

**Seniors in Rural Area's Perspectives on China's Migration Policies and Their
Political Transmission to the Offspring**

by

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Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the accompanying thesis by Bingxin Zhu has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Honors in Sociology.

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv
INTRODUCTION 1
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 4
RESEARCH QUESTIONS..... 10
THEORY 12
LITERATURE REVIEW 19
METHODS 26
RESULTS 31
DISCUSSION 51
CONCLUSION 54
REFERENCES..... 58

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Introduction

In the first half of the twentieth century in China, there was a quest for social data regarding the country's citizens, and more than nine thousand surveys were carried out between 1927 and 1935 alone (Lam 2011). The surveys, along with national census and other similar programs, were used to collect facts about "population statistics, sociological and ethnographic facts, economic data, cultural artifacts, archeological evidence, and similar empirical information" in China (Lam 2011:3). These facts obtained during the late Qing dynasty and Republic period (1912-1949) became a source for the People's Republic of China (established in 1949) to obtain knowledge about its population and exert better control through policies and other political practices.

In the early days of New China, many policies were introduced and especially pointed to disadvantage rural people, which seemed to depart from one of the primary groups the communist party claimed to serve. As Nancy E. Riley in her book *Population in China* states, "the state played a key role in deepening the rural/urban divide and created inequalities through its intervention in the movement of people across boundaries to meet its own goal of modernity since the 1950s" (2017:79). These policies, in a large sense, negatively affected rural people's agricultural harvest and other economic productions, their access to material and immaterial resources, the way they organized local institutions, and the manner in which they managed relations. As Riley argues, rural residents were locked in the countryside in an unequal system of rewards and punishment, "a system that some have likened to apartheid" (2017:79).

Under this reality, it is worth investigating how people in rural areas felt and what they thought when they were experiencing these policies. Further, how did they

understand their conditions at that time? How did they make sense of those hardships and injustices? How did they interpret policies subjectively and perceive the government? And how did they act back then? There have been abundant records and circulations of the Communist Party's political history, whereas people from rural area's subjectivity under specific policies has rarely been addressed and explored. This article aims to present people in rural area's sensibilities and understandings of the particular political time period they experienced and the political injustice they suffered. Examining their specific affections and perceptions of migration policies formed in two time periods can provide us with a viewpoint that may reflect rural residents' understandings of policy and the government at large.

Secondly, it is unclear what socialization and discussion regarding politics are like in private spaces such as families in China. Hence, this thesis also aims to explore the issue from a generational aspect. In particular, researching how rural people transmit their political attitudes and perspectives to their offspring regarding specific policies may provide us a niche to potentially infer how older generations convey their political understandings to later generations in general in China. It also may allow us to know in a large sense whether there exists a location in which individuals' own political history and knowledge could be passed down to later generations, under the context that public circulation is tightly controlled by the government. In other words, I hope to figure out, through this project, whether rural people establish their own way of understanding, discussing, and preserving their political experiences and history that work against or supplement the official political discourse and rhetoric.

In the subsequent sections of this thesis I will provide a brief background regarding the migration policy history in China. I will then state my research questions in a detailed way. The discussion of a theoretical framework and literature review follows the research questions. Ultimately, I will present my methods and results.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of rural-city migration policies after the establishment of the PRC and before the 1990s could be briefly categorized into two phases, namely the migration prohibition stage and the migration permission stage according to Li Sun's book *Rural Urban Migration and Policy Intervention in China* (2019). Sun divides the years between 1949 and 1983 as the prohibition phase for rural-urban migration, and 1984 to 1991 as the permission stage (2019). I will follow this classification in the thesis. The rural-to-city migration prohibition stage was signaled by a series of policies and political administrative strategies that intended to confine people in rural areas' movement to cities, while the loosening of the migration restrictions imprinted the permission stage. I will describe two stages in detail in the following sections.

Migration Prohibition Stage

There were about 274 million people from rural areas migrating to cities to work by 2014 in China (Sun 2019). However decades ago, this was not the case: people in rural areas could only stay in the countryside. Since 1949 when the People's Republic of China was established, the government issued a series of policies that intended to control the migration from rural areas to cities. In 1953, the government introduced "Instructions on Preventing Peasants from Blindly Moving to Cities", which required local officials to admonish peasants from going to cities and factory leaders to disband migrant workers to the countryside (Zhou 1953). A series of similar policies was issued in 1954, 1956, and 1957 such as "Complementary Directives on Preventing Peasants Blindly Moving to Cities" to send migrant workers in cities back to the countryside and to discourage rural-to-city migration (Zhou 1957). People in rural area's movement and other aspects of their

lives were highly intervened with and controlled by the government before neoliberal ideology influenced China.

Along with the series of migration-prohibitive policies, in 1958, the government passed “Regulation of Household Registration in People’s Republic of China” (Davin 1999). The regulation aimed to tie “all citizens to a particular location” so that people born in the rural areas could only stay in the countryside (Riley 2017:77). Under the regulation, each household had a registration book in the local government. Family members were listed in the book, and they were categorized as either an “agricultural” household or a “non-agricultural” household (Davin 1999:5). The registration system is referred as “hukou” system. Most households in rural areas were categorized as agricultural, while those of cities were non-agricultural. People in rural areas were not allowed to move to cities or even counties (xian) where they did not have correspondent household registration, and were confined to the place where their household registered.

With the execution of the new policy, rural people were not allowed to move to cities except for special circumstances such as having jobs in urban areas, but this was rare back then (Davin 1999). Though the transfer of household registration from rural areas to cities was not impossible, the time needed for the bureaucracy to complete the complicated transferring process made it difficult. As a result, some big cities such as Shanghai and Beijing that were thought of as attractive to live in closed their doors to people from the countryside. The “spacial hierarchy” was also formally established, that the countryside was considered as inferior to the city (Davin 1999:6). The spacial hierarchy entailed the status hierarchy derived from the space, that “urbanities were

favoured and rural peasants disadvantaged” (Riley 2017:78). The registration system strengthened the divide between the urban and rural areas (Riley 2017).

Furthermore, people from rural areas not only were prohibited from permanent residency in big cities but also the short time stay was highly regulated. For any stay longer than three days in cities, people from the countryside were required to register at the local Public Safety Bureau (Davin 1999). It was a form of government surveillance that applied strategies to know and control people’s behavior. The basic unit of the political apparatus of surveillance, the Residence Committees in city neighborhoods, was in charge of reporting strangers in neighborhoods to the government (Davin 1999). With such close supervision, although people from the countryside managed to find ways to be in cities, they would easily be found out and then sent back to rural areas.

As the registration system created and deepened the urban-rural division, resource distribution was vastly different for agricultural and non-agricultural households, especially under an era when the government largely determined the economic production and material distribution. In the 1950s, “grain, oil, cloth, fuel, and many products were rationed” (Davin 1999:7). Urban citizens could use food coupons to buy necessities at a subsidized price, while peasants had no coupons and their food came from their own harvest through people’s communes (Davin 1999). People in the countryside were set up to be more self-reliant about their food supply. Government support and subsidies were rarer compared to those given to cities. (Riley 2017). Most food coupons could only be used locally, so if peasants left the village, they would not be able to get food because they did not have coupons (Davin 1999). The ration system which related to

resource distribution also confined peasants to villages, preventing them from moving easily.

Another political practice that indirectly controlled the rural-to-city migration that started at the end of the 1950s was People's Commune. It was primarily proposed and implemented in rural areas in China, and it was the principle "economic, administrative, social, and political unit" in the countryside (Umali et al.1977:15). People's Commune was a three-layered apparatus. Production brigades, and production teams which on average had over one hundred members were two lower units below People's Commune (Sun 2019). Production teams worked on farms which along with farm tools and animals were owned collectively (O'Leary and Watson 1982). Individual households could only keep their house, a small amount of livestock, and other trivial implements (Umali et al.1977). Members earned harvest and income based on their workpoints determined by work hours and task genres in the production team. Therefore, people could not leave commune work for too long, otherwise they would obtain less harvest and income (Umali et al.1977). People's Commune not only managed economic production, but also served as the political administration unit. It absorbed the function of old township (O'Leary and Watson 1982). It organized post offices, police stations, schools and other local services (Sun 2019). Sometimes based on available resources, it built infrastructure such as irrigation systems or small industries as well (O'Leary and Watson 1982). By the end of 1958, most of the Chinese farmers, around 500 million, had participated in communes (Sun 2019), and such forms of production and administration ended in the 1980s.

Restrictive migration policies, regulation of household registration, the ration system, and People's Commune, which were all meant to prohibit people of the

countryside from moving to cities, marked the migration policy stage after the establishment of the PRC. The reasons behind these policies were multifaceted, and Riley argues that containing the flow of migration from rural to urban areas allowed China at that time to move in a more “careful, planned, and systematic process toward modernization” (Riley 2017:78).

