

Social Integration of the Low-income Migrant Population in Beijing Over the Past Two Decades

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ABSTRACT

In order to study the plight of low-income migrant population in Beijing. I have collected data from government websites, reports and papers, to analyze the reason of a large number of low-income migrant population flew out of Beijing. Results manifest that government unkindly policies, unfair educated chances and awful public opinion environment are main factors repelled low-income migrant population. Based on this, Beijing government should issue population kindly policies, ensure the right to education for children of low-income migrant population, and improve public opinion environment. The unfair efforts and rewards reflect the failure of social integration among low-income migrant population in Beijing.

KEYWORDS

Low-income Migrant Population; Social Inclusion; Urbanization; Industrial Transfer.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past of two decades, thousands of low-income population have entered Beijing and made significant contributions to the economic growth and urbanization of Beijing. While, they did not enjoyed equal rights. Those people were squeezed into dilapidated and narrow houses, expelled from Beijing by the government. Social integration is discussed in terms of the contradiction between the economic contribution and treatