

Rural-to-Urban Migration: An Investigation of the Connection Between Housing and Educational Attainment in Shanghai

By Renee Gagne
International Affairs, University of Colorado Boulder

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Defense Committee:
Colleen Berry, Primary Advisor, Center for Asian Studies
Shuang Zhang, Secondary Reader, International Affairs
Douglas Snyder, Honors Council Representative, International Affairs

Abstract

In light of its recent and rapid economic growth, China has captivated the attention of the international community. Beyond China's reputation as a rising economic power are the people who have played a critical role in establishing and sustaining the country's upward trajectory—migrants. China has experienced the largest rural-to-urban migration in modern history. The individuals and families moving are motivated by the prospect of gaining access to better economic and educational opportunities that are otherwise scarce in rural regions. The transition into major cities, however, is burdened by many challenges. Institutional barriers including the household registration system—also known as the *hukou*—and city-specific policies are enforced in a manner that target and disadvantage migrants. The uneven distribution of resources and benefits among migrants and local residents creates a dichotomy that exhibits the negative impacts of discriminatory processes targeted toward rural migrants.

Shanghai, one of the top destinations for rural-to-urban migrants, continues to showcase many of the difficult realities among migrants adapting to the urban lifestyle. Two critical and highly-impacted aspects of one's lifestyle are housing and education. Institutional barriers create regulations that favor locals in both of these realms, leaving migrants with limited, unaffordable, and low quality options. The relationship between housing and education for migrants in urban areas is primarily dictated by the bounds of institutional barriers such as miniscule housing assistance and not allowing high school migrants to take the college entrance examination. In addition to the segregation that results from these modern-day regulations, data shows that there may be an interconnectedness between these two entities. Housing arrangements for migrant families may further burden a student's educational attainment and create schooling-related challenges stemming the household registration system.

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INTRODUCTION

China's unparalleled economic growth coincides with the largest rural-to-urban migration in human history. Over the course of the past few decades, China's largest cities have become known for their dense migrant populations (Wang and Zuo 1999,1). Among these migrants, the vast majority gravitate towards China's major cities in search of opportunities including familial economic advancement and gaining access to a better education for the children. Though internal migration has been a widespread phenomenon, the process of migrating and settling into China's cities is a challenging endeavor. Noteworthy are institutional barriers, defined as the systematic policies and procedures that have an unequal and negative impact on people based on their upbringing and social status. The continued adherence to the household registration system (户口簿 *hukoubu*) and the implementation of city-specific policies discourage migrants from becoming well-situated in urban areas. The issues associated with transitioning into the city are particularly pronounced in Shanghai, where the share of migrants became 6.68% in 2010, marking it as having the largest share of the rural migrants (Lu and Xia; 2016).

Housing and education in Shanghai are two pivotal aspects of urban life that are greatly influenced by institutional barriers. The extent to which citizens are benefited or harmed by these policies is dependent upon an individual's regional status, regulated by the *hukou* system. This state-mandated classification structure becomes particularly important in the case of migration. Limited access to affordable and adequate housing arrangements, restrictions on enrollment in public schools, and the Shanghai government's program to eliminate so-called "shantytowns" are all derivatives of institutional barriers that hinder migrant's ability to adapt to the urban lifestyle

(Shanghai Daily 2018). Related to Shanghai's large proportion of migrants residing in the city is an abundance of challenges specifically endured by migrants.

In recognition of China's rise as an economic superpower, the implications of current legal processes pertaining to migration show for a present-day division between the rural and the urban. Internal migrants have and continue to be the driving force for economic growth, despite the prevalence of constraints imposed upon rural citizens. Currently, the country is undergoing a 'transition' from being a physical labor-intensive economy to one that places more emphasis on education and high-skilled labor (Naughton 2007, 180). This accentuates the importance of understanding the relationship between housing and education-related challenges migrants undergo; challenges such as these have potential to impact not only the individual experience, but also the economic future of China. The external factors which influence the wellbeing of newly-urban dwellers greatly influences productivity of both the city and country at large. The necessity for adequate housing and quality education are pivotal to improving human capital, and thus, sustaining economic growth.

Though Shanghai is a top destination for rural migrants seeking to reap urban benefits, very little research exists on the the direct relationship between housing and education. This thesis will seek to resolve the question of what institutional barriers make it difficult for rural-to-urban migrants to find housing in Shanghai and how these housing-related challenges impact the attainment rates and quality of education for their children. To approach this question, it is critical to establish an understanding of current phenomena which play a role in housing attainment, including the *hukou* household registration system, neighborhood demolitions, and availability of housing for migrants. Through investigation of each of these factors, this thesis

will gain a strong foundation of knowledge regarding the current residential landscape in order to determine connections between poor housing and the education of migrant students.

BACKGROUND

Nearly all of the current literature regarding education and housing for migrants in China is presented in a mutually-exclusive manner. This background section will establish a foundation of essential knowledge through explaining the household registration system, also known as *hukou* (户口). Through adopting this approach, the connections between the *hukou* system, migration, housing, and education will be introduced.

Hukou: The Household Registration System

The household registration system in China is a government-enforced institution that categorizes the Chinese populace “based both on their place of residence (living in rural/urban areas) and eligibility for certain socioeconomic benefits (agricultural/non agricultural),” (Congressional Research Service; 2016,1). The *hukou* system is upheld by the Chinese government through legal and bureaucratic processes which maintain barriers to internal movement. The specific implications of these policies can be observed on an individual level, specifically through the experiences of rural-to-urban migrants.

Cindy Fan, globally-recognized researcher known for her work on migration, explains the difference (类别 *leibie*) between agricultural (农村 *nongcun*) and non-agricultural (非农 *feinong*) *hukou* classifications (Fan; 2018; 2). Citizens with ‘non-agricultural’ status receive support through welfare services, subsidies, and various benefits unique to this distinction (Fan; 2018,2). In contrast, individuals who maintain the ‘agricultural’ status are granted land access to

sustain their generally-rural lifestyles (Fan; 2018,2). Although both of these classifications are associated with *hukou*-specific benefits, there is a noteworthy imbalance which favors those of non-agricultural status. The second layer of *hukou* categorization outlined by Fan refers to the specific location (所在地 *suozaidi*) of residence, which allows people of a certain locations to access benefits that those from outside *hukou* distinctions cannot (Fan 2018,2).

The distinctions established by the household registration system play directly into the domestic migration processes in China today. An individual's *hukou* status has the power to both discourage and disadvantage certain groups of people—primarily—rural citizens seeking to reside in urban areas. Moving from one region to another does not immediately guarantee a citizen to the same benefits as received by those who already reside in the area and have been granted a favorable *hukou* status. This is particularly notable when looking at the residence and educational opportunities accessible by rural-to-urban migrants. The unbalanced allocation of benefits shapes a difficult reality among migrants whose access opportunities in the realm of housing and schooling are constricted on the premise of an agricultural label.

History of the *Hukou*: Domestic Immobility during the High-Socialist Era

The earliest records of the *hukou* system in China suggest that it was first utilized as a means of overseeing migration during the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BCE)(Fan; 2018, 3). During the years leading to the founding of the PRC, the household registration system was primarily used for land distribution and tax-related purposes (Chan; 2019, 2) (Fan; 2018, 3). Although the system has been embedded in China's infrastructure for much of its history, scholars tend to focus on the *hukou* system just prior to the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. This was a period of time when the *hukou* underwent drastic changes and became a central policy adopted by the Communist Party (See Figure 1).

Period	Manifestations of the differences
1949-1978	Occupations (agricultural vs industry) and residence locations (rural vs urban).
1953-1992	Food rationing was imposed; only urban population had state-guaranteed food grain supply.
1958-1980	Rural to urban migration was strictly banned. Urban population had access to state-provided employment, housing, education and other welfare.
1966-1976	Rural population was allowed to run and work in non-farm enterprises owned by collectives in the countryside.
1977-1984	A limited number of rural labourers were contracted to work in cities.
From 1985	Rural laborers were allowed to work in cities without the urban residency right and eligibility for urban services and welfare.
From 2000	<i>Hukou</i> migration to small towns was permitted in 2002; <i>nongzhuanfei</i> was gradually phased out in some locales, which was finally formalized as a nationwide measure in 2014.
2014	Promulgation of <i>National New-type Urbanization Plan and Opinions on Hukou Reform</i>

Figure 1: Historical overview of *hukou*-related policies. Source: Chan 2019

As shown by Figure 1, there was a steep rise in the imposition of regulations following the founding of the PRC. The categorization of citizens, food rationing, and collectivization were all highly influential in inscribing a government-established separation between the rural and urban. Most noteworthy among the changes was banning rural-to-urban migration beginning in 1958 (See Figure 1). Parallel to these policies that encouraged a division between the rural and urban areas was the gradual restriction and re-addition of mobility rights to the Chinese citizenry. These policies, specially in reference to making internal movement illegal, would later gradually be modified into the rules and regulations that are enforced today.

The Right to Citizen Mobility: Inscribed in National Law

This section will analyze the key points and evolution of citizen rights with respect to their ability to navigate the country and establish places of residence. Upon the creation of the PRC, the Communist Party implemented the Common Program from 1949 until 1954, a “*de facto* constitution... that guaranteed a plethora of freedoms and rights,” (Cheng and Selden 1994,

646). Among the rights guaranteed to Chinese citizens was the freedom of movement (Cheng & Selden; 1994, 646). As articulated in Chapter 1 Article 5 of the Common Program:

The people of the People's Republic of China shall have the freedom of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association, correspondence, person, domicile, change of domicile, religious belief, and the freedom of holding processions and demonstrations.

The inclusion of “domicile” and “change of domicile” under the 1949 Common Program suggests that the State did not initially consider domestic citizen mobility to be a major area of contention. The allowance for citizen mobility at the beginning of the CCP's reign also aligns with the fact that during the early years of the PRC's operations, the household registration system was not utilized country-wide, nor was it utilized to the same extent that it would later be used as a tool for economic growth. In 1951, the *hukou* system was used as a data collection mechanism concerning citizens' place of residence and to garner insight as to what individuals possessed unfavorable political perspectives (Chan; 2019, 3). Still, during this time the *hukou* was not a widely-adopted policy in the PRC nor did it employ citizen immobility as means for control.

Developing Divisions and Progression of *Hukou* Adoption

In 1954, the first Constitution of the PRC under the Chinese Communist Party was adopted. This version of the constitution carried over the right of citizens to freely move throughout China from the Common Program (Chan 2019,3). However, this governing document shows the emergence of differing rights between rural and urban citizens. The 1954 Constitution of the PRC in Chapter 1, Article 8 outlines a distinction between rural and urban characteristics and rights:

Working people who are members of rural economic collectives have the right, within the limits prescribed by law, to farm plots of cropland and hilly land allotted for private use, engage in household sideline production and raise privately owned livestock. The various forms of cooperative economy in the cities and towns, such as those in the handicraft, industrial, building, transport, commercial and service trades, all belong to the sector of socialist economy under collective ownership by the working people. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the urban and rural economic collectives and encourages, guides and helps the growth of the collective economy.