Migration Permission Stage

In the 1980s, according to Ngai Pun in her book *On the Construction Site: the Survival Circumstances for Construction Workers in Cities*, neoliberal ideology was exerting its power globally, and it extended its influence to China (2010). China started the era of Reform and Opening lead by Deng Xiaoping and his supporters in the party, and the market and capital became a more important force in China’s economy.

Specifically, neoliberal scholars and reformers proposed to establish export-oriented labor-intensive industries as a starting place to develop China (Pun 2010). They believed that such an economic strategy would play to China’s advantage of having a large labor force and would bring about an economic boom (Pun 2010). In 1984, the government issued “Announcement About Development in Rural Areas in 1984 From the Central Committee of the Community Party in China” which permitted people from rural areas to go to cities and towns to work and start businesses (Yang 2009). As a result, the increasing demand for labor in cities in the 1980s, especially in labor-intensive manufacture industries as well as construction and service sectors, along with the loosening of migration policies, opened the door for rural people to go to cities for work (Davin 1999). The rules introduced in the 1950s, such as reporting to the local Public Safety Bureau if the stay in city is over three days, existed mostly in name. From the start

of the 1980s to 1988, there was a large number of rural residents migrating to cities, and the number of migrant workers was around 30 million (Riley 2017). As an important source of cheap labor to do work urban citizens were unwilling to do at a time when economic development was the primary goal, the government started to provide migrant workers with renewable temporary registration cards to stay in urban areas. This practice demonstrates that the governing on migration workers from the countryside to urban areas was institutionalized (Davin 1999). Though the temporary registration card reflects that rural migration policies were less restrictive compared to those during the migration-prohibition stage, the power it endowed to the local government over peasant workers, in many cases, and as always, were adverse to their limited freedom. Moreover, the hukou registration system still exists, so that migrant workers still have considerably less access to resources and welfare compared to urban residents.

In a nutshell, political events and policies had a significant influence on rural-to-city migration in China. Migrants are currently capable of working in cities because of the policy changes in the 1980s (Zhao and Liu 1997). Nevertheless, having more freedom to go to cities doesn't entail rural migrant workers' better living conditions. In a large sense, as Riley stated in her book *Population in China*, the inequalities between urban and rural residents remain solidly in place, and restrictive migration policies have disadvantageously influenced the way migrants envision their lives and futures (2017).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With the migration policies in two eras presented above, my thesis questions ask how seniors in rural areas who were born in early years of migration-prohibition stage and who were once migrant workers in their lifetime describe their feelings and thoughts about those migration policies. Similarly, how do they depict their political attitudes and understandings of migration policies that were introduced during Reform and Opening era? In other words, how did rural seniors make sense of their own migrating and working experience, life conditions, and their agencies and constraints in relation to the government who issued relatively different migration policies in the 1950s and 1980s? The questions about how people from the countryside portray their subjective feelings and thoughts toward migration policies are important because they were rarely investigated in the literature. Moreover, people's emotions and dispositions in many cases are the first step for political action. Therefore, having such understanding may allow us to better investigate the public's political behaviors.

Secondly, I ask did rural people convey and transmit their emotions and perceptions of migration policies to their offspring when their children were youngsters, around 11 to 17 years old or not? If yes, what was the transmission like? The reason why the question regarding political transmission from parents in rural areas to offspring is sociologically important is that it allows us to examine whether intergenerational political transmission and the knowledge flowing with the conveyance can counter official political discourse and circulation as well as the governmentality at large or not. Furthermore, I intend to investigate how seniors in the rural areas perceive the influence of their transmission on their offspring, and reversely, how their offspring view the

impact of their parents' conveyance on them. The Offspring's perceptions of the influence of their parents' transmission measures the effectiveness of such conveyance. With parents' transmission, whether affecting the offspring or not, the thesis also explores how offspring of rural seniors understand the migration policies in the past.

These sets of research questions allow me to grasp a basic sense of the attitude of people in rural areas toward policies and government, the conveyance of past history and parents' political understandings to next generations, and the relationship between generational transmission and governmentality.

THEORY

Two theories, Michel Foucault's theory of "governmentality" and Karl Mannheim's theory of generation provided me the framework to investigate my research questions. The theory of governmentality explores how "the art of government" develops into "the science of government". Though the theory is not necessarily unfolded from the viewpoint of people being governed, but the governing bodies, and though it was generally discussed in the context of liberal and democratic polity, it still provided great insight into explaining why people under authoritarian regimes cultivate certain political attitudes rather than others by demonstrating, examining, and interpreting various government practices. The second theory, Mannheim's generation theory provided me the tool to explain generational position of rural parents-offspring and the transmission between them.

Foucault's Theory of Governmentality

Foucault poses a question of the art of government in *Governmentality*, namely the question of "how to be ruled, how strictly, by whom, to what end, by what methods" (Rabinow and Rose 2003:230). According to Foucault, governing a state is managing inhabitants and goods, and exercising surveillance and control at the level of the entire territory (Rabinow and Rose 2003). He then distinguishes government from sovereignty in terms of their finalities. The end goal of sovereign is a "common good" that all subjects obey the law from God and men, "the absolute sovereign" (Rabinow and Rose 2003:236). Derived from La Perriere's analysis of government, Foucault interprets government's distinct end: the "convenience" of things that are governed (Rabinow and Rose 2003:237). Such finality indicates that government has a multiplicity of specific aims, so that it adopts various tactics to dispose and arrange things (Rabinow and Rose

2003). Unlike sovereignty which is inseparable from law, law to the modern government is only one of the tactics for management (Rabinow and Rose 2003).

Foucault bases his previous analysis of governmentality on the model of family, the central question of which is how to apply the management of a family to a state. In other words, the issue is how to introduce “the correct way of managing individuals, goods, and wealth” within the family into the management of the state” (Rabinow and Rose 2003:234). However, along with the development of statistics, the emergence of the concept of “population” renders “family” into an instrument relative to population, no longer obtaining the position as a model. Statistics depict the quantified aggregate effects of population such as birth, death, epidemics, labor, production, and wealth that are irreducible to the dimension of family (Rabinow and Rose 2003). The data such as birthrate, death rate, infant mortality, fertility rates and so forth could not be produced from individual family, but from the population (Cisney and Morar 2016). This fundamental shift of family’s role in governmentality allows government a different target, that the population, becomes the ones whom government acts upon directly or indirectly (Rabinow and Rose 2003). The level of population is pertinent for government’s economic-political action, and population becomes a political being unto itself, differing from multiplicity of individuals (Cisney and Morar 2016). Population is then “the object in the hands of government”, of what government wants (Rabinow and Rose 2003:242). For example, government “directs the flow of population in certain regions or activities” (Rabinow and Rose 2003:241). This example speaks well to Chinese government’s direction on the flow of population from rural areas to cities in migration prohibition and migration permission stages, which exemplifies the political

power exerting on the population. Foucault's theory of governmentality was rarely used in previous literature to make sense of China's migration policy history, so the purpose of my thesis is to apply the theory and explain the change in migration policy, which could be a contribution to the scholarship.

Furthermore, the concept of "population" also bases the constitution of "political economy" (Rabinow and Rose 2003:242). The rise of political economy depends on the new network of multiple relationships between population, territory, and wealth (Rabinow and Rose 2003). Without the concept of "population", such new networks would not emerge, and neither would political economy. By having knowledge of all processes related to population, political economy presents its characteristics of intervention. Political economy is the science and technique of governmental intervention in population (Rabinow and Rose 2003). As a result, governing becomes a political science that stresses the techniques of management and interventions (Rabinow and Rose 2003). In sum, Foucault concludes that government has population as its target, political economy as its main form of knowledge, and security as its instrument (Rabinow and Rose 2003). Security stands for the systematic efforts to study and manipulate statistics and probabilities related to the phenomenon of population (Cisney and Morar 2016).

Foucault also introduced the concept of "biopower", a power that applies directly to bodies rather than land and productions (Cisney and Morar 2016:3). Such power can "provoke, purify, and disseminate" force to manage and control, and it is bent on "generating force and expansion" (Cisney and Morar 2016:4). One location where biopower operates is the human body and its labor through disciplines and institutions (Cisney and Morar 2016). Disciplinary power "demands and guarantees" the body "the

optimization of its capabilities”, “the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility”, and “its integration into the system of efficient and economic controls” (Cisney and Morar 2016:4). Under the occasion, “The human body comes to be seen as a machine, complete with functions and utilities, inputs and outputs, predictabilities and precisions” (Cisney and Morar 2016:4). Another realm in which biopower acts is “population”, not limited to the individual body, but species-body at large (Cisney and Morar 2016:5).

