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Analysis of the Governance Issue on the Migrant Children's Education in Beijing

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ABSTRACT

Establish migrant students' educative governance committee to discuss the solution of the problems. From 4 aspects, showing how to organize a governing body, to make the floating learners get better education, which can benefit not only them but also the Beijing city.

1. Introduction

With the rapid economic growth and the agricultural development in China, labor demand continues to grow in big cities and gradually declines in rural area. As the capital of China, Beijing combines the national political, economic and cultural center, leads the domestic public facilities, health care, public transport, and justifiably has grown into the biggest city with the largest number of migrant workers with families in China. According to online data, among the 58 million students in Beijing, 1 out of 8 is migrant student; some parents are well-funded, and actually, the vast majorities of them are peasant-

workers, doing physical work and yet have only low income and poor working and living conditions.

Only the minority of parents with good economic conditions can afford their children study in private aristocratic middle schools or international schools, in which the children can directly go abroad to study after graduating from high school, not restricted by the relevant entrance policy to senior high school.

In fact, proper policy and management from the Education Commission of Beijing are provided to improve the quality of migrant children's education, still the main issue exists.

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Some of their children attend public junior high school with local children in their parents' workplace. Most go to private migrant schools. In Beijing, there are 300 private migrant schools for migrant children; only 60 have got the licenses. The fundamental characteristics of these schools are "four low", low investment, low charge, low wage and low quality. Besides, because of the restrictions of education policy in China, they are almost not allowed to study in any public senior high school. But the rest of them are still confused and worried where they are going for the further learning. They are too young to go back home by themselves to study in their local senior schools. However, they have to stop schooling if they stay with parents in Beijing who have to work here for living.

In short, the Quality of the migrant children's education under 15 years of age and the education of the migrant young people aged 15 through 18 have become big social issues in Beijing.

It's well known that migrant children's education is about the fairness of education, which involves social justice, and building a harmonious society.

From what I learned from Dr. Bev Rogers' class, I know that transforming from management to governance, thinking deeply about institutional reform must be concerned to deal with the issue.³ Experience has shown that many education problems are not solved by the education community itself. From management to governance, education requires the government to penetrate deeply into the development of society and to seek policies in the process of social evolution. However, there are many comrades in the education circle who are not too concerned with social changes. They are conservative in their own way, or have weak insight into society and lack of control over the situation. For example, they always believe that as long as the government gives money, all the problems can be solved, it is not the case, system is an important factor to decide the administrative efficiency, and otherwise it is difficult to fundamentally solve the problem completely.

From the perspective of public services, the government should not fulfill education function of public service directly, but can give financial support and encourage society supporting management power, also combine education department own efforts, implement a non-profit financial system with governmental supervision.

In view of this, taking my school as an example, this essay starts with the establishment of migrant students educative governance committee to discuss the solution of the problem; I will focus on four aspects to show how we organize a governing body, to make the floating learners get better education, which can benefit not only them but also the Beijing city.

2. What Is Governance/Educational Governance?

Governance is one out of the 3 key factors (management, leadership, governance) to help an organization work well and continuously improve the efficiency and outcome of the organization.

Although "Governance" has been used for many centuries—the ancient Greek word "kubernetes" meant "steersman" or "helmsman" and was used to refer to "exercising authority, control and direction"^[1] (Coward, 2010, p. 711). In recent times, what Stivers (2008) refers to as "new" governance has now been expanded to include a range of non-profit and business organizations, with the associated underpinnings of the assumed market dominance. New governance has shifted meaning to be widely used as a replacement for direct government action. Only one simple definition cannot be applied everywhere.

The context I am considering is an example of the National Health Service in Scotland who has identified a need for educational governance. Coward (2010) considers educational governance in relation to health care and in doing so, provides a fresh look at the meaning of "educational governance" as the "diverse approaches to designing, funding and managing education to benefit learners, organizations and wider society"^[2] (Coward, 2010, p. 710). NHS Education for Scotland defines Educational Governance as "... the systems and standards through which organizations control their educational activities and demonstrate accountability for the continuous improvement of educational quality and performance"^[3] (NHS Education for Scotland, 2009, p. 6). Therefore my understanding of governance stresses the importance of the systems and standards that contributes to the performance, effectiveness or accountability of educational activities and programmers.

In Beijing, the experience of wandering life of most floating parents makes a difference of the experience of education for their children. In order to solve governing

of a school for better education, we need a focus on governance as calling for the renewal of public spaces, the opportunity for each person to share his or her own viewpoints on the issues that we face, then we need what Stivers (2008) calls “governance of the common ground” (p. 6) That is to say, a special educative governance committee should be established to change the educational plight of weak groups — the floating workers in Beijing, help to improve the education of their children.

3. What Is the Educative Purpose of Governance?

Research on governance addresses educational governance from diverse perspectives ranging from political to sociological and the technical/managerial^[4] (Coward, 2010, p. 711).

Lundgren (2001) argues that it is by education that we reproduce our culture – our values, habits, attitudes and knowledge – from one generation to the next. It is by education that we create conditions for cultural and economic growth. This insight is fundamental for educational planning and thus for governing and monitoring education. (p. 25)^[5] Broader political questions about how society might be improved and changed are expressed in the kinds of knowledge, attitudes and skills identified as required by participating in society. The reproduction and transformation roles of education are not distinct — both require an awareness of new and changing circumstances and the building on a foundation of what is valued in existing arrangements. Since different groups have different views about what aspects of society need to be maintained and changed, education is always a debate with differing views of what constitutes a ‘good society’ embedded in each proposal for change or maintenance. Education is always contested (p.167 emphasis added). We argue, therefore, not only for education of a particular form and practice, but also for (or against) the vision of the good society that underpins our views on education. What kind of society should education, then, foster?^[6] (p. 167)

Nixon et al. (2004) argues that we need a vision of the good society which includes the possibility individual and collective”^[7](p. 169) issues in the context of what Arendt called a ‘care for of thinking outside of the assumptions we make and what we take for granted, which requires consideration of “both social and economic,

political and historical, the world’ beyond the self-interest driven by our neoliberal consumer-driven attitudes and behavior.

