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*Authoritarian Deliberation Revisited: What Does It Mean for  
Our Understanding of Democratic Governance?*

**Educational Inequality in China: The Implementation of  
China's 'New-Type Urbanisation Plan' to Reduce  
Educational Inequality of Migrant Children in Changsha**

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## **Abstract**

Since the economic reform started in the late 1970s, China has greatly upgraded its economic structure, and profound changes have taken place in China's society. During the past three decades, more than 200 million *rural migrant workers (nonminggong)* have migrated to cities for a living (NBS, 2012). This large-scale, persistent, internal migration phenomenon is one of the main drivers of China's economic growth. It is also one of the main manifestations of the urbanisation process in this country (NBS, 2012). However, rural migrant workers have found that settling down and assimilating to the cities can be very challenging for them (Zhu, 2007). Among all the social problems that have been brought by internal migration in China and the difficulties migrants have encountered in their integration process, the problems of rural migrant children to gain access to education in cities have attracted extensive attention not only from the government, but also from the social media, scholars, and have even stimulated public protests in China. Along with the increasing migrant population, the development of citizenship and perceptions of it, a fast-developing civil society, especially the growing collective action and louder voice for better conditions of migrant workers, have emerged. Because the position of the Chinese Communist Party and its direct control over key areas in the country remains unchallenged, China looks like a huge monolithic one-party-state to an outsider. Yet there are spaces left for democratic activities within an authoritarian setting. China's highly decentralized government system, the variegated policy behaviour of state actors, and complicated relationships between governmental and non-governmental actors, are examples of such potential spaces for the democratic activities.

## **Introduction**

This research is about educational inequality in China. The research question is how governments in different levels deal with educational inequality experienced by migrant children in China. Educational inequality in China manifests itself as that nowadays many migrant children have experienced difficulties in gaining access to education in cities in China due to the educational laws/policies in China have tied children's school enrolment with their residence, specifying that the possession of an accommodation in certain areas is required when applying to schools in respective districts (Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress, 1986). The housing situation of migrant families therefore has been connected with the educational problems experienced by rural migrant children. As educational inequality indirect is in conflict with key values of Communist state, the Chinese Communist Party decided that it cannot be tolerated. Also, educational inequality has led to irruption of protest in various cities. In this paper, I will look at how local governments in China implement central policies in local level to address the educational inequality experienced by migrant children. This paper has following structure: educational inequality in China, education system and *hukou* system in China, public reaction to the educational inequality problem (especially migrant parents), reaction of governments on different level, the practical situation in the case city, and the analysis of research data. I will use theories of policy implementation to analyse data, adopting an interpretivist strategy, drawing on semi-structured interviews, direct observations, review of documentation and archival records. It is designed as a case study of Changsha city. Qualitative interviews, direct observations, review of documentation and archival records will be the main sources of evidence in my study to support the research conclusion.

### **1. Manifestation of Educational Inequality in China**

As stated in the *Annual Survey of Migrant Workers (2015)* conducted by *National Bureau of Statistics*, the number of rural migrant workers (labourers with a rural household registration, i.e. *hukou*, employed in urban workplace. They work or/and live in cities, yet remain classified as rural migrants due to the inflexibility of the household registration system) in China has climbed to 274 million in 2014 (National Bureau of Statistics of the PRC, 2015). When they are extensively needed for economic development in most major cities in China, they do not enjoy equal rights with urban residents. Specifically, according to statistics, 234 million migrant workers (overall 274 million migrant workers in 2014) and their accompanying families have not been able to enjoy equal basic public service with urban residents on education, employment, medical care, pension, affordable housing and other aspects (Central government portal, 2014). As a disadvantaged group in China's urban society, the way that the migrant population has been treated on education and residence issue has shown the existence of injustice in both policies and practices.

Since the first version of *The Law of Compulsory Education in the People's Republic of China* was enacted in 1986, the principle of *Entering Nearby School* has been adopted. The target group of this law are students within the stage of compulsory education (primary education and secondary education). The *Entering Nearby School* principal in the compulsory education law has implied that school attendance of children in China is strictly restrained by their *hukou* status, registered permanent residence, and their living address (The Fourth Meeting of the Sixth National People's Congress, 1986). Currently, the local governments of areas where those migrant children went to accept compulsory education are responsible for education provision of those migrant children, instead of governments of areas where those migrant children registered their *hukou* initially (The Twentieth Meeting of the Tenth National People's Congress, 2006). The rigid binding among these three aspects has been loosened but not

eliminated in the second (also the current) version of *The Law of Compulsory Education Law* in China, which was issued in 2006, and is partially responsible for the educational inequality experienced by migrant children.

According to a report made by *All-China Women's Federation* (2005), there were at least 35.81 million *rural migrant children (liudongertong)* accompanying their parents (migrant workers) come to cities, but accepting education in cities remains an intractable problem for most of them. Most rural migrant workers consider their children's enrollment into local public schools difficult for several reasons, such as too complicated procedures of enrollment, demanding evidentiary materials required for migration children to enroll into public schools in cities, high sponsorship fee some schools require from migrant students (The Central Research Institute of Education Science, 2008). In addition, many migrant students have been found getting educated in schools with poor infrastructure, incompetent teachers, and poor traffic condition. Some migrant students have been reported discriminated by others in local public schools, when their counterparts in cities are competing for seats in elite schools with much more advanced infrastructure and teaching resources (Zhou and Ma, 2015).