In the context of China’s political history, people’s commune was an institution with its own sets of rules that controlled farmers’ bodies, labor, and production. The practice was initially promoted and implemented with the anticipation that it could rapidly mechanize agriculture in rural areas. The farmers and their body capacities were incorporated into a specific way of economic production limited by the government (Umali et al.1977). In other words, under the context of People’s commune as an economic unit, the bodies of rural population were seen as a functional machine for agricultural outputs and as object upon which the power exerts.

Mannheim’s Theory of Generation

According to Mannheim, a number of individuals who “share the same year of birth” are in a similar location of a social-historical process, and such similarity constitutes a generation (1953:290). The “biological rhythm” such as life and death is the basis of generation location, while the social structure and history allows the generation to be a social location (Mannheim 1953:290-291). Specifically, people in the same location are endowed with “same phase of collective process”, and “same events and data” (Mannheim 1953:291, 297). These external experiences work on people who have a “similarly stratified” life and consciousness (Mannheim 1953:297). Nevertheless, people

of the same generation are limited to a “specific range of potential experiences”, and are predisposed of “a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant actions” (Mannheim 1953:291). Therefore, a large number of experiences, actions, and thoughts are excluded for a particular location (Mannheim 1953). This theory serves as a base in which research questions of the project are established because the questions assume that the senior generation and offspring generation were exposed to particular social and historical processes that other generations weren’t able to experience. The senior generation and offspring generation formed thoughts that had characteristics of their own generation.

Moreover, according to Mannheim, how a generation expresses themselves is also circumscribed in certain possibilities (1953). As a result, “a certain definite modes of behavior, feeling and thought” become a tendency among people who are in similar locations. The tendency is “inherent in” and determined by the nature of locations (Mannheim 1953:291). This part of theory allows me to infer that some transmission patterns from rural people may emerge because they might have limited possibilities to express their past experiences and political perspectives. In addition, Mannheim argues that what’s been consciously conveyed to the next generation has limited significance compared to the experiences and perspectives that are unconsciously communicated (1953). The data that the second generation learned wittingly is the ones that have become problematic in the course of time, and therefore required reflection (Mannheim 1953). His claim is also proved by the fact that experiences in early times infiltrated to people’s mind tend to become the oldest layer of consciousness and form the base of people's view of world (1953). Mannheim describes that it is not until around 17 years

old when life experimentation begins and people start to reflect the data that social change has rendered problematic (Mannheim 1953). Nevertheless, I suppose that under different political regimes and social conditions, the age for people becoming capable of reflection may vary. For instance, people in the authoritarian state may have distinct ways of obtaining information compared to those in the democratic society. Therefore, different generations in China might start to reflect upon their experiences at different ages, not necessarily around 17 years old.

Mannheim further concludes that the complete transmission from former generation to the next one is considerably difficult because youth face different adversities from the ones who transmit (1953). From this, Mannheim implies there exists a generational gap. Mannheim also recognizes the multi-directional transmission among different generations. The old generation can not only influence the younger one, but also can be impacted by them. If the social dynamism increases, the older generation may be more receptive to the younger generation (Mannheim 1953).

Foucault uncovers his theory of governmentality from the perspective of governing bodies. He investigates the genealogy of practices and strategies which the government exert upon the governed. Though he may argue that the power relationship between the powerful and the powerless changes based on different conditions, that the strong could become the weak and vice versa, it does not alter the fact that he precedes his analysis from the viewpoint of the actors who initiate the power. Mannheim's theory of generation, on the other hand, displays the general public's experience in face of certain social, historical, and political processes. He unfolds his theory from the stance of subjects of social and political processes, while the process may be inseparable from the

practice of government, i.e. governmentality. Therefore, incorporating two theories together may allow us to see a more holistic picture: on the one hand, how government exert its power, and on the other hand, how different generations experience politics and transmit them to later generations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review on Migrant Workers in China

There is an abundant amount of literature about rural migrant workers in China, though workers' subjective emotions and perspectives toward migration policies are rarely investigated. The few studies that do pay attention to workers' affections conclude that migrant workers share an "unsettled 'structure of feeling.'" (Gao 2017:296) Scholars, Tang and Li also make the point that migrant workers represent themselves as "aliens, outlanders, the suppressed and socially excluded" (2015:2617). "A deep sense of unfairness", anxiety, pain, "incompleteness", anger, and resentment are also common feelings among different generations of migrant workers (Lu and Pun 2014:2).

There is a lack of studies displaying how migrant workers perceive the government as well. Understanding the migrant worker's perceptions on government is important because policies also influence their lives either directly, or through social and economic factors. Migrant workers' dispositions may also affect workers' collective actions (Lu and Pun 2014). In the study *Boundaries of Inequality: Perceptions of Distributive Justice Among Urbanities, Migrants, and Peasants* which explores how urban residents, rural people, and rural-city migrants perceive the current social system and distributive justice in China, Feng concludes that migrants and rural respondents are the ones who report more gains from reform era than city residents, though rural people and migrants attain less economic and political resources (2007). Migrant workers are also more positive towards future than urban residents (Feng 2007). The study also makes the point that respondents evaluate whether current economic and political conditions are just or not in reference to their own past (Feng 2007).

Due to multifarious sources of pressure, migrant workers have more mental health issues than the general public. They are more likely to have symptoms such as anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsion, and hostility (Zhong et al.2013; Sun 2016; Wong 2010). The existing literature lists economic factors such as contractors' exploitation, and social factors like discrimination from urban residents as the source of migrant workers' pressure, yet political factors are rarely addressed.

Compared to research about workers' affections and political perspectives, the literature focusing on different generations of migrant workers is richer because there is an emphasis on the old generation and the new generation of migrant workers' divergent attitudes of motivation, work, life, and consumption. People born before 1965 are defined as the "old" generation of migrant workers, those born between 1965 and 1979 are considered the "middle" generation, and those born after 1979 and before 1994 are the "young" generation (Pan 2018:2).

Zhou and Sun (2010) argue that the new generation of migrant workers have different motivations to work in cities than older workers. "What they want is not merely to change their economic situation but to bring about a thorough transformation in their lives, to break out of the trammels of a culture of poverty", while obtaining economic gains is the main goal for the older migrant workers (Zhou and Sun, 2010:72). In addition, older workers think that changing jobs frequently is dishonorable, whereas new workers are "always ready to leave" when they find a better job (Zhou and Sun 2010:72).

Regarding the daily life of migrant workers, new rural migrants adjust to the city life better, and are "moving closer to city people" (Zhou and Sun 2010:78). They hope to attain a similar status as people in the city (Zhou and Sun 2010). When migrant workers

have higher income and an occupational status, they are more likely to adopt urban consumer habits (Chu, Leonhardt, and Liu 2015). However, older generation rural migrant workers are less likely to adjust to the urban lifestyle because they consider the countryside their root. Nevertheless, in another research article that studies young rural female factory workers in Guangdong province, authors find out that integrating to an urban city is not their primary goal (Myerson et.al 2010). There exists a divergence of expectations among workers based on their gender, work locations, job sectors. Furthermore, attributing generation as the reason for these differences is contested. Other factors such as the change of payment system overtime also explain why old workers and new workers think and behave differently (Franceschini, Siu, and Chan 2016).

There is little research examining how older migrant workers influence younger migrant workers. Among the few studies that touch on the intergenerational aspect, Zhou and Sun (2010) make the point that some children of migrant workers consider it natural to go to cities to work because they have a life of drifting with their parents in cities. Moreover, since old generation workers remember the hardship and pain of their work, they often instruct their children not to have a similar life (Zhou and Sun 2010). Under this influence, young rural migrant workers set their goal to do business or to be self-employed to climb the social ladder, but they are hampered by lack of capital (Zhou and Sun 2010). In Pan's research, migrant parents have an "indirect and underlying influence on children" who stay in the countryside by "unintentionally establishing and transmitting a series of meanings and values to them" (Pan 2018:7). Children will understand the importance of money because parents always attribute "go[ing] to city to make money" as the reason why they leave children (Pan 2018:7). Moreover, the

distinction between the urban and rural area is felt by children, and it may trigger their wish to go to city as well (Pan 2018). Cities leave a polar impression on them. On the one hand, they are amazed by the prosperity, while on the other hand, they also sense the difficulties in making a living in the city (Pan 2018). Their knowledge in part comes from parents' stories, and in part are from their own short stay in the city when they reunite with family members occasionally (Pan 2018).

Literature Review on Political Socialization

Political socialization constitutes all political learning about political authority, political entity, political institutions and so forth starting early in childhood until adulthood (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). The age of the transmission receiver is a significant factor for socialization in the literature. According to Niemi and Sobieszek's meta-analysis of political socialization, they state that most children in their early childhood think of political authority as "trustworthy, benevolent, and helpful" (1977:212). They do not understand the context and meaning of political matters such as policies (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977), and they can't deal with abstractions until 11 to 13 years old (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). By late elementary grades or adolescence, youth become more aware of inequalities in the law, they start to obtain policy learning, and they begin to understand specific political issues. Nevertheless, their trust in political figures and institutions is still more than adults who are more cynical (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977).

Another significant aspect of political socialization is the socialization agent. There are multiple sources for people's political learning, and the crucial ones are family, school, and media. "Foremost among agencies of socialization into politics is the family",

so begins Herbert Hyman's discussion of the sources of political learning in his book *Political Socialization* (Hyman 1959:69). The statement depicts the significance of parents and family in socializing offspring politically. Furthermore, a longitudinal study which reevaluates the character and influence of political socialization within the family also concludes that children are more likely to adopt their parents' political orientations if the family is highly politicized and if the parents provide consistent political cues over time (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009). Parents' direct influence is especially evident in offspring' partisanship orientation (Jennings et al.2009). This result is supported by many other studies, that the correlation of partisanship of parents and children is about 0.6, which means the two variables are relatively highly correlated (Jennings et al.2009). Moreover, parents' saliency and conviction during the political conveyance increases the transmission rate (Jennings et al.2009). The multivariate model used in the longitudinal study suggests that the direct transmission of political orientation from parents to children is robust (Jennings et al.2009).

However, many empirical studies contest the seemingly dominant role of parents and family in political transmission. Robert Hess and Judith Torney in their book *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children* argue that family has little ability to transmit idiosyncratic attitudes to offspring, and its influence is only limited to a few consensual attributes and partisanship (1967). Jennings and Niemi make the similar point that other than party identification, parents' transmission of political attitudes have limited effect on offspring (1968). For political orientations other than partisanship and voting, the correlation between parents' political values and those of offspring is about 0.2, which shows that parents' political conveyance is not influential in offspring'

attitudes (Connell 1972). In general, the role of family in people's political socialization has been contentious, and further studies are needed to investigate the parent's role in political transmission more clearly (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977).

For the intersection of age factor and family factor in the literature of political socialization, Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers make the conclusion that young adults who are more attached to parents' previous political conveyance are more likely to withstand other factors. These factors include new endeavors and personal relationships which may influence their political orientation during adolescence (2009). Therefore, this group of people displays much more continuity in their political orientation during their young adult years (Jennings et al.2009). For people who exit childhood without being affected greatly by parents' political views, these early years of adulthood are crucial for their political development. Researchers further conclude that the acquisition of parental political attributes in people's pre-adulthood leaves a lifelong impact on them (Jennings et al.2009). The predispositions formed in childhood do persist (Jennings et al.2009).

Regarding school as a socialization agent, elementary school has an insignificant role in developing children's political viewpoints because they do not have enough cognitive capacity to make sense of abstraction (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). Scholars also have disputed opinions on high school's influence on students' political orientation. From different studies, there are positive results such as that political science courses taught in high school influence students' political knowledge and skill, but there are also results showing that civic classes have almost no impact on students' political attitudes (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977s). When students grow up to the age for college, they are away from parents' direct influence and they can practice their political learning by

voting and other political participations (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). It is commonly agreed in the literature that college studies make people less authoritarian, dogmatic, and conservative (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). As a result, college, compared to high school, affects students' political attitudes more (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977).

As the communication channels and information are more available to youth, their recognition of their own subcultures has strengthened (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). Moreover, in a few studies, researchers concluded that mass media as a source for political information and participation exceeds the influences of parents on offspring (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). Moeller and De Vreese in their study about media as a socialization agent support the result that mere exposure to news media has a significant effect on adults' political participation such as signing a petition (2013). However, there is a lack of clarity in the literature whether media reinforces what people have already cultivated politically, or affects them in terms of political development (Niemi and Sobieszek 1977).

The literature of political socialization studies is mostly America-focused, and some measures and conclusions can't be applied to China, which has a different political condition. For example, schools, no matter high school or college in China seldom provide a good space for students to engage with civic and political studies critically. What dominates most often is the Communist Party's mobilization that is present in textbooks, meetings, events and other public realms. Nevertheless, conclusions regarding the influence of parents and mass media on offspring' political orientations in the literature may be helpful to interpret similar issues in China.

METHODS

The thesis is a qualitative study based on interviews. The project in total has 17 interviewees. Among them, nine are considered as seniors from rural areas, and eight people are categorized as offspring. I conducted semi-constructed and in-depth interviews with each of them through an online platform that is similar to Skype. Each interview lasted about one hour for seniors and 45 minutes for offspring, and they were asked different sets of questions. During the interview, I asked each group of interviewees the same questions in different ways to make sure what they said was genuine and accountable. I was attentive to their facial expression and emotion as well when they were telling their experiences. I in some cases cross-checked the authenticity of interviewee's responses by asking one's offspring/parent the same factual questions to see whether there existed a significant difference or not. The interviews were conducted in Chinese which is my native language. The interviews took place in January and February 2019 and were recorded.

I transcribed all interviews and categorized them according to questions I asked, which means that for both the senior group and the offspring group, under each important question, answers from all respondents in the group were listed. I read through the raw data for each question and identified similar word choices, phrases, patterns, relationships, and themes. The approach I took to analyze the data was inductive, discovering general patterns from specific interview content. Specifically, for each question, I started with putting interview content that expressed similar feelings and thoughts into one group and identified the major themes of the group. The two processes happened mostly simultaneously. The themes could be about certain affections, perspectives, or relationships. Within the themes of each group, I then identified more

nuanced concepts, which are meant to complicate the theme. Paying attention to repeated words and sentences was one way for me to identify themes, and adjectives and opinions helped me to recognize the theme as well. The concepts and themes then became my coding categories, which were not constricted by previous literature and my own theoretical framework, but rather derived from the original data. I used Chinese for the analysis process. Furthermore, I compared and contrasted different themes to see whether there exists any relationships and patterns between them. After the coding and analyzing procedure, I translated quotes and analysis from Chinese to English for thesis writing.

As to interviewees recruiting, I posted my thesis information on major social media sites including the Baidu Post Platform under the tag of migrant workers and workers. Secondly, I searched migrant workers and worker's WeChat chat groups, joined them and posted the recruitment information in groups. Moreover, I used my personal network such as relatives and friends to find participants. The ultimate respondents in the thesis were mostly recruited through recommendations from relatives and friends.

Ethical Considerations

Considering my interview questions might invoke interviewees' memories of traumatizing experiences, I cautiously thought about what questions I ought to ask, how to ask them, and what relation I should build with interviewees. Moreover, interviewees may have different comfort levels to comment on the government and reflect upon policies which impacted them. Hence, I conducted one-on-one rather than group interviews so that they may feel more comfortable to talk and not be afraid of their comments being heard by others. I also left space for them and encouraged them to take

time to form their thoughts, not appearing as pushing them greatly to only get answers for my own sake or not paying attention to their emotions.

Confidentiality

I followed the rules of confidentiality strictly to minimize risks brought to interviewees. The interviewees' names in the thesis are pseudonyms. When I describe interviewees in the thesis, I will not provide identifying information. Therefore, it is hardly possible to identify any individual interviewee. I kept a document matching pseudonyms and interviewees' names and other identifying information. This document was encrypted and was kept on my computer which is protected by password. Interview recordings and transcripts were stored on my password protected computer as well.

Sample

Table 1 Interviewees' Information

	Name	Birth Year	Birth Province	Senior or Offspring	Gender
Pair 1	Feng Zhu	1941	Anhui	Senior	Male
	Qing Zhu	1976	Anhui	Offspring	Male
Pair 2	Xia Chen	1939	Jiangsu	Senior	Female
	Ying Chen	1967	Jiangsu	Offspring	Female
Pair 3	Zhen Cai	1944	Anhui	Senior	Male
	Fei Cai	1987	Anhui	Offspring	Female
Pair 4	Fu Sun	1943	Jiangsu	Senior	Male
	Hua Sun	1969	Jiangsu	Offspring	Male
Pair 5	Zhong Yin	1950	Jiangsu	Senior	Male
	Hong Yin	1979	Jiangsu	Offspring	Female
Pair 6	Quan Zhou	1948	Jiangsu	Senior	Male
	Yu Zhou	1974	Jiangsu	Offspring	Female
Rest 3 Seniors	Gong Zhang	1957	Jiangsu	Senior	Male
	Hua Wang	1957	Jiangsu	Senior	Male
	Liu Yang	1946	Zhejiang	Senior	Female
Rest 2 Offsprings	Fang Ji	1964	Zhejiang	Offspring	Male
	Peng Li	1964	Jiangsu	Offspring	Male

The project in total has 17 interviewees. Table 1 presents some general information about interviewees. For nine seniors, seven of them were born before 1950, and other two respondents were born between 1950 and 1957. Their average age is seventy-four years old. Seven seniors are male, and two are female. They were all born and grew up in rural China. All interviewees came from either Jiangsu, Zhejiang or Anhui provinces, the eastern region of China, within the lower reaches of Yangtze River. All of them directly experienced the migration-prohibited stage. They all managed to migrate to cities for various lengths at various ages. Three seniors currently live in cities after their migration from the countryside, while the other six people all went back to

rural areas. For these six respondents, four of them had migrated to cities and stayed there for over one year. Two of them didn't stay for this length. Rather, they had rich experiences on business trips before they were in middle age. They went to many places including both city and rural areas for work, and sometimes they were away for business for a straight two months or more. Therefore, I considered these two respondents as not significantly different from the rest of the group, that at the least they saw the urban-rural gap in their 20s or 30s. In other words, most respondents in the project were once a migrant worker, but currently none of them identify themselves so. The reason why senior interviewees need to have migration experience for the thesis is that I suppose it may make them form a more profound understanding and reflection on migration policies. For offspring, most of them were born in the mid-1960s or early 1970s. Seven of eight respondents grew up in rural areas. The number of males and females of this group is equal. Six of them were children of rural senior interviewees, which means that there are six pairs of parent and offspring in the thesis.

RESULTS

Rural Senior Interviewees' affections and Perspectives toward Policies in the

Migration-Prohibitive Stage

Rural seniors' sensibilities and perspectives toward policies in the migration-prohibitive phase varied. Some reported that they didn't realize the unfairness embedded in the policy back then, while others said that they had clear understanding of it. However, the common pattern among seniors was that they said they dared not to make their voice heard and to take actions to change the political injustice in the migration prohibition stage.

Three seniors stated they didn't consider policies in the migration-prohibitive stage as unfair when policies took place because they didn't have an awareness of justice or injustice back then. These three respondents expressed that "people at that time didn't think too much, and they were simple". Participating in the production team and earning workpoints were what they cared most about, they reported. They didn't have spare time to think about "injustice", but were busy with farm work. Another factor that contributed to interviewees' lack of consciousness was their limited access to information and knowledge so that they couldn't understand the condition and the environment in which they were situated. Gong Zhang who was born in Jiangsu in 1957 and who currently lives in Shanghai as a worker in the air-conditioning industry described, "You didn't have any source for information back then. Neither radio nor TV were accessible. When the moon was bright, we played hide-and-seek. We only had one post office. We didn't have any information at that time". Since they didn't see themselves in an unjust situation, they took their farmer status, which was different from city residents, for granted. The three senior interviewees said they knew the rural-urban gap, but it wasn't considered as

problematic. It was therefore a natural matter for them to live a life with more hardships in the countryside than city residents back then.

For respondents who had a political consciousness during the migration-prohibited stage, they stated that they perceived policies as commands from higher officials: they were not allowed to intervene in any part of its formulation, implementation, and reflection. They couldn't do anything other than follow policies, no matter if they favored or disapproved of them. Zhen Cai who was born in Anhui province, and who had multiple migration experiences in his 20s and 30s said “You had no choice but followed the policy. How could it be possible to resist?” The statement reflects that the majority of senior interviewees saw themselves as passive subjects upon which policies were exerted. Referring back to Foucault’s theory of governmentality, it also mirrors that population was managed and controlled directly by the government.

Elder rural respondents used the concept of “fate” to make sense of their more difficult lives in the countryside compared to urban residents during the prohibition phase. To them, being born in the countryside was their fate, predetermined by a force that was out of their control. Due to the strict household registration policy, they saw no possibility to change their fate, so they followed the path to be a farmer, similar to their parents, grandparents or even ancestors. No alternative was available to them, and they then accepted the reality and normalized the idea that the child of peasants is supposed to be a farmer. Their destiny was clear to them, according to their report: “We were born in the countryside, then we lived there and did what farmers do.” Moreover, for two respondents, it was not the harsh reality that made them adopt the conception of “fate”.

Rather, birth location entailing the work they do was so natural for them that it was ingrained in their mind. They didn't think there was anything wrong with it.

Government policies produce "docile" political subjects, a concept introduced by Foucault. People dare not to disagree with policies, but follow what is asked of them. By introducing various policies, though unfair, the government intervenes and manages the population and their bodies for distinct goals. Farmers need to work on the farm day and night for agricultural production, which reflects that their bodies are seen as machines and are incorporated into efficient economic controls. Farmers' expanding capability to produce goes hand in hand with their increasing docility.

Three out of nine senior interviewees expressed that they had a sense that migration policies were unfair during the stage of migration prohibition. What made them have strong senses of injustice was much fewer food supply, education access, and job opportunities in rural areas than cities. Urban areas with more resources were largely due to the policy slant. Quan Zhou who was born in the lower reach of the Yangtz River, said

"My older brother was supposed to work in Shanghai, but he didn't have a Shanghai hukou, so he could not work there. I was young at that time, so I didn't quite understand the incident. As I grew up gradually, I felt what happened to my brother was unfair. It was widely discussed and circulated at that time that everyone was equal, but it was actually not."

Hua Wang from Jiangsu province, who is now a teacher, stated a similar dissatisfaction about his educational opportunities: "I felt antagonism. I saw government officials' children all had good jobs or went to universities. I asked myself why I couldn't." Nevertheless, respondents' disagreement and disapproval was silent. They dared not to share such affection with people they were unfamiliar with, to officials, or even to family members. They perceived great risks associated with publicly disagreeing with policies.

It is supported by Zhen Cai's statement that "You will be labeled as rightists if you do so, and they would criticize you to the hell. How dared you then talk about policy?" It supports Foucault's theory of Governmentality that surveillance is necessary for the government to exert control on its population.

One respondent, Feng Zhu, who was born in the Anhui rural areas and currently lives in the city, did fight against the migration policy rather than follow it back then. He made ways to cities regardless of the strict regulations. The reason for his "revolt" was that if he didn't leave for city, he would die in the countryside due to hunger. It was the survival will that pushed him to break the political constraints and go to cities for food. However, he stated that he was easily found by the surveillance team in the city and was sent to the detention center for policy education. He was ultimately sent back to the countryside.

Rural Senior Interviewees' Affections and Perspectives toward Policies in Migration-Permissive Stage

All senior respondents considered Reform and Opening (Gai Ge Kai Fang) as a positive and helpful policy in general, with three interviewees addressing its relatively insignificant negative aspects. The interviewees responded that they considered Reform and Opening as favorable for multiples reasons. Agriculturally, they could obtain harvest based on their own efforts rather than commune distribution. It means if they devote themselves to farming the land, they would have a better harvest. Hunger for them was no longer a crucial problem under Reform and Opening. Secondly, they started to be allowed to go to cities and work in cities, which was hardly possible in the migration inhibition phase. As Liu Yang, who was born in Zhejiang province said, "You had the option to choose to farm the land or to go to cities." Except for working as employees,

rural people were permitted to start their own businesses in cities, which made them “have a space to use their intelligence, wisdom, and hardwork to play to their ability”. Liu Yang went to a northern city to do small business in the 1990s. Senior respondents considered that they had more freedom to make choices for their life and that their living standard increased due to the economic reform. They said they were grateful to the party and state who issued the policies that allowed them to “do whatever they want to do”.

Moreover, beyond material benefits, senior respondents expressed that they thought Reform and Opening provided them with more access to education, so their life would be better and they could make contributions to the society. The reform era allowed people from both rural and urban areas to take the college entrance exam, and if they met the score, people from the countryside could go to the city for college. By going to college, individuals were able to change their status, and they could work in other fields instead of farming, which differed greatly from the migration-prohibited phase. Hua Wang said “As the person born in rural areas, if it was not Reform and Opening that offered me the chance to go to the university, I could only be a farmer, and I would not had any channels to work toward a better life”. Hua wang is now a physics teacher in one of the high schools in Jiangsu province.

However, increased living standards and more freedom didn’t disguise the continued inequality. According to one respondent, he perceived that welfare given to workers was more than that given to farmers. Another respondent said he observed that employees in public institutions were paid much more than workers in cities when he migrated to the city to work in road construction. Interviewees’ responses reflect that they made comparisons to decide whether certain policies were helpful or not. Interviewees’

own past experiences were one of the comparing units. That senior respondents considered their life became better during migration-permission stage is because they compared the life after Reform and Opening to their own past. They compared the material and other resources they obtained during the Reform and Opening to those they had in the 1950s and 1960s, and they concluded that the resources were more abundant for them under the reform. Therefore they considered it as a better policy. They didn't compare their life with the city residents' previous living standard, but their own. The result matches Feng's study which concludes that rural respondents compare their past to current life to judge whether the external environment has become fairer or not.

Another reference group senior respondents adopted to create contrast was people who they thought shared a similar status with them and who they considered close to their position. Particularly, farmers compared their life with that of workers, and workers in cities compared their life with that of employees of public institutions. For example, the construction worker in the city Zhong Yin said "Entry employees in the public institutions got paid five to six thousand yuan a month, but we only got paid two to three thousand. It was not that fair". Farmers didn't compare their life with merchants, but workers; workers in cities didn't compare their life to business elites, but entry level employees in public institutions. The result of the comparison to a large extent influenced their perception of whether Reform and Opening is just or not. This result differs from Feng's study in which he concludes that the "perceived degree of inequality becomes smaller when the reference group is closer to oneself" (2007:10). However, it was through comparison with reference groups that are close to them, senior respondents of the thesis considered there was injustice in policies.

By reflecting on their own past, senior interviewees expressed that they perceived policies in the migration-permission stage such as Reform and Opening as improving their living conditions greatly. However, by making reference regarding payments and welfare to groups who were close to their position, a few rural seniors also concluded that injustice continued and lasted during Reform and Opening.

Rural Senior Interviewees' Transmission of Political Values to Offspring

Rural seniors' reported transmission behavior differed considerably based on their perceptions and sensibilities of particular policies. For policies in the migration-prohibition stage which most of the interviewees viewed negatively, the ways parents transmitted their political perspectives to offspring when they were youngsters varied greatly. Nevertheless, with regard to the conveyance of policies of Reform and Opening, the content and the method of transmission tended to be more homogeneous.

The Absence of Direct Political Transmission

The majority of senior interviewees said they basically didn't convey their perspectives of policies introduced in the migration-inhibition stage when their children were young, and they intentionally didn't talk about it. The first reason why they didn't talk was that they were afraid of surveillance of speech from the government in the 1950s and 1960s. It is evidenced by Xia Chen who grew up in Jiangsu province. She stated "You couldn't say anything bad about the policy. You would be arrested and imprisoned if you did so. You would be labelled as anti-revolutionist and be paraded through streets." Quan Zhou also stated something similar: "Before Reform and Opening, you needed to be cautious and ponder what you said." Interviewees' responses reflect that government surveillance and deterrence to a certain degree produce people's docility.

Secondly, parents stated that they were afraid that the conveyance of their political attitudes and perspectives might have some negative influence on their children, so they chose not to talk about them. In other words, they thought it was not beneficial for children to be exposed to the political criticism. They considered that if they presented themselves as antagonistic to the government, their children would be aberrant as well, while being rebellious was not seen as desirable character. “I tried to speak less about my dissatisfaction and antagonism about policies. Children all knew it is important to follow the rules and policies. [When you express your disapproval], they will be confused. They will think how come you are dissatisfied with the government? It was important to keep them amenable”, said Hua Wang. Similarly, another interviewee, Zhong Yin, expressed that he used positive examples, rather than negative examples to educate children, and the problematic policies during the migration-inhibition phase were negative examples.

“If you talk about the problems of policies in the end of 1950s too often, they would start to be skeptical about the current policy. They may think current policies in some way are similar to the past ones. If you transmit the negative aspects of policies too frequently, they might be led to think in this way. So you can’t convey dissatisfaction to children too often, it would work against them. I didn’t wish to lead them to the wrong way, and it would be the best if they don’t know what happened in the past. You can’t educate them with previous problematic policies, but the favorable ones”, he expressed.

The reason why respondents tried to prevent their children from being antagonistic may be that parents, based on their past experiences and reflections, associated great risks with being critical about politics. They didn’t want their children to be punished due to the antagonism. However, on the other hand, such a mindset from parents also reflects that they self-disciplined and self-monitored what they transmitted to offspring. Seniors were

docile under the governmentality in the migration prohibition stage, and they conveyed such docility to offspring, intentionally educating them to be less critical about policies. Combining Foucault's theory of governmentality and Mannheim's theory of generation transmission together, it's reasonable to suggest that senior interviewees intend to transmit their docility to the next generation to keep them from potential risks and punishment.

Depoliticized Transmission

The second way of transmission is that occasionally for several rural seniors, they talked about their experience in the migration-prohibition phase vaguely to children, and they avoided politically sensitive words and references, which made their experience sound apolitical. Their experience, which was largely influenced by the politics back then, was rendered into personal anecdotes in the course of transmission, and they intentionally depoliticized their experience. For example, analyzed from Hua Wang's report when he talked about his migration experience in the 1960s to his children, he described in detail how he felt when he couldn't go to cities and other aspects of the incident with abundant affections. The way he unfolded his experience was like telling a vivid story. However, he didn't transmit to offspring why people were prohibited from moving freely back then. When children asked him the reason, he avoided answering the question directly and shifted the focus, saying "my current condition under the reform era gets much better right?" The phrase indicates that he didn't want to pay too much attention to his past hardships, but just focus on the time when life gets better. In sum, parents filtered the political aspects of their past experience and conveyed a depoliticized story to offspring.

Particularly, in terms of word choice, almost half of senior interviewees used the word “situation” (xingshi), such as “bad situation” (huai xingshi) when describing and making sense of policies in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, when asked why rural people couldn’t migrate to cities in the migration-inhibition phase, Zhen Cai stated “It was in a bad situation at that time”. Respondents didn’t use the straightforward words “policy”, “rules”, and so forth, but the ambiguous “situation”. In Chinese, the word implies that multiple obscure factors together result in a particular condition and trend. That is to say four seniors perceived that unjust living conditions between rural people and urbanites in the 1950s and 1960s were not fully caused by political leaders and officials, but by other ambiguous factors as well, while these factors were out of politician’s control. Therefore, the word choice mirrors half of the senior respondents’ perceptions that politicians don’t need to be completely responsible for the terrible outcomes in the migration-prohibition stage. It also demonstrates that the way in which respondents express past political experience was depoliticized and filtered.

Extraction and Simplification

Another approach of rural senior’s conveyance was that they simplified their past experience, abstracted it into certain principles such as “save food” and “study hard”, and then transmitted to offspring. It differs from detailed storytelling because it lacks specificities, but similarly, political references, preferences, and perspectives were mostly absent in the communication. What makes it distinct from apolitical transmission is that it is simpler and conveyed more frequently than stories. Nevertheless, these principles contain and imply the sensibility and rationality of the seniors' reflections of their past encounters.

The instruction to “study hard” from parents was in part extracted from their experience when they were not able to leave the countryside during the stage of migration inhibition. Study well and go to the university is one way to leave rural areas during Reform and Opening, so they wished such conveyance could make children understand the importance of study.

“My husband and I stressed to children that you need to study hard, otherwise you’ll stay in the countryside with no way out. You could only have good opportunities in cities. If you don’t study hard, you don’t know anything when you go to cities and you can’t find jobs. If you have a job, then you will obtain a stable life. Even though you can’t find a job temporarily, you still have opportunities because you acquire knowledge and skills from learning. My husband emphasized to study hard. He wanted to continue his study in the 1950s, but he couldn’t”, said Liu Yang.

The principles from parents were the ones which they considered would help their children survive and thrive in the society. The principles also mirror that for senior respondents, they perceived the way to succeed in the society was to adjust themselves to the existing rules and policies, to walk on limited roads permitted by political elites rather than to pave new paths that were not officially allowed. They instructed their children to exceed on considerably restricted possibilities, rather than guide them to disagree with and fight against the policy slant by various means and to strive for more access to resources from the government.

Direct transmission

The transmission of the second category of policies was about ones which interviewees considered as favorable, namely the policies issued in the Reform and Opening era. From both parents and children’s reports, it’s consistent that senior respondents talked directly to children that they thought policies were beneficial for them

for various reasons. Parents also expressed in front of children that they were grateful for Deng Xiaoping and the Communist Party who issued such policies. The transmission of policy which rural seniors considered as desirable was severely different from the conveyance of policy they perceived as unjust: they didn't avoid discussion, they didn't depoliticize and filter what they said, and they didn't simplify and abstract their experience into principles. It is therefore perhaps inferred in China that policies that were viewed as positive had a larger chance to be told to the next generation, and offspring were more likely to know parents' attitudes and perspectives toward these policies.

Moreover, it is worth noticing that along with parents' positive perspectives of Reform and Opening, a sense of individualism that stresses individual merit and capability was also conveyed to children. Under the context that rural parents thought the reform era was fairer, they educated children that, whether they would be successful or not, they couldn't blame anyone else but themselves. They are responsible for their outcomes, not other people, not policies, and not the government. Feng Zhu who went to the city for food in the migration prohibition stage said he educated children in their adolescence that "People had freedom due to Reform and Opening, and you can do whatever you want to do. You can play to your ability, which was quite different from before. If you still can't make money and survive, you could only blame yourself." When the political condition was thought of as improved, and policies as less unjust than before, respondents were more likely to think that individual experiences and achievements were not relevant to structural reasons such as policy slant, but personal abilities, and then communicated such a mindset to the next generation. The formation of this sensibility may not be separated from senior respondents' lack of criticism to politics and lack of

actions against policy preference to cities. If they didn't problematize the political injustice in the first place, and thought paths given by politicians as possible for their offspring to thrive in the society, it might be natural for them to blame individuals, not political unfairness, for the failure.

The merit-based mindset on the other hand reflect that rural seniors perceived Reform and Opening not only as a policy improving their living conditions, but as a complete departure from policies in the migration prohibition stage and a rupture from previous political history. It marked the start of new era. Respondents thought that similar policies as that of the 1950s and 1960s would never be introduced again. In other words, interviewees saw that the government obtained a new essence and a different nature from that of the party during the phase migration inhibition, and such radical change was manifested by Reform and Opening. Therefore, for senior interviewees, they saw a considerable shift of governmentality from the migration prohibition stage to the migration permission stage, and they increased their sensibility of individualism as a result.

Rural Seniors' Perceived Influence of their Transmission to Offspring

Six senior interviewees thought their transmission influenced their children. Two respondents expressed that they thought their conveyance allowed their offspring to tell right from wrong. "By talking policies to them, children can at least tell right from wrong, good policy from bad policy, and protection from exploitation. They will have a basic sense of it, and she would know what is the right thing to do, and what is not", Hua Wang said. Quan Zhou stated the similar: "Based on my education and incorporated with

child's learning from school as well as social experience, my child can use their brains to think about political matters”.

However, for the other three respondents, they perceived that their conveyance had little influence on their children. “In general, people pave their own road. Good will be good, and bad will still be bad no matter how much you transmit to your children”, stated Fu Sun who owns a rubber factory in rural Jiangsu province. One factor that may contribute to seniors' views of their limited impact on children is that they perceived a generational gap between them and their children. They viewed that their offspring didn't believe what they said about their past experiences. Or in other words, they perceived that it was too difficult for their children to believe in their stories. They formed such beliefs from children's reactions and responses to their transmissions. One third of interviewees reported that when their children heard their experiences during the stage of migration prohibition, children said: “how could that be possible”, “that's your era, it is a different era now”, and “why did you still talk about things that happened in the 1950s to me now”. These resistant reactions to conveyance may lead parents to think that their transmission didn't have a crucial impact on children. The finding supports Mannheim's standing that the transmission from previous generations to the next may be difficult due to each generation facing different social and political processes and events.

Surprisingly, however, offerings of these three senior interviewees who considered their transmission as not influential all mentioned that they were impacted by their parents' conveyance in some aspects. Hua Sun, the son of Fun Sun thought he had been deeply influenced by his parents' transmission, mostly from his mother. The hunger story in 1950s and the principle of “being thrifty and economical” told to him frequently

when he was a youngster have affected his lifestyle greatly. Zhen Cai, the father of Fei Cai said that his transmission had no influence on her daughter as well, however, Fei stated that his father's positive perspective toward migration policies on Reform and Opening affected her corresponding viewpoints. Moreover, Zhong Yin, the father reported that he did not tell his experience in migration prohibition stage often to her daughter Hong Yin often because he did not want to use a "negative example" to make his daughter rebellious. Nevertheless, Hong Yin expressed that she heard a lot of past stories from the elders in the family, and one unfair incident that happened to her parents affected her deeply. She realized back then she needed to succeed and thrive in the society through her own hard work. These three misalignments mirror that under some occasions parents' perceived influence of their transmission of past injustice on children differed from the actual one.

Offspring's Perceived Influence from Parents' Transmission

The transmission regarding parents' experience in the migration-prohibition stage left offspring different influences. Peng Li was deeply traumatized by his parents' past experiences which in part were told to him by his brothers and sisters. He stated that his parents were upright and virtuous people, and they offered lots of help to people in the village. They gave out clothing and medicine to villagers for free. However, when her mother was sick, she could not go to the hospital in the city smoothly for treatment, and his father was tortured to death during the Cultural Revolution. These incidents severely harmed him and such pain would be with him for his entire life. The trauma may derive from the fact that righteous people were treated unjustly and horribly due to the political and social conditions.

Politically, a few second generation respondents reported that they learned to be cautious of what they say about policies and the government from their parents' transmission. "I learned that you can comment on some matters, but not on others. For some policies, if you can't make comment, just don't make. It's against the law to make criticism. We can't deviate from the law, and we can't say things that are reactionary", said Ying Chen. Though parents did not mention the word "government" or "policy" when they conveyed their experiences to their children, a few children knew that their parents' encounters were related to politics, and they knew there was something more behind the story. Peng Li expressed "They [Parents] dared not mention the word such as "government". They avoided the word, but we knew the Communist Party was relevant to what they experienced."

One respondent Hong Yin, the daughter of construction worker Zhong Yin, felt strong unfairness when she heard their parents' past. Therefore, she made up her mind back then that she had to succeed in the society as a way to fight against the unjustness. "I just thought from my parents' incidents that I have to be a promising person", she said. Her mindset was the following: policies treated me more unfairly, I will be more successful to prove that political injustice can't defeat me. It could be thought as a circuitous way to express dissatisfaction and fight against the unfairness, that interviewees' would not let exploitative policies exert power on them, and prove unfairness powerless through their success. In sum, the conveyance from parents sometimes aroused some interviewees' will to thrive in the society.

Three interviewees expressed that their parents didn't leave them significant influence from the transmission because they couldn't imagine and understand their

parents' past since they didn't experience it. Interviewees in this subgroup also made the point that external sources such as media and social experiences shaped their political understanding, rather than transmission from their parents. According to Hua Sun, the son of Fu Sun, when he was in his childhood and pre-adult years, politics were irrelevant to him. He said that all he thought about at that time was how to become a writer, and he didn't care about policies and government. His political consciousness wasn't aroused until he was in his forties when he had access to the internet. Since then, he read widely about politics such as relevant news and blogs, and his political views were deeply affected by sources on the internet. The result supports the political socialization literature that media is an important socialization agent.

Another respondent Qing Zhu stated that he cultivated his political understanding by exploring different cities incorporated with what he learned from books and articles. He said: "The environment our generation grew up with made us think more independently, that we basically are not swayed by other people's thoughts. We prefer to observe the society more directly. My father was not at home often, and my mother didn't speak much, so many of my thoughts were established on my own by exploring cities and reading articles." Compared to external resources, the extent of parents' transmission in influencing their political perspectives was insignificant for this group of interviewees.

Regarding policies of Reform and Opening, two offspring interviewees explicitly stated that their parents' views on Reform and Opening and the party directly influenced theirs, so that they perceived the policy and the government positively as well. While

another respondent Xu Zhou expressed that her views on Reform and Opening were not affected by her parents' transmission, but through her own observations and experiences.

Offspring' Understandings of Past Migration Policies

Except for one respondent who displayed a relatively strong opinion that China has significant shortcomings to overcome, the other seven interviewees displayed positive attitudes about the government and the Communist Party. Two offspring interviewees displayed a sense of forgiveness, that they forgave the party's previous mistakes. For them, it is natural for the state and the party to make mistakes because it is just like a person who also makes mistakes. These two respondents made the state and party anthropomorphic. They made the point that though the party/state did introduce problematic policies in the migration prohibition stage, it realized its mistakes and took actions to correct the error. Therefore, the state and the party still deserved their trust. A series of policies introduced in 1978 and onward were thought of as beneficial and helpful so that they made up previous political mistakes. "After 1978, I thought the nation has been good. [The government] corrected earlier irrational policies, and made my journey pretty smooth since 1978", said Peng Li. Qing Zhu also stated the similar: "You have to allow people to make mistakes. It's impossible to succeed without making mistakes. I thought Reform and Opening is good, and the communist party is also good because it has a feature: at crucial times, it always corrects its errors timely. For instance, when Deng Xiaoping gained power, he set previous wrongs things in Cultural Revolution right. The party always made right choices at key times. The reason why China has developed to today's position is that it knows what to do, and what not to." These respondents perceived the state and party as a person, and they forgave its mistakes.

In addition, these two offspring respondents adopted official political discourse to make sense of why the depriving policy was issued during the migration inhibition stage. They used the phrase “cross the river by feeling the stones”, which means that the state/party was exploring the potential path to develop China since political leaders didn’t have enough experience of governing. The phrase implied that political leaders were uncertain what the policy’s outcome might be, so some terrible consequences could be forgiven because they were not experts of the government at that time. Though the idiom was firstly mentioned by Deng Xiaoping during the time of Reform and Opening, and this concept was not specifically proposed by the party to explain problematic policies introduced in the migration-prohibition phase, respondents themselves actively appropriate this term to understand issues generated by unjust policies. It reflects that the political discourse created by the government in such a case influences how people interpret and make sense of political particularities.