This excerpt from the 1954 Chinese constitution is historically significant because it is part of the framework of what became legally-induced divisions between people residing in rural and urban regions. The regulations between the economic collectives as described by this article of the Chinese Constitution complements the modern-day *hukou* divisions articulated by Fan. Although the article states that it is the responsibility of the government to protect the rights of the rural and urban distinctions of the economy, it makes no mention as to the protections of citizens who navigate between economic collectives. Arguably, this can be seen as contributing to the institutional barriers that rural-to-urban migrants currently face today.

Urbanization vs. Industrialization: Systematic Citizen Immobility

The progression of the PRC toward an industrial planned economy coincided with the gradual strengthening of the household registration system, and thus, the restriction of citizen mobility. A critical part of former Chairman Mao Zedong's vision of creating a socialist state was a push for immense industrialization while minimizing urbanization processes. What became known as the 'big push' socialist economic strategy "generat[ed] immense outflows from the countryside and created huge disparities between urban-industrial and agricultural sectors," (Chan 2019; 3). Thus, resources allocated from the countryside to industrial cities were used to help facilitate the process of materializing Mao's vision for industrialization through supporting those in urban work units (單位 *danwei*). This strategy for industrialization is significant because it contributed to the *hukou* system becoming a "powerful instrument to

enable ‘industrialization on the cheap,’” and further solidified the developing rural-urban divide (Fan 2018; 3).

In response to the ‘big push’ industrialization strategy, a large number of peasants during the 1950s began to move from their rural residences to large cities. The state came to refer to this migratory process as being ‘blind flows,’ whereas the influx of migrants to cities were seen as “troublemakers without a purpose,” (Chan 2019; 3). This phenomenon was not looked upon favorably by the government, and thus in 1958 the state used the *hukou* system as a tool to implement a series of policies to put a stop to the ‘blind flows’ and nearly all internal movement overall. The hardening of internal migration policy enforced by the state took many forms, such as requiring individuals to obtain approval from both the net-sending and net-receiving city to move, travel document checks, affiliating food rations with one’s *hukou* registration, banning the sale of transportation tickets, making the housing market nonexistent, and not allowing people from rural areas to obtain jobs in the urban labor force. Restrictive policies such as these were ultimately enforced to further the state’s plan for economic development (Fan 2018; 3).

During the high-socialist era (1949-1957), the household registration gained national leverage with respect to its impact on the rights and individual experiences of Chinese citizens. In addition to the influence of the government on citizen residency, the period of ‘high socialism’ also influenced the education of the citizenry. Naughton explains how the socialist infrastructure was effective in providing basic education that improved the skill acquisition and literacy rates among the populace, but did not properly compensate academic achievement (Naughton 2007; 192). Notably, from the 1960s, the Chinese government took to encouraging citizens to work. Thus, nearly 95% of individuals who attained high school or college-level degrees were appointed jobs and the labor market became nearly nonexistent (Naughton 2007; 181).

The CCP used the *hukou* as a political tool to advance its economic ambitions which brought about two noteworthy outcomes at the time. First, the *hukou* system made internal migration nearly impossible for citizens regardless of local distinction. As previously discussed, internal movement between rural and urban areas became essentially illegal between 1958-1980. Second, the *hukou* system created two different forms of infrastructure based upon geographic classification. Different operations and isolation between the two “Chinas” during this period of time established a dichotomy which continues to have a legacy into the present day.

Gradual Redemption of Citizen Mobility: 1978-Present

On December 18, 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China began to undergo a series of reforms known as China’s Reform and Opening Up (改革開放 *gaige kaifang*). In the context of migration, this series of policy changes are significant because they gradually returned the rights to the Chinese population to navigate throughout the country (*See Figure 1*). The progressive policy changes which came about between the 1980s and 2000s can be connected to the large influx of rural migrants that flooded into China’s largest cities. Although the changes under China’s Reform and Opening Up did target citizen mobility and slowly reversed certain aspects of high-socialist citizen immobility, the mass internal movement observed in recent years is not indicative of the ability to migrate *freely* within the bounds of China’s borders. Today, the household registration system still prevails; it continues to be upheld by the government and maintains approval by the National People’s Congress (Chan 2019; 3). Continued adherence to the *hukou* system—even in the face of evolving lexicon—continues to operate in a way which confronts modern migrants with institutional barriers. People with agricultural registrations who seek to reside in non-agricultural regions—both temporarily and permanently—are subject to

numerous hurdles such as being granted the ability to move, becoming integrated in a different region, and even changing *hukou* status.

The *hukou* is referred to as being one of the “most important institutional mechanisms” in China with respect to the dichotomy between rural and urban divide it manifests (Chan;2019, 1). The systematic allocation of resources and benefits based upon individual’s place of origins in China amounts to a plethora of modern-day challenges and forms of discrimination that primarily impact those of rural agricultural statuses looking to live and study in major cities such as Shanghai (Chan 2019,1).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although rural-to-urban migration in China is a topic which has been investigated by many scholars, the specific relationship between Shanghai's migrant housing situation and the educational attainment of migrant students is not well-researched. Among scholars who specifically research education or housing in China, many establish the foundation of their understanding by investigating migration through the *hukou* household registration system, as it imposes a variety challenges with reference to migration, housing, and education.

The ideas of Everett Lee, a scholar known for his 1966 publication *A Theory of Migration*, maintains great influence on modern-day studies of migration. Lee defines migration as any “semi permanent” change to one’s domicile regardless of physical distance (Lee 1966, 49). According to Everett Lee’s theory, changes to a place of residence are categorized into four main factors of consideration which can ‘push’ or ‘pull’ an individual:

1. Factors associated with area of origin
2. Factors associated with area of destination
3. Intervening obstacles
4. Personal factors

Recognition of Lee's theory of migration is critical; portions of his theory can be seen as the foundation of many modern-day research studies concerning China's rural-to-urban migratory trend. Numerous scholars have highlighted how the prospects for economic advancement and improved education 'pull' rural citizens into urban regions, which falls under Lee's "factors associated with destination" (Lee 1966, 50). Similarly, challenges associated with family economics and accessing a quality education fall under Lee's "factors associated with area of origin". Migrants are burdened both by restrictive *hukou* and local policies-defined by Lee as being "intervening obstacles"—and therefore often occupy low-paying "marginal jobs" and have limited access to schools (Congressional Research Service 2016), (Lee 1966, 50), (Wang and Zuo 1997, 2). Finally, personal factors such as the ability to send remittances, temporary migration, goals, and family dynamics are within the bounds of what Lee's defines as "personal factors," (Lee 1966, 50).

Barry Naughton, a specialist of China studies, employs this logic in his book *The Chinese Economy*. Naughton explains that in China specifically, the destination 'pull' factors-such as economic gains and jobs- have a stronger influence than those that 'push' migrants away from their rural origins (Naughton 2007; 131). For the purposes of this thesis, the primary consideration derived from Lee's theory is "intervening obstacles" faced by temporary migrants in Shanghai. Many scholars have acknowledged the lopsided distribution of resources for people in the city on the premise of local and *hukou*-based policies, two of which pertain to housing and education.

Urban Housing for Migrants

There is a general consensus among scholars who study Chinese migration that challenges pertaining to urban housing arrangements and educational infrastructure for migrants

have a strong correlation to the household registration system. Although economic advancement is commonly recognized as a drawing factor to places such as Shanghai, Professor John R. Logan known for his research on housing discrimination, articulates how the challenges migrants face derives primarily from governmental policies as opposed to resource allocation (Logan et al. 2000; 915). Logan's research on housing helps researchers distinguish between scarcity of resources and the infrastructure that contributes to modern-day migration phenomena; many researchers agree that finding housing is a challenging process for migrants (Wu 2002; 93). Zhilin further builds upon the ideas of Logan and argues that individuals who do not have local *hukou* status in their destination are more likely to be deterred from the decision to move because of the discrimination the *hukou* establishes within the rural-to-urban migrant experience (Liu et al. 2017; 1837).

Weiping Wu is a professor at Columbia University who researches the dynamics of Chinese cities. Wu argues that two of the prevailing reasons for such poor housing conditions specifically among migrants are their 'temporary' status and the limited housing availability (Wu 2002; 90). Again, this idea appears to relate to both Logan's observation of government policy as well as Lee's theory with respect to "intervening obstacles." An additional consideration for migrant housing presented by Wu is that there is not a definite framework used to determine what characteristics of a place of residence amounts to being deemed of 'quality' (Wu 2002; 94). Thus, migrants can be subject to living in unfavorable living conditions.

Despite the large quantities of migrants temporarily settling in major cities such as Shanghai, many scholars have highlighted the disparity between the housing arrangements of locals and migrants. This dichotomy is often studied in a manner which compares the living circumstances of locals, permanent migrants, and temporary migrants. Feng Wang at the

University of California and Xuejin Zuo at the Shanghai Academy of Sciences refer to the housing situation as a form of ‘residential segregation,’ whereby migrants occupy smaller places of residence, pay comparatively higher rents than locals, and live in low-quality spaces that lack basic amenities (Wang et al. 1995), (Wang and Zuo 1999, 278). Parallel to the ideas of Logan and Liu, Wang and Zuo’s research is also indicative that institutional barriers have a great influence on the housing arrangements acquired by migrants.

Another perspective relevant to the migrant housing situation is Wang and Zuo’s observations as to why a disconnect between locals and migrants exists. Based upon their research, Wang and Zuo articulate that factors including “1. Segregated Labor Market Occupations... 2. Low Income and Poor Benefits... 3. Temporary Housing and Residential Segregation... 4. Individual Instead of Familial Migration... 5. Absence of Social Integration,” are all at the forefront of a situation that marginalizes migrants (Wang and Zuo 1999; 277-278). These factors are important to highlight because they allow for connections to be made between the reality migrants endure and the situations that catalyze such challenges.

Education for Migrants

A prevailing theme among researchers who investigate the quality of education for migrants in China are the challenges associated with enrollment, quality, and affordability of schools; these factors are often framed in terms of the impacts of the *hukou* system. Data garnered by researchers indicates that there is a noteworthy dichotomy between the educational experience public and migrant schools. Yuanuan Chen at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (SUFE) and Shuaizhang Chen from the Institute for Economic and Social Research at Jinan University showcase this phenomenon through surveys they conducted in Shanghai in 2010 and 2012. Chen and Feng state that migrant schools perform “considerably worse than their

counterparts in public schools,” (Chen and Feng 2017; 1007). Similarly, Xiaobing Wang et al. express similar findings whereby the barriers created by the *hukou* system are a major consideration factor for rural-to-urban migrant parents (Wang et al. 2017; 1866).

Many scholars agree that, like housing, migrant education continues to be influenced by the policy changes made to the *hukou* system over time. Chen and Feng state that it was particularly difficult for migrant students to obtain a public school education prior to a 2001 government decision (Chen et al. 2019; 391). In 2001, it was decided that local governments were to be held accountable for ensuring the education of migrant students and should encourage enrollment in public schools for migrants (Chen et al. 2019; 391). With regards to Shanghai specifically, the local government began to allow migrants to enroll in public schools as well as exude oversight of migrant schools beginning in 2008 (Chen et al. 2019). Although it is a monumental effort, many scholars continue to depict urban migrant schools as facing a multitude of challenges such as those “in major cities like Beijing run the constant risk of being closed down by the authorities on any pretext,” operating without a license, or operate with the risk of demolition (China Labour Bulletin, 2019).