## **2. Basic Overview of Education System and *Hukou* system in China**

### **2.1 Comparison between Public and Private Schools**

According to *The Educational Law of the People's Republic of China*, the Chinese education system can be divided into five parts: *Pre-school Education*, *Basic Education (Elementary Education)*, *Secondary Education*, *Higher Education* or *Vocational and Technical Education*, and *Adult Education* (Ministry of Education of the people's Republic of China, 1995). Compulsory education stage in China is consists of primary education and secondary education. They are both free of charge in public education system (Xinyu, 2009). This research will be mainly limited to the discussion of situation within the compulsory education stage.

Because firstly, the school attendance within this stage is tied up with the *hukou* system (household registration system) and residence of students in China. Secondly, providing basic education to all children within certain scope of jurisdiction is one of most important responsibilities to local governments on all levels in China (Ministry of Education of the people's Republic of China, 1995). Whether government could distribute educational opportunities and allocate educational resources evenly to all groups of children in society is a key issue discussed under the framework of social justice (Goodburn, 2009; Fan, 2010). It is through these three conditions, admission age, residence address, and *hukou* status, to allocate and decide which primary/middle school a student could attend within basic education stage. Enrolment in high schools and universities/colleges, on the other hand, is decided through examinations testing students' ability and intelligence (Xinyu, 2009).

When most schools in China are public schools, the number of private schools is significantly lower. Public schools in China are supported by the government financially. It has been stated in *Compulsory Education Law* (2006) in China that the compulsory education funds are fully covered within the scope of national budget, while local governments at various levels contribute to the national budget through tuning in revenue to the central government every year. Specifically, the State Council and local governments in China are required to lay the compulsory education funds into their budget in advance, and appropriate the funds to public schools in full and in time. The amount of funds is decided on the basis of standards for teaching and administrative staff arrangement register, wages, school construction, and average amount of funds per student etc. The funds from the State Council and local governments are used to ensure normal operation of schools, safety of schoolhouse, and the payment of teaching and administrative staff's wages as required by the *Compulsory Education Law*.

Private schools, however, are supported by non-governmental organisations or individuals. As stated in *Private Education Promotion Law* (2002) in China, it is suggested that the local governments in various levels should take the development of private school education into the *National Economic and Social Development Plan*, while the administrative department of education under the State Council takes the responsibility of overall planning and macro-management of private school education work. On the one hand, there is no compulsory requirement of funds from the government to support private schools in law; on the other hand, according to the *Private Education Promotion Law* (2002), private schools in China are entitled to enjoy preferential tax policies and preferential policies on land use/construction for public utilities.

## **2.2 Emergence of Migrant Schools**

When the migration pattern for migrant workers had shifted from 'migrating to cities oneself' to 'migrating to cities with whole family' in 1980s, the education problem of migrant children firstly emerged in China (Zhou and Ma, 2015). Initially, due to the number of migrant workers and migrant children in cities were not as much as today, there were still enough places for migrant children in public schools and private schools in urban area. In 1990s, with increasing number of migrant children, public and private schools in cities no longer have enough capacity for all migrant children. Therefore, migrant schools, as one type of private schools, had emerged and been accepted limitedly by the state in China (Zhou and Ma, 2015).

In the first place, migrant schools are constructed by migrant workers themselves, under the circumstances that public schools in cities refuse to take migrant children, or migrant parents cannot afford sponsorship fee required by public schools (it is an extra fee required from students whose *hukou* are not registered within the same administrative district with the schools they apply). The migrant

school has another name, 'simple and easy school', since most of them cannot hit the accreditation criterion set for private schools. Many migrant schools are actually illegal schools with substandard safety, sanitation, diet and other basic school conditions. These disapproved migrant schools, on the other hand, have brought difficulties on management to local education department (Kwong, 2004). Specifically, as migrant children are not as stable as local students in terms of residence (they might need to move to another place with their migrant worker parents once their parents changed job or residence). Therefore, they have higher likelihood to transfer to another school. This temporality and variety of school choice could disrupt regular order of school management in most cases (The Ministry of Financial Science Institute, 2012).

### **2.3 *Hukou* system in Educational Inequality**

As a system initially designed for controlling the flow of population in China since 1958, it has resulted in many unintended negative consequences in terms of inequality (Bie, 2013). It has divided citizens into urban population and rural population, according to people's birthplace, with the imbalanced development between cities and rural areas, the *hukou* system has caused huge disparities of social welfare and rights between urban and rural population (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Literature Research, 1995, cited in Bie, 2013, p. 80; Cheng and Selden, 1994). Hereafter, social welfare, especially social security and children's education, have become more and more dependent on non-rural *hukou* (Bei, 2013). Such *hukou*-social welfare dependent mechanism has worsened educational inequality for migrant children. It also undermined social justice in other crucial welfare-related rights and schemes between people possessing an urban *hukou* and those who possess a rural *hukou*.

## **3. How Has the Educational Inequality Problem Been Responded?**



The emergence of large numbers of migrant children has resulted in serious problems and challenges for various levels of the educational administration in China's government (Liang and Chen, 2007). As a result, in 2010, nearly 61 million children have been left at home in rural areas, separated with their parents who work in cities, becoming *leftover children* (The All-China Women's Federation, 2013). 'Leftover children' are defined as children under 18 years' old who cannot follow their parents working in cities and far from home, and are left home, educated and taken care by substitute guardians or themselves (Liu, 2008). The education problem of rural migrant children hereafter has become a pressing issue attracting extensive attention from the public and the Chinese government (Zai and Yiu, 2005).

