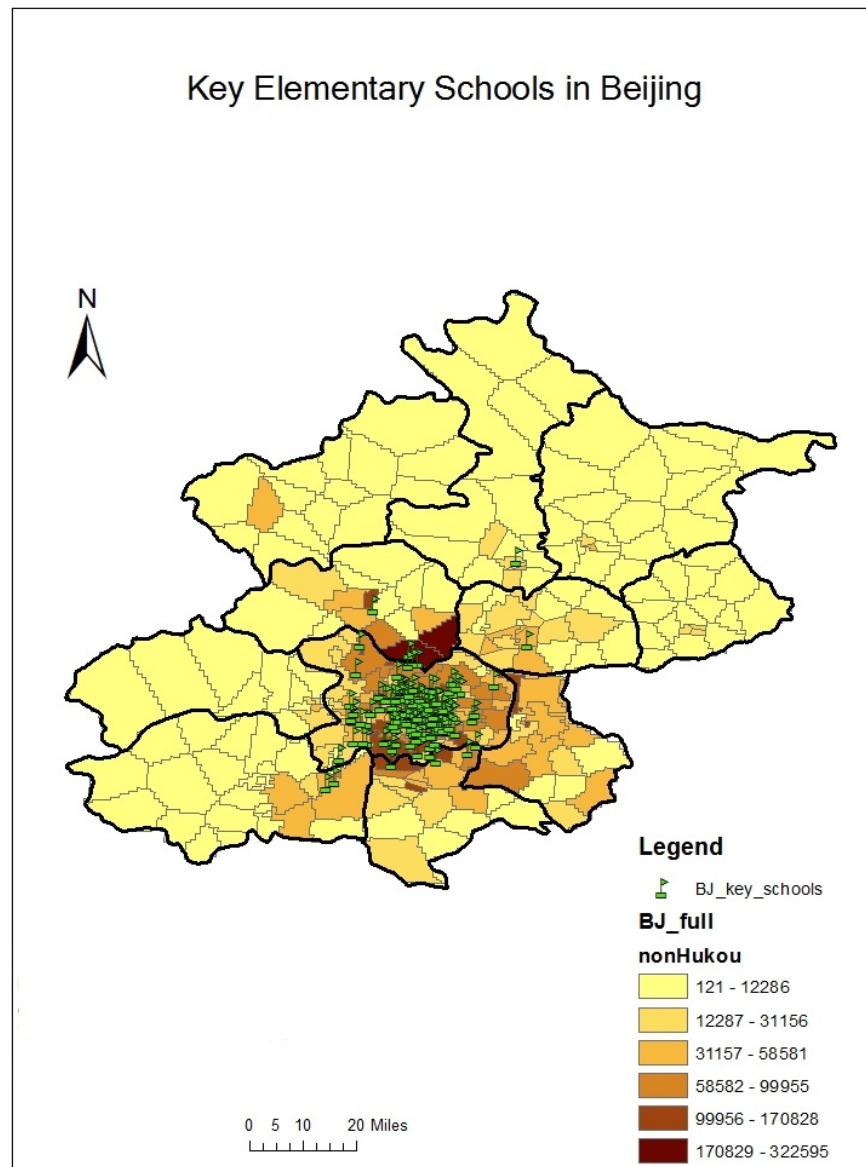


Figure 5.9 The Spatial Distribution of Key Schools in Beijing. Data Source: website of key schools; Geocoded by Author

Based on the Natural Breaks (Jenks) algorithm, figure 5.9 shows the spatial distribution of Beijing’s “key elementary schools”, which means the elementary schools that have better quality of education and funding. Data were reclassified into six groups based on the similarity of values. The map suggests government investment is based on hukou population instead of overall

distribution of total population in the city. In the areas where migrants are concentrated, “key elementary schools” are hardly to find.

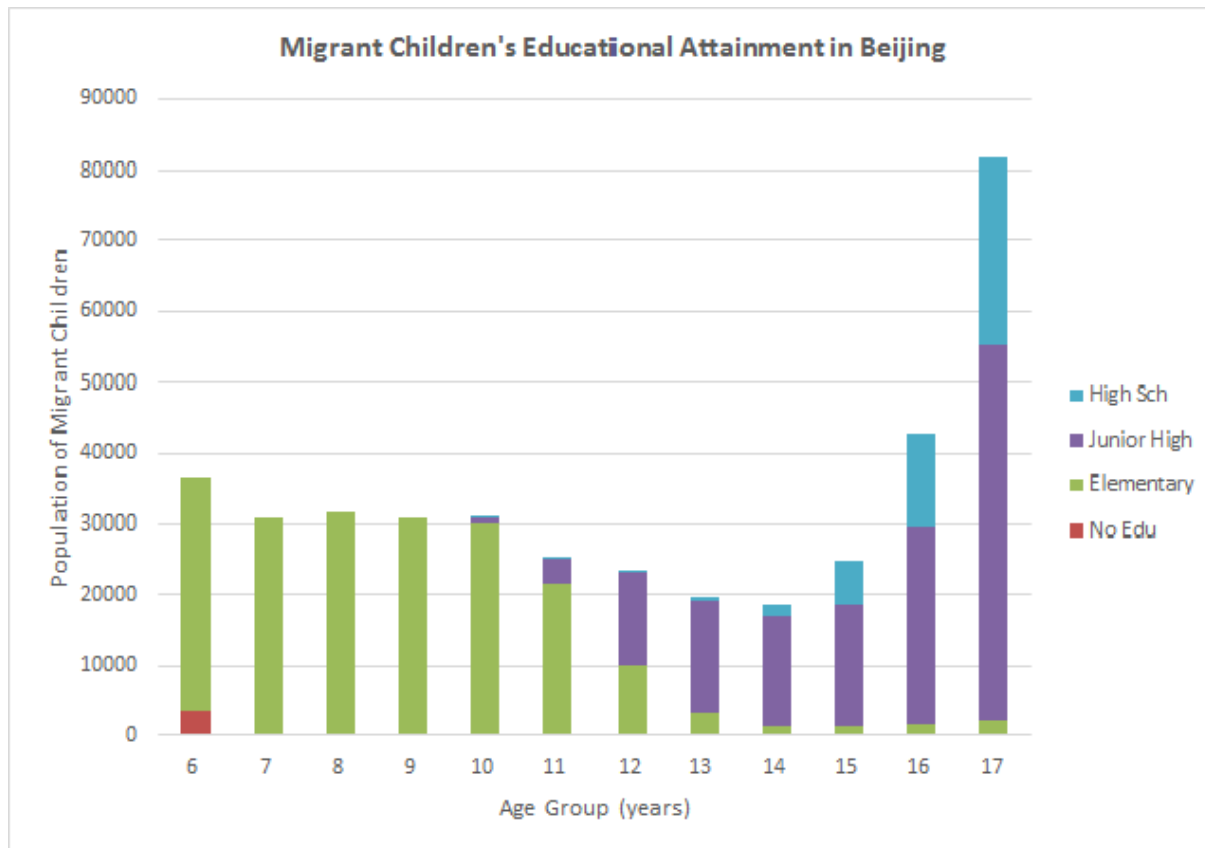


Figure 5.10 Educational Attainment of Migrant Children in Beijing. Data Source: Census 2010

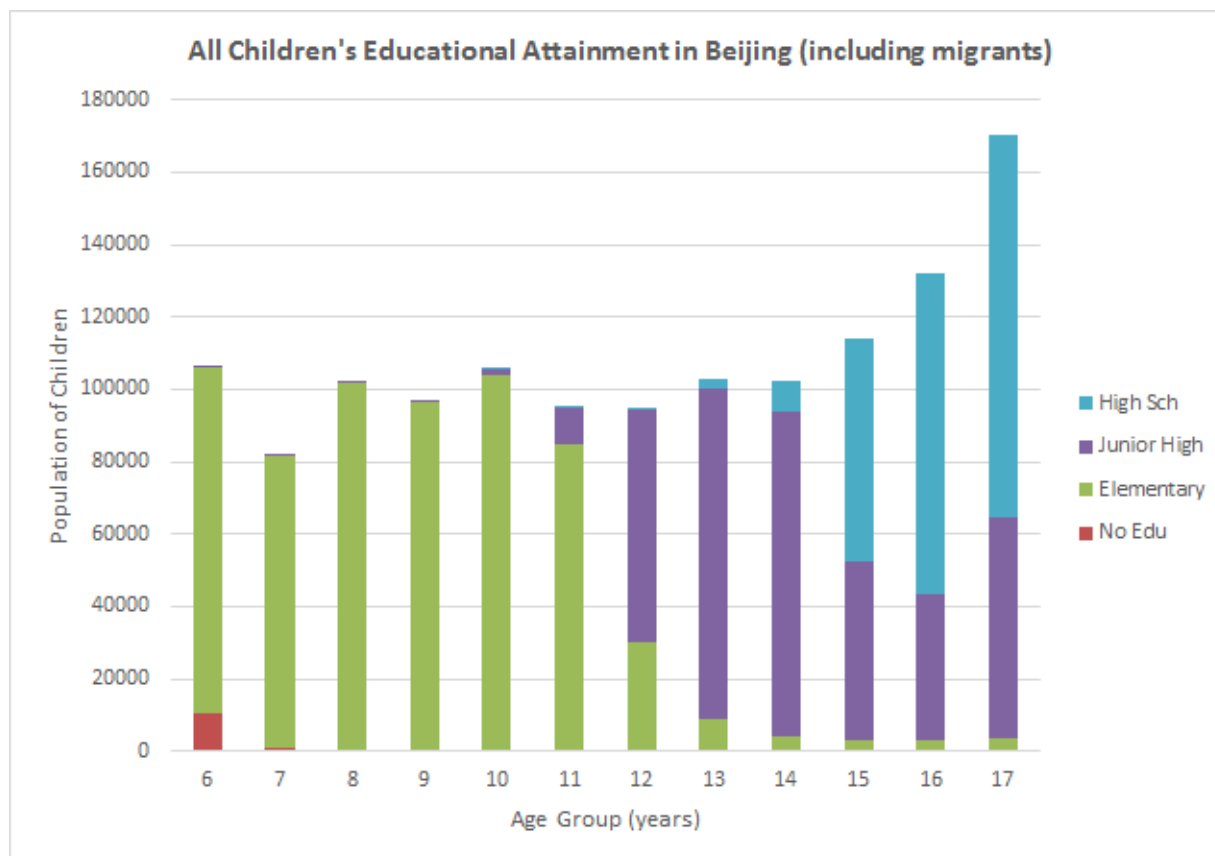


Figure 5.11 Educational Attainment of Children in Beijing. Data Source: Census 2010

These two figures clearly show that while the majority of 17-year old migrant children in Beijing only received the nine-year compulsory education, the overall education attainment for the same cohort in the city is high school. For most non-hukou migrant students, there are only two options available for them after finishing junior high: going back to where they came from or finding a job in Beijing. Data have shown that there are non-hukou children who are neither attending school in Beijing nor working. In recent years, in major cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, migrant children have represented a disproportionately high percentage of the prison population.

2.2 Rural-Hukou Students in Shanghai

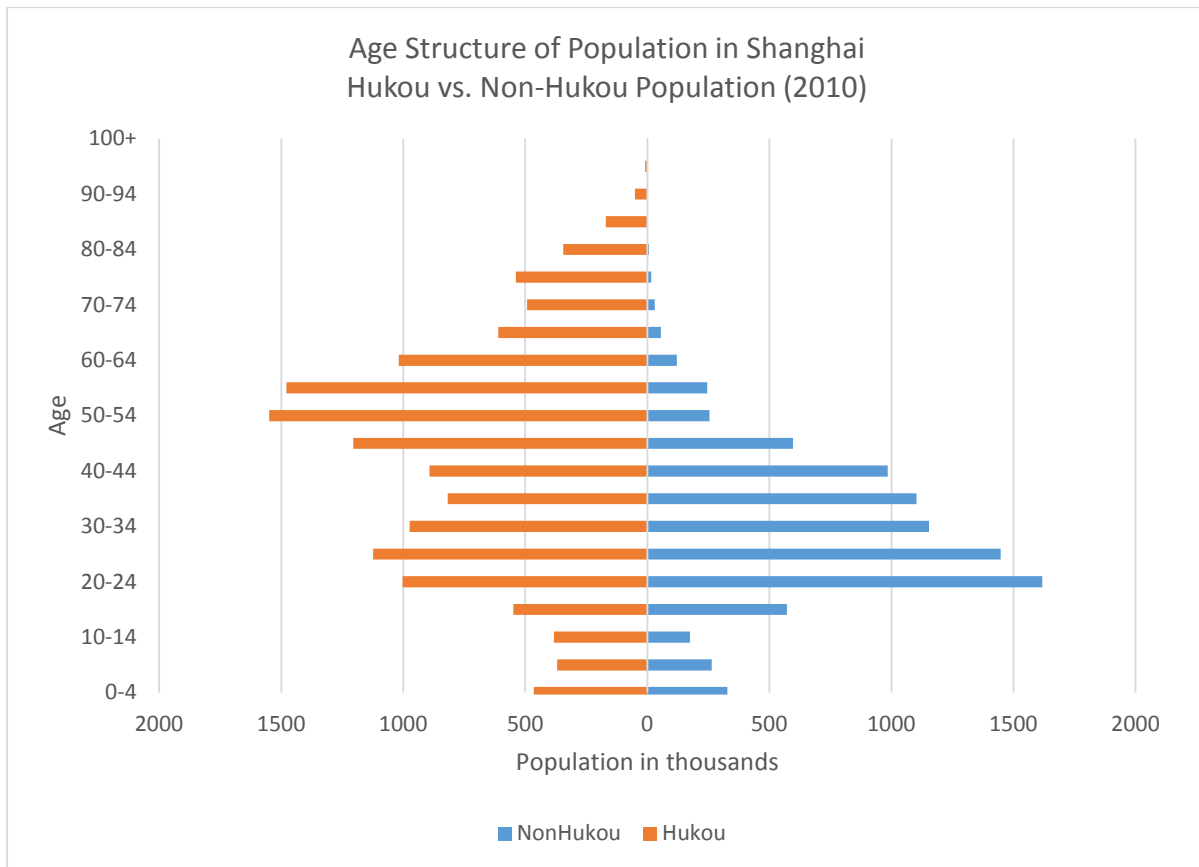


Figure 5.12 Age Structure of Population in Shanghai (hukou vs. non-hukou). Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics

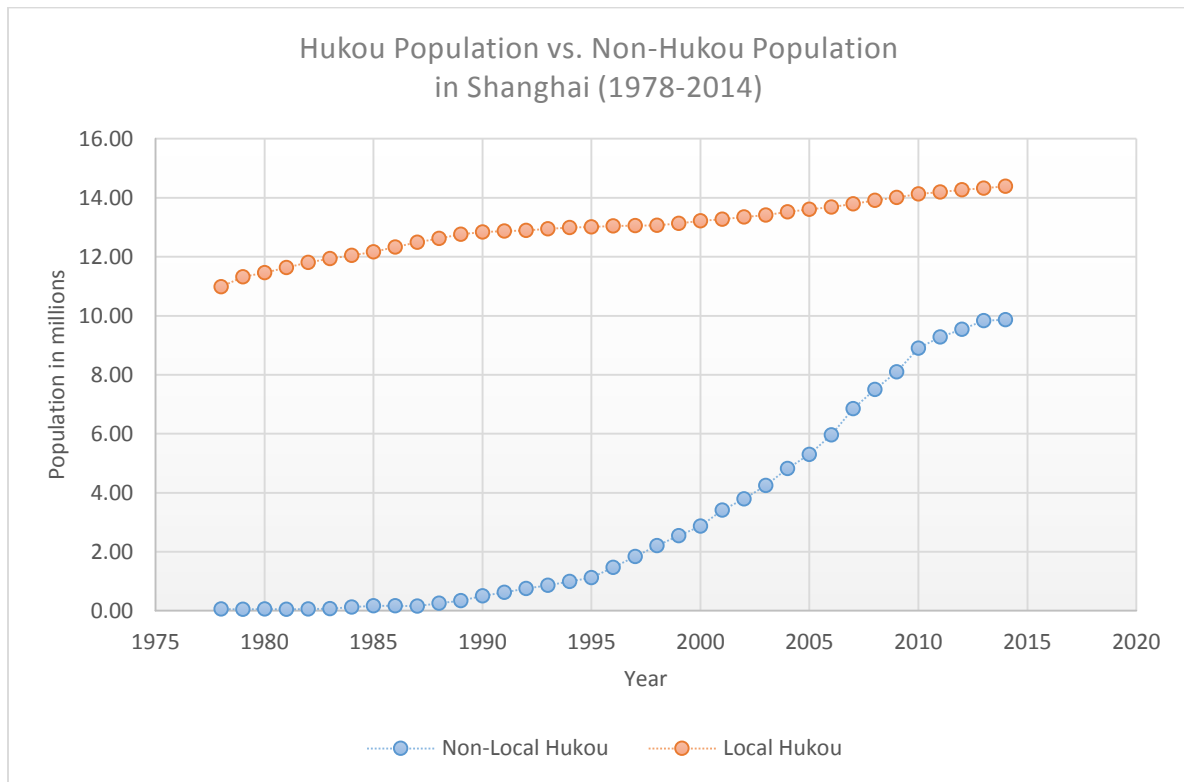


Figure 5.13 Hukou Population vs. Non-Hukou Population in Shanghai. Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics

Similar to Beijing, hukou population in the city is aging quickly while millions of younger migrants are streaming to the city. When local hukou population is increasing slowly, the pace of migrants is much faster. It is noticeable that compared with the size of local child population, the smaller size of non-hukou child population suggests that children are left behind by their migrant parents.

Table 5.2 The Increase of Hukou Population vs. Non-Hukou Population in Shanghai. Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics

Population Increase in Shanghai (Hukou vs. Non-Hukou) 1978-2014					
(in millions)					
Year	Total Population	Local Hukou	Change%	Non-Local Hukou	Change%
1978	11.04	10.98		0.06	
1979	11.37	11.32	3%	0.05	-15%
1980	11.52	11.47	1%	0.05	13%
1981	11.68	11.63	1%	0.05	-6%
1982	11.86	11.81	2%	0.05	6%
1983	12.01	11.94	1%	0.07	27%
1984	12.17	12.05	1%	0.12	75%
1985	12.33	12.17	1%	0.16	33%
1986	12.49	12.32	1%	0.17	2%
1987	12.65	12.50	1%	0.15	-7%
1988	12.88	12.62	1%	0.26	65%
1989	13.11	12.76	1%	0.35	35%
1990	13.34	12.83	1%	0.51	47%
1991	13.50	12.87	0%	0.63	24%
1992	13.65	12.89	0%	0.76	20%
1993	13.81	12.95	0%	0.86	14%
1994	13.98	12.99	0%	0.99	15%
1995	14.14	13.01	0%	1.13	14%
1996	14.51	13.04	0%	1.47	30%
1997	14.89	13.05	0%	1.84	25%
1998	15.27	13.07	0%	2.20	20%
1999	15.67	13.13	1%	2.54	15%
2000	16.09	13.22	1%	2.87	13%
2001	16.68	13.27	0%	3.41	19%
2002	17.13	13.34	1%	3.79	11%
2003	17.66	13.42	1%	4.24	12%
2004	18.35	13.52	1%	4.83	14%
2005	18.90	13.60	1%	5.30	10%
2006	19.64	13.68	1%	5.96	12%
2007	20.64	13.79	1%	6.85	15%
2008	21.41	13.91	1%	7.50	9%
2009	22.10	14.01	1%	8.10	8%
2010	23.03	14.12	1%	8.90	10%
2011	23.47	14.19	0%	9.28	4%
2012	23.80	14.27	1%	9.54	3%
2013	24.15	14.32	0%	9.83	3%
2014	24.26	14.39	0%	9.87	0%

Table 5.2 shows that in the last decade, the increase rate of local population was less 1 percent each year while the population of migrants increased by two-digit numbers annually.

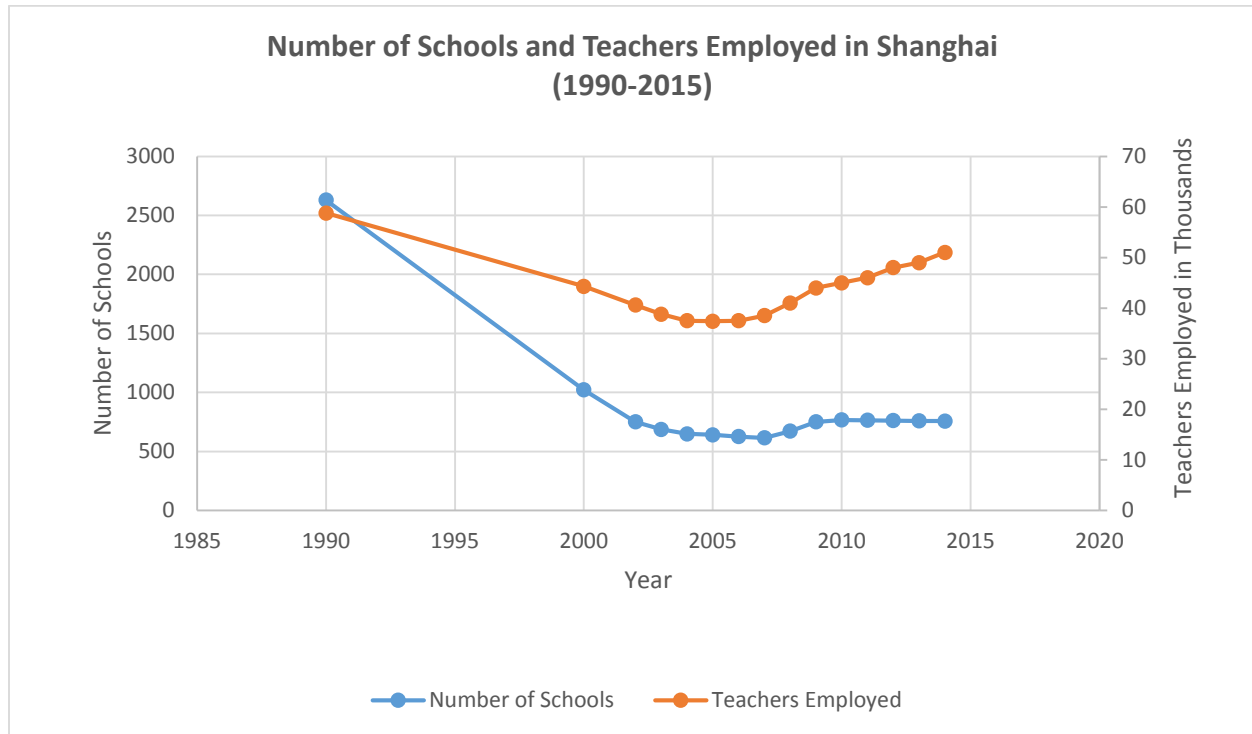


Figure 5.14 Number of Schools and Teachers Employed in Shanghai (1990-2014). Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics

Table 5.3 Numbers of Schools and Teacher Employed in Shanghai (1990-2014). Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics

Numbers of Schools and Teachers Employed in Shanghai (1990-2014)				
in Thousands				
Year	School	Change %	Teacher	Change %
1990	2630		58.80	
2000	1021	-61.18%	44.30	-24.66%
2002	751	-26.44%	40.60	-8.35%
2003	686	-8.66%	38.80	-4.43%
2004	648	-5.54%	37.50	-3.35%
2005	640	-1.23%	37.40	-0.27%
2006	626	-2.19%	37.50	0.27%
2007	615	-1.76%	38.50	2.67%
2008	672	9.27%	41.00	6.49%
2009	751	11.76%	44.00	7.32%
2010	766	2.00%	45.00	2.27%
2011	764	-0.26%	46.00	2.22%
2012	761	-0.39%	48.00	4.35%
2013	759	-0.26%	49.00	2.08%
2014	757	-0.26%	51.00	4.08%

Figure 5.14 and table 5.3 shows a similar story in Shanghai: the focus of Shanghai's education authority is also on the local hukou population as well, ignoring the presence of millions of migrants and their needs. Since the 1990s, when the city kept aging and the population of local students shrunk, many elementary schools were closed. The total number of teachers employed also shows the same pattern though more teachers were hired after 2009.

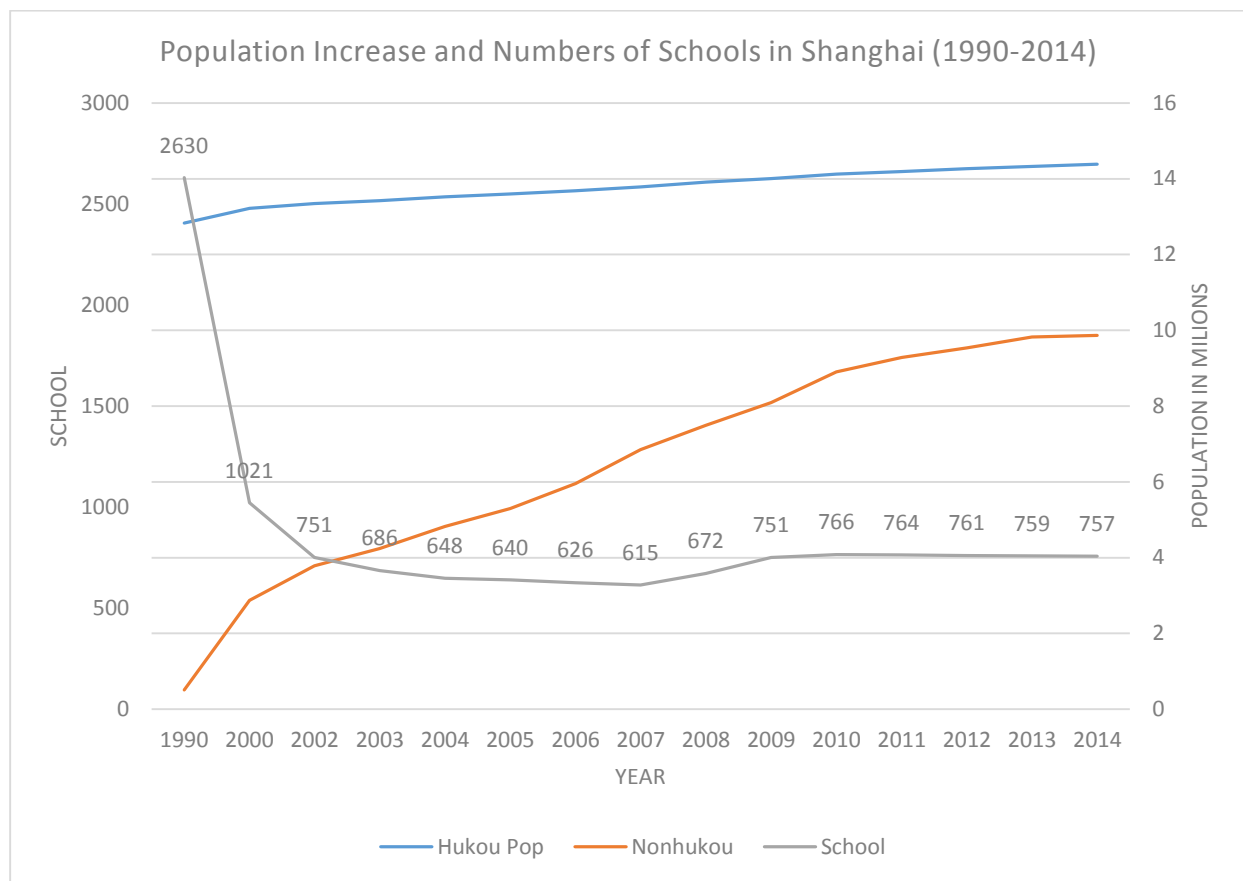


Figure 5.15 Population Increase and Number of Schools in Shanghai (1990 -2014). Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics.

Table 5.4 Population Increase and Number of Schools in Shanghai (1990 -2014). Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics.