There appears to be a debate among researchers as to the areal distribution of schools and the corresponding hierarchy of quality. Currently, there is not a unanimous perspective among scholars as to whether rural public schools or urban migrant schools are of higher quality (Wang et al. 2017;1866). However, it is important to note that there appears to be a general consensus that urban public schools generally outperform urban migrant schools (Chen and Feng 2017; 1007).

The Housing-Education Connection

The current literature about housing and education in China studied as separate entities both indicate that the *hukou* system greatly influences migrant experiences. However, there appears to be little research specifically on the correlation between housing for migrants and educational attainment of their children in Shanghai. Hao Feng and Lu's article in the *Journal of Housing Economics* looks at the relationship between schools in Shanghai with the prestigious EMSHS¹ distinction and increased housing prices in the surrounding area. Their study found that the price for housing in the vicinity of an EHSMS-ranked school increased by as much as 17.1% (Feng and Lu 2013; 292). Although their research contributes to understanding the relationship between migrant housing and education, this is the extent of literature (in English) that directly references such relationships. The limited scholarship about the housing-education relationship in Shanghai indicates that there is a need for further research into the realities faced by temporary migrants. This research seeks to be a starting point in filling in this gap of knowledge and provide further insights into China's contemporary migration situation.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis seeks to explain the institutional barriers that make it difficult for rural-to-urban migrants to find housing in Shanghai. And furthermore, it tries to answer the question of how these housing-related challenges impact the quality of education attained by rural migrant children (*See Figure 2*). To answer this question, this thesis first establishes a foundational understanding of current phenomena which play a role in the relationship between temporary migrant housing and educational attainment including the *hukou* household registration system,

¹ *Experimental Model Senior High Schools (EMSHS)* is a school designation associated with prestigious schools in Shanghai (Feng and Lu 2013; 291).

Shanghai-specific policies pertaining to housing and education, neighborhood demolition of shantytowns², availability of housing, and accessibility of schools. Through investigating each of these factors, compiled data will be used to determine what connections exist between poor housing conditions and the education of migrant students.

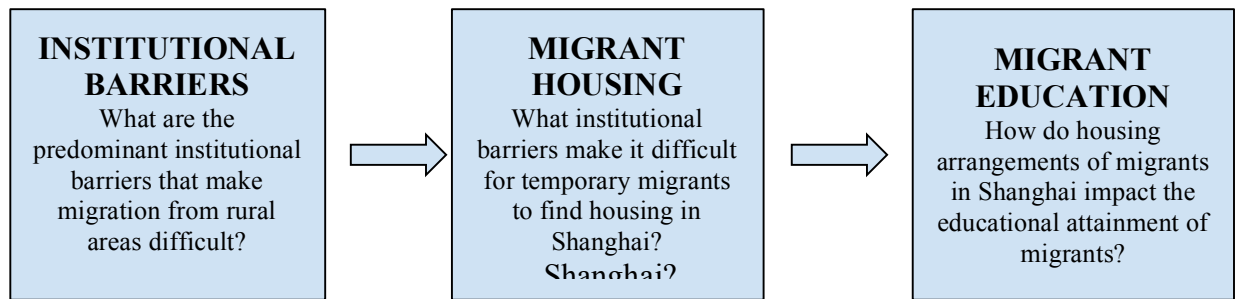


Figure 2: Visual representation of the question and connections this thesis will seek to resolve.

Research Parameters

The parameters of this qualitative research project pertain to location, population, timeframe, and circumstance. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of migrants in Shanghai with non-*hukou* distinctions grew from 3.7 million to 9.8 million people (Chen et al. 2019; 392). Among this population, 45% of students in Shanghai who are at an age where education is required³ are migrant students (Chen et al. 2019; 392). These statistics indicate that Shanghai is not only a top migrant destination city, but also that the city has a high need for suitable housing and education among its migrant population. The trend of having a large inflow of rural migrants and the current discriminatory practices creates an-‘urgency’-for there to be additional research

²Shanty towns are distinct from ‘urban villages’. Urban villages are a unique type of settlement which are the result of urban development colliding with village communities (Liu et al. 2010 ;135). Among urban villages, Shenzhen is the most prominent example of this phenomenon.

³ The Compulsory School Age is a law established by the Chinese government in 1986 whereby students are required to attend nine years of schooling. This law is depicted as being motivated by a vision of modernization and being a “target more than reality,” (China Highlights; 2019).

conducted in Shanghai specifically. By focusing on Shanghai, the scope of China's mass-migration is narrowed down to a city which demonstrates a variety of outcomes that derive from institutional barriers.

Temporary migrants⁴ are specifically subject to a number of disparities with regards to the housing and educational arrangements, and thus will be the focus population in this study. Lacking a local *hukou* designation is a defining characteristic of migrant's experiences while in the city; education and housing are two among the many areas that are influenced by such regulations. Although temporary migrants do not intend to settle permanently in Shanghai, it is important to note that institutional barriers are seen as being one reason why.

The time parameter of this thesis is the past two decades because this will allow for an investigation of how the progression of changes to the *hukou* system have impacted the experiences of temporary migrants in Shanghai. A focus on the recent history will be valuable in developing an understanding of the ongoing challenges endured by temporary migrants. Though not perfectly encapsulated within this time period of interest, it is also important to recognize the influence of China's Opening Up and Reform (改革開放 *gaigekaifang*) beginning in 1978. Among the numerous changes that took place during China's Opening, this series of policies catalyzed the reemergence of internal migration. Movement between rural and urban areas—and even between areas within an urban setting was a rare occurrence prior to China's economic reform; but there has been a noteworthy influx of migration from rural areas beginning in 1983, post *gaigekaifang* (Wu 2002).

⁴ Migrants can be categorized as being permanent or temporary. Fan differentiates the two groups by stating that "permanent migrants is commonly used to refer to five-year inter-county migrants who have changed their *hukou* to the place of enumeration; whereas temporary migrants refer to those who have not changed their *hukou* to the place of enumeration." (Fan; 2018, 6).

With regards to education, the primary population of interest is migrant students who are enrolled in schools from kindergarten to twelfth grade, both at public and migrant schools. Migrant students face a multitude of challenges both in public and private schools, and a vast majority unroll by the time they complete middle school. By looking at migrant students within the these grades and school structures, this study will be able to distinguish variance in quality of education among schools as well as gain insight as to how accessible each of the two school systems are.

This thesis will approach data collection by drawing upon scholarly publications, journal articles, datasets pertaining to migration, and previously conducted surveys. Analysis of current scholarship is a more-practical approach as opposed to statistical analysis because the situations experienced by migrants cannot be fully represented numerically. Utilizing news reports is important because it allows for integrating current information that is currently not documented in scholarship. Data that derives from news publications will be supplemented with research publications to establish credibility; this will enrich my thesis by conducting research that is grounded in scholarship, but also conveys current affairs and implications.

In order to address the objective of this thesis, the first chapter will investigate the housing situation in Shanghai in terms of the current institutional barriers that influence the experiences of migrants. The second chapter will discuss education for migrant students with respect to enrollment, the quality of the schools, student experiences, and regulations that impact educational attainment. After having discussed both housing and education through the lens of migration and institutional barriers that are relevant to each, the third chapter will be an analysis of the relationship between housing and education. This thesis will conclude with a discussion of key findings.

Chapter One

The Floating Population and Institutional Barriers

China is known for undergoing one of the largest and most prominent instances of rural-to-urban migration in world history. The growing scope of this phenomenon accentuates the importance of understanding modern-day trends pertaining to the connection between the floating population and institutional barriers. Institutional barriers, primarily the *hukou* system accompanied by local Shanghai policy, greatly influence the transition from a rural-to-urban lifestyle in a multitude of ways such as acquiring housing and enrolling in school. This chapter will explain current migration trends and the ways that institutional barriers influence the process of internal movement. Although past and current migratory trends in China are noteworthy, data shows that the process of becoming integrated into the urban lifestyle is not an easy feat. Efforts have been made by the state and city alike to slow movement into Shanghai and encourage migration to smaller, developing cities—an act motivated by the prospect of further economic growth. The drawbacks and challenges pertaining to not having a local Shanghai status are generally outweighed by the prospect of advancing a family's economic standing, and are further incentivized by rural 'push' factors as well as urban 'pull' factors. Though migration from rural areas is challenging, the trend continues today, as many aspire to have a better lifestyle for themselves and their families.

DEFINING MIGRANT POPULATION SEGMENTS

There are multiple terms used in reference to migrants in China; it is imperative to distinguish each term from each other for clarity purposes of this thesis. Note that the *hukou* system is embedded in China-specific migration terms. The following definitions will be used to refer to the following segments of the population:

Term	Definition
Migrant	A person who undergoes any form of semi permanent movement regardless of physical distance ⁵
Floating Population	Chinese citizens who leave their place of <i>hukou</i> registration for periods of time valued at six months or longer ⁶
Permanent Migrant	Migrants who have changed their <i>hukou</i> registration to their place of destination ⁷
Temporary Migrant	Migrants who have not changed their <i>hukou</i> registration to their place of destination ⁸

Figure 1: Definitions in reference to migrants in China. Source: Fan 2018, Lee 1966

Although Lee's definition of what constitutes a migrant dismisses physical distance, it emphasizes time and intent for individuals choosing to live away from their homes (Lee 1966; 49). This definition shows the essence of modern-day migratory trends in China whereby rural-to-urban migrants each have an individual experience with unique transitions, variations in distance, motivations, and allotted time in the destination city. Lee's lexicon for migrants is an 'umbrella term' that encapsulates the essence of many different forms of migration.

⁵ Definition based upon Everett Lee's *A Theory of Migration*, 1966 and from Sidney Fan's *Population Mobility and Migration*, 2018. Note that permanent and temporary migrant definitions are referenced in terms of a five-year time period

Cindy Fan builds upon Lee's ideas by distinguishing between the 'floating population', permanent migrants, and temporary migrants. Fan's definition of the 'floating population' is used in reference to people who go beyond the bounds of their *hukou* registration, marked by six months of time or more (Fan 2018; 6). This concept of the the floating population is described by Fan as being a "stock measure" used to help quantify any migratory-related behavior that disregards the time associated with migrating (Fan 2018;6). Though this terminology is also broad, it adds a layer of specificity in reference to internal movements in China and the relevance of the household registration system.

Like the floating population, the distinction between permanent and temporary migrants is also embedded in the *hukou* status that a migrant does or does not maintain. Both terms are measured in terms of five years. The major difference between being 'temporary' and 'permanent' is whether a citizen decides to maintain or alter their regional distinction. The decision to change *hukou* registration is significant because it can greatly influence the ability for a migrant to access resources, transition to the city, and improve their lifestyle overall. This thesis will focus on the experiences of temporary migrants because their transition is greatly influenced by their inability to obtain a local Shanghai *hukou* status.

Except for the definition of migrant, these migration terms are crafted around China's household registration system. Incorporation of the *hukou* system into migratory terminology showcases that the modern day infrastructure pertaining to citizen mobility remains centered around the household registration system. Although China has undergone a series of reforms and gradually allowed for domestic movement, the *hukou* system holds great influence in the present day.

MIGRATORY TRENDS OVER TIME

Due to domestic reforms primarily in the 1980s and 1990s, people from rural areas began to flood into urban regions as they were gradually allowed to move throughout the country. Prior to these series of reforms, domestic migration was miniscule, making it important to highlight China's migration trend as a recent phenomenon in China's long history.