### **3.1 Reaction of the Public**

The education problem has been considered far from resolved from the perspective of the public, especially migrant workers. As mentioned earlier, accessing to local public schools in cities for migrant children faces several challenges, while attending to private schools in cities financially demands more from migrant families. In some extreme cases reported by mass media, there have been public protests established by migrant groups, as shown in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3. The migrant schools their children enrolled into had been compulsively demolished by the government few days before starting date without giving any announcements to students and parents in advance (Wangyi News, 2011). The demolition of migrant schools has made migrant parents consider themselves as 'abandoned groups' (by the society and the government), as reported in mass media (IFENG, 2011).



Figure 1. Migrant parents protesting by lying on the ground in front of the demolished migrant school

Reference source: <http://news.163.com/photoview/00AP0001/17058.html#p=7BIK52PC00AP0001>



Figure 2. Migrant parents found no place to safeguard their rights

Reference source: <http://news.163.com/photoview/00AP0001/17058.html#p=7BIK5PKB00AP0001>



Figure 3. Migrant children standing in front of the demolished migrant school he was supposed to go.

Reference source: <http://news.163.com/photoview/00AP0001/17058.html#p=7BIK5T5500AP0001>

## 3.2 Reaction of Governments

### 3.2.1 The Central Government Issue Policy on National Level

Since the education of migrant children has become a social problem in 1980s, it received a series of public responses. The central government has started working on the formation of laws in guarantee the educational rights of migrant children and improving educational equality in China. The state promulgated a series of policies, regulations, and laws to address this education problem, including *Temporary Measures for Floating Children or Adolescents in Schooling* (1998), *The Decision on the Foundation Education Reform and Development of State Council* (2001), *The Suggestions on Further Work on Education of Migrant Children* (2003), *The Notification of the State Council on Deepening the Reform of Rural Compulsory Education Funds Safeguard Mechanism* (2005), the new version of *The Compulsory-Education Law* (2006).

From the perspective of the state and politicians working in government in China, the education problem of migrant children is not only a social problem that ties with countless households and individuals anymore, but also a political problem associated with national development and social harmony (Zhou and Ma, 2015). After 2006, the state has made 'educational equality' a basic social value, made the national urban and rural compulsory education free of charge, and included rural migrant children in *Compulsory Education System* in China (Zhou and Ma, 2015). After 2010, the education problem of migrant children has been connected with strategies on national urbanisation and urban-rural integration (Zhou and Ma, 2015). Moreover, *The National Medium and Long-term Plan for Education Reform and Development from 2010-2020* (2010) has explicitly raised the education problem of migrant children to the level of national coordinative development.

Meanwhile, after the *Chinese Economic Reform* (refers to the programme of *Socialism with Chinese characteristics*) and *Opening-up Policy* promulgated in 1978, with expedited development of industrialization in China, urbanization in China has experienced a fast-developing process from a low beginning point. Sharp contradictions and problems also emerged in the process of urbanization (Central government portal, 2014). It has been noted and concerned by the central government in China that there is a large number of rural migrant population has experienced various difficulties, trying to integrate into urban society. Educational inequality is one of pressing problems need to be addressed. Aiming at this situation, in 16<sup>th</sup> March 2014, CPC Central Committee and the State Council in China have promulgated a document that strikes up the largest social reform since the establishment of New China, *New-Type Urbanisation Plan from 2014 to 2020* (Central government portal, 2014).

As is the first planning program released jointly by the Party Central Committee and the State Council of China. It shows that the state pays high attention to urbanisation progress along with its problem. In China, 'urbanisation' is considered a social project that is cooperated and participated by four main bodies: the government, the enterprise, the resident, and think tank (not sure who they work for). It is believed by the government that the only way of proceeding urbanisation process smoothly in China is to let the market plays the decisive role in allocating resources, under the guide of the government, cooperating with other three main bodies (Li *et al.*, 2016).

This programme intends to carry out the *hukou* system reform, and achieve equalization of basic public service at the same time (Central government portal, 2014). In order to help migrant groups to integrate into cities; enable them access to urban basic public services and rights; and complete citizenization of migrants in cities by 2020, the programme has made plans in following aspects (2014): firstly, differentiate *hukou* settling policy among small towns, medium-sized city, and megacities (it suggests relaxing the conditions required for *hukou* settling in middle-large cities; and eliminating the conditions for *hukou* settling in small towns. Meanwhile, the unification of urban-rural household registration system is considered as an important purpose of *hukou* system reform. Through implementing *residential certificate system*, basic public services that were dependent on urban *hukou* status are expected been brought to migrant workers without an urban *hukou*); secondly, guarantee migrant children's rights of accepting compulsory education equally with urban local children (it was suggested that migrant children's education should be covered in local governments' education development plan and financial security. Meanwhile, when migrant children cannot be enrolled into public schools, government's purchase of service will be adopted to assure migrant children's educational rights through providing education in inclusive private schools); and broaden channel of

housing security for migrants (it was suggested that living conditions of migrant workers should be improved through giving them access to low-rent housing, public renting housing, and rental subsidies).