Population Increase and the Number of Schools in Shanghai (1990-2014)						
(population in millions)						
Year	Hukou Population	Increase %	Non-Hukou Population	Increase %	School	Change %
1990	12.83		0.51		2630	
1991	12.87	0.30%	0.63	23.99%		
1992	12.89	0.17%	0.76	20.43%		
1993	12.95	0.42%	0.86	14.06%		
1994	12.99	0.31%	0.99	14.99%		
1995	13.01	0.20%	1.13	13.55%		
1996	13.04	0.24%	1.47	30.13%		
1997	13.05	0.08%	1.84	25.22%		
1998	13.07	0.09%	2.20	20.09%		
1999	13.13	0.50%	2.54	15.18%		
2000	13.22	0.65%	2.87	13.03%	1021	
2001	13.27	0.42%	3.41	18.89%		
2002	13.34	0.53%	3.79	11.01%	751	
2003	13.42	0.57%	4.24	11.97%	686	-8.66%
2004	13.52	0.79%	4.83	13.80%	648	-5.54%
2005	13.60	0.58%	5.30	9.82%	640	-1.23%
2006	13.68	0.57%	5.96	12.46%	626	-2.19%
2007	13.79	0.79%	6.85	14.88%	615	-1.76%
2008	13.91	0.88%	7.50	9.48%	672	9.27%
2009	14.01	0.69%	8.10	8.00%	751	11.76%
2010	14.12	0.83%	8.90	9.98%	766	2.00%
2011	14.19	0.50%	9.28	4.24%	764	-0.26%
2012	14.27	0.53%	9.54	2.74%	761	-0.39%
2013	14.32	0.38%	9.83	3.07%	759	-0.26%
2014	14.39	0.44%	9.87	0.43%	757	-0.26%

Figure 5.15 and table 5.4 show that the city did not stop closing elementary schools until 2008. In 1990, the city had 2,630 elementary schools. Twenty six years later, when the total population in the city has increased by almost 84% and the population of migrants has increased by almost 20 times since 1990, there are only 757 elementary schools as of 2014.

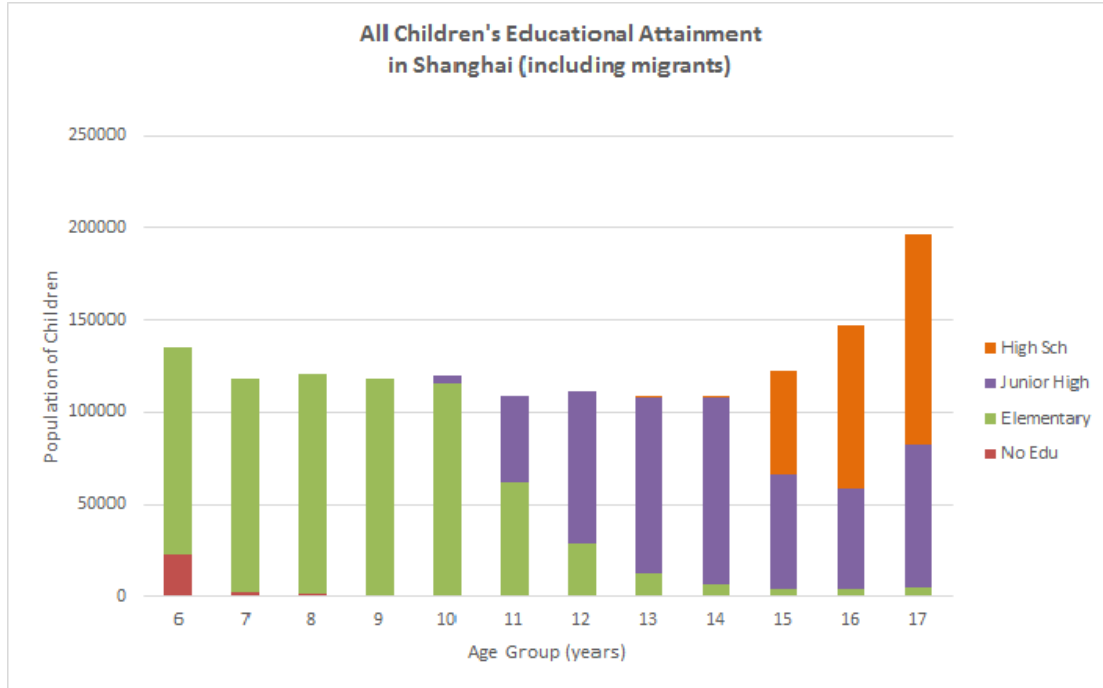


Figure 5.16 Children's Education Attainment in Shanghai. Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics.

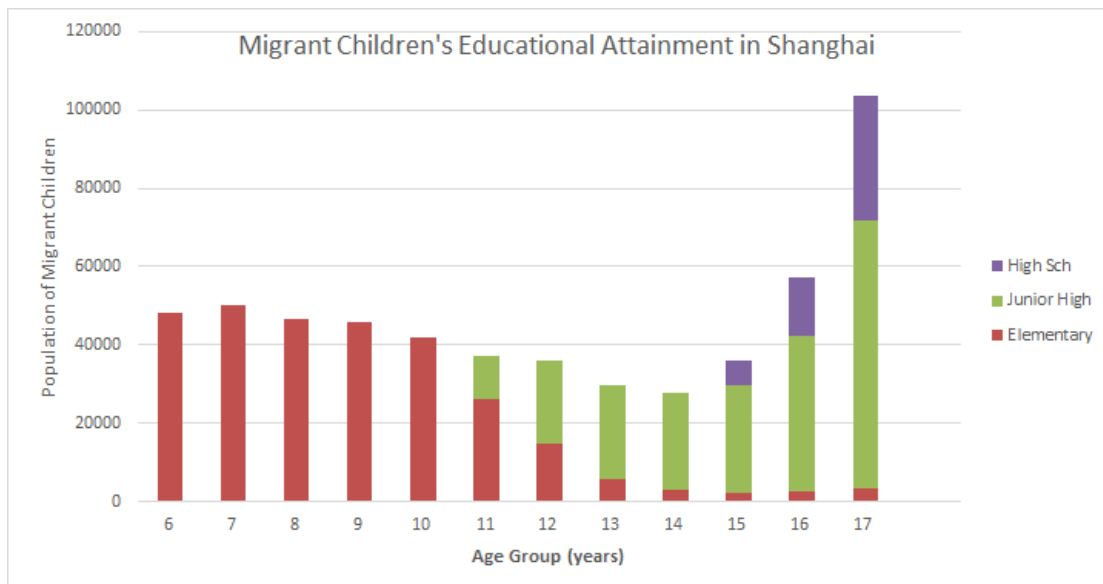


Figure 5.17 Migrant Children's Educational Attainment in Shanghai. Data Source: Shanghai Bureau of Statistics.

Similar to Beijing, these two figures (5.16 and 5.17) clearly show that while the majority of 17-year old migrant children in Shanghai only received the nine-year compulsory education, the overall education attainment for the same cohort in the city is high school. Shanghai government also publicly admitted that migrant children left school earlier than local children. For most of migrant students, only two options are available for them after finishing junior high: going back to where they came from or finding a low-end job in the city. Data have shown that there are non-hukou children who are neither attending school nor working.

3. Summary

This chapter highlights the following phenomena and structure of migrant children in Beijing and Shanghai:

For migrant children, their eligibility of attending public school depends on the status of their parents in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. In other words, only those migrants who have met certain requirements can apply for public school for their children.

For migrant parents, they are required to apply for a variety of documents before they can submit application for their children to public school. The policy, however, changes very quickly. Sometimes, it might be easy for them to get all the required certificates. Other times, however, especially when the city government wants to “strictly control inward migration”, obtaining all the certificates becomes a mission impossible for many migrants because local government could interpret the requirements according to their will.

For most migrants, especially rural migrants, getting a Beijing hukou or Shanghai hukou is almost impossible.

The point system applied in cities, which is another channel through some migrants could get hukou, are not for rural migrants and common urban-urban migrants.

The public education system in these two major cities takes care of only local-hukou students not every child in the city. Based on China's dual education system, migrant children are considered extra burden for the city even though their parents pay taxes exactly as what other local-hukou holders do. Major cities have been closing schools for years because of the decline of local child population, ignoring the presence of millions of migrants and their children.

The educational resources have been primarily invested in the "Key Schools", which are not intended to serve migrant students. Geographically, most of the "Key Schools" are located in the "core" area in the city while most migrants live in the peripheral areas of the city.

Shanghai has been praised for its openness to migrant children for some time, in terms of children's rights to public education. The data, however, have shown that the policy is becoming harsher and harsher against migrants in recent several years.

Migrant children are not eligible for urban high school. As a result, the majority of them only finished their junior high education while local children could have more options and better opportunities. Some migrant children are neither attending school nor working in the city.

Compared with other developing societies where the difference between city and countryside is evident, the Chinese case is more complicated because most migrants are identified as not only urban workers but also farmers at the same time. While spatially they have moved to the city, socially they still belong to the countryside.

Chapter 6

The “Left-Behind” Children, Family-Breakup and The New Form of Poverty

What we have seen in the previous chapters is just one side of the coin, i.e., what happens to rural migrants and their children in the city. To understand the nature of China’s rural-urban dual system, it is also necessary to examine the other side: children who are left behind in the countryside by their migrant parents and “split family”. This chapter aims to explain certain key aspects of Chinese left-behind children and the split family. While much of the scholarly work on rural children in China treats migrant children in the city and children left behind in the countryside as two separate issues, this chapter links them together to provide a more complete picture of this special population and the Chinese dual system behind it. The key theme of this chapter is to understand the making of the left-behind children. Specifically, in terms of left-behind children’s lived experience, I contend that the key difference between two major camps of scholars actually lies in the understanding of the form of family life. I also bring a new perspective to the study of left-behind children: split family as a new form of poverty under the dual system.

1. The Chinese Left-Behind Children in Debate

1.1 The Profile of the Left-Behind Children

The “left-behind” children is not a new phenomenon that has just emerged and there has been a large body of literature on it. In fact, international/domestic migration and increasing number

of the left-behind children in developing countries have drawn increasing attention in recent years (e.g., Battistella and Conaco 1998, Meier 2004, Rossi 2009, Garza 2010, Démurger and Xu 2015). Particularly, the impact of cross-border labor migration and internal labor migration on children has been studied by scholars and international institutions (e.g., Orellana et. al. 2001, Lahaie et. al. 2009, Madianou and Miller 2011, Antman 2012). For example, based on a wide range of scholarly works, UN (2007) summarizes that from 2000 through 2007, while a total number of 300,000 children was left behind in Ecuador when their parents were seeking employment in developed world, a similar trend was found in other labor-sending countries like Moldova, El Salvador, Jamaica and Albania. The report concludes that “in labour sending countries, a growing number of children is left behind by one or both parents.” “The absence of fathers often results in increased household responsibilities for women and children left behind. Adolescents from left-behind households may face pressure to become labour migrants as part of their transition to adulthood” and as a result, “children and adolescents left behind may be at greater risk to drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, psychosocial problems and violent behaviour”. As we can see in this UN report, in general, the focus of this line of scholarship is primarily on left-behind children’s education, well-being, vulnerability, and psychological effect of migration of parents, health of children, abuse of children and split family, which are summarized in (Whitehead and Hashim 2005). To a great extent, the literature on Chinese left-behind children also follows this standard pattern. I, however, want to study Chinese left-behind children by emphasizing that the Chinese case is different in that the Chinese left-behind children are actually “institutional orphans”, even though they have some common characteristics with their counterpart in other societies.

I suggest that while the geographic focus of relevant literature is generally on Latin America, East Europe and South Asia, which are major labor-sending areas of international labor migration, the Chinese left-behind children also deserve further scholarly attention because the size of the population of Chinese left-behind children is much larger than that in any other countries¹⁸. In China, according to All-China Women's Federation (2012), there were 61.02 million children left behind in countryside by their migrant parents in 2010. It is noteworthy that 46.74% of left-behind children in rural China lived with their grandparents or other relatives while both their parents worked in city and 3.37% of them (i.e., 2.057 million) even live alone without any adult care and supervision. More importantly, the institutional arrangement behind the creation of such an ocean of left-behind children, i.e., rural-urban dual system, is less noticed by scholars even though the plight of these Chinese children has been widely reported by Chinese and international media. As a result, the lived experience of Chinese left-behind children is commonly equalized to that in other countries in the literature. In other words, while relevant issues such as education, health, well-being, remittance, burden on relatives and social behavior as standard analytical variables are studied by scholars, the major Chinese characteristic, i.e., the role of rural-urban dual system, is commonly overlooked.

By calling Chinese left-behind children “institutional orphans”, I mean they are actually the victim of rural-urban dual system. Even though their parents are still alive, these children can rarely see their parents who work and live in city and many tragic accidents have happened in the countryside in the recent years. A recent nationwide survey report published in China points out

¹⁸ According to a recent report by the US-based Migration Policy Institute, while in Moldova, approximately 100,000 children are left behind by their parents working in other developed European countries, Ukrainian migrants have left roughly 200,000 children behind with their grandparents or other relatives. See Yanovich (2015) at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/children-left-behind-impact-labor-migration-moldova-and-ukraine>

that among 1,045 left-behind children surveyed, only 23.9% of them have daily contact with their parents and 4.3% of them haven't been contacted by their parents for at least a year. The report estimates that 15.1% of Chinese left-behind children, i.e., almost ten million children, do not have a chance to see their parents in an entire year and roughly 15 million children could contact their parents only three or four times each year via telephone (Li 2015). While left-behind children in other societies are commonly created by the international borders lines between countries, Chinese rural children are separated from their parents by China's own rural-urban dual system.

In the 1990s, while rural-urban migration was quickly increasing in size in the country, there were only sporadic news reports about rural children left behind in countryside by their migrant parents and scholarly works on this issue were scarce at that time. In 1995, a survey was conducted in five rural counties in Hunan Province and found that among 266 migrants interviewed, only 12 of them brought their children to the city. Most of cityward migrants left their children to either grandparents, other relatives or one of parents, forming the first generation of left-behind children (Tan 2011). Rural left-behind children, however, largely remained unnoticed by media and scholars until 2004 (Zhou and Duan 2006). Only after a conference on "the problems associated with rural left-behind children", hosted by the Ministry of Education in 2004, there emerged an increase in scholarly interest in studying rural left-behind children in the following several years. Hundreds of papers on this special population were published each year, while there were just few related publications before the conference (Wang and Hu 2011). Duan and Yang (2008) estimated that there were 58.61 million rural children left behind in 2005. As we have mentioned before, in 2013, All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) announced that the total number of rural left-behind children had reached 61 million in 2012.

Also according to ACWF (2013), the population of rural left-behind children was concentrated in just few migrant labor-sending provinces such as Sichuan, Anhui, and Henan, etc. The report stated that the total number of preschoolers (i.e., 0-5 years old) had reached 23.42 million, making up 38.37% of rural left-behind children. Compared with the population size of left-behind preschoolers in 2005, there had been an increase of 47.73% in just 5 years. If combined with the population of children of 6 to 11 years old, 70.38% of rural left-behind children (i.e., 42.95 million) were younger than 11. A summary figure is attached below for reference.