Parallel to these governmental reforms, the size of the floating population began to grow immensely over the past few decades. Such mobility is particularly noteworthy between 1990 and 2010, when inter-provincial and temporary migration were far more common than permanent migration (*See Figure 2*). In 1983, the floating population was comprised of two million people, and in 2014, 298 million people (Fan 2018; 6). This is a nearly-exponential rate of growth that brought great change to rural and urban communities alike.

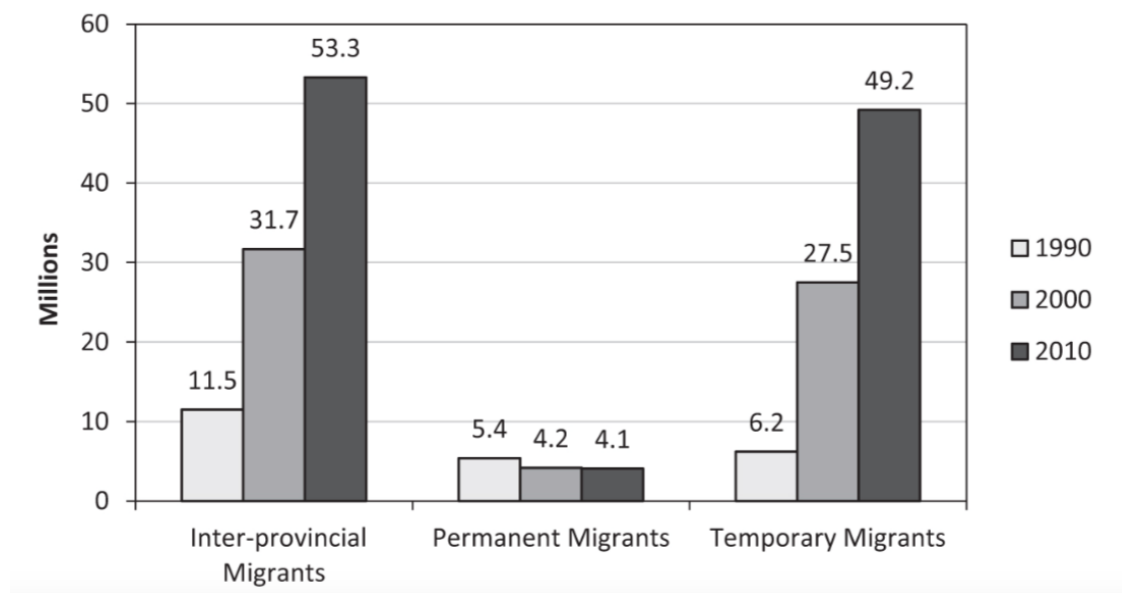


Figure 2: The progression of migrants between 1990-2010. *Source: Fan 2018.*

As the rate of urbanization in China primarily began to increase during the 1980s, the proportion of the urban population occupied by rural citizens also increased (*see Figure 2*). What

is important to note about the changes to the population composition over time is that proportion of the rural populace generally exceeded the growth rate of their urban counterparts leading into 2011. This showcases both the extent of rural-to-urban movement occurring with the state's adoption of Reform and Opening Up (改革开放 *gaigekaiifang*) as well as the changing population composition impact felt by urban areas throughout the country. The loss felt by rural areas that can be accredited to migration is being felt in destination cities, often characterized by overcrowding and insufficient housing.

Motivations to Migrate

There are many factors that lead individuals to migrate out of their hometowns, the primary reason pertaining to economics (Hu 2012; 4), (Zhong et al. 2016; 9). Families in rural areas generally face a series of financial burdens including earning little income from their jobs, having expensive rents, being able to afford education costs for their children, supporting both familial elders and children, medical expenses, and having few employment benefits (Zhong et al. 2016; 9). A study conducted in Shanghai found that rural-to-urban migrants whose destination is Shanghai nearly double their income (Wang and Zuo 1999; 276). This drastic improvement in a family's income is a major "pull factor" that falls in Everett Lee's classification of "factors associated with area of destination" (Lee 1966; 50).

The prospect of alleviating a proportion of a family's financial stress greatly appeals to many of those who choose to move. In a series of interviews conducted by Zhong et al., one of the interviewees articulated this:

I have a very heavy financial burden that you can't imagine! I'm the only person who has a paid job to support the whole family. My parents are farming in my village, and my two younger brothers are and one younger sister is receiving education in schools. They all need money from me. (Zhong et al. 2016; 9).

This account conveys the personal reality and pressures endured by one female worker who has the stress of supporting her extended family by herself. The accumulation of pressures associated with supporting a family and sustaining an income is a critical factor that has long continued to drive China's large-scale domestic movement. Migration is seen by many rural citizens as being an outlet that can help with alleviating the extent of financial and familial-related burdens.

As children reach an age to which they are able to pursue work, they feel a pressure to help support their families (Hu 2012; 3). The age of an individual's first migration experience has been on the decline; between 1980 and 1990 the average age for a young citizens' first time migrating was 21.1 years, and for the younger generation born after 1990 the average age is 17.2 years (Hu 2012; 3). Such a decline accentuates the prominence of economic hardship endured by rural families, and the overarching primary reason that people have and continue to move to major cities.

In addition to the pursuit of improving families' economic standing, there are numerous other reasons for moving. In a survey among China's young generation, a trend among interviewees showed that additional reasons for motivation include feeling exhausted from school, being drawn to an urban lifestyle, a curiosity to experience the city, career advancement, "for fun," and working in a less-labor intensive position (Hu 2012; 5-10). Although these accounts convey a variety of motivations to pursue such a life-changing decision, they do not exhibit the same necessity as those looking to further support their families. Investigations of motivations such as these would likely present a different narrative. However, a common reason among migrants, regardless of reason, is a shared hope for an improved lifestyle.

THE *HUKOU* AS AN INSTITUTEIONAL BARRIER

In 2017, 9,726,900 of Shanghai's 14,456,000 residents were without Shanghai citizen status (Fu 2018; 1). This is a large proportion of the population who are more likely to have and continue to experience the impact of the *hukou* system. The systematic and unequal procedures that derive from institutional barriers are observable through challenges endured by rural-to-urban migrants. More specifically, the most outstanding barrier that continues to influence migratory trends and experiences in China is the *hukou* system. The dichotomy between rural and urban citizenry is quite prevalent when comparing that of agricultural and non-agricultural *hukou* status; the entitlements and resources of citizens are based upon this form of identification. People's household registration status can help or harm their ability to access services such as welfare benefits, education, and housing—dependent upon their status. Those residing in urban areas with local status are granted access to a wide variety of benefits, such as subsidized housing and access to higher-paying jobs. In contrast, migrants in urban areas are barred from sharing local urban benefits, and often face forms of discrimination and inadequate resource access. This is significant because it puts rural-to-urban migrants in a disadvantageous position, especially in their movement to top-tier cities such as Shanghai.

Challenges of the *Hukou* in Shanghai

Possession of a *hukou* specific to Shanghai has noteworthy benefits including the ability to buy a house, access medical insurance, enroll in public schools, and receive retirement benefits (Fu 2018;1). Temporary migrants who settle in Shanghai with their agricultural status are essentially 'barred' from accessing benefits such as these. This can make the transition into the urban lifestyle particularly challenging because it manifests a situation to which migrants

have limited access to generally low-quality and expensive housing and services while being subject to discrimination.

Although migrants can apply for non-agricultural *hukou* status, the process to obtain the registration is difficult. *China Briefing* outlines the following qualifications necessary to obtain this documentation in Shanghai specifically:

1. Possessing a noteworthy talent, such as those in reference to starting business, having a leadership position in a company, or obtaining patents
2. Obtaining a bachelor's degree in a foreign country
3. Graduating from a university
4. Being close to family members with a Shanghai registration
5. Having a Shanghai permit and making contributions to social insurance over the course of seven years

Qualifications such as these demonstrate a preference for people who possess notably high levels of human capital. The ability to “check off” achievements such as attending a university or becoming established in the world of business requires having ample resources and opportunities to do so. These are not common attributes among temporary rural-to-urban migrants. As previously discussed, migrants are primarily incentivized to move to urban centers in order to advance their family's economic standing. This typically entails occupying low-skill positions as opposed to white collar positions that are associated with having a degree or having a managerial position at a business. By having such high-levels of achievement as the benchmark to determine whether an individual can become a Shanghai citizen, migrants are subject to a form of discrimination that favors highly skilled and well-resourced individuals, despite the need for low skill positions to also be filled.

In addition to standards such as these, migrants' ability to obtain a Shanghai status is further muffled by a point-based system, first implemented in 2013 (Wen 2018;1). In Beijing, a comparable system has been adopted. Citizens are ‘scored’ on the premise of things including

their education level, contributions to social insurance, age, criminal record, “entrepreneurial ability” (Wen 2018;1). Thus, migrants are not only subject to high standards of achievement to be considered for changing their registration status, but they are also subject to being scored on the premise of many of their personal attributes. This process is for the *hukou* as an intervening obstacle for migrants who seek to reside in the city. Temporary migrants endure a plethora of challenges amidst the process to acclimate to a Shanghai lifestyle. Like the preference for high-achieving and well-off citizens, the point-based system conveys additional areas that systematically disadvantage migrants, preventing them from having a straightforward transition into the city.

Shanghai and the “Blue” *Hukou*

Although temporary migrants do not possess local *hukou* status, there are ways for migrants to obtain a status comparative to that of being a ‘local’. Known as the “blue seated” or “blue-stamped” *hukou*, migrants who have outstanding talent, experience, or other attributes of the like can qualify purchase their status into a megacity and receive benefits (Wang and Zuo 1999; 279). In Shanghai specifically, the city began to target migrants and foreigners affiliated with business, investment, education, government, and health in the 1990’s (Wu 2013; 35). A big drawing factor for the “blue-stamp” status is being granted the ability for migrant’s children to enroll in high-quality schools and the ability to apply for a business license (Wu 2013; 35). However, this is not an affordable endeavor for most; the hefty price tag of one million RMB (\$143,020) for domestic investors is approximately 150 times the average yearly income of a rural migrant (Wang and Zuo 1999; 279).

The premise of the “blue-stamped” *hukou* indicates that Shanghai values and welcomes individuals with high levels of human capital. However, considering that the majority of

migrants seek to advance their economic standing and often work low skill, and highly labor-intensive jobs, that there is not the same level of value. Various forms of discrimination, such as financial discrimination pertaining to ‘buying’ a Shanghai *hukou* status, showcases that it is difficult for migrants to divert the challenges that they endure in the big city.

The *Hukou* and Migration: A State-Based Perspective and Efforts

It is also imperative to highlight the perspective of the Chinese government and cities with respect to migration and resource/benefit allocation. Spencer Sheehan’s 2017 article in *The Diplomat* explains the state’s goal of granting non-agricultural *hukou* documentation/residency permits to 100 million migrants by the year 2020 (Sheehan 2017;1). This approach specifically refers to granting statuses that pertain to smaller and developing cities and emphasize the state’s hopes to further catalyze economic growth in these regions (Sheehan 2017; 1). This agenda upheld by these states can be seen as one way to which rural citizens are being encouraged to undergo the process of changing their *hukou* and thus gaining access to non-agricultural benefits. Additionally, this vision attempts to motivate people to move to areas that are beyond the boundaries of the heavily populated and strong economic standing of top-tier cities.