The majority of offspring interviewees perceived themselves as general public who is far away from politics and their voice doesn’t matter. There isn’t a political apparatus collecting and reflecting people’s voices such as voting in China. Most offspring respondents considered that politics is not a matter they ought to care about, that policies and politics are like an external and independent existence to them. There haven’t and there won’t be any relationship between politics and them. All female second generation respondents addressed the point. “I didn’t have any thoughts on the government. I am just an ordinary person. Political matters are not things we can imagine and we should pay attention to. I just live my life well as a common person, and I think policies and politics can’t affect me”, stated Fei Cai, a current worker in an industrial

town. Yu Zhou expressed something similar: “Policies are made by the nation, and thousands of words from the general public can’t equate their one word. Therefore, it is just waste of time to speak out what you think politically. No one listens to you. Your voice is useless to make any change. Only government officials can reduce unfairness.” This group of respondents didn’t perceive themselves having any agency to make improvements on unjust policies. Moreover, respondents also mentioned that they didn’t know where to offer their feedback, that political apparatus was not available for them to put in their voice. To a large extent, a sense of powerlessness and indifference in front of the governmentality is reproduced in offspring. Though there is not enough evidence suggesting it is entirely due to parents’ transmission that they form such sensibilities, the result presents the alignment between seniors’ views on politics and those of offspring.

Though most of the offspring did not think political participation was relevant to them, they did hold a positive attitude toward China’s political future. According to their expression, two offspring demonstrated their belief in a progressive view of history, that they thought the society will only develop in a good direction and politicians will make policies that help such development. “Similar policies such as those in migration prohibition stage will be never issued again in China” said Ying Chen and Qing Zhu.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that both senior and offspring respondents viewed the migration permission stage as a different governmentality from the migration prohibition stage, and the policies introduced in the two phases were perceived as manifestations of two governmentalities. For senior respondents, they had direct experiences under and established perspectives about both the 1950s governmentality and the 1980s governmentality, while offspring only had direct experiences since around the 1970s. In many cases, offspring respondents' views of the 1980s governmentality was not an independent existence, that they were in various degrees influenced by parents' transmission of their views on two governmentalities. In other words, such transmission or lack thereof from senior respondents to a certain extent affects offspring' attitudes toward migration policies of Reform and Opening, their understandings of politics in China in general, and their perceptions of their own positions within the unfair political system of rewards and punishments. Offspring' attitudes and actions under a certain governmentality may not be ahistorical, but bearing the weight from their parents, grandparents or even previous generations. These affections and perspectives impact their daily lives, and might be the source for their political actions. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that without Foucault's theory of governmentality, it is difficult to conceptualize the political practice and strategy of governing bodies under different times and their impacts on people who are governed; without Mannheim's theory of generation, it is hard to depict how political sensibility is transmitted between generations, and to examine how historical political injustices leave imprints on people's attitudes of later governmentality. Put differently, Mannheim's theory of generation serves as a compliment to the theory of governmentality, allowing people's subjectivity under

certain governmentality to be no longer ahistorical. The combination and incorporation of two theories together allow us to understand not only the governing bodies, but also the complex inner world of people who are governed. The incorporated theoretical framework may be used to interpret and explain similar issues in other authoritarian regimes which encountered an ideological shift in governing bodies, manifested by rather distinct policies before and after the shift.

Limitations

Respondents of the thesis all come from the eastern region of China, so it is hardly possible to generalize the results of the project to rural seniors in other regions of China. The sample size is limited as well, so that the representativeness of the result in eastern China may be also constricted. Secondly, research questions of the thesis required respondents to recall the time periods that were a long time ago so that their memory involves and may influence the attitudes and perspectives they reported. Moreover, for each migration phase, there were indeed other policies that were formulated and implemented at the same time along with migration policies. Therefore, what respondents expressed as their affections and thoughts of migration policies might in fact be those of other or all policies that were introduced at that time. In other words, it's hard to discern whether people in rural area's political attitudes and understandings were affected by migration policies alone, or by different types of policies that were incorporated as a whole. Furthermore, since political discussion is perceived as behavior associated with high risks by many people in China, some respondents may reserve part of what they think or modify the extent of their affections and attitudes. The format of the interview,

an online video call, may enlarge such a possibility because a face-to-face interaction was not established and interviewees had little knowledge about the interviewer.

CONCLUSION

Rural seniors held varied attitudes and perspectives toward migration policies in the 1950s and 1960s. For some senior interviewees, they stated that they were not conscious of political matters back then because they had little access to information and education. Policies were out of their attention. Therefore, they didn't form a clear understanding of the political conditions in which they were in. Another one third of respondents didn't think of policies as unfair when they were experiencing them. Strict household registration made them not think otherwise, but to be a farmer on the countryside, and they interpreted it as fate. In the face of government power, they perceived themselves as powerless, and they didn't think they could participate in any part of policy formation, implementation, and evaluation. Though they were conscious of political conditions at that time, they didn't consider they had any relation with political matters. The rest of the interviewees did feel migration policies were unfair, but they dared not to speak up due to the potential punishment they may receive from the government. One respondent broke the strict migration rules back then, he figured out ways to cities. It was a survival will that urged him to fight against the policy, because he would suffer hunger leading to death if he stayed in the countryside. Unlike rural people's affections and perspectives toward the migration-prohibition era, their attitudes of migration policies of Reform and Opening were homogeneously positive. They

thought they had the freedom to choose between staying in the countryside or going to cities. Rural people could also leave the countryside by studying hard and then entering college. They evaluated policies as helpful or not by referring to the living conditions of their own past and those of the group they consider had a similar position in the society as they did.

A similar pattern emerged from rural seniors' political transmission to offspring as well, that the conveyance of migration-prohibitive policies differed, while the transmission of Reform and Opening was rather similar. Direct transmission of their political attitudes and viewpoints was absent for rural seniors when their offspring were around 11-17 years old. Perceived risks of political comment were the major reason to do so. They worried that the transmission may render their children into rebellious beings was another signification reason. However, it didn't mean rural parents didn't transmit. What they conveyed to children was not clear political attitudes, but stories in a format like personal anecdotes which were free from political references and preferences. Another way of transmission was extracting their past experiences, then abstracting and simplifying them into education principles. On the contrary, rural parents directly expressed their affections and perceptions of Reform and Opening to their offspring.

Regarding how rural seniors perceive the influence of transmission, one third of them thought that their transmission had no influence on children, and one reason was they thought there was a generational gap between offspring and them, while the rest of the interviewees considered that their conveyance allowed children to tell right from wrong, and to have knowledge to judge whether certain policies are beneficial or not. According to offspring, some were influenced by their parents' transmission to be quiet

about political opinions, while some other respondents made their mind to succeed in the society as a way to fight against the unfairness. Two offspring, on the contrary, expressed their political attitudes were mostly affected by media such articles in print and online, and their own experience in the society. As to the unfair past their parents underwent caused by problematic policies, several respondents expressed a sense of forgiveness to the government, that they thought it's understandable to make mistakes especially when political leaders at that time were not experienced in governing. If the government learns from its mistakes and improves gradually, it would still be trustworthy.

The thesis demonstrates that when seniors from rural areas in their thirties or forties and when their offspring were youngsters, a political understating of their own and a space for discussion and transmission of such understanding wasn't established. Both rural parents and offspring mostly adopted official political discourse to make sense of politics and their conditions. In other words, most of them didn't cultivate their own knowledge and cultural heritage to understand the political injustices they underwent, and structural factors such as authoritative governmentality were major reasons for such an outcome. However, the two groups of people that the thesis focused on are older generations of the society. The generations such as those born after the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s may present a different pattern in terms of the way they understand their political experiences, especially when media and the internet have expanded radically since the 1980s in China. This could be a direction for future research as well. With more information available, later generations might form a general knowledge of politics in China and critical understanding of the political conditions they are situated in. The future research can also look at whether younger generations in China discuss and

participate in political matters or not and how. For example, it might be worth investigating what is the relationship between the seemingly heated political discussion in social media and political actions for younger generations. Moreover, younger generation of factory/migrant workers in some areas of China such as Guangdong province have organized a few demonstrations against economic exploitations and political injustices in recent years. It may also be worthwhile to explore the role of the family's political transmission in their collective actions. This may enable us to see whether parents' political conveyance and the circulation of political history in private sphere can be a starting point leading to younger generations' collection actions against the authoritarian governmentality. The finding might provide people some guidance to strive for their rights and power for a freer and fairer life.

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