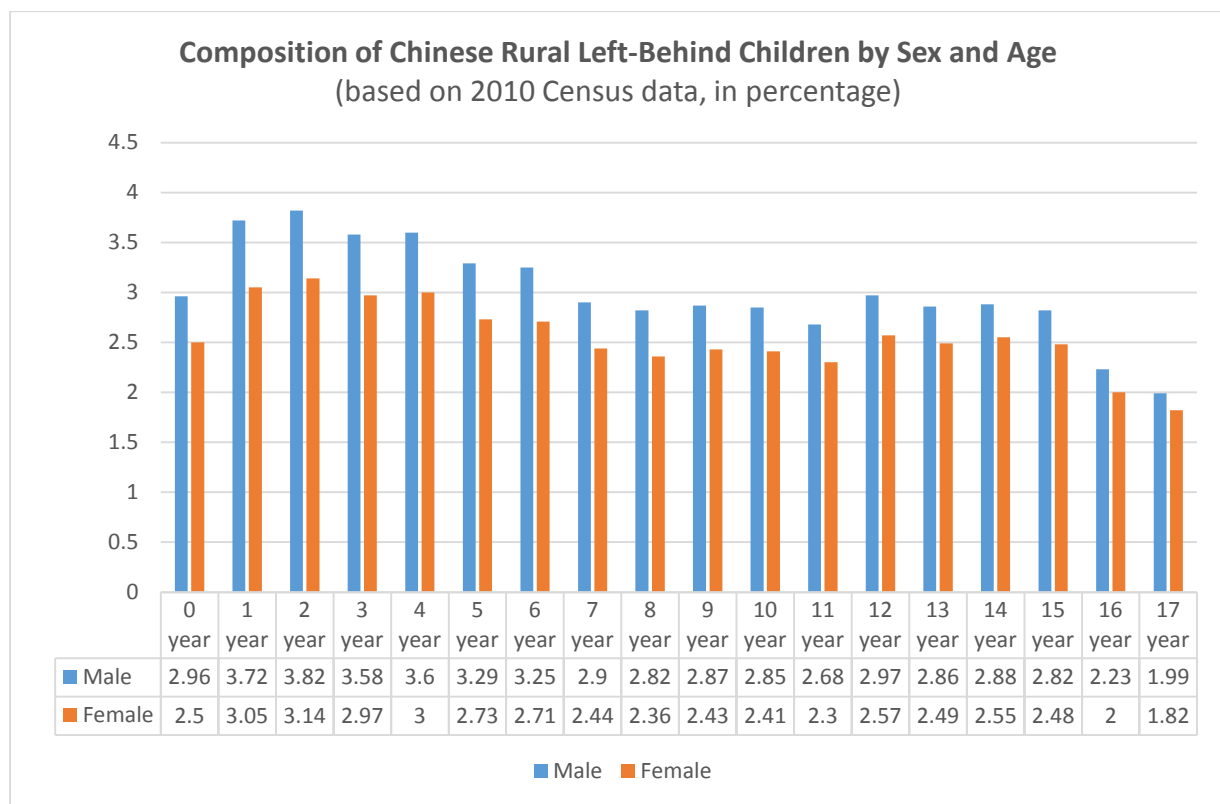


Figure 6.1 Composition of Chinese Rural Left-Behind Children by Sex and Age. Data source: “*Research Report on the Rural Left-Behind Children and Migrant Children in China*”, 2013, by All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF).

In the English literature, Xiang (2007) was one of the earliest research articles that paid close attention to the so-called “left-behind population”, which included women, the elderly and children in the countryside because of increasing rural-urban migration. Xiang pointed out that in

general, children left behind had “portrayed a fairly grim picture” because of the impact of migration of parents. For example, he noted that scholars had found that many rural children became either socially “withdrawn or excessively aggressive” after their parents migrated to city and “rural children are more than twice as likely to have psychological and behavioral problems as their urban counterparts”. Even though Xiang argued that some analytical variables such as educational performance and psychological health of rural left behind children should not be overestimated and need further careful study to see the relationship between them and migration of parents, he precisely concluded that in fact “rural–urban divide is thus far more significant than the differences between the left-behind and the accompanied.” Simply put, in as early as 2007, when rural left-behind children just started to draw the attention of scholars and media, Xiang had already realized the key issue behind rural left-behind children was “rural-urban divide” instead of commonly analyzed variables such as exam scores and other material well-beings. Finally, he concluded that the left-behind children were left behind not only by parents, but also by teachers, by other capable community members, and ultimately by the policy design.

1.2 Children Left-Behind: A Household Strategy?

Unfortunately, in recent years, obviously Xiang’s call for more attention to the “rural-urban divide” has not caught much scholarly attention. The mainstream literature (both Chinese and English) on Chinese left-behind children is still stuck in the “bottleneck” observed in Wang and Hu (2011), which argue that much of research has been repeatedly working on the empirical description of those children instead of scrutinizing the hidden mechanism behind their plight. Specifically, using the analytical variables commonly used in international migration literature,

e.g., education, mental and psychological health, remittance, and integration to urban life, etc., this line of literature has evolved into two opposite directions: one is to problematize the left-behind children and the other is to normalize the left-behind children. Within the first group of scholars, the focal point lies in how the migration of parents has negatively impacted the life of children left behind in the countryside. For instance, using a set of longitudinal data collected from a northwestern province in China, Gansu, Lee and Park (2010) investigated how the migration of fathers had impacted the educational performance and psychosocial development of left-behind children. In general, the negative impact was undeniable, according to the authors. Chang et.al. (2011) adopted a gender-based perspective and found that migration of parents would only increase the work time and load of elder women and girls instead of every one left behind in the countryside. Using a dataset that contains school performance records of 7,600 elementary school students in the Northwest China, Zhao et.al. (2014) found that the migration of parents could be directly related to the low math score of left-behind children. The authors suggested that China's economic growth model, which heavily relied on migrant labor, might be based on the sacrifice of rural left-behind children.

Within the second group of scholars moving towards a completely opposite direction, there has been a trend that de-problematizes the left-behind children phenomenon in China. Drawing on the “transnational family” literature, which has emerged in recent years in the field of international labor migration and family studies, they argue nobody is left behind. In fact, some scholars have begun to challenge conventional interpretation of family life, with which the nuclear family are assumed to be the sole and universal form¹⁹. At this point, however, the focus

¹⁹ This line of scholarship will be briefly summarized and reviewed later in this chapter because of its increasing influence.

is its influence on some China scholars. As an example, In Fan et. al. (2011), specifically on the family life of migrants, first she points out that “public discourse, perhaps more than academic research, has a tendency to encourage an ‘ideal’ type of family organization”, by which she refers to one form that has “a breadwinner with a stable, postindustrial, high-wage job, a housewife, and two children” or “dual wage earners, single parents, stepchildren, and adopted children” in contemporary society. And more importantly, with this standard type of family, “members of the same family live together most of the time”, according to Fan’s observation. She then questions such a tendency by suggesting there are other existing forms of family life such as the “split household” adopted by Chinese rural migrants. For her, besides hukou, it is because migrants want to take advantage of both “the rural and the urban worlds”. Then she further argues not only locally in the Chinese context but universally, the conventional notion of family has to be reworked because of the emergence of migrants and split households. She concludes that “an additional discourse on split households is necessary in order to address the experiences of long-term (circular) migrants and their families” and “sending both spouses to the city, therefore, is perhaps simply a strategy to maximize the household labor power devoted to earnings from the city”.

While admitting tens of millions of rural children in China have been left behind by their migrant parents in the countryside on the one hand, Murphy (2014) tries to prove that they are actually not left behind on the other hand. Assuming conventional family life can be transformed through adding non-conventional members, through her fieldwork in some rural areas of Jiangxi Province, following the essential idea of the transnational family literature, Murphy argues rural schools have played such a key role in the transformation of rural Chinese family life.

Specifically, she claims that the goal of migrant parents and the interest of government “converge in schools” and migration has reshaped the ways in which people “do family” in rural China. In her interpretation, for migrant parents, the logic is while parents work hard in the city, children are supposed to study hard as well in the countryside because education is the only reason for the parents’ absence. As a result, for Murphy, school and study have provided children with ways to deal with problems caused by the absence of parents and the lack of adult care and supervision. In conclusion, she claims that left-behind children live active and meaningful lives at home.

In this chapter, I want to rebuke the scholarly works that normalize left-behind children phenomenon because they represent a trend trying to de-problematize China’s rural-urban relations, which is the main focus of my study. As we have known, : 1. the migration-generated income has been the major source for rural China in recent years and 2. the gap between city and countryside, in terms of income, education, environment and health, etc., continues to expand at the same time. If we combine these two facts together, one can easily draw a conclusion, i.e., such a “household strategy” actually is not as smart and effective as what some scholars believe. In general, the fact is migrants are gaining less than what they are losing. I contend that it is rural-urban dual system that actually functions as an invisible hand directing the life course of migrants. When the validity of her “household strategy” becomes questionable, as a result, the nature of “split household” as a so-called “new form of family life” by Fan definitely leads to more questions. In other words, I suggest that a split household based on the “free-will” of migrants is completely different from a “forced” split household Ren Yuan, professor of Fudan University has some great insights that deserve serious attention. Ren (2015) argues “Left-behind

children and family separation are not rational in any sense. They are based on rational decisions (under certain circumstances), however”. According to him, major reasons that lead to children left behind and split family includes 1. migrants choose to split family for economic return; 2. migrants can see great uncertainty in life in the city; 3. migrants are not able to afford high living and childcare cost in the city; 4. migrants have no enough personal time to take care of children; and 5. as a result, leaving children behind in the countryside even became the best solution. He further concludes that “Left-behind children is definitely not a shortsighted family decision. Instead, it is the distortion of family decision making, which is caused by institutional and social factors”.

Murphy’s conclusion, i.e., no one is actually left behind, is problematic as well. In general, her conclusion is based on one of the core arguments in the transnational family literature, i.e., family ties can be well maintained via modern technology such as telephone and the internet, and “extended family” (see Baldassar and Merla 2013). As “extended family” plays an important role in the transnational family literature, Murphy considers rural school a new member and caregiver to the “extended family” and assumes they could be a bridge between children left behind and their migrant parents. In her analysis, on the one hand, children could communicate with their migrant parents via telephone and parenting could be effectively circulated through optical wire or wireless signal. On the other hand, life in school and hard study become the centerpiece of parents-children relationship. As such, according to Murphy, a new form of family life is emerging in rural China and “left-behind children live active and meaningful lives at home”. There are, however, important questions she did not answer in her work. As we have seen in the previous chapters, there are sufficient data that are able to prove the rate of school dropout is extremely high in the countryside. That means using educational institutions to play the role of

parents is problematic and telephone calls are not magical bullets. In fact, the reality could be even worse. A grim reality in today's rural China: when the notion of "education is useless" is widely believed by this generation of rural youth, a high rate of school dropout among left-behind children is just how they put this belief into practice. In addition, crimes against left-behind children in school have been a serious problem that no one can deny and many left-behind children have been victims of various crimes and abuses committed by relatives, school staff and village thugs.

2. The Nature of Left-Behind Children

2.1 The Form of Family Redefined?

Clearly, the nature and consequence of children left-behind, positive or negative, depends on how we understand and define the form of family. Arguments based on the transnational family literature has been influential in the study of Chinese left-behind children and split family nowadays. It seems more and more China scholars have begun seeking theoretical linkages from it because the progress made on theorizing children left behind in China is still quite limited, as Wang and Hu (2011) point out. Therefore, to better understand the strength and weakness of the latter, it is necessary to have a brief summary of the former, i.e., the transnational family literature. More importantly, I suggest that we could have a more thorough understanding of the nature of left-behind children and split family through scrutinizing the gist of this line of scholarship. In this chapter, I argue that the transnational family literature essentially is a new form of the Western-centrism, though self-labeled as Anti-Western-Centrism. My interpretation

of the nature of left-behind children in China starts from reviewing it and explaining why it is still Western-centric in nature.

In the transnational family literature, Baldassar and Merla (2013) provides a powerful critique of relevant literature and some strong arguments. The authors argue that theoretically, migration has created a new frame for us to understand how caregiving activities can be performed by transnational families in distance. Specifically, the authors argue that while the traditional form of family life has been significantly changed because of increasing geographic mobility global wide, new communication technologies have enabled family members of transnational families to “care across distance and to manage absence in family life”. Firstly, the authors challenge the conventional concept of family by arguing it should be considered in a broader sense, i.e., beyond nuclear households. Secondly, the authors suggest that more “care actors”, i.e., extended family, should be brought into consideration when interpreting the lived experience of transnational families. As such, the authors conclude that a care circulation lens then is able to “map the actual and imagined connections between members of global households across distance and time”. Furthermore, they argue that absence and distance are supposed to be common features of contemporary family life and transnational families as family forms are “in their own right”. For them, the presence of transnational families have proven that family ties can be well maintained across distance and effective family caregiving actually does not necessarily require intimacy and proximity.

One of the most interesting findings in this line of literature, identified by Baldassar and Merla in their 2013 book and used as evidence to support their argument, is that in other non-

Western societies, “families experience separation as less painful and disruptive than in the West”. Based on such a finding, they further question the adoption of dominant Western notion, which stresses the emotional and physical close between mother and children, in international labor migration and family studies literature. When doing so, at first the authors define care as an object that has five dimensions: economic, accommodation, personal, practical, emotional and moral. Consequently, personal care that requires people to stay close physically becomes just one of dimensions of performing care.

The logic Baldassar and Merla have applied in their anti-Western Centrism writing is clear: firstly, they argue that while a Western-centric definition of family is dominant in international migration and family studies literature, transnational families have demonstrated new forms of family life. In other words, nuclear families and geographical proximity of family members are just an ideal lifestyle in the Western society rather than a universal one. Secondly, when discussing how this new form of family life emerges, they argue that in the practice of transnational family care circulation, the concepts of family has been changed from typical nuclear family to non-Western extended family, which means more caregivers, e.g., grandparents, have participated in the new form of family life and such a form of family life does not exist in the Western society. Thirdly, focusing on how this kind of family life is maintained, they suggest that with the help of modern communication technologies, parental care can be easily performed and circulated by using telephone and the internet by transnational families. Their arguments are quite problematic in fact. Generally, there have been some unrealistic assumptions applied in their interpretation of the presence of transnational families and their practice of family intimacy and parental care. For example, by using a new definition of care, which includes not only

“embodied” but “virtual” parental care, Baldassar and Merla have opened a new channel through which care can be circulated via communication technologies by more “care actors”. Otherwise, without a concept such as “virtual care”, communication technologies will be useless. Questions, however, remain unanswered. Among these care actors, is the role of parents identical to that of other relatives such as grandparents? Or in other words, for children left behind, are other relatives the same to them as their biological parents? Baldassar and Merla unconditionally assume they are identical to each other in their analysis.