### **3.2.2 Local Governments Implement National Policies on Local Level**

Even though the central government has most authority and control in policy-formation at the national level, it has limited influence on decision-making and policy implementation on local level. While the central government have authority to command officials in local governments to implement their policies, local governments still have a certain degree of autonomy to make regulations, and implement policies on local level on the basis of their specific situation. Street level servants in local governments have a certain degree of discretion on how to interpret the policy on local level and adopt specific strategies to cope with citizens. Their discretion, however, is constrained by external factors including laws, policies, regulations, moral etc., and the limits are differentiated according to particular situation in China's context.

Theoretically, suggestions mentioned in *New-Type Urbanisation Plan* could help reducing educational inequality and injustice in residence problem between migrant population and local population. Yet whether or to what extent these programme and policies would help address education and housing issues of migrants; and to what extent could this programme reduce inequality in education enrolment mechanism for migrant children in practice remain unknown. Therefore, it made this implementation study necessary. In the next section, I would like to introduce the case in China using theories of *policy implementation*, borrowing basic concepts in implementation study from scholars like DeLeon (1999), Ferman (1990), Michael and Peter (2002).

## **4 Analysis of Policy Implementation Process in the Case City**

#### **4.1 Brief Introduction of Hunan Province**

Before the *implementation analysis* of the case to find out what happens between policy expectations and perceived policy results (DeLeon, 1999a: 314-15, paraphrasing Ferman, 1990: 39) in *New-Type Urbanisation* in Changsha, I'd like to introduce the case city first briefly. My research is based on Changsha city, the provincial capital of Hunan province. Hunan province is located at the south central China, where its economic development is relatively hysteretic compared with mega cities like Beijing, Shanghai and coastal cities at southeast coastal areas of China. Yet it has sufficient labour resources, which enables it export labour power to other cities out of Hunan province on a large scale, especially to Guangdong and other southeast coastal cities. However, with it undertaking industrial gradient transfer from eastern areas of China, the speed of backflow of the migrant workers (it means migrant workers coming back to their hometown) in Hunan keeps climbing (Li *et al.*, 2016). The total area of Hunan province is 2,118,000 square kilometres, including 13 prefecture-level cities, one autonomous prefecture, 122 counties, 2151 villages and towns, 361 sub-district offices, and 4152 communities. The total number of people in Hunan province is around 707,900 million, with 663,893 million people being permanent residents, 354,187 million people as rural population, and 300,00 million rural transferring labours which is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in China's provinces (Li *et al.*, 2016).

#### **4.2 Brief Introduction of Changsha City**

Changsha, as its provincial capital, has total area around 11,800 square kilometres, with around 7.43 million permanent residents, and permanent resident urbanization rate being 74.38% (Changsha statistic yearbook, 2015). In Hunan's rural transferring labours, 70% of them getting non-agricultural work in other provinces, concentrating at Pearl River Delta area, Yangtze River Delta area, Beijing-Tianjin area and other areas, while 30% of them getting non-agricultural work within Hunan province. However, the number of rural transferring labours

who stay in Hunan province is climbing while the number of rural transferring labours who go to other provinces declining (Li *et al.*, 2016).

Under the context of *New Type Urbanisation*, from “rural migrants” to “agricultural migrating population”, the concept of “agricultural migrating population” has been more explicit. Cost Prediction and Sharing Mechanism Research Group about Urbanisation of Agricultural Migrating Population in Changsha has made specific definition of this group: those rural labours whose primary activities was agricultural, but gave up agricultural activities and live in multi-business in the process of transferring to the secondary and the tertiary industry due to specific needs (e.g. improving living condition, raising family income, going and seeking refuge with friends or relatives and so on). Under certain condition, it includes children of migrant workers or elderly of migrant workers in need of provide. Therefore, the concept of *agricultural migrating population* is richer than the concept of *migrant workers*.

#### **4.3 Different Interests Under the Common Goal**

In the implementation process of *New-Type Urbanisation Plan* in Changsha, there are actors involved: the central government is acting as policy formulator (officials in the central government as decision-maker), while local governments (and street level servants/officials in local governments), local public/migrant schools, real estate developers, migrant parents/children as policy implementers. While they share a common goal, implementing the *New-Type Urbanisation Plan* in order to reduce educational inequality experienced by migrant children, each actor’s interests and values are completely different in this case. The central government needs to guarantee educational accessibility of migrant children, because it could improve integration of rural migrants, which generates better social management; contributes to construction of harmonious community; enhances social justice; boosts development of urbanization; and maintain stable reign of CCP. In local



governments' case, the guarantee of educational accessibility of migrant children would bring greater pressure on financial expenditure to provide education services and to purchase more lands for educational use, especially for local governments of migrant children-receiving areas. It is important to realize that the distribution of responsibility and cooperation between local governments of migrant-outflow areas (where migrants come from) and local governments of migrant-inflow areas (where migrants come to) is still unclear. In local public schools' interests, increasing migrant children would bring overwhelming pressure on their receiving capacity. In migrant workers and children's mind, better accessibility to quality education in cities would make integration process into cities easier; when the values of real estate developers remain unknown. But how do they cooperate?