Although this attempt appears to be proactive on the surface, it is not a clear-cut solution that stands free from the impacts of the household registration system. One factor associated with helping migrants adapt to non-agricultural registrations worthy of mention is the noteworthy expense of expanding benefits to newly urban citizens. The welfare and benefits received by newly registered urban citizens are affiliated with a cost of approximately \$14,500 per individual (Sheehan 2017;1). This large cost indicates as being a possible motivation associated with the continued usage of the *hukou* system in the present day. Extending benefits to a larger proportion of the population increases the state’s financial obligation to provide non-agricultural benefits.

It is also important to acknowledge that not all migrants are interested in changing their *hukou* status. Undergoing the process of changing one's *hukou* is a timely process that puts rural migrants in a position whereby they must give up their rural land; this is something that not many migrants are eager to do (Sheehan 2017;1). A large number of aspiring and present-day migrants are motivated by the prospect of supporting their families and advancing their economic standing. Surrendering their land in the name of changing their registration can greatly impact their whole family and ability to sustain a rural lifestyle. Additionally, it is important to also highlight that large cities tend to be more alluring destinations that attract many migrants as opposed to smaller cities that are in the works of becoming established. Comparatively, the challenges affiliated with migration in China's largest cities generally bring forth better job opportunities, higher wages, stronger infrastructure, and economic activity than the small cities migrants are encouraged to move to (Sheehan 2017; 1). Thus, the cost-benefit tradeoff between choosing to migrate to either region is not a simple decision. Despite the state's effort to help residents navigate the *hukou* system specifically in smaller cities, it does not fully address the scope of considerations that migrants consider.

Current Government Policy in Regards to the Hukou

Recently, Shanghai became the first city to issue residence permits which are intended to be distributed to high-skilled foreigners with intentions to temporarily work in the city (Shira et al. 2017;1). Although this policy allows for Shanghai to celebrate increased citizen integration, this policy does not ease the process that domestic temporary migrants undergo. There is a 'gap' between Shanghai locals, foreigners issued a residence permit, and people without a Shanghai registration. Immersion and experiences associated with the urban lifestyle accentuates these gaps within the individual experiences of migrants. A collaborative qualitative study conducted

among 17 rural-to-urban migrants in Shenzhen reveals a glimpse into the frustration migrants feel as they encounter the hurdles of city life through the *hukou* system. One individual expressed:

It's a joke! I'm a Chinese citizen from a rural area, and the city residents are also Chinese citizens. We are living and working in the same territory, we are all Chinese. Why only I should apply for the residence permit? (Zhong et al. 2016; 10).

This individual account shows that there is a sense of division between people and place which is embedded in the regulations of the *hukou* system. Conversely, the interview also suggests the importance of unity—"We are all Chinese." This dichotomy facilitated by the institutional barrier of the registration system fosters challenges that not only pertain to external infrastructure, but also the human experience.

The decision to migrate from a rural hometown to Shanghai is a major decision. Migrants must consider an abundance of challenges including the lack of possessing a Shanghai status, not being the recipient of *hukou* benefits allotted to locals, the costs associated with moving and living in the city, and discrimination. Despite these realities, migration has and continues to occur on a large scale; the primary reason to endure circumstances such as these is the hope for better supporting their families and an improved lifestyle. However, upon arriving in the city, there is another set of burdens associated with the *hukou* system, such as issues with finding housing and enrolling their children in schools.

Chapter Two

Urban Housing Arrangements for Rural-to-Urban Migrants

“Restricted access to urban housing, together with the temporary status for migrants, contributes to their poor housing conditions,” (Wu 2002; 90).

The affordability, environment, location, and quality of a home can greatly influence the experiences and lifestyle of an individual. With the mass rural-to-urban migration China has experienced since Reform and Opening up, the necessity for affordable, safe, and quality housing in destination cities has increased exponentially. However, despite efforts to resolve this issue, housing continues to be a major challenge for migrants arriving in megacities such as Shanghai. The negative impact on migrants has captured the concern of scholars and news outlets alike. Wang and Zuo have gone as far as describing the migrant housing landscape as “residential segregation,” arguing that locals reap the greatest housing-related benefits (Wang and Zuo 1997; 278).

This chapter will look at current housing-related challenges and how institutional barriers play a role in the residential arrangements of temporary migrants. News reports and research studies both indicate that migrants’ ambition to temporarily settle down to work for remittances to send to their families in rural areas is not an easy feat. Limited housing, high costs of living, lack of access to everyday facilities, and discrimination are all common among migrant populations in Shanghai today. These outcomes are related to the current *hukou* system as well as Shanghai-specific policy.

HOW THE *HUKOU* SYSTEM SHAPES MIGRATION

The *hukou* system in China today functions as a continuation of the dual system that began during the high-communist era. Although this infrastructure has undergone efforts of integration to soften its rigid implications, it still maintains an internal division that becomes increasingly prevalent during the process of migrating from rural to urban areas. As previously mentioned, a “blue-stamped” *hukou* in Shanghai costs the equivalent of 150 times the annual income of a migrant which rules out this option (Wu 2013; 35). However, beyond the geographic boundaries of their rural classification, migrants are excluded from many of the benefits granted to urban locals, such as access to free public housing and employment opportunities (Wang and Zuo 1999; 279).

In Shanghai, it is said that housing is the greatest household registration related-benefit celebrated by those with Shanghai status (Wang and Zuo 199; 277). With this benefit, however, it is important to make the connection between work and housing in that work provides the capital to help individuals afford their place of residence as well as housing-specific assistance. The locals generally occupy higher-paying, higher-benefits, and overall higher-quality positions relative to temporary migrants (Wang and Zuo 1999; 279). This is significant because migrants who occupy low-paid, manual labor positions do not receive assistance with finding affordable housing, and therefore, work hard to pay more for lower-quality facilities. The *hukou* system is structured such that only Shanghai locals, not migrants, qualify to live in free public housing, and additionally, that benefits allocated to locals leads migrants to paying nearly double the cost of housing (Wang and Zuo 1999; 277, 279). The housing-related inequity migrants endure while residing in Shanghai is the product of *hukou*-related discrimination. Migrants face a collection of

challenges including those related to housing unaffordability, being restricted in what housing options are available to them, and occupying lower-quality housing.

In the City: Where do Temporary Migrants Live?

Many scholars agree that obtaining a place of residence is a challenging endeavor in China's megacities, especially for temporary rural-to-urban migrants (Wu 2002; 93). In the cities across China, renting is generally the most commonly used method among temporary migrants (China Labour Bulletin 2019), (Lu et al. 2016), (Wang et al. 1995), (Wu 2002;101). This is also true in Shanghai. Data collected in 2002 indicates that 49% of temporary migrants in Shanghai occupied privately-rented homes, followed by 28.8% residing in dormitories, and 11.6% renting public housing (*See Figure 1*)(Wu 2002; 101). Comparatively, locals and permanent migrants both show a different trend whereby locals in Shanghai primarily occupy public rentals (43.8%) and permanent migrants most commonly live in private housing (51.3%) (*See Figure 1*) (Wu 2002; 101). Additionally, when looking at the rentals of locals and migrants, we see that the physical space of migrant rentals is significantly smaller, on average half, of that of local house sizes (8. 2 square meters) (Wang and Zuo 1999; 277). This dichotomy in housing arrangements can be traced to the restrictions and regulations implemented through the *hukou* and local Shanghai policy.

	<i>Shanghai</i>			<i>Beijing</i>		
	<i>Temporary Migrants</i> (n = 1,789)	<i>Permanent Migrants</i> (n = 80)	<i>Local Residents</i> (n = 137)	<i>Temporary Migrants</i> (n = 927)	<i>Permanent Migrants</i> (n = 145)	<i>Local Residents</i> (n = 154)
Renting private housing	49.0	2.5	3.6	31.9	7.6	2.6
Renting public housing	11.6	33.8	43.8	18.7	26.9	24.7
Dorm/workshed	28.8	3.8	0.0	41.6	11.0	1.3
Staying with local residents	4.6	1.3	2.9	3.9	1.4	0.0
Private housing	0.0	51.3	39.4	0.0	32.4	42.9
Commercial housing	0.7	5.0	10.2	0.4	1.4	2.6
Other ^a	5.4	2.5	0.0	3.3	19.3	26.0
Combined	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

a. Other housing choices include self-built shed, boat, hotel/inn, living on the street or in a hallway, and staying in hospital rooms for temporary migrants and include relocation housing and housing sold by work units for permanent migrants and local residents.

Figure 1: Comparison between urban population status and housing arrangements between Shanghai and Beijing.
Source: Wu; 2002; 101

Because the majority of temporary migrants in Shanghai do not have local *hukou* status, they are being excluded from local welfare, benefits, and other resources that are granted to locals and permanent migrants. The impact of this can be observed in housing, as 49% of the temporary migrants occupied privately-rented houses compared to permanent migrants at 2.5%, and 3.6% of Shanghai locals who occupy private rentals (See Figure 1). This data suggests that private rentals and dormitories are the most accessible option for migrants arriving in Shanghai, and that in contrast, individuals with Shanghai-specific status have more readily-available alternatives for housing. However, the differences in housing types do not convey the full picture of what housing-related challenges for temporary migrants related to the *hukou*. An investigation of additional considerations such as quality, access to basic housing elements, and affordability help to demonstrate the impact of the *hukou* on a personal level.

Urban Living Conditions for Temporary Migrants

Quality is an attribute that characterizes a place residence and the well-being and experiences of its inhabitants. However, the concept of quality is subjective; it is often “context dependent” and lacks a universally-agreed upon set of standards that explicitly determine whether an entity can possess this label (Wu 2002; 94). Factors including accessibility, affordability, and the surroundings of a home are all common indicators used to ‘measure’ the overall condition of a housing arrangement (Wu 2002; 94). Despite the nebulous distinction of what is and is not deemed as being “of quality,” for the purposes of this research, quality of migrant housing will be based on affordability, size, safety, access to basic amenities and appliances, and the character of the neighborhood. The specific conditions of housing for temporary migrants in Shanghai are generally depicted by scholars and news reporters as being expensive, exceptionally small, lacking access to necessities, and even being unsafe, all attributes that do not fit the the definition of quality housing.

One area of contention is migrants’ limited access to housing essentials including kitchens and bathrooms. In Shanghai, 60% locals have access to a kitchen and 50% to bathrooms compared to 12% and 6% of temporary migrants, (Wang et al. 1995). The rent for spaces with kitchens and bathrooms accessible to migrants is much higher; this housing dilemma not only pertains to having access to living necessities but also hints at migrant-accepting housing as being unaffordable. For example, in the Baoshan District, the cost of housing increases from 500-1,000 RMB (\$71.01-\$142.03 to 2000 RMB should migrants select a home with a kitchen or bathroom (China Labour Bulletin 2019). This is a substantial increase considering that the average Shanghai local is paid an average of 22.5 RMB (\$3.22) per month compared to migrants who pay an average of 133 RMB (\$19.02) per month (Wang and Zuo 1999; 2013). Therefore,

there is a substantial gap in monthly housing costs for people in Shanghai, largely due to the household registration system. Furthermore, many temporary migrants occupy places that not only negatively impact their finances, but also constrict their lifestyle and wellbeing.