In the following discussion of the stories of Chinese left-behind children and split families, we will see what the reality is in the Chinese context. While correctly recognizing how increasing mobility has significantly impacted people’s life global wide, they overestimate how much the “connectedness” can do to offset the negative effect of split family. Baldassar and Merla repeatedly stress the importance of using communication technologies such as sending letters, fax, email and SMS texts to maintain family ties. They, however, fail to notice that the five dimensions of care they introduced, i.e., economic, accommodation, personal, practical, emotional and moral, are not supposed to replace each other. In other words, personal care, which definitely requires geographic proximity, cannot be replaced by other four dimensions. Baldassar and Merla, however, obviously have avoided to discuss the absence of personal care and simply assume it could be replaced by other four dimensions. The lived experience of Chinese left-behind children and their families that will be introduced later will prove that assumption is not realistic as well. In terms of research methodology, there are also red flags that might indicate the invalidity of their arguments. The central theme in their study is the transnational family as an increasingly important global phenomenon. To a great extent, however,

the conclusions they have drawn are only based on the experience of Westerners. For example, “Viviana’s Australia-and UK-based grandchildren” are used in their analysis as evidence to prove that care could be circulated across distance. The New Zealanders travelling from New Zealand and Australia also are used as example to prove that “being together” and “doing family” could be “well beyond daily proximity”. Australian mine workers traveling back and forth between a remote mining center and Perth are used to show that distance does not matter for contemporary family life. Even though there are few examples that are based on the experience of migrants from developing world, the analysis in their work is still primarily based on the Western experience such as from “a Skype call”, “unrestricted and relatively inexpensive border crossing” to “fly-in, fly-out work arrangements”. When arguing that family intimacy is only a Western tradition, the only evidence used is “migration in Cape Verdean society” and “the Caribbean” where “the nuclear co-present family has never been the norm”. How peoples in the rest of the world, billions of them, “do family”, however, is completely ignored by them. One more problem is the authors have mixed up the separation of adult family members, e.g., husband and wife, with the separation of parents and their children when interpreting their definition of transnational family. Compared with adults, I suggest that minors might be more vulnerable and therefore deserve more scholarly attention. In sum, thin line of scholarship’s effort to redefine the form of family actually has failed.

2.2 Forced Family-Breakup Rather Than Voluntary

The problems discussed above are just examples that could be directly rebutted by readers. I however would like to stress a couple of major problems in their work and the scholarship they

have been building. First, I suggest that even though transnational family has been a global phenomenon, there is supposed to be a line clearly drawn between two worlds: the developed and the developing when interpreting the new emerging forms of family life. There are several reasons for doing it: while Western families could enjoy advanced “communication technologies”, “unrestricted” border crossing and relatively cheap “fly-in, fly-out work arrangement”, in non-Western societies, these might not be reality in common people’s life. In current literature, what we can see is how migrant laborers from developing world are streaming to developed world, how they are restricted by immigration law in developed countries and how much they have suffered from family breakup. In addition, when searching key words such as “transnational parenting” or “transnational mothering” in any of literature database, most of research papers returned by the search engine are related to keywords like “Mexican”, “Central Americans”, “Ecuadorian”, “Ukrainian”, and “Filipino”, etc. While labor migration from developing world to developed world consists of the majority of transnational families, mixing it up with migration inside the Western world, which might be just a minor in size if compared with its counterpart, could lead to a serious misunderstanding of the nature of transnational family. I contend that it is a global wide phenomenon but has striking geographic characteristics. It is undeniable that there are geographies of transnational families. Unfortunately, it seems this bulk of literature has completely ignored it. As I said before, the line of literature is in fact a new form of Western Centrism even though self-labeled as “anti-Western Centrism.” The second serious problem associated with their work is that the authors fail to understand the presence of transnational family is the result of complex social, economic and political relations. In Baldassar and Merla (2013), this problem has been obvious since the beginning. In their view, for transnational families, that family members live in the different parts of the world is the

reality and also is completely voluntary. For the authors, the good thing is that anyhow migrants have already known how to deal with the difficulty caused by family-breakup, i.e., either Westerners could take advantage of advanced communication technologies to have family members connected or non-Westerns just simply do not care. One of the evidences Baldassar and Merla use to support their argument is the role of “extended family”, which means more relatives have participated in circulating care across distance. They, however, have never asked if this change has added extra burden to other relatives, for example, family elders. In other words, all the hidden cost caused by family breakup is not shown on their radar screen, let alone a variety of problems behind family-breakup. In next section, we will see more details regarding the forced family breakups in China.

2.3 “Institutional Orphans” – Left Behind Children

As we have discussed, when some China scholars are deeply influenced by their works, the same kind of problems emerge in the literature: Chinese migrants are idealized as independent decision makers who are able to easily maximize their personal interest without worrying about any policy constraints, migration is cheap and easy, telephone and the internet can be used to keep family members connected and family elders are also available anytime to help. As a result, family-breakup is concluded as a new form of family life that should be accepted universally. My critique of their scholarship upon which their work is based is not simply grounded on abstract theories or imagination, , but based on the lived experience of some Chinese rural children, using content analysis of some published accounts to show that in China,

1. The making of left-behind children and family breakups has to be interpreted through institutional arrangement, in addition to individual decisions.
2. For Chinese rural migrants, family breakup and left-behind children as “household strategy” is neither voluntary nor a normal family life norm and “cost-free”. Instead, it is forced, institutionalized and the family pays a high price. .
3. Personal care cannot be circulated by telephone and the internet and the strategy of using “extended family” is also problematic. And
4. All parents and children, China included, cherish intimate family life..

Furthermore, my analysis will answer questions such as: what contributes to the making of the left-behind children? What are the main problems they face? What lies in the heart of this problem? Is it based on economic rationality or market logic? And how typical is it in China?

Li Yong, a famous freelance writer in China, also called “ten-year woodcutter”, once wrote and posted an eye-grabbing essay on the internet after a trip to his home village in 2009. The essay was titled “Left-behind children are grown-ups now”. The partial translation of this essay is below²⁰:

²⁰ The original essay is posted on the author’s blog, which can be accessed at <http://kanchai.blog.caixin.com/archives/1925>

“In the night I stayed with my parents, we chatted a lot about many things that happened in neighboring villages. It was heart-breaking: many of the village youth became thugs. It was common that all the youth in a village formed a gang before migrating to the South China to be thieves and robbers. And each village had their own characteristics. For example, (the youth of) some villages became burglars while the youth of other villages joined mafia. And some were specialized in kidnapping victims and requested ransom. In a nearby village, which was just two kilometers from my village and seated in a small basin surrounded by mountains, there were a dozen of young people went to Guangdong to make money by kidnapping people and taking ransom. Just before the New Year’s Eve, they kidnapped a 50-year old man and left him in a car’s trunk. The victim died of suffocation later. The case was solved by police soon and four kidnappers were arrested. All four came from the same village and had been friends since they were little kids. One of them received death penalty while other three were sentenced to serve long time in prison.

.....

Most of these young people, who became criminals, were in their 18 or 19. Some of them were still minor. Their parents, normally born in the late 1950s or 1960s, were the first generation of migrant workers. In other words, these youth were China’s first generation of left-behind children. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s in the last century, when the wave of rural-urban migration surged every village in Hunan Province, countless youth, men and women, went to Guangdong and became industrial workers from farmers in a night. Because most of these people worked on assembly lines, they were not able to bring their children to the city, unlike those farmers who were street vendors in the city. Their children had to be left behind in the countryside and raised by their grandparents.

Many problems emerged when grandparents were taking care of left-behind children. First of all, children were more likely to be spoiled. Secondly, elders were not able to supervise their study.

Especially after 1999 when higher education system was completely marketized, because universities and colleges began to admit more and more students, employment became a serious problem for many graduates. For students from countryside, the chances of finding a good job became even slimmer. Farmers were quite pragmatic. They became concerned about their children's future when seeing increasing costs of education. As such, without any motivation to received education, children left behind gradually grew into loose cannons that nobody could control.

Once grown-ups, they suddenly found they needed find a source of living. To join the army? Soldiers who had no sufficient education background would be discharged sooner or later, not to mention that many college graduates had been enlisted. To be a farmer? How many of them could still do farming? Village elders had been bemoaning that no young person knew how to farm. To be a migrant worker like their parents who worked on assembly lines all year long and had to make a living by working overtime? But it could lead to injury and sickness. Not worth to do it. Even though the future might be full of uncertainty, migrating to the city was the only option for rural youth who just finished their middle school education. In the city, however, they were bored with their parents who did not take care of them when they were little kids. As such, they were welcomed by some young migrants who came to the city earlier and had found certain ways of making easy money. Of course, in the beginning, they had no obligation to their friends. As time passed, they felt embarrassed if they were not able to contribute to the gang. Then they started from being lookouts when others were “working”. Finally, they started “working” more actively, independently and eventually became seasoned. More important, behind them, there was already a reserve army of left-behind children who were following their way.

.....”

In this short essay by Li, there is rich information for understanding the reality of China's left-behind children and split family. First, most of migrant workers from this village were not able to bring their children with them when they worked for factories. The only option for them was to leave children with their family elders. Clearly, this is what transnational family scholars have called the care provided by the extended family. Does this strategy work for migrant workers? In Li's opinion, definitely not. In this story, family elders and other relatives were not able to take good care of left-behind children. Then why migrants were not able to bring their children to the city? As we have discussed in the previous chapter, before the late 1990s, in urban-based schools and daycare centers, there was no room for non-local hukou holders. Since the late 1990s, even though policy was changed, migrant children were still charged extra fees for school enrollment in the city. In this real story, we can clearly see that it was the implementation of rural-urban dual system, i.e., hukou that impeded rural children from migrating to the city with their parents. In other words, it is definitely not just an individual decision that has nothing to do with China's rural-urban relations. Will school help them, like what Murphy has suggested? It seems the answer is no in this village. Higher learning education system has been marketized and for rural students, there are even fewer chances to change their fate through hard study. "Education is useless" became the mainstream belief in the village. Both migrants and their children knew it. Why bother study hard?! In Li's home village, the youth would migrate to the city right after they finished middle-school education, i.e., the nine-year compulsory education. And this observation matches the official data provided by Chinese government. Is this true that parent-child separation does not matter and family members can be effectively connected by telephone and the internet? In Li's essay, it is obvious that the fact is different. When village youth went to the city to live with their parents, they felt bored with their parents and other older relatives

because the two were already emotionally distanced. Distance really matters. For parents, when their children became members of street corner society in the city or join a gang in the countryside, what kind of smart “household strategy” could be used to save them? Compared with scholars who de-problematize left-behind children and split family, one of the most insightful conclusions in Li’s essay is he has realized that left-behind children are very likely to become a reserve army of criminals.

While many of left-behind children become trouble-makers, many of them are victimized. In other words, this is the price of parental care across distance. Even though migration could normally increase household income, there are always risks accompanied with it. Unfortunately, the latter is commonly ignored by scholars who define family breakup and left-behind children as “household strategy”. UC Berkeley-based Journalist Melissa Hellmann has been working on a less known aspect of rural -urban migration in China for a while: the trafficking of China’s left-behind children. On the web site of the *Christian Science Monitor*, Hellmann (2015) reports:

“Mi Village, Guangdong, China — on a late December afternoon, a four-year old boy with a Superman tracksuit and cherubic cheeks plopped down in front of a TV here. Nearby, his grandfather dozed off after a late lunch. An hour later, he woke up to find his grandson, Liu Si Rui, had gone. He rushed out to scour the dirt roads and knock on neighbors’ doors, to no avail.”

“Young Liu’s suspected kidnapping is a common tale in parts of China. His parents are among an estimated 250 million workers who have moved in recent decades to cities, part of a labor force that underlies China’s increased prosperity. Liu’s father, a driver, and his mother, a factory worker, live 200 miles away in Shenzhen, a booming city of 10 million studded with bustling factories.”

"One reason why so many are left behind is that China's forbidding official household registration policy, or hukou system, makes it near-impossible for migrants to raise their children where they work. Coupled with a one-child policy that stokes demand for male heirs, this lack of parental supervision increases the risk of exploitation, sexual assaults, kidnapping and trafficking of kids — especially the children of migrants."

"The hukou system began in the 1950s as a form of social control, a way for officials to keep track of the population. One's hukou is designated at birth and is usually connected to the place of origin. Social services such as subsidized housing, free healthcare and education only apply in that location; migrants and their children are routinely denied such services. "

"Liu Junming, father of the missing boy from Mi village, says he and his wife left their son due to Shenzhen's high cost of living, and the hukou system. Since Liu and his wife didn't have hukou status in Shenzhen, their son didn't qualify for a reputable public school. The only option was to enroll in a private, fee-paying school specifically for migrant children. 'If there's no such limitation imposed by hukou, I would have definitely brought my kids; but we have other concerns as well, because I have a huge economic burden in the city and we are not from a rich family,' he says."

"Unlike most migrant workers, Liu would travel to see his children every month, but now his spare time is dedicated to finding his son. Over the past three years, he has traveled around the country distributing flyers that show a smiling Sirui and detail his disappearance. The caption reads: "The parents are devastated."

Hellmann's report has clearly outlined the reasons that lead to the increasing trafficking of left-behind children since the 1980s. The life of migrants follows such a standard model: while parents are working in the city, grandparents take care of their grandchildren in the countryside. This is how so many families become broken. The status quo of these broken families, however, is far worse than what some transnational family scholars have imagined. First, these family elders are commonly lack of necessary energy and time when they are required to take care of grandchildren. The fact is many elders are also in need of care. Therefore, the strategy of taking advantage of extended family actually does not work here. Secondly, in her interviews, Hellmann noticed that even common migrants were aware that it was hukou that prevented them from raising children in the city and the problems caused by the separation of parents and children. Thirdly, because rural migrants living and working in the city are facing extra pressure and as a result, they are not able to raise children in the city, therefore, leaving children in the countryside with their grandparents becomes the only option for migrants. As such, family-breakup and left-behind children are neither voluntary nor a smart strategy to maximize income. On the contrary, as Ren (2015) has argued, it is a distorted family decision, forced upon on migrants by China's institutional arrangements. Based on Hellmann's report, we can see that family breakup and children left-behind because of migration is not risk-free and "cost-free". For migrants, besides the economic costs, other potential costs could be stunning. How much will telephone and the internet help to prevent such a tragedy from happening? The incidences of criminals who targeted and abducted those left-behind children actually have answered this question. The fact is co-presence of parents and children is a seriously matter for children's safety, and it is not something that someone else can replace. In a word, the tragedy of Chinese

left-behind children just told us that care cannot be circulated across distance and extended family is not as reliable as many have imagined.