#### **4.4 The Share Mechanism of Cost in Changsha City**

According to *Cost Prediction and Sharing Mechanism Research Group about Urbanisation of Agricultural Migrating Population in Changsha* (2016), building the share mechanism of cost of urbanisation of agricultural transferring population is the key to complete the work of *New Type Urbanisation* for Changsha's government. The cost of urbanisation of agricultural migrating population represents economic input needed for agricultural migrating labours to get employed and settle down with equal public services and respective welfare, including education services in cities in Changsha. The costs are shared by three main bodies, the central government and local governments, enterprises, and individuals (agricultural migrating population). Divided by source, the whole cost is consisting of public cost (governmental cost), enterprise cost and personal cost. Categorized by the purpose, the cost of urbanisation of agricultural migrating population is divided into six types: compulsory education cost, social security cost, employment service cost, basic housing security cost, public service and public facilities cost, and living cost, as showed in Table.1 (Cost Prediction and Sharing Mechanism

Research Group about Urbanisation of Agricultural Migrating Population in Changsha, 2016). It could be found in the table that the educational cost of migrant children within compulsory education stage are beard by governments only. Yet we do not know how the cost on this part has been shared between central government and local government in China.

**Table 1. The Index System of Urbanization of Agricultural Migrating Population in Changsha**

First-tier Index	Second-tier Index	Detailed Meaning	Subject of Cost Sharing
Governmental Cost	Compulsory Education Cost	Cost on providing compulsory education to migrant children	The Central Government and Local Governments
	Social Security Cost	Cost on providing social security to agricultural transferring population	
	Employment Service Cost	Cost on providing employment service to agricultural transferring population	
	Basic Housing Security Cost	Cost on providing housing security to agricultural transferring population	
	Cost on Public Services and Public Facilities	Local governments provide cost on normal public services, public safety and building infrastructure to new agricultural transferring population	
Enterprise Cost	Cost on Social Security	Enterprises 'cost on paying social insurance for agricultural transferring	Enterprises

		population	
	Cost on housing	Enterprises 'cost on participating in building indemnificatory/security housing	
Personal Cost	Living Cost	The extra cost needed to transfer daily life from rural area to urban cities	Individuals in Agricultural migrating population
	Housing Cost	Housing cost undertook by individuals in the process of urbanisation of agricultural transferring population	
	Social Security Cost	Social security cost undertook by individuals in the process of urbanisation of agricultural transferring population	

Source: Cost Prediction and Sharing Mechanism Research Group about Urbanisation of Agricultural Migrating Population in Changsha.

From 2015 to 2020, the average annual educational funds cost of migrant children in Changsha was expected around 710,480,000 yuan (around 82,901,200 pounds when the rate is 8.5:1), while the total cost in five years is around 3,552,400,000 yuan (around 410,500,000 pounds) as stated in Table 2. Statistics about cost of constructing school building for migrant students within compulsory education stage could be found in Table 3. The cost spends on different projects involved in compulsory education is showed as Table 4. It could be found that more new primary schools are needed than middle schools in Changsha, and the cost for building schools for primary migrant students almost doubled the cost of school building for secondary migrant students, which potentially implied that the lack

of school positions phenomenon in Changsha within compulsory education stage mainly concentrated at primary schools. Most cost of providing compulsory education to migrant children has been spent on educational appropriation (takes up around 47% in overall cost) and purchasing lands for constructing school building (takes up around 43% in overall cost), while the construction work of school building only takes up around 10% of the overall cost.

**Table.2 Cost Calculation on Education Funds of Children of Agricultural Migrating Population**

Student Type	Origin of Children of Agricultural Transferring Population	Education Subsidies (yuan/person)	Total number of new children of agricultural migrating population	The number of newly arrived children of agricultural transferring population	Yearly Subsidies (10,000 yuan)	Education cost of 5 years (10,000 yuan)
Elementary School Students	other cities & other provinces	13500	43,000	36,378	49,110	355,240
	Changsha city (Hunan Province)	4350		6622	2,880	
Secondary School Students	other cities & other provinces	19000	11,600	9814	18,647	
	Changsha city (Hunan Province)	2300		1786	411	

Source: Cost Prediction and Sharing Mechanism Research Group about Urbanisation of Agricultural Migrating

Population in Changsha.

**Table.3 Cost Calculation on Building Schools for Children of Agricultural Migrating Population**

Student Type	School Building Construction Area per Student (m <sup>2</sup> /student)	New School Building Area Needed (m <sup>2</sup> )	Construction Unit Price for School Building (yuan/m <sup>2</sup> )	Construction Cost (10,000 yuan)	Overall Construction Cost for School Building (10,000 yuan)
Primary Student	8.34	191,820	2500	47,955	76,027
Secondary Student	9.68	112,288		28,072	

Source: Cost Prediction and Sharing Mechanism Research Group about Urbanisation of Agricultural Migrating Population in Changsha.

**Table.4 Calculation Cost on Compulsory Education of Agricultural Migrating Population**

Cost of Compulsory Education	Project Indicators	Average Cost (yuan)	Overall Cost (10,000 yuan)
	Cost of Educational Appropriation	1438.22	355,240
	Cost of School Building Construction	307.80	76,027
	Land Opportunity Cost	1337.30	330,312
	Overall	3083.32	761,564

Source: Cost Prediction and Sharing Mechanism Research Group about Urbanisation of Agricultural Migrating Population in Changsha.