With the price and housing style dichotomies both deriving from the *hukou*, it is imperative to highlight that people with local *hukou* status are entitled to subsidized housing, which also has an influence on the differentiation in monthly rent (Wang and Zuo 1999; 277). This provides further context as to the contrasting arrangements and financial obligations that make different impacts for temporary migrants and Shanghai locals. Migrants who generally seek economic gain are paying higher prices for lower-quality facilities. Alternatively, locals, who can be inferred as having comparatively higher incomes in addition to subsidized housing, have an elevated standard of living.

FROM STATISTICS TO REALITY: A LOOK INTO SHANGHAI MIGRANT EXPERIENCES

Although statistics describe harsh realities and bring light to the prevalence of housing-related issues, they do not draw connections between factual representations and the actual human experience. Photographs, quotes, and excerpts provide a more complete view of the hardships migrants face. In addition to the quality and cost of a place to live, there are far more details that are not conveyed through such accumulations of data. Weiping Wu, a specialist on urban China studies, provides a glimpse into the realities faced by migrants residing in Shanghai. Wu describes:

Overcrowding seems to be a feature of migrant housing, with each person using only about a third of the space occupied by a typical urban resident. These migrants also tend to live in dwellings that are less equipped with kitchen/bathroom facilities, are used for working or other purposes in addition to serving as residences, and have less stable structural features (such as temporary dorms on construction sites). It is not unusual to see a family of three sharing a single rental room with no facilities and using a corner to set up a small cooking area with either a kerosene burner or propane stove. A small portion of temporary migrants (about 3%-4% in both cities) encounters the worst housing conditions for prolonged periods of time, ranging from sleeping on hospital benches to resting by vendor stalls sheltered by only plastic sheets to sleeping under staircases in multistory apartments. (Wu 2002; 105).

Wu's account brings attention to a multitude of complications that are associated with being a temporary migrant living in Shanghai. Exuberant prices, small living quarters, limited access to basic amenities and appliances, and unsafe setups are all realities that many migrants endure upon joining the urban lifestyle; situations such as these are not explicitly conveyed just through an investigation data.

Migrant Workers' Personal Experiences

News reports allow for a deeper and current insight as to the housing conditions temporary migrants face. This section is a small collage of some of the realities faced by a few among many temporary migrants who are seeking to go about their work in Shanghai.

In *Laoximen* (老西門), one of Shanghai's older neighborhoods densely populated with migrant workers, migrants pay approximately 1000 RMB (\$143.06) for monthly rent (AFP International Text Wire 2018). This rent is notably high compared to the average price of 133 RMB (\$19.02) per month computed by Wang and Zuo. During the winter, however, this price increases further if people want heating. A 2018 news report by AFP International Text Wire explains that migrants cannot afford to buy a heater nor pay an additional 100 RMB (\$14.31) per month to have heating during the winter (AFP International Text Wire 2018). As an alternative,

residents describe alternative ways of trying to keep warm, such as using hot water or, if they do have a heater, only using it for large gatherings with family and friends (AFP International Text Wire 2018). Despite having small, cold living conditions, Bao, a 64-year old migrant residing in *Laoximen* said:

I'm very happy here to earn one or two hundred yuan a day. Making money every day makes me happy... I will go back to my hometown when I'm 70. (AFP International Text Wire 2018).

Bao's enthusiasm conveys the necessity that migrant workers have the capability of earning an income to support themselves and their rural families. However, this account does not refer to how the migrant feels about his living arrangements.

Shantytowns, unsafe and illegally constructed housing areas, are an arrangement that has been adopted by many migrants in Shanghai. A key attribute of this style of housing is a lack of safety, such as the use of gas cylinders, inefficient drainage systems, and poor construction (Jian 2018). Despite these concerns, the greatest appeal of these neighborhoods is the low rent (Jian 2018). Endurance of such conditions in exchange for a low cost of living accentuates the necessity for affordable housing that can be accessed by temporary migrants, and as a current alternative, living in shanty towns became a reality. Although the city government decided in 2014 to pursue a plan of destroying 35 of these regions in Shanghai, this process is still underway. To capture the reality of such regions, Wu Xiaodi says,

"I can barely sleep at night every summer and winter for fear that the low-lying village might be flooded or that roofs will collapse under heavy snow," (Jian 2018).

Another news article tells of a migrant worker in Shanghai who does not have the funds to afford a place to live. As an alternative to expensive housing arrangements, this individual has

resorted to living in a 24 hour McDonald's located at the *Tonghe Xincun* metro station (Shanghai Daily 2013). This man's situation reflects the limitations of *hukou*-derived housing benefits.

Provided the necessity of having a local status to obtain access to free public housing, subsidized housing, or more affordable options in general, it can be assumed that this man's status greatly influences his inability to establish a place to live, even if he intends to work in Shanghai for a temporary period of time.

One of the few affordable housing options available to non-Shanghai *hukou* holders are dormitories owned by employers (China Development Briefing 2018). These facilities are often small and crowded, do not allow for privacy, and lack their own kitchen/bathroom (*See Figure 2*) (China Development Briefing 2018). Although these arrangements exist, the photo below, described as similar to dormitory arrangements across the city, do not offer the greatest quality, nor are ideal for families raising kids.



Figure 2: Example of dormitory style living conditions in Shanghai. Source: China Development Brief 2018.

City-Specific Institutional Barriers: Shanghai's Current Housing Landscape

Shanghai has been marked by its proactive measures to help improve its quality of housing since the 1990s, such as increasing investment in housing and replacing unsound structures (Wu 2002; 94). However, Wu highlights that changes such as these, although bringing about positive change to the community, have little to no influence on the residential circumstances of temporary migrants (Wu 2002; 94).

More recent data suggests that rental options for migrants are decreasing, and that migrants are more likely to pay market price and reside in collective housing or market rentals (Logan 2009). It is forecast that only about two thousand rental homes will be constructed and made available in the upcoming years (Poon 2019). Since migrants in the city face extreme overcrowding and do not have the ability to afford many housing options, this small-scale future development does not appear to be a solution nor a realistic option that will be extended to a significant number of temporary migrants. Although a small effort is expected to be made, it does not seem to be intended for migrants, but rather for locals who have the means to afford new living complexes. Therefore, the current and future limitations on housing supply are an indirect institutional barrier created by the city. There does not appear to be a substantial effort made to accommodate the city's large population of temporary migrants.

Another important issue that is of misinformation circulating among people looking for housing through advertisements. A study conducted by *CityLab* analyzed approximately 33,000 advertisements for Shanghai rentals that described desirable characteristics, such as being centrally located, having a kitchen or bathroom, or a shared room for affordability. However, from responding to 200 advertisements, researchers found that many of the advertised homes were greatly overcrowded, having upwards to 24 people occupying a space intended for a small

family (Poon 2019). As the number of renters increased per unit, the overall cost of rent decreased, making arrangements such as these more accessible to migrants' pocketbooks (Poon 2019). However, places such as these deemed as being "informal rentals" are becoming hard to find. The government has made an effort to delete advertisements for "bed spaces" targeted towards migrants on popular housing websites, therefore making somewhat more affordable arrangements inaccessible (Poon 2019). The study conducted by *CityLab* showcases the situations migrants are willing to endure to ensure that they have a place to live, and also, that deliberate efforts are being made to prevent migrants from obtaining few of the unideal, yet affordable, housing options.

Along with restricting access to overcrowded yet affordable homes are city efforts to demolish areas deemed as shantytowns. Areas that are recognized as shantytowns are the product of insufficient living spaces, which has led to the construction of illegal structures (Jian 2018). In 2014, the Shanghai government began to pursue a course of action involving the destruction of 35 shantytowns (Jian 2018). As a means of making this process a reality, the state has offered subsidies to former inhabitants to relocate, with the amount being larger the sooner the resident signs an agreement (Jian 2018). There are two points to highlight in this situation. Firstly, the majority of these illegal structures are not deemed as safe, since they are subject to heavy flooding and the structures are unsound. However, some inhabitants feel attached to their homes and do not think that the money given in exchange for relocation is sufficient to sustain their families for long (Jian 2018). An additional consideration is that although the demolition process does clear up space, it does not guarantee that the space will be intended for temporary migrant housing. Rather, opened up space can also be used for expensive shopping centers or apartments (See Figure 3).



Figure 3: Demolition in Hongkou, Shanghai. Source: China Development Brief 2018.

The lack of affordable housing leads a sizable proportion of Shanghai migrants to share small apartments with an abundance of fellow tenants—assuming that places such as these can be found and occupied without local status—indicating that lack of affordability prevails as a challenge that migrants face. This hardship can be related to the *hukou*, in that locals generally do not endure comparable instances of high rent or overcrowding.

Excellence and the BRI: The Shanghai Master Urban Plan 2017-2035

In addition to the current limitations placed on migrants through the country-wide *hukou* institution, Shanghai has recently adopted a policy that will further hinder the ease of migration. Part of China's vision for sustaining economic growth and gaining further prominence in the international community through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) strategy. Within this approach, Shanghai has become a key player pinpointed for contributing to further economic growth, specifically through the Shanghai Master Urban Plan 2017-2035. With reference to migration to Shanghai, the most noteworthy aspect of this plan is it articulates the objective to

control the growth of the population. By 2035, the population of Shanghai is forecast to be capped at 25 million people (*Master Plan for Our Global City* 2018). For context, the estimated population of Shanghai for 2020 is approximately 27 million people (World Population Review 2020). Assuming that this goal remains into the future, this implies that restrictions on migration will become more stringent, thus imposing a city level institutional barrier on top of the overall *hukou* system.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Although Shanghai has made efforts to alleviate housing-related issues for migrants, it endures a hurdle whereby the needs of local Shanghai citizens is prioritized atop such endeavors (China Development Briefing 2018). The governmental assistance provided to Shanghai citizens appears to help buffer locals from conditions comparable to that of temporary migrants. The unfair distribution of resources that excludes and discriminates against migrants demonstrates that both the state-level household registration system as well as local Shanghai policies function as institutional barriers that curtail migrants' abilities to participate in the Shanghai lifestyle. In addition to the hardships in finding housing, it is imperative to acknowledge that such barriers are hard for migrants to work around and overcome. Transitioning into a Shanghai *hukou* classification is an expensive endeavor that targets people with high levels of human capital and prestigious accomplishments. Therefore, there is little that can be successfully and easily done by migrants themselves to be able to have access to the same resources, opportunities, and benefits as locals. The problem of occupying inadequate housing or not having housing at all can impose negative impacts on the wellbeing and experiences of migrants. Institutional barriers that systematically influence migrants, and not locals, not only pertains to poor housing conditions, but also shapes education for migrants in urban areas.

Chapter Three

Urban Education and Enrollment for Rural-to-Urban Migrants

“I found migrant families open and honest in sharing their life experiences. There were lots of tears, but also a strong sense of love and gratefulness for the family being together in the same city.” (Ming 2013, 39).

Today, there are approximately 20 million children throughout China between six and fourteen years of age who are classified as rural-to-urban migrants who do not hold urban *hukou* designations (Chen and Feng 2017; 1008). There is a clear necessity among migrant families for accessible and high quality schools. As with housing, however, educational opportunities for migrant students are greatly constricted by *hukou* and city-specific policies that make enrollment a challenging endeavor. The Chinese government requires that all students attend school for a minimum of nine years. Although this law is in place, the *hukou* system also holds influence over such that local students are favored over migrants.

Similar to many cities around the country, migrant students in Shanghai endure a multitude of challenges upon adopting an urban lifestyle. These include discriminatory barriers to enrollment at distinguished schools, having to decide the trajectory of their futures upon completing middle school, expensive school fees, and for many, attending lower-quality private migrant schools. Institutional barriers impose an uneven allocation of benefits and selectivity that negatively impacts the educational experiences of migrant children in Shanghai.

THE COMPULSORY EDUCATION LAW AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR MIGRANTS

In 1986, the Chinese government established the Compulsory Education Law in light of its push for national modernization (China Highlights 2019). The law requires that all Chinese children attend school for a total nine years, and that such education be funded by the government. The law is specifically applicable to children at or above the age of six. The

specified years of schooling include elementary school (grades one through six) and middle school (grades seven through nine) (China Education Center). The state officially estimates that 99% of all children legally required to attend school meet the nine-year requirement (China Education Center).

Although the Childhood Compulsory Education Law appears to be a monumental push towards improving the education, human capital, and opportunities available to the younger generations, migrant children residing in urban areas do not perfectly fit within the boundaries of the funded schooling. The *hukou* system's allocation of benefits, based upon having agricultural or non-agricultural status, favors students with local Shanghai status. Elementary and middle school level students residing in Shanghai without local *hukou* status do not qualify for the compulsory education system, as the funding is primarily for students with local status. This causes an uneven financial and opportunity—based burden specific to children of migrants. Therefore, it becomes evident that, despite efforts to improve education for all children, there is an underlying discriminatory process that imposes on migrant students.

Urban public schools, generally characterized as being higher in quality, prioritize enrolling local Shanghai students over migrants. Public schools only admit migrant students when there are remaining 'open' seats in the program (Chen and Feng 2017, 1008). Even in the event that there are open seats in a public school, migrant families face an additional financial barrier, whereby the schools often ask migrants for sizable sums of money for their students to attend (Ming 2013, 53). Therefore, it is evident that the opportunity for migrant students to enroll in Shanghai's public schools to complete their legally-required nine years of schooling is greatly restricted. As a more affordable and accessible alternative, many migrant students in Shanghai attend "private, profit-driven, low-quality" schools that are specifically intended for children of

migrants (Ming 2013, 57). It is estimated that 30% of migrant students today cannot attend public schools and therefore attend migrant schools (Stepping Stones China). Though 30% is seemingly a small proportion of students relative to the 70% who do attend public schools, this is a profound statistic when considering the number of migrant students in Shanghai alone. As a result of allocating the city's best educational resources to urban local students, not only are three out of every ten migrants enrolled in under-resourced schools, but their academic performance is also impacted.

THE QUALITY GAP: PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE MIGRANT SCHOOLS

Although scholars disagree on the school quality between rural and urban schools, they generally agree that urban migrant schools lag behind their public counterparts. With the influx of migrants to Shanghai was a growing necessity for accessible education. As a result of this unmet demand, migrant schools established by migrants themselves began to appear across the city in overcrowded and unsound structures (Stepping Stones China). The state quickly took notice of the proliferation of these schools, and deemed them as being illegal (Stepping Stones China). Parallel to private migrant school relocations and closures was efforts made by the government to claim and maintain oversight of these facilities. Despite the imposition of regulations and surveillances, migrant schools continue to endure numerous of challenges into the present day that are indicative of a comparative disadvantage relative to Shanghai's public schools.

Migrant schools are generally characterized as having underqualified teachers, insufficient resources, little regulation, low funding, lacking health-promotion, and occupying unsound structures (Liu, 2019). These challenges are further exacerbated by the possibility of government closure and limited access to resources (Liu, 2019). There exists a variety of studies

conducted across China seeking to create an accurate portrait of what the present-day experience of migrant schools entails. For example, while conducting interviews and observing the education system in China, Ming writes:

A common classroom arrangement in migrant schools was seating five students to three desks, which did not encourage independence (Ming 2013, 39).

In addition to concerns for the quality of the schools, teachers, and availability of resources, many scholars have highlighted the “achievement gap.” This term refers to the differentiation in academic performance between urban and rural public schools compared to private migrant schools, whereby private migrant schools have been observed on multiple instances of earning scores lower than their rural and urban school counterparts. The general imbalance between private and migrant schools in Shanghai can be attributed to the confines of the *hukou* system. The institutional barrier cultivates an underlying form of discrimination, as observed by the dichotomy in the quality and accessibility of schooling for migrants.

DECIDING FUTURES, DECIDING CONSTRAINTS

In addition to the opportunity to earn a greater income and further support their families in rural areas, migrant childrens’ ability to enroll in an urban school is another factor which encourages migration. The prospect of receiving a better education in urban areas and being able to physically be together as a family are also important considerations among parental migrants (Ming 2013, 56). Despite these choices being indicative of the family unit as a top priority, migrant families must continually make difficult decisions in response to the institutional challenges imposed on education. Families must both decide whether to migrate, whether they

will bring their their children, and whether they will send their children back to their rural hometowns to finish their schooling (Wang et al. 2016, 1866).

Data shows that families are increasingly migrating as units to large cities such as Shanghai. The amount of time that families live as a unit in the city, however, varies greatly. Upon completion of elementary school, a majority of migrant parents decide to send their children back to their rural hometowns for ease of transitioning into middle school and high school (Ming 2013, 239). This decision is influenced the potential of older students to experience more stressors associated with a delayed return to their rural communities. Becoming further accustomed to city life can make the transition home and familial separation more challenging (Ming 2013, 239). Therefore, parents who send their elementary students home hope that their children will easily transition into the rural school system and later take the *gaokao* (Ming 2013, 239). Although this is a noteworthy trend among migrants, there are students who continue their schooling into middle school and high school while in the city.

The burden that institutional barriers imposes on migrant students becomes particularly pronounced during the transition between middle school and high school. Students as young as the age thirteen must make a life changing decision—whether to enroll in high school in Shanghai or to return to their rural hometown. Not only does this decision impact their immediate high school years, but also determines whether migrant students will have an opportunity to go to college upon graduating. This dilemma is recognized as being one of the most important decisions in a migrant student's life, and is in place due to the *hukou* system.

Migrant students who attend Shanghai schools, public or private, to the point of high school enrollment must consider whether they intend to go take the National Higher Education Entrance Examination, the *gaokao* (高考), to enroll in college. Students must take the *gaokao*

examination within the bounds of their *hukou* registration. Therefore, migrant students with rural *hukou* enrolled in Shanghai schools are “legally barred” from taking the college entrance examination if they graduate from high school in Shanghai (Ming 2013; 54). However, making this decision from such a young age does not allow migrant students to have the same level of ‘flexibility’ as their urban counterparts regarding decisions for their futures. Students may discover a new passion, career path, talent, or reality that can change the trajectory of their career goals. But, influences such as these may remain unknown to students just completing middle school.

In a Shanghai-based survey, Ming found that middle school students who attended school in Shanghai are more likely than not to return to their rural hometowns and continue schooling after completing middle school (See Figure 1)(Ming 2013, 236).

	<i>Shanghai</i>			
	<i>Grade 7</i> <i>(n=71)</i>	<i>Grade 8</i> <i>(n=46)</i>	<i>Grade 9</i> <i>(n=34)</i>	<i>All</i> <i>(n=151)</i>
Definitely Not	9.9%	10.9%	14.7%	11.3%
Probably Not	12.7%	10.9%	29.4%	15.9%
50% Chance	28.2%	34.8%	17.7%	27.8%
Probably	31.0%	13.0%	17.7%	22.5%
Definitely	14.1%	8.7%	11.8%	11.9%
Have Not Considered	4.2%	21.7%	8.8%	10.6%

Middle school student survey results to the question “Will you return to your hometown to continue your studies?” *Source: Ming 2013, 236*

Based upon the survey, students in seventh grade are more likely to be in favor of returning to their hometown compared to ninth graders. This suggests that by the time of graduation, a noteworthy proportion of migrant students prefer to remain in Shanghai despite the

opportunity cost of not taking the college entrance examination. Though the statistics gathered by Ming also show that there is a general trend of declining interest in returning to rural origins, this does not dismiss the reality that students of migrant parents who do go through with Shanghai's education system to the point of graduating middle school face a major decision. One eighth grade child of migrant parents in Shanghai captured such hardship. In a blog post titled "Working Hard, Bound for Nowhere", Guowei wrote to his peers seeking advice:

I am so troubled it's killing me! What should I do? If I stay in Shanghai for ninth grade, I would not be able to get into a high school when I return. But to return to my hometown? ... I do not want to return. All my friends are here and I do not want to leave them! I want to stay if possible. (Ming 2013, 52).

Guowei, like many other migrant students in Shanghai, make a life decision at a young age that will have serious consequences on their present and future alike, regardless of whether they choose to stay or leave. The actual decision as to whether children of migrants will stay or return to their rural home is an extension of the initial conundrum of whether parental migrants choose to migrate, and with their kids. Children of migrants who brought them to Shanghai grow up building a community and have sense of 'home' in the city. Thus, such connections and experiences make their rural origins seem distant and can foster hesitation when migrant students reach the age of choosing what they envision for their education and future. As students spend more time in the city, the transition back to their rural homes becomes increasingly nebulous and stressful.

The educational constraints maintained by the *hukou* system shows there is a statewide and systematic practice that discriminates against the education of migrant students that begins

prior to the process of migration. However, a noteworthy proportion of China's rural migrant students reside in Shanghai. The experience of attending comparable low-quality schools, deciding the duration of attending urban schools, and ultimately deciding whether to take the college entrance examination is shared among many of China's students, especially in Shanghai. Though migrant parents want to make decisions that have their children's best interest at heart, they face a series of challenges and choices that can be detrimental to their childrens' futures. In contrast, urban locals and their children do not face comparable situations.

THE IMPLICAITONS OF INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS ON FUTURES

Although migrant schools are an alternative option for families, it is important to highlight the exclusive nature cultivated by the urban public school system. A study conducted by the China Labour Bulletin estimates that 2.25 million elementary school and 500,000 middle school migrant students were excluded from public school enrollment. The domain of the *hukou* system negatively influences mobile citizens regardless of their age or stage in life, and therefore, a substantial part of the states' migrant students are discriminated against on the basis of their origins. A child's rural origins essentially has the power to constrict the future opportunities that are available to them, all on the premise of household registration policies.

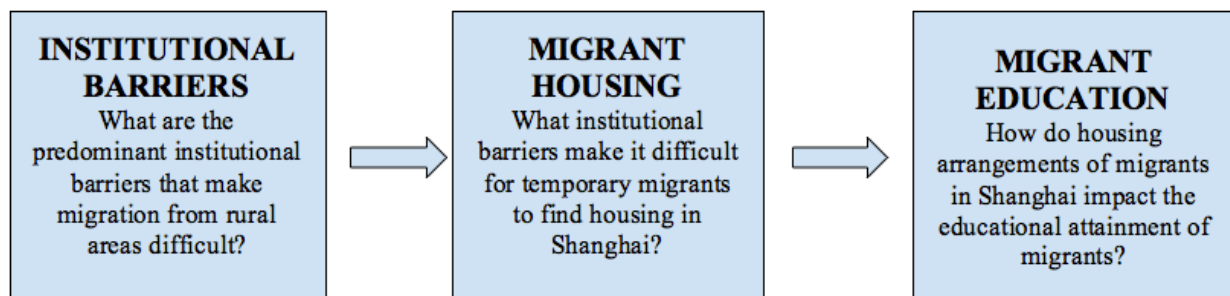
The challenge of enrollment for pursuing a high-school level education and ultimately taking the *gaokao* for middle school graduate migrants in Shanghai creates negative consequences on their futures. It is estimated that only 37% of rural migrant students in China go on to high school, compared to 90% of students with local *hukou* in China's megacities (China Labour Bulletin 2013). Parallel to this, it is estimated that millions of children each year in China begin working upon completing their middle school education (China Labour Bulletin 2013).