In 2013, five left-behind children drown in a pond near their home village, which is located in a rural area of Jiangxi Province. A group of concerned journalists wrote a report that provided a detailed introduction of this tragedy (Sina News, Aug 9, 2013). Some paragraphs of this report are translated and attached below:

“The village was located 80 kilometers off Yichun City, JiangXi Province. It was around 2pm in the afternoon, the grandson of 72 years-old Wang Jiushou, Xiaohui told him that he and other five brothers and sisters were about to pick some wild fruit. When kids felt hot and sweaty, they decided to go to a pond to “take a bath”. After brothers and sisters walked into the pond, Xiaohui, the youngest kid, stopped at the edge because he was nervous. Shortly, he found all brothers and sisters were missing. He called them loudly by names but received no response. At that time, a boat stopped by. He told the man paddling the boat that all his sisters and brothers were missing and asked for help. The man searched the pond quickly but found nobody. He realized something went wrong and immediately went back to the village for help. ”

“Once Wang Jiushou and his wife Li Xixiu heard what happened, they immediately tried to find some neighbors to help. However, there were no young people around in the village. Finally, they had to hire a motorcyclist to help them find anyone nearby who could help. After a long-time search, they found two young men who were able to help. But it was already too late. ”

“The village leader said (to the journalists) that the pond was for irrigation and roughly three li (i.e., 1.5 kilometer) away from the village. Water was deep in that season. The village had largely 300

households and 1,000 people but there was neither much arable land nor village factories. As a result, most of young and middle-aged people became migrant workers, leaving elders and children behind. When the accident happened, villagers tried their best to help, even though the chances were slim. All rescuers on the scene were elders, however. ”

“This is an underprivileged family. Wang has two sons. Though seriously sick, the elder son and his wife work at a construction site in Yichun City. The younger son lives in poverty and owns lots of debt. For the purpose of paying off the debt, he and his wife migrated to Shenzhen and started working for a factory one month before the accident. ”

“Why leaving elders and kids behind in the village? The Wang brothers did a calculation and concluded (to the journalists) that it would be better to work in the city. The elder brother said, ‘working at a construction site is hard, but I could make Yuan 100 per day’. The younger believed he could have more chances in Shenzhen and could keep up to Yuan 30,000 in his pocket per year. Similar to the Wang brothers, many people have migrated and left others behind in the village.”

“The elder brother continued, ‘there is nothing you can do to stop them from swimming in the pond. My kids kept telling me that they wanted to swim even though I told them to quit it.’ The younger brother added, ‘I called them from Shenzhen every week and warned them not to go to the pond and not to pick wild strawberry’. The tragedy happened anyway. ”

“Within a month after the accident in Jiangxi, a series of accidents, in which all victims were left-behind children, occurred across the country:

May 9 and 19, three boys drown in Shantou, Guangdong Province

May 20, three children drown, Binzhou, Shandong Province

May 20, three children fell into water and one died

May 27, five girls drown, Xiaogan, Hubei Province

.....”

In this report, there are several key points that deserve attention. First, exactly like two previous examples, the basic family life model remained the same: while parents were working in the city, it was grandparents who took care of grandchildren. Grandparents had limited capability of giving care to grandchildren and as a result, the tragedy happened²¹. It is needless to repeat that extended family is not able to provide full care that children need. Second, entire village had only elders living in there because all young people had migrated to the city for work. Third, it is true that farmers intended to maximize their economic interest through migration to the city. But it did not mean they had to leave other family members left behind if city could provide them with necessary support such as child care and education. In the conversation, though there is no explanation about why children were left behind, it is undeniable that parents and their children had paid the highest price for the family breakup. And fourth, frequent telephone calls from Shenzhen did not save children's life. In other words, in this case, care failed to circulate through communication technologies.

Among many publications about Chinese left-behind children and family breakup, Yang (2012) is a quite unique one because it is written by neither scholars nor journalists. Instead, it is a collection of diaries by 26 left-behind children. Yang, the editor, is a rural school teacher in a

²¹ Some scholars argue that care by grandparents has been practiced in China for thousands of years and therefore taking care of grandchildren by them should not be a problem. This conclusion is questionable, however. First of all, long distance mass migration in ancient China was low in general (see e.g., Chao 1986). Secondly, according to Ge Jianxiong, migration in the Chinese history was normally done by families because of government policy, natural disasters, and wars, etc instead of individuals (Ge, Cao and Wu 1993). Therefore, in ancient China, grandparents were helpers rather than the primary caregivers. In contemporary China, however, grandparents are used as the primary caregivers when the parents of their grandchildren are gone.

poor mountainous area of Guizhou province. As a teacher, he has been encouraging his students, many of whom were left-behind children, to write diaries for a while and one day he realized these diaries were priceless first-hand data for understanding the life of the left-behind children. The book was finally published in 2012 and caught nationwide attention. Besides knowing the plight they have been experiencing, more important, reading these diaries also can help us explicitly understand how Chinese children make sense of their world and how much they crave intimacy with their parents. In other words, parent-child intimacy is definitely not just a Western tradition.

“I miss daddy so much. Neither because it is hard to take care of whole family (it is hard in fact) nor because my brother is very picky in food. This time daddy will not go to Xingyi, from where he only needs to pay roughly 10 yuan for a trip home. This time he will go to a place that will cost him hundreds of yuan to come back.....It was always daddy who woke me up in the mornings. But in the future, nobody will do it for me. This time he will only come back by next New Year’s Eve. I will miss him!” (Author: Yang Min, April 18, 2010)

“Yesterday my daddy came home. Even though he did not bring anything for me and the goal of this trip was to pay off debt, I was very happy. I thought since daddy was already home, everything would be good from that point on. This morning when I woke up, what a surprise, daddy told me he was about to leave again.....I did not say a word while cooking and washing clothes. I did not want to go to school and I just wanted to cry. He just spent one night at home with us. He is about to hit the road again.....I really hope he could stay. But what excuses do I have? ” (Author: Yang Haijiao, April 5, 2010)

“Sometimes I miss my daddy because I could ask him for help when I had problems with school assignments. But right now nobody can help. I really want to cry because nobody is able to teach me. I still remember how happy we were when both daddy and mom were at home. Every time when I thought of those days, I couldn’t help smiling. Grandma would ask, ‘what is going on’. I then replied, ‘I miss daddy and mom’. One day, daddy called us and asked me what I wanted to do after the sixth grade. I said I had no idea. Daddy said ‘you have to study hard. No matter how much it costs, I will borrow money for you. I cried even though daddy kept telling me to stop..... ’”
(Author: Zhang Minhui, June 21, 2011)

“Today on my way home, I saw a yellow cat walking toward the sidewalk while meowing at me. It was so skinny that I thought it must be a homeless cat. I thought if the cat would go home with me, I would take good care of it. But I also hope it could find its mom and have a happy family reunion.”
(Author: Yang Tianguo, September 17, 2011)

“It would be great if it were New Year’s Eve right now, not for money, only because daddy and mom would come home. Then we four would have a family reunion and I would be very happy. I would study very hard if every day were like that.” (Author: Zheng Qin, September 16, 2011)

“One day on my way to school, my classmate Xia Congli told me that her parents were about to migrate to city for work. She burst into tears when she told me their decision. I said ‘don’t worry’ and told her that her parents wouldn’t leave her behind. But her parents finally left. Before departing, her mom asked me to come often to their home to accompany their daughter because she would feel lonely and be scared when home alone.....It was heart-breaking. We played games when I visited her home. I hoped she could forget unpleasant things. But she never did.” (Author: Xia Min, April 12, 2011)

Based on the six pieces translated above, a summary table is created and listed below for further analysis:

Table 6.1 Diaries of Left-Behind Children. Source: Yang (2012).

Author	Major character	Event	Theme	Key words
Yang Min	Father	leaving for a distant city	growing up without father	miss
Yang Haijiao	Father	home visiting	growing up without father	cry
Zhang Minhui	Father	home alone	growing up without father	cry
Yang Tianguo	Cat	encountering a homeless cat	missing parents	take care
Zheng Qin	Father and mother	making a wish	growing up without both parents	happy
Xia Min	A friend	home alone	growing up without both parents	lonely

Even though it is a small sample, there is sufficient information reflecting the nature of family breakup in the era of great rural-urban migration. What does family breakup mean for the children? What makes family members separated? Can telephone be used to have family members connected? Clearly, most of major characters are parents, mainly fathers. All parents are either leaving home for work in the city or have already left for some time. For these left-behind children, they are growing up without parents, no exception. Nobody liked seeing their parents leaving. Even though no one mentioned why their parents could not bring them to the city, it seems everyone knew city was not where they were supposed to go. No one mentioned using telephone or any other type of similar communication tools. For these children, a family gathering was much more important than income. The overall response from them to family breakup was negative.

The making of left-behind children in the countryside is directly related to the education policy implemented in major cities. In the following, first through analyzing the Census data, we can clearly see how left-behind children are created by Beijing and Shanghai at macro level. Then through context-analyzing Beijing's policy on the enrollment of non-hukou elementary students, we can see how hard it is for migrants to register for their children in the capital city at micro level, especially in 2016. As a result, many migrants have to send their children back to the countryside and become left-behind children or simply left them with other relatives in the countryside before migration. The content analysis performed is based on three major variables: hukou and other requirements (i.e., so-called "Five documents"), clearness of government instructions and the complexity of review process.

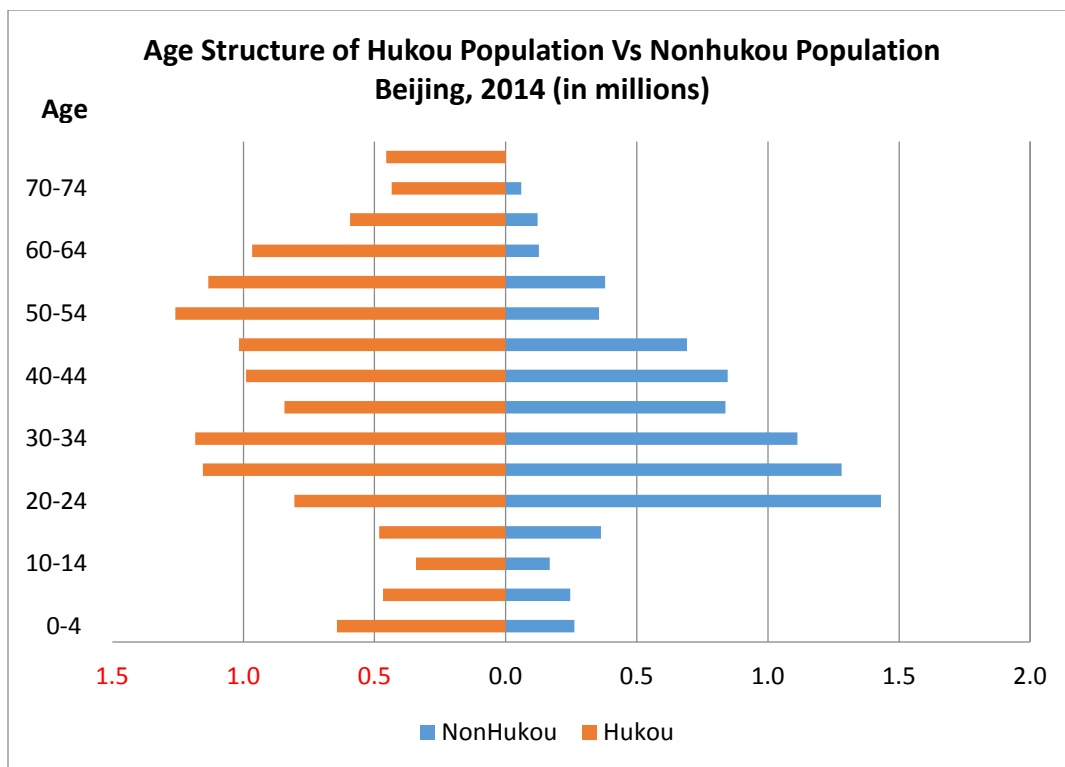


Figure 6.2 Age Structure of Hukou Population Vs Non-hukou Population Beijing, 2014. Source: Beijing's Bureau of Statistics.

Based on this figure, the majority of migrant population consists of people who are between 20 and 49 years old. Specifically, of 8.28 million migrants, at least 6.20 million are in the labor force. At the same time, when Beijing as a seriously aging city has 1.45 million children²², there are only 0.68 million migrant children in the city. In other words, if assuming migrants also strictly obey the one-child policy, it is fair to estimate that Beijing has at least created at least 0.77 million left-behind children (i.e., $1.45 - 0.68 = 0.77$). Given the fact that the one-child policy is not very strictly implemented in rural areas, it will be realistic to believe that there are more than one million left-behind children because of Beijing's policy or in a broader sense, the rural-urban dual system.

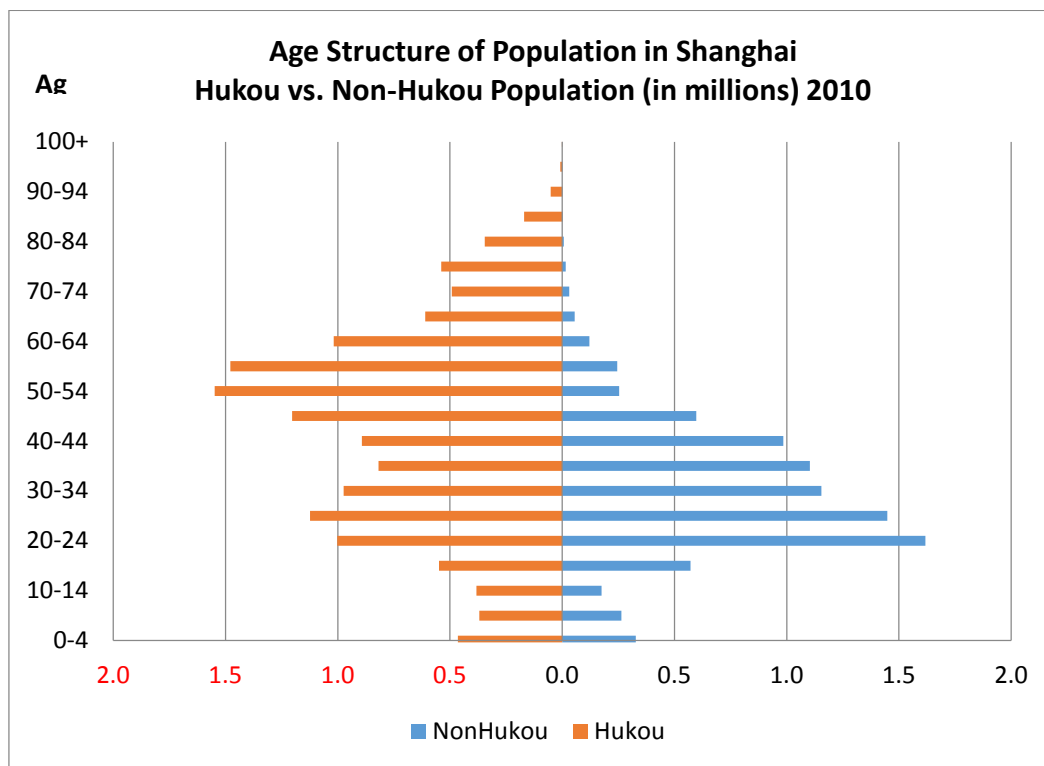


Figure 6.3 Age Structure of Population in Shanghai Hukou vs. Non-Hukou Population (2010).
Source: Shanghai's Bureau of Statistics.