## 5 Analysis of Interview Data

### 5.1 Looking through Education Bureau's Eyes

From interviews with officers in Changsha Education Bureau, it is clear that this institution cooperates mainly with Construction Committee and Human Resource and Social Security Bureau to implement their policies about education arrangement of migrant children. Construction Committee is responsible to prove the living status of migrant children and migrant parents, while Human Resource and Social Security Bureau is responsible to verify migrant parents' social insurance records. Within all agencies cooperating together in policy implementation process, sometimes one particular agency/department would be designated as the main responsible body (such as Development and Reform Committee in many cases) to coordinate job among different departments, monitoring progress, acting as coordinator.

According to interviews with governmental officers work in Changsha Education Bureau, as a part of government system, Changsha Education Bureau on municipal level has showed optimistic opinion towards the effectiveness of their policy targeting at differences in education quality of different groups of students, particularly between local urban students and migrant students. The local urban student represents those whose parents are local residents in Changsha with an urban *hukou*, while the migrant student represents those whose parents are migrants coming from other places with a rural *hukou* or *hukou* registered in other cities, yet work and/or live in Changsha city. These two student groups are the two main categories of students identified by the Changsha Education Bureau. Even though the Changsha Education Bureau has admitted pressure in providing enough school positions to migrant children in certain districts, like Yu Hua Qu/District, showed in Figure 4), they have showed confidence in the 'fact' that they have created an education environment that basically achieved no discrimination or disparate treatment towards migrant children, not only in terms

of policy-making and implementation towards education opportunity, but also in terms of education resource allocation towards these two groups of students.

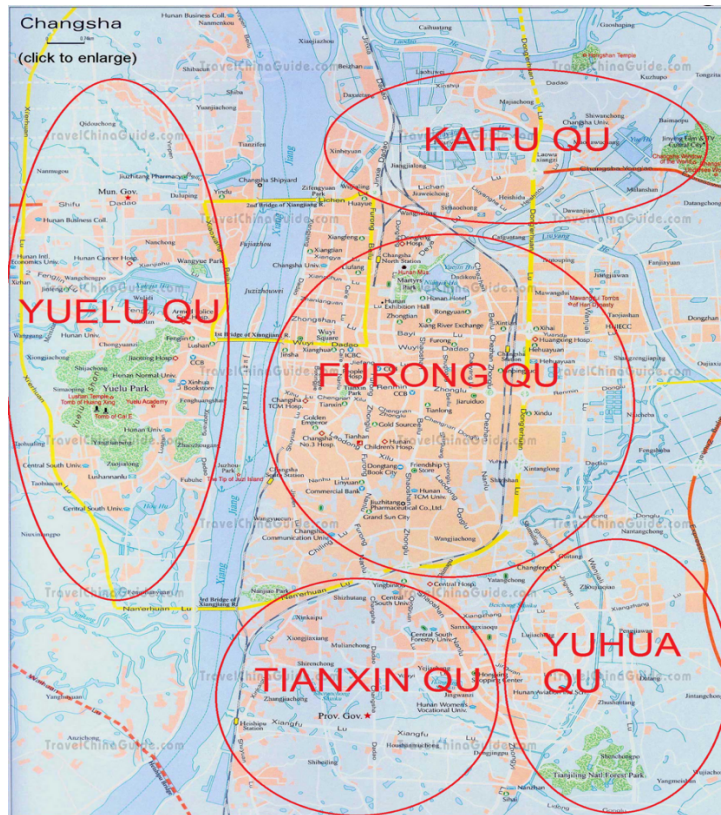


Figure 4. Changsha Five Districts

Source : <http://www.chinanon-stop.com/2012/11/changsha-five-districts.html>

## 5.2 Looking through Migrant Parents' Eyes

However, there are different perspectives from migrant parents, which showed conflicts with this optimistic 'fact' believed by the Education Bureau. During the interviews, migrant parents group have showed a certain degree of sense of approval to the implementation of *Entering Nearby School* policy. Because their children would at least have a school to attend to, if not the ideal one, under the protection of this policy. Enrolling into local public schools is much more challenging before when migrant parents get school position in cities through their social ties or paying a large amount of sponsorship fee.

*Migrant Mother: ...Since last year, as long as you got a job and social insurance, your child will be arranged into a local school no matter what. But this isn't the case for the year before last year. It only become like this since last year. (The entering nearby school policy) basically has been implemented in 2016, not in 2015, that's the change. What do I think of the policy, is that they come out tight a bit, then loose a bit, then become tight again, and then go loose again, tight then loose anyway... Parents (used to) queue up throughout the night to sign up to school for their kids. But no more of that since last year.*

Yet because of the 'entering nearby school' policy, it's not easy or normal for migrant parents to get their children enroll into public schools with relative high teaching quality and better teaching resources. According to interviews with migrant parents, schools located in their district are normally equipped with substitute teachers who just graduated from Education Colleges instead of experienced teachers in those elite schools, which makes teaching quality of their schools on the bottom of all schools in Changsha.

*Migrant Mother: ...and those students graduating from teachers college, aren't they go to these schools first? When your level's rising up, you transfer to better schools. Anyway, it's principal's employment now, right? I don't know if those substitute teachers are in the establishment. They can get establishment through passing exams. It's ok to teach in schools without getting establishment when they first arrive schools. They normally leave those schools after they get into the establishment. They are not staying in those schools.*

Those young substitute teachers normally do not stay long in those migrant-children-concentrated schools. Migrant children concentrated schools are like



stepping stones of their teaching career. Many of them leave the school in several years, after obtaining enough teaching experiences and getting inside the teacher establishment. School teacher groups seems not so worried about the education situation of migrant children, and some of them have experienced the lower performance of migrant student in schools. Teacher's quality in schools is different, while the schools with more migrant students get inexperienced and substitute teachers. It indicates unstable teaching resources in migrant children concentrated schools.