In Beijing, the foundation of the Migrant Student Educative Governance Committee surely can contribute to both a good education for the floating learners but also the whole city, even the whole nation.

4. What Worldviews/Orientations Shape the Idea of Governance?

4.1 Orientations, Perspectives and Assumptions Influencing Thinking and Acting in Education

Human beings are meaning making creatures. We establish ways of understanding the world around us, whether it be the natural world or the human social world. These meanings are often systematised and have been variously called orientations^[8] (Kemmis, Cole, & Suggett, 1983), ideologies, worldviews, frameworks, or perspectives. Their value is that they provide ways of understanding the world and give it meaning.

4.2 Four Orientations to Education

At any one time, there may be a range of competing perspectives held by different groups and subgroups, some of whom will have greater access to making their perspective more dominant in the political sphere. The transnational development of education policy, largely supported by various quantitative comparisons between countries (as in OECD reports) also includes elements of other perspectives. There are four orientations which have had an enormous impact on the way education is understood. These are the Market orientation, the Conservative orientation, the Humanist/progressive orientation and the Collective orientation.

4.2.1 The Market Orientation

The market orientation establishes an idea of the “free market” as the organising principle for what is seen as important. This places the economy as the central purpose of all institutions in society, including education. At different times this orientation has been known by different names including economic rationalist, neo-liberal, social capital, vocational and ‘human capital’. Each of these have in common is a conviction that the 39 economy, particularly the market economy, is at the centre of any understanding of human life and human interests.

4.2.2 The Conservative Orientation

The conservative orientation establishes the key factor in its explanatory framework as the traditional social and cultural context. It wants to preserve what it sees as the key forms of knowledge that have been established over time and served the society well. This orientation has sometimes, particularly in recent times, shared values with the Market orientation in seeking the best outcome for the economy through individual effort, often coordinating between neoliberal marketism and neo-conservatism. Other terms used to cover this orientation include the New Right and authoritarian populism, and in its extreme form, fascism.

4.2.3 The Humanist/Progressive Orientation

The Humanist/progressive orientation establishes the key factor in its explanatory framework as the individual human being. It seeks whatever contributes to the greater orientation the focus on the individual but in this case it is not the economic individual but the fully realised human individual, i.e. a person who has developed all their capacities and capabilities: intellectual, emotional, physical and social. Other related terms used for this orientation can be the naturalist, romantic, or progressive.

4.2.4 The Collective Orientation

The Collective orientation establishes the key factor in its explanatory framework as the good of the social group. It argues that humans are fundamentally social beings and fulfilment can only be achieved through cooperative effort towards the good of the greatest number. Individuals are still valued in this orientation: individuals have reciprocal responsibilities with other members and their identity comes from their relations with others. The individual can only achieve their potential through cooperative action and interaction with others; and all human practice is always social, including language. At various times this orientation has been called the socialist, socially democratic, socially critical perspective.

These orientations seldom appear in reality in their 'pure' form. There is a dominant view at any one time, but the others still operate in various ways. The way of describing the orientations is as an interpretative device to reveal the assumptions on which each relies and to make clear the very different implications for education and the curriculum of each perspective.^[9]

The governance in our school is also a combination in which collective and humanistic orientations are dominant,

combined with the other two orientations.

5. Who Gets to Participate and How?

How we think about the educative purpose of governance makes a difference to what we think about who should participate in governance processes. As Trujillo (2013) identifies, high-stakes accountability can impact on governance by board members embracing competitive, individualized goals for teaching and learning.^[10]

Yong Zhao (2012) argues that narrow specific standards treat students as identical and that we need instead, to have diverse outcomes for education, representing the diverse talents, skills and capabilities that young people need as global citizens.^[12] Robinson, Ward and Timperley (2003) question how we have thought about "laypersons" as board members in New Zealand schools and those we need to consider specific ways to build capacity.^[11] This question prompts a consideration of the people who make up governing boards in educational contexts.

The school has five key stakeholders: government, school administration, academic system, students, and society. They form a force field, which determines the mission, direction and function of the school.

Our School Migrant Student Governance Committee should be an educative governing body that is jointly attended by all education stakeholders — government, society, administration, teachers, students, staff and so on. As legal person, The School Migrant Student Governance Committee is responsible for the school management affairs, including:

- (1) The basic framework of the mission, the major policies and operational framework, responsible for the education resources, long-term strategy and resource allocation;
- (2) The appointment of school president, the exam of annual work plan, and budget, the supervision of the operation of the school;
- (3) Contact with all stakeholders of education, understand their opinions and suggestions about school work, and put these ideas and suggestions to the school administration in the proper way, establish school administration contact and coordination with each stakeholder group, the relationship between keeping these contact channels.

6. Conclusion

In all, by analysing the foundation and perfection of governing about the migrant students in Beijing City, through the statement of the conception, the educative purpose, the orientations to shape the idea of governance in Beijing, I get to know how the educative governance help migrant students to get better education, consequently realize the education justice in our city.

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