²² The fertility rate in Beijing and Shanghai is as low as 0.7, according to a WSJ report.
<http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2014/09/02/baby-boom-or-economy-bust-stern-warnings-about-chinas-falling-fertility-rate/>

Based on this population pyramid, similar to Beijing, Shanghai is also a seriously aging city with which the child population is just a tiny portion of the city's population. But compared with Shanghai hukou child population, the size of migrant child population is even smaller. When there are 1.21 million Shanghai hukou children (0-14 years), more than eight million adult migrants are only raising 0.76 million children in the city. In other words, at least 0.45 million children are not living with their parents (i.e., $1.21 - 0.76 = 0.45$). Given the extremely low fertility rate in Shanghai and higher fertility rates in other areas, even though there is no detailed data available, it is realistic to estimate there are another one million or even more children who are separated from their parents and have become left-behind because of Shanghai's policy²³. In sum, Beijing and Shanghai have created more than two million left-behind children, most of whom are children of rural-hukou migrants.

²³ According to media and my informants, it is common that migrants in Beijing and Shanghai have two or three children when one-child policy is strictly implemented for Beijing and Shanghai hukou holders.

Table 6.2 Beijing Policy on Enrollment of Non-hukou Elementary School Students

Beijing Policy on Enrollment of Non-Hukou Elementary Students (2016)										
		Employment	Residence	Temp Residence	Hukou book	No guardian at origin	Record of Immunizations	Window of application	Online application	Joint Review
东城区	Dongcheng	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	May 9-May 15	Yes	Yes
西城区	Xicheng	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; No alternative	No	May 9-May 18	Yes	Yes
朝阳区	Chaoyang	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; No alternative	No	May 9-May 31	Yes	Yes
丰台区	Fengtai	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; No alternative	Yes	May 9-May 25	Yes	Yes
海淀区	Haidian	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; No alternative	No	NA	Yes	Yes
房山区	Fangshan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	May 9-May 31	No	Yes
石景山区	Shijingshan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	May 9-May 31	Yes	Yes
门头沟区	Mentougou	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	NA	Yes	Yes
燕山	Yanshan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; No alternative	No	May 9-May 31	Yes	Yes
通州区	Tongzhou	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; No alternative	No	May 13-May 31	No	Yes
顺义区	Shunyi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; No alternative	No	May 15-May 29	No	Yes
昌平区	Changping	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	May 9-May 20	No	Yes
大兴区	Daxing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	NA	No	Yes
怀柔区	Huairou	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	April 28-May 30	No	Yes
平谷区	Pinggu	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	May 9-May 31	No	Yes
密云区	Miyun	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	May 9-May 31	No	Yes
延庆	Yanqing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes; Alternative ok	No	before May 31	No	Yes
									Highlighted columns are "Five Documents"	

Based on the information I collected, all the administrative districts in Beijing require so-called “five documents” from non-hukou migrants before their children could enroll in public school. But when implementing this policy, there are different requirements among the districts. It is noteworthy that what “five documents” include could be different among districts. And to verify one document might require more documents to be submitted for verification. Non-hukou migrants are required to prove that their children have no guardians available at their home place where hukou is registered. For many migrants, when other four documents are already hard to get, such a requirement is an even tougher job to finish for some reason. In some districts, there are alternatives that are also acceptable. But in some districts where migrants are concentrated, such as Chaoyang, Fengtai, Haidian, Tongzhou and Shunyi, migrants have to return to their home place for an official certificate no matter how much the trip would cost. Because the city government has allowed district governments to make their own policy, besides “five documents”, there are other legitimate requirements that migrants have to fulfill. The clarity of instruction varies among the districts. In some districts, it is clear that migrants have to register online first before they can manually submit application to the local education authority in their district. Some districts, however, only informs migrants of submitting their application to local government without mentioning the online registration requirement. In some districts, migrants could have up to one month to prepare the required materials. In some districts, however, the window period of application is as short as one week. Once the window period expires, one will not be able to apply for enrollment again in the year. The review process is another key barrier for many migrants because it is a joint review process in which many government agencies are involved simultaneously. For migrants, they have to go through each agency one by one in a very short time period and be prepared for changing requirements.

2.4 A New Form of Poverty: Family-Breakup

Geographically, most of the left-behind children in China are in less developed rural areas (ACWF 2013). Why are they left behind by their parents? In general, because they live in poverty and selling labor in the city is the only available option for their parents to make a living. Based on the data collected from numerous surveys, econometrical studies have repeatedly told us that cityward migration could effectively reduce rural poverty. They however cannot explain why there are more and more left-behind children in the countryside, let alone explaining why the rural-urban gap keeps increasing in recent years after waves of rural-urban migration. As we have known that left-behind children are “institutional orphans” in fact, neoclassical economics-based development economics is still stuck with pure narrow economic rationality, without knowing poverty is much more than just low income.

The field of poverty studies has been dominated by mainstream development economists for a while. *Poor Economics* by Bannerjee and Duflo is one of the most influential scholarly works that deserves attention. Aiming to better understand the nature and mechanism of chronic poverty, the authors have tried to promote a new research approach, the Randomized Control Trials (RCTs), which is based on their idea that the experience of the poor is extremely heterogeneous. Therefore, for the authors, in reality there is no room for so called Big Theories that have been advocated from Rostow to Sachs. The authors reject the idea that poverty can be completely eradicated by macro-level policies and critiques of political economy in developing world. On the contrary, through arguing “details matter” and “the view from below”, their work focuses on studying how the poor makes decisions and the specific circumstances upon which individual decisions are made. Specifically, they suggest there are five key lessons that can be

found in the life of the poor: 1. the poor often lack critical information and believe things that are not true; 2. the poor bear responsibility for too many aspects of their lives; 3. some markets are missing for the poor; 4. it is the governance and policies (but not the politics) imposed upon the poor that are problematic; and 5. changing negative expectations about the future will be helpful to the poor. In a word, they are expecting those who are underprivileged to change themselves “smartly” for a better future.

Critical scholars, for example, O’Connor (2002), Hickey (2005 and 2009), Mosse (2010), and Lawson (2012), have long pointed out that this kind of mainstream work is problematic and the mainstream poverty studies itself actually is already trapped in poverty in terms of theory and practice. Is poverty just about the lowness of monetary income or flawed personality? Even in the domain of development economics, which has stuck on the lowness of income for decades, many scholars and international institutions (e.g., the World Bank) have agreed that poverty is more than just about money and poverty reduction is more associated with the entitlements of the poor. O’ Connor (2001) further criticizes how poverty knowledge has been constructed in a biased way in the past and calls for a new framework of poverty knowledge that focuses on the dominant social structure instead of the flawed characteristics of the poor, i.e., a relational approach to understand poverty. The key point in her argument is clear: based on the existing poverty knowledge that only lets the poor to take the blame, attempts to reduce poverty can go nowhere. Wood (2003) has made it clear, “people are poor because of others...”

The relational approach suggests the key to poverty reduction is a reformation of social relations. Therefore, in practice, for the underprivileged class, poverty reduction refers to not only increasing income but also upward social mobility, which can be obtained only under balanced social relations. In the Chinese case, one of the direct consequences of the rural-urban dual system is losing of social mobility for people with rural hukou especially children. And this lacking of social mobility is achieved through depriving rural children's access to quality education and parental care. For the majority of rural-hukou children, living in the cities or left behind, when they grow up, the only way out will be following their migrant parents' path to become new generation of young migrant workers. As a result, poverty will be passed to the next generation under the dual system.

For the state and capital, rural-hukou children are already a *reserve army* of low-skilled laborers without upward social mobility. In Marx and Engels' critique of political economy in capitalist society, the unemployed and under-employed workers are the reserve army of labor to capitalist model of production, which makes profits through keeping the cost of labor low and having a stable supply of labor force all the time. Obviously, empowered by the capital, contemporary China's state development has enlisted rural children to this reserve army, besides adult migrant workers. On the one hand, the cost of urbanization and industrialization can be effectively lowered through refusing providing rural-hukou children with access to education and other social services. Forced family breakup makes migrant workers accept living in factory dorms and leaving children behind in the countryside instead of seeking affordable family housing, which is supposed to be provided by government. On the other hand, a large amount of poorly educated children will become the stable source of cheap migrant labor. At the point, the

family breakup of rural migrants becomes one of the secret weapons of Chinese economic miracle, which is famous for supplying the whole world with cheap products. Family breakup is definitely not cost-free and we have seen enough evidence in the previous section. Particularly, the cost of family breakup is completely put on the shoulder of rural migrants and their children. In sum, even though the truth is that Chinese rural migrants can make better income in the city for now, in terms of obtaining upward social mobility and having a normal family life, they and their children have never been emancipated from the exploitation and oppression of the state and capital, not to mention escaping from poverty.

3. Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the debate on left-behind children, pointing out that the debate is centered by an argument that if the form of family life can be redefined. For scholars who believe that the nuclear family is not supposed to be the sole form of family life in the entire human society, extended family might be a better explanation. Therefore, based on this line of scholarship, parental care can be provided through communication tools virtually and it is not always necessary for children to live with their parents. I examined the plight of children of rural-hukou migrants in China and challenged this explanation of family breakup. . In the Chinese case, it is the rural-urban dual system that has created an army of left-behind children. Using Beijing and Shanghai as examples, we can see that there are at least two million children who are not living with their parents because of city's education policy. I suggest that at least in China, family-break up is not voluntary. Instead, it is forced and children are forced to separate from their parents because they are considered as extra burden by the city. Without parental care

and quality education, many left-behind children became victims of crimes in rural China. I contend that for scholars who believe that leaving children behind in the countryside is kind of smart household strategy for economic return, their argument fails to recognize that the strategy might be too risky for children and the cost could be very high. “Extended family” as a strategy does not work in China. The examples used in the context analysis have shown that grandparents have difficulties when taking care of their grandchildren and modern communication tools failed to prevent the tragedies from happening. Family-breakup has also presented us a new form of poverty, which is caused by China’s rural-urban dual system.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

A few years ago, after I presented my paper in a session at the AAG annual conference, one of the discussants explicitly expressed her doubt about my point that poverty in China was still a serious problem deserving more scholarly attention. She commented that poverty was no longer a big problem in China because rural-urban migrants were considerably better off than they used to be and there were data that could show their income was close or even equal to that of average urbanites in China's major metropolitan areas. Later, when one of China's leading development economists was visiting the Jackson School at the UW, I went to his class, asking for his insights on the same issue. Interestingly, he was quite surprised by my research. He also believed that poverty in the countryside was not a problem anymore because farmers could go to city to find jobs and make more money. In other words, cityward migration has solved the problem of rural poverty. As result, they doubted if poverty was still a topic deserving much scholarly attention.

The basic argument is that migration can effectively reduce poverty and China has provided such an example of success. It is just that simple. There is a large body of literature that argues that China's migration has successfully reduced poverty for not only migrants themselves but also their family members living in rural areas (see Zhang 2004, Du et. al. 2005, Deshingkar 2006, and Meng et. al. 2010). Ironically, at the same time when many have claimed that poverty has been greatly reduced through rural-urban migration, there also is a rich body of literature that extensively points to the increasing rural-urban inequality (see Kanbur and Zhang 1999, Khan and Riskin 2001, Sicular et. al. 2007, and Li et. al. 2013). The paradox here is evident: when the rural-urban inequality (primarily in terms of income) keeps increasing every year and the

majority of poor population lives in rural areas, how has poverty been effectively reduced through rural-urban migration? There is a contradiction in these conclusions?

I have to admit that I was confused for a while, caught between two opposite lines of arguments. Survey data shows that rural migrant workers can make more money in the city and the quality of life in the countryside has been improved because of the extra income generated through rural-urban migration. Survey data also have shown that rural households that have migrant workers are better off than those households that have no members migrating to the city for work. Some scholars collected longitudinal data to analyze how migration had impacted rural life and concluded that migration had significantly reduced rural poverty. When the news of rural migrant workers appear in the media, it is not unusual that they are sometimes portrayed as one who can easily make more money than urban white-collar professionals²⁴. Consequently, it is very common that the governments in the poor rural areas would encourage farmers to migrate to the east coastal areas for work.

I was not sure how to proceed until I noticed the education predicament of rural-hukou migrant children in China's major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. When studying rural-urban migration in China, few scholars have treated rural-hukou children as an important population because obviously children are only the dependents of the adult migrants. As a result, usually they are not separated from adult migrants in the mainstream of migration literature. Even though there are many scholars who are interested in studying rural-hukou children, generally those children are portrayed as the victims of the urban-biased policy, i.e.,

²⁴ Three years ago, a construction worker made the front page for making seven thousand Chinese Yuan per month. It was a salary that even raised eyebrows among many white-collars at that time. The original story can be found at <http://finance.people.com.cn/n/2012/1203/c1004-19773929.html>

hukou, only. Treating rural-hukou children as a crucial role in interpreting Chinese development has been less common in the literature. What lies in the heart of China's problem of rural children? What makes the life of the rural children so hard? What is the relationship between the plight of rural children and contemporary Chinese development? When market is commonly blamed for the plight of migrant workers, is there anything else behind the crisis of rural children since they are not in the labor market yet? What will be the consequences of such a problem of rural children? What is the relationship between rural children and China's poverty reduction? Questions like these, however, remain largely unanswered in the literature. I maintain that the study of rural children could provide us with a key to understanding the nature of Chinese development.