The trend of migrant students both leaving school and entering the workforce from a young age, upon completion of ninth grade, showcases that the *hukou* system cultivates a systematic disadvantage that is felt hardest among migrant students. Compared to the benefits celebrated by local Shanghai students pertaining to enrollment, school resources, and the overall quality of education, migrant students are put at a significant disadvantage that cannot easily be overcome. The institutional aspect of the *hukou* cultivates for a system that targets migrants, specifically in education. This is important because the youth of today will be leading the country in the future. Skills and human capital such as those acquired during years of education are critical for the future of not only the individual migrant students, but also the country as a whole.

Chapter Four

Analysis of Findings

As shown by the previous chapters, there currently exists a plethora of scholarly-based information regarding migratory trends, housing, and education in China. In current research, however, each subject is discussed individually in a manner that exclusively showcases their relationships to migration. In this chapter, the qualitative data collected in this study regarding the relationship between migration and housing as well as that between migration and education are drawn. Using this data, this section seeks to determine whether the data converges in a way that is indicative of a relationship between housing and educational attainment for children of temporary migrants. In order to bring clarity as to the existence and strength of the relationship between housing and educational attainment, this chapter is structured such that each component of the research question is addressed, and concludes with an assessment and discussion of by the relationship among the three main factors that were hypothesized as being influential: institutional barriers, migrant housing, and migrant education systems.



DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The infrastructure of the *hukou* continues to cultivate a dichotomy among Chinese citizens into the present. Although the overall structure of the *hukou* system has evolved, it continues to exert great influence over the lives of all Chinese citizens. Such institutional barriers become more pronounced when looking at the experiences of migrants. Their agricultural *hukou* distinction determined upon birth holds a multitude of implications that put rural citizens at a disadvantage when looking at the unequal distribution of welfare benefits between rural and urban areas. Though both portions of the populace are recipients of state-granted benefits, inequality can be seen on a personal level for rural citizens holding an agricultural *hukou* to move to urban regions. Those seeking to temporarily leave their rural origins to gain opportunities in Shanghai face many challenges related to the *hukou* system that impose on mobility and social standing alike. Migrants envisioning financial gains and improved stability for their families face barricades of bureaucratic policy even before beginning their journeys.

The *hukou* system is structured in a way such that it appears to function not only as a means to oversee the population and allocate resources, but also to discourage movement between regions. Rural migrants face an abundance of burdens when integrating into a city lifestyle, such as exclusion for urban benefits, discrimination, being subject to paying comparatively higher prices for housing and education than urban counterparts, working positions that would otherwise be hard to fill, and having limited access to affordable housing. Mindful of the influence that the *hukou* system has over nearly all aspects of a migrant's life in the city, it becomes clear that the *hukou* system is the primary institutional barrier that complicates the decision and process of moving to urban areas, regardless of whether the intent is temporary or permanent settlement. In addition to such influence, those who are destined for

Shanghai specifically experience an additional set of institutional barriers. These primarily take the form of selective preference for those with high levels of education, business influence, and/or monetary resources, constricting low-income neighborhoods, and putting an exuberant price on acquiring a local Shanghai status.

Together, this information indicates that institutional barriers cannot be simply explained in the framework of one policy with one objective, but rather that barriers are ‘layered’ in a way that work cohesively to hinder migration. The *hukou* is as widespread geographically as it is impactful on the lifestyles of the population, though it favors those not of rural-to-urban migratory status. Although Shanghai specific policies continue to prevail, they do not appear to carry the same weight of favoring urban locals as does the state-enforced household registration system. Although regulations in Shanghai do further instances of discrimination and challenge temporary rural migrants, the core of these issues derive from the *hukou* system at large. In consideration of the inequality both on a state and city-wide scale, it becomes apparent that housing and education for temporary migrants are both greatly impeded by such regulations.

Housing in Shanghai is characterized by both its scarcity as well as its lack of affordability. Locals in the city benefit from the *hukou* system in that they are granted lower costs for many different housing arrangements, from rentals to dormitories. In contrast, migrants are excluded from accessing the same housing arrangements as locals, based upon their ‘outsider’ status. Therefore, the overall dichotomy among those living in Shanghai is founded on the organization and enforcement of the housing registration system. This can be conceptualized as cultivating a secondary housing market known by migrants that is generally financially inaccessible, low quality, and/or faces instances of overcapacity, an effort to lower the distributional cost of living. This situation is an important consideration when investigating the

relationship between housing and educational attainment because it provides context as to the conditions migrants generally live in and the constraints they are bound by.

Limitations on housing put migrants in a position to which they may be more inclined to inhabit a residential area characterized by overcrowding, lacking basic housing amenities, or low quality in favor of moderate affordability and the ability to establish themselves in the city. Data suggests that in the present day, the prevailing motivation among rural-to-urban migrants is the potential for them to advance their family's economic standing in rural communities. Although there are other less common reasons to move to the city, caring for familial needs is a priority among many migrants. This can be seen as further contributing to migrant's 'settling' for subpar housing conditions, as the situation is intended to be temporary and that there is a need for support within the family units.

The decision to migrate is further complicated not only by the bureaucratic considerations for living in the city, but also for parents, in that they must decide whether to bring their children. Parents who do bring their children envision a hopeful arrangement where their children can enroll in schooling that would be comparatively better than the education received in their rural hometowns. However, the *hukou* system also holds noteworthy influence over the education system as migrant children face limited enrollment spots in the higher-quality public schools. Therefore, a proportion of children of migrants attend private migrant schools. Schools specifically intended for migrants are generally lacking in the areas that their public counterparts excel in, such as test scores, the qualification of instructors, and resource availability. This further conveys the extent to which the *hukou* alone is an institutional barrier whose scope is not limited to a separation between rural and urban populations, but goes beyond the bounds of geography and into that of opportunity and well being.

SYNTHESIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRANT HOUSING AND EDUCATION

Housing is the central place around which individuals structure their lives. School, work, relationships, resource accessibility—these are all factors that all function as orbiting aspects of one's lifestyle that all correspond to the idea of home. For temporary migrants living in Shanghai, the urban home generally does not demonstrate the attributes that are indicative of quality, safety, and belonging. The *hukou* system makes it such that migrants face residential discrimination, which can be seen through having limited options when finding a place of residence in the city. In contrast, locals are not as well acquainted with such hardships, as the household registration system factors those with 'local' residency, allocating them benefits that help prevent similar housing-related issues. This phenomenon helps to explain why many migrants in Shanghai occupy homes that are branded as being structurally unjust, overcrowded, unsafe, or lacking necessities such as bathrooms and kitchens. In addition to the underprivileged physical character of the areas occupied by migrants, it can also be understood that the unmet need for affordable and quality housing helps determine the distribution of where migrants live in Shanghai. In a Shanghai-based study, it was found that rural migrants tend to gravitate to similar "enclave" areas, primarily peripheral areas described as being the "bottom hierarchical tier" of housing (Liu et al. 2018, 189).

The implications of the *hukou* system extend beyond adult rural migrants who decide to migrate to the children who accompany their parents in their urban endeavors. As rural migrant parents endure the hardships associated with low quality housing and discrimination, their children are sharing that experience beginning at a younger age. However, noteworthy among

the migrant youth is not only their experiences at home, but also what they undergo in relation to their schooling. Migrant children experience immense change during critically formative years which can be greatly influenced by the added stress of attending and affording enrollment in a low quality school—outcomes that are the product of institutional barriers that seek to discourage migration. The systematic disadvantages imposed on rural-to-urban migrant families are further built upon by impositions on the schooling of migrant children, though this is not the primary focus of this thesis.

In acknowledgement of the data that suggests that migrant housing is of limited availability, and that migrant children face challenges in their enrollment to Shanghai schools, it becomes apparent that the *hukou* system is the primary source of the challenges endured by migrants. However, upon closer investigation, there also appears to be a very subtle yet important relationship between housing and educational attainment. Factors that are attributed to unideal residential experiences in Shanghai degrade the quality of urban lifestyle that migrants seek to establish. Circumstances at home as well as the discrimination that cultivates a general trend of migrant clusters both can be interpreted as having the ability to not only hinder the well being of parents, but also of children. Enrollment-primarily in migrant schools- shows for an extension of the hardship faced at home, characterized by the general mediocre to low quality of the schools.

Inadequate resources in the classroom and unsound physical conditions at home both impose negative stressors on children, which may be an additional consideration when studying migrant student's academic performance. Although this relationship is not clearly defined within the bounds of this research, it brings attention to a necessity for a new direction in studying

migration in China, specifically through the lens of migrant residential and educational circumstances.

CONCLUSION

The experiences that derive from institutional barriers, including the *hukou* system and city-specific policies, are shared by migrants across the country. This thesis contributes to current research on China's domestic migration, specific to the challenges endured by migrants upon arrival to destination cities. By researching two critical aspects to an individual's wellbeing—housing and education—in the framework of institutional barriers, this research raises awareness of the interconnectedness between these two factors. Researchers today generally study migration in isolated units, therefore there is little research as to how institutional barriers shape education through housing-related challenges. This thesis accomplishes a basic understanding of migrants' realities through raising awareness for the possibility that migrant education is not just negatively impacted by the schools themselves, but also by external circumstances. Based upon the qualitative data in this study, there appears to be a nebulous relationship between migrant families' living arrangements and their educational opportunities and achievements. Understanding the strength of the connection between housing and education in China requires additional research. By investigating the relationship between migrant housing and education, this thesis not only calls for a new perspective on future research, but also highlights another way to approach improving the circumstances migrants endure.

Today, China continues to capture the world's attention through its immense economic growth. However, behind the country's upward trajectory are domestic migrants seeking to both help sustain China's growth and support their families. The implications of the *hukou* system constricts migrants' abilities to lead a comfortable lifestyle in the city through policies that are discriminatory. Among the many realities of transitioning to an urban lifestyle, migrants are prevented from living in affordable and safe houses, changing their registration status, and face

challenges enrolling in quality public schools. In contrast, urban locals are granted a variety of benefits and services that ‘shield’ them from experiencing comparable hardships as that of migrants. The ongoing discriminatory nature of the *hukou* system and city policies not only disadvantage migrants, but also contribute to maintaining the rural-urban divide.

A deeper understanding of the relationship between housing and educational attainment can improve researchers’ understanding of factors that impact migrant schools, academic achievement, and career trajectories. Furthermore, obtaining a clearer understanding of the impact that housing arrangements have on students’ education will allow educators, policymakers, and families to have more information to make decisions that will benefit China’s future leaders.

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