Except what mentioned above, the controversy over the existence of migrant schools in Changsha is also one of examples of the policy struggle targeted at reducing educational inequality between and providing non-discrimination treatment to both local urban children and migrant children. In interviews with government officers in Changsha Education Bureau, they have denied that there are migrant schools in Changsha, while some migrant parents saying the opposite. From my perspective, there are two possible reasons behind Education Bureau's denial of existence of migrant schools. Firstly, admitting the existence of migrant schools to certain extents equals admitting the discriminatory treatment towards migrant children, as the existence of migrant schools is considered a proof of gaps existing between local government's commitment to migrant workers about their children's education, and the realities of capacity in local public schools. Because the capacities of local public schools are limited, local governments in migrant-receiving areas find taking the full responsibility of educational rights of migrant children difficult. However, except building new schools, expanding the old schoolhouses, and integrating old schools, there are few suggestions made on developing capacities of public schools. The local governments need certain number of migrant schools to share the responsibility of migrant children's education. This has put local governments themselves in dilemma. In addition, it involves the definition of 'migrant school' from the perspective of governmental

officials. It was firstly defined as public or private schools opened by migrants (or private organizations) to address the education problem of migrant children in cities, which mainly pass the quality certification of Education Bureau (Baike, 2017). According to a government officer in Changsha Education Bureau, there were migrant schools which their names includes 'migrant (student)', and only/mainly accept migrant children. When the name of those schools changed, deleting 'migrant (student)' out of the school name, and when they were opened by governments, accepting not only migrant children, they become normal schools instead of migrant schools by definition in the mind of Education Bureau. However, because there are certain districts in Changsha where migrants (also migrant children) are concentrated more than in other districts (such as Yu Hua Qu/District), schools in those migrants/migrant children-concentrated districts naturally have more migrant students than schools in other districts where local residents/local urban students concentrated. From perspectives of migrant parents, those schools with much more migrant students are still considered migrant schools in terms of its student composition.

### **5.3 Limited Channel for Citizens to Make Voices**

#### **5.3.1 Voice through Appealing**

Division of Complaints and Appeal department in all government institutions bear the main job of communicating and dealing with citizens' problems and difficulties. Normally, when citizens come to Division of Complaints and Appeal department in a governmental institution, for example, Construction Committee, officers work in this division are responsible to dealing with letters from petitioners, respond within 15 working days. Sometimes they are also responsible to the reception of petitioners when they come to the division in person. Officers would meet with petitioners, listen to their problems and experiences, give advice, and if the problems discussed are considered not in accordance with policies, they cannot always help with the difficulties citizens encountered. Instead, they would

proceed to report to Division of Complaints and Appeal department in higher levels, or pass on/assign to/inform other respective departments according to the types of problem. Therefore, the real possibility for appeal is quite limited by policy and petitioning procedures.

### **5.3.2 Voice through Collective Action**

“Civic/collective action” has been an important factor contribute to China’s political development. There are various forms of collective action in different countries and situation. I’d like to narrow the discussion of collective action in my research to those aimed mainly at challenging and changing some aspect of the sociopolitical order that shows inequality in practice in China (Jacka, Kipnis, and Sargeson, 2013). Since 1980s, there have been significant shifts resulted from laws enacted by the state that increased political opportunities for collective action in China, such as the Labor Law (enacted in 1995) and the Property Law (enacted in 2007). When they have not contributed much in protecting citizens and their legal rights, they have nurtured a new understanding in Chinese citizens’ mind: citizens in China have legal rights that and the rights to protest against the behavior that violates their rights. Laws enacted have also provided both legitimacy to and avenues for certain types of collective action in China (Jacka, Kipnis, and Sargeson, 2013).

As reported by many China observers, nowadays the Chinese government attach great importance at maintaining stability (King, Pan, and Roberts, 2013). When *collective action potential* to a certain degree is even equal with factionalism and ultimately chaos and disorder from the perspective of Chinese government, collective action, especially in the form of protests are prevented on all costs by governments in different levels in China (King, Pan, and Roberts, 2013). These findings have reappeared in interviews took in my case. According to interviews

with Division of Complaints and Appeal department, street level bureaucrats, as well as other governmental institutions, governments on different levels have showed a strong intention of controlling collective action, through following and monitoring 'dangerous citizens'. In this case, 'dangerous citizens' refers to those residents/citizens who have the possibility to complain and appeal (which means they have encountered some problems or difficulties that haven't been resolved) or those who frequently go petitioning. From what governmental officers shared in interviews, it is fair to say that petitioning that bypasses the immediate leadership is prevented from happening, via the joint efforts of street level bureaucrats, community, and governments on district and municipal levels, as showed in following quotation from an interview with government official works in Changsha local government.