In short, the contribution I can make to the migration literature is examining the plight of rural-hukou children (i.e., migrant children in the city and left-behind children in the countryside) through a rural-urban dual system perspective. In the literature, generally the issue of migrant children and left-behind children are categorized as two separate groups. The dual system perspective links the two sides of the same coin, a product of Chinese development. Specifically, instead of looking at just the income, the analytical framework I used, extended from Chan (1994, 1999, 2009 and 2014), Solinger (1999), and Wu (2011), interprets the relationship between rural-urban migration and the role of rural-hukou children in the context of Chinese development. The focus of my dissertation is on the persisting dual system in China, which underlies the plight of the children of rural-hukou migrants. I maintain that without placing the dual system at the center of the debate on the lived experience of rural children, one will not be able correctly interpret what is really happening to those rural children, let alone understanding why rural children have

to suffer so much. Particularly, without realizing how the dual system has been refashioned in the past three decades after 1978, one will not be able to fully understand why rural children are deprived of upward social mobility even though rural-urban migrants have had more cash in their pockets. In other words, for Chinese farmers, while migration can be seen as a means of escaping from poverty, under the dual system, the lack of social mobility of their children will inevitably drag them back to poverty again in the future. Stated simply, it is the dual system perspective that has enabled me to connect the fate of migrant workers with that of their children.

Furthermore, it becomes clear that a better understanding of China's rural-urban migration and the plight of rural children has to be based on the study of Chinese development since the 1950s. In addition, without the help of the dual system, China's market economy cannot be that successful. But for the Chinese migrant workers, they are exploited and oppressed by not only the capital but also the state. With a persisting dual system functioning, poverty reduction will be just a dream when migrant workers inevitably become old and their children can only inherit the same life path of their parents.

1. Summary of Major Findings

As we have discussed in the previous chapters, based on the work of some scholars, the rural-urban gap in China might be one of the largest ones in the whole world. And the gap, in terms of income, education, quality of income, etc., keeps increasing every year even though the Chinese Communist Party and central government have been promoting a "harmonious society" and advocating a "rural-urban integration" policy for a while. How about the rural-urban relations in traditional Chinese society? For how long has the Chinese society been so divided that rural-

hukou people are treated as second-class citizens and are deprived of basic rights of human development, especially rural-hukou children? In this study, I have answered these questions by showing that the rural-urban dual system is not a Chinese tradition. Instead, it was imported from the Soviet Union in the 1950s to be China's state development strategy. To understand the evolution of Chinese development, one has to look at the Soviet root of Chinese development. It is noteworthy that in the history of the Soviet Union, even though the rural-urban dual system was used as the state development strategy for the purpose of facilitating industrialization under Stalin, the system eventually became relatively lax when industrialization was accomplished and the demand for labor was high in the city. The system lasted till the 1970s in the Soviet Union and rural population only made up a smaller portion of the total population at that time (Census Bureau 1991). The Chinese version of rural-urban dual system, however, continued and eventually evolved into a special mega dual system separating city and countryside for decades.

It is common that China scholars and observers are more interested in what has happened after the 1978 Reform and the impact of the post-1978 market reform. For example, the plight of Chinese migrant workers has been widely attributed with the global expansion of neoliberalism. The critical role of the rural-urban dual system, however, has generally been overlooked by many. We also need to know what has created such an army of migrants for international capital, what has taken away universally acknowledged labor rights such as forming independent union and the right to strike, and what has disallowed rural migrant workers to settle in the city. These are things that capital is not able to do directly, but the dual system can.

After we have identified the roots of contemporary Chinese development strategy, one of the key findings in this study is the persistence of rural-urban dual system after the 1978 Reform and the consequences. I made three points regarding the Chinese development after the reform. First, exploiting rural migrants has been the foundation of development strategy since the 1950s. After the 1978 Reform, even though farmers were allowed to run Township and Village Enterprises, they were not allowed to leave the countryside. After 1984, when farmers were finally allowed to seek urban employment opportunities, they have never been allowed to freely settle in the city since then. When the global financial crisis happened during the period of 2007 and 2008, twenty million migrant workers just went back to the countryside quietly. There was no large-scale urban riot or demonstrations reported by Chinese or international media. For the state and capital, migrant workers are just pure labor force. Second, I argue that the role of the collective land ownership in the countryside cannot be ignored in interpreting the persistence of rural-urban dual system in China. Under the Chinese land law, there is no private land ownership. Instead, while urban land officially belongs to the state, rural land belongs to rural collectives. As a result, individual farmers have no legal rights to sell their land. The collective land ownership actually works as a stabilizer for the Chinese urban economy: when urban economy declines and unemployment rate is high, migrant workers will automatically go back to the countryside and wait for the recovery of economy. Former Premier Wen Jiabao once made it clear when speaking to the *Financial Times* when global economy was hit by the 2007-2008 Financial Crisis: migrant workers could just go back to the countryside and farm their land to make a living. Third, I argue that the hukou system is one of the most important tools that have buttressed the persistence of the dual system. As Chan (2008 and 2009) have pointed out, even though the hukou system has

been reformed many times, the basic functions associated with the system remain the same, especially in major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

It is well-known that education is the key to human development. But education policy also could be biased. As an important component in the Chinese rural-urban dual system, the national education system plays a crucial role in the persistence of dual system. I argue that China actually has two education systems under one government: an urban education system and a rural education system. Urban education system was supposed to support industrialization through teaching science and technology, and rural education system was required to educate “new farmers” who were able to make contribution to agriculture. Under such an education system, there were two options for rural students in general: either be selected by urban high learning system or to stay put in the countryside and be a farmer forever while the urban education was the highest priority in the national education system, the decline of rural education system was inevitable. While many scholars assume that admitting more rural students to higher learning institutions is equivalent to narrowing down the rural-urban gap, my analysis shows that it is just a “cherry-picking” strategy, which is not helpful to rural development for the majority of rural children, they are tied to the countryside and this exactly is what the dual education system was designed for.

Many China observers and scholars have noticed such a paradox: on the one hand, Chinese central government has promised that the dual system will be reformed and rural-urban gap will be eliminated soon. On the other hand, to a great extent, local governments, especially those of major cities, have the freedom of making decisions upon hukou-related issues and are quite

reluctant to reform the hukou system (see e.g., Goodburn 2009). It is worth noting that when doing so, local governments are not without legal foundation. Interestingly, in the central government documents that openly advocate hukou reform, there are always “back doors” that local government can use to take care of their interests. For example, in 2014, while the State Council explicitly stipulated “further reform on the hukou system” and “facilitating the transfer of agricultural population to urban population” in the city, governments of major cities were also authorized to strictly control the growth population. The paradox is not about who is good (e.g., the party and central government) and who is bad (e.g., local governments). Instead, it is embedded in the China’s long time central-local relations. Based on his research on the central-local relations and administrative mechanism in China, from a quite unique perspective, Zhou (2014) suggests that for the purpose of promoting economic growth, Chinese central government has been “subcontracting” its administrative functions to local governments. Zhou points out that in ancient China, central government had to rely on local governments to control its broad territory and population. Therefore, as return to their loyalty to the central government, local government officials were granted great freedoms in local governance. In contemporary China, the logic of conventional governance has been inherited from the historical dynasties. To assure that local government officials are loyal to the ruling party and central government, the latter strictly controls them through putting a tight control over the channel of personnel promotion. At the same time, local government officials are allowed to deal with local affairs according to their economic interests. Consequently, as local officials are under the absolute political control of central government and are required to demonstrate their absolute loyalty to the party and central government, their local interest is guaranteed by the party and central government. In my analysis of the internal “immigration” system implemented in Beijing and Shanghai, it is clear

that both the residence certificate system and the point system are products of that kind of localized “Chinese characteristics”. When making policies, local government enjoys great freedoms of setting up barriers against migrants through so-called “attracting the talented” policy. At the same time, ignoring the presence and needs of millions of migrants in the city, education authority in the major cities has kept closing elementary schools because the population of local-hukou students has been declining for years. As a result, many people believe that the city has only limited educational resources and therefore there is no way to accept all non-hukou children. The fact, however, is that Chinese national education system is still based on a rural-urban divide and is not ready for an era of great migration. The data analysis in this dissertation shows that Shanghai used to be more open than Beijing, in terms of educating non-hukou children. In recent years, however, following Beijing’s harsh policy, Shanghai has turned its back to the non-hukou children²⁵.

In sum, the answer to the question why it is so hard for migrant children to enroll in public school lies in the implementation of rural-urban dual system, which serves as the foundation of Chinese development, and other “Chinese characteristics”. In other words, even though the hukou has been under reform for a while, migrants and their children are still considered “outsiders” by the city. At issue is not how hukou can be reformed. Instead, it is the dual system working as the invisible walls creating injustice across the country.

In this study, I documented that left-behind children in the countryside are much the product of China’s “incomplete urbanization”, a result of China’s development strategy (Chan 2010).

²⁵ A recent *The Economist* article reveals that in the past few years, between 50,000 – 80,000 migrant children left the city involuntarily. Based on the information from media and my informants, Shanghai’s school enrollment policy has become increasingly strict since 2013.

Furthermore, it is the rural-urban dual system as the foundation of state development that leads to the formation of such a special group. I argue that when children are left behind by their parents, families are broken up. And this is a large hidden cost farmers are paying for the country's economic "miracle". Family-breakup is a form of poverty rather than a strategy of economic rationality. Will left-behind children have a better future than their parents? While their parents just received limited education in the countryside, there is little evidence showing rural-hukou children could have better opportunities in a knowledge-based economy. Under the double exploitation and oppression by the state and capital, Chinese migrant workers have formed the largest reserve army of labor in the world. Their children will likely follow the same life path of their parents and become next generation of cheap labor.

The Chinese development, though considered by many as a successful model for developing countries, is generally based on the double exploitation and oppression of farmers, presenting a example of urban-biased development to the world. As Lipton (1977) has pointed out, this bias is deeply embedded in the power structure of those countries promoting development through sacrificing the interest of countryside. In the Chinese case, even though farmers make up a big portion of Chinese population, they are politically powerless and are not able to protect them from urban-biased development. Of course, this is not the end of the story. How long could this biased development strategy survive? How long can the exploitation and oppression-based Chinese economic miracle last? When the first generation of migrants unconditionally took whatever city government offers, how the next generation will respond remains unknown.

2. Limitations and Future Research

There are some shortcomings in this study. Generally speaking, besides secondary data, I will need more ethnographic data and analysis to make my findings and arguments stronger. For example, even though I have noticed the role of collective land ownership in the persistence of rural-urban dual system, more empirical evidence is needed to show how it really works. Although I used to be a rural land use planner for almost a decade, the function of collective land ownership is still unclear to me. In other words, with more compelling first-hand data, my argument will be better supported. I also have paid attention to the rural education system. Particularly, I argue that the double-goal of rural education system is conducting “cherry-picking” for the state on the one hand and preventing the majority of rural children from leaving the countryside on the other. Such a criticism definitely will be more powerful and convincing if there are more first-hand ethnographic data collected. Therefore, in the future I would like to conduct field work to study those children who are not selected by the urban higher learning system. In other words, though I believe that admitting more rural students to higher learning institutions will not help countryside much and only a “complete” urbanization based on balanced development between city and countryside will be the ultimate solution (Chan 2014), I will need more data and time to study the relationship between dual education system and rural development in China. In addition, in doing this research, the information I collected through social media, though abundant and useful, was scattered in general. Therefore, for a systematic study of the children of rural-hukou migrants, in the future I also will need to conduct more ethnographic work in the future.

In recent years, more and more scholars are studying how the rural-urban migration with “Chinese characteristics” is changing Chinese urban politics (Friedman 2014, Wallace 2014). This line of scholarship is different from the traditional labor studies in that it combines China’s internal factors into account: socialist ideology and the Stalinist-Maoist development strategy. Besides continuing the current research work, I am also interested in interpreting the role of rural-hukou children in the political transformation of Chinese society.

In a word, I suggest that migrants and their children are not just victims in the city. Rather, they have been actively and openly fighting for their legal rights to quality education. I see that migrants and children are resisting the dual system through four main approaches: 1. attending school to get educated; 2. knowledge production; 3. Joining hands with open-minded urban intellectual and social activists, and 4. taking legal actions. Even though it has been harder and harder for migrant children, especially rural-hukou children, to enroll in public school in major cities, many migrants are doing their best to get children educated. “School for migrant children”, though poorly funded, is a symbol of resistance to the dual system. Migrants are also empowering themselves through knowledge creation. A few years ago, a fifteen-year old girl Zhan Haite, who had no Shanghai hukou, made a front page story on international media by bravely protesting hukou-based discrimination in Shanghai’s *People Square* (Diplomat Dec19, 2012). After the incident, discussions regarding the meaning of “tax payer” and “citizenship” surged on the Chinese internet. At that time, many migrants started calling themselves “citizens” and “tax payers” who were supposed to be treated equally. At the same time, more and more public intellectuals have involved in helping migrant children, openly criticizing the education authorities in Beijing and Shanghai. In 2015, unprecedentedly, eight migrants, including both

rural hukou migrants and urban hukou migrants, filed a lawsuit in Beijing against city's Education Commission. Even though they lost the lawsuit eventually, it was a groundbreaking moment for many migrants who were struggling for their children's future because no one else had ever sued such a symbol of power in the capital city before.

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Appendix A: The Point System Implemented in Shanghai

Details for Implementation of Shanghai Certificate of Residence Based Point System					
Standard Points (up to 120 points)					
Age	56-60	55-44	43 and younger		
Point	5	2 points for each year younger	30		
Education	Associate	Four-year College	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
Point	50	60	90	100	110
Career Rank	rank 5	rank 4	rank 3	rank 2 or middle level	rank 1 or advanced
Point	15	30	60	100	140
Social Security Tax					
Point	3 points / year				
Bonus Points					
Mjaor in Need, to be determined by the city					
Point	30				
Investment					
Point	10 points for every 100,000 yuan paid in tax or one Shahgi hukou holder hired				
Social Security	Income 80% -100% higher		Income 100%-200% higher		Income 200% and up
Point	20		50		100
Public Service					
Point	4 / per year after continous service of 5 years				
Service in Remote Areas					
Point	2/ per year after continous service of 5 years, up to 20 points				
University Graduate of the Year of Graduation					
Point	10				
Award	Industrial	Comprehensive	Province and up		
Point	30	60	110		
Spouse as Shanghai Hukou Holder					
Point	4/per year, up to 40 points				
Deduction					
Fake Materials					
Point	-150	(each time in 3 years)			
Detention					
Point	-50	(in 5 years)			
Criminal Record					
Point	-150	(in 3 years)			
Condition of Denial					
Volation of the Planned Birth Policy, or					
Serious Criminal Charge					

VITA

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