*Government official: the community, the neighbourhood committee...maintaining stability, they (staff work in community committee and neighbourhood community) have no other choices...they are tired too, they need to watch over these dangerous citizens (means those people who try to petition) and not let them slip away, when there is NPC & CPPCC or when there is important event going on in the country...maintaining stability, (they) have to keep their eyes upon these petition people, send staff and take turns to watch over... If there is short of staff (to help with watch over), then the neighbourhood committee coordinate the job, if the neighbourhood committee couldn't coordinate this out, district (respective administrative institution) help coordinate (to do this job).*

Tracking and monitoring petitioning of citizens normally happens when there is important event or during national conference time. For example, staff that have been sent out to do monitoring or following 'dangerous citizens' would follow

their designated 'dangerous citizen'. There are many cases where two staff work in governments are responsible for one particular 'dangerous citizen' and their goal is avoid letting petitioners go to Beijing to appeal. If there were still citizens managed to petition in Beijing, especially during national conference time, it would be considered that the leader of respective district has failed his/her job, therefore the prevalence of collective action is officially a part of the formal evaluation criteria for local officials in China.

#### **5.4 Street Bureaucrats in Community**

As an actor that directly deals with citizens, migrants, the street-level bureaucrat plays an important role in interpreting and implementing policies from governments. According to interviews with them, street-level bureaucrats in community on the one hand consider their main task to serve residents' needs, on the other hand, they feel unwillingly forced to do so, when encountering pressure from upper level governmental institutions. They act as an intermediate role between local government and citizens. It is important to mention that when there is conflict between the interests of citizens and governments, they do not exercise their administrative discretion for the benefit of citizens, including both migrants and local residents in their communities. Except dealing with inspection of local governments in terms of community appearance, sanitation situation etc., they have put great efforts to prevent petitioning of citizens and potential collective action.

#### **5.5 World of Migrants and Their Integration Process**

Migrant parents group concentrated in Yu Hua District in Changsha, where it has the most complex urban construction and poorer facilities compared to other districts in Changsha. The living circumstances of rural migrants in Yu Hua District is known for its crowded streets and poor facilities. It is a district which shares border with countryside area. Logistics industry was located in that district, and

resulted in severe traffic jam. High-speed rail way station of Changsha is also located in that district that makes population flow around that area quite complicated. Most of migrant parents rent small apartments (normally one bedroom one living room type) as their home instead of purchasing properties in Changsha directly. The public rental housing and low-rent housing is not accessible to migrants without local *hukou* according to local policies.

At the same time, a large part of migrants works in unstable/low-salaries and labour-requiring precarious job, such as help selling goods in Grand Market or help with selling motor parts in Motor Parts Town (Factory that sells/makes motor/car's parts). In addition, many migrant mothers gave up job because of the need to look after children. It is important to mention that many migrant workers find blending into city life in Changsha difficult. Not only because of the limited opportunity to interact with local urban residents, as residents living in their communities are mainly migrant workers (not many local residents live in that district), but also the discrimination from a small part of local people as following quotation from interview with a migrant parent shows. Different lifestyle and habits have also decreased their chances to integrate into the city. For example, migrants normally have different eating habits with local people in terms of food types they choose and ways of eating food, which is difficult to change completely.

*Migrant: Anyway, the contact with local people is...it's like there is a dozens of houses, and only two of them are local people. How many chances do you think we have to make contact with them? Right? It's the same for them, they don't want to...Some local people who live here are ok, but some rich local people are not willing to make contact with migrants. How do I put this...hmm, maybe they have relatively stronger defence mode, right?*

In this case, migrant workers in this city, especially in Yu Hua District, have been separated and marginalised both socially and spatially. They have formed their social networks mainly with migrant groups instead of local residents. According to Chen and Wang (2015), social networks are a crucial aspect that influences the chance of migrants to integrate into cities, lack of interaction between migrants and local people in Changsha could impair the integration process of migrant groups in this city.

## **6 Conclusion**

From analysis in earlier discussion, it could be concluded that various actors involved in the policy implementation process are grasping the limited opportunity to cope with the policy on national level in an authoritarian context in China, but not all of their coping strategies has helped with reducing educational inequality experienced by migrant children. Specifically, there are spaces left for three main types of deliberative activities during the process of implementing *New-Type Urbanisation Plan* in urban China. Categorized by the subject of activity, the first type of deliberative activity is exercised by governments in different levels. In this case, local governments in Changsha city are allowed to implement the national policy through their own ways (for example, build share mechanism of cost). They are given certain degree of autonomy to make local policies and address the educational inequality problem on the basis of practical situation on the ground. This type of deliberation has increased the flexibility of the *New-Type Urbanisation Plan* in its implementation process in local level. The second type of deliberative activity is exercised by street-level bureaucrats. They have a certain degree of administrative discretion when interpreting policies on the ground, putting policies into practice. However, their intermediate role between governments and citizens has not been used to interpret policies to protect the rights of disadvantaged groups in society, including migrants, especially when there is conflict between citizens' needs and governments' interests. Hence their

deliberation does not play an effective role in reducing educational inequality experienced by migrant children. The third type of deliberative activities is exercised by migrant groups. Under the poor living circumstances, they enjoy limited appealing and petition opportunity, little avenue to making voices, while they face the possibility of being marked as 'dangerous citizen' and discrimination on both institutional and individual level. Their deliberation to acquire their rights as citizens and their children's educational rights in urban China seems have long way to go in terms of reducing educational inequality experienced by migrant children.



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Some titles are accompanied by its original language title (Chinese) and its literal translation. In case of no alphabetic translation available, author's translations are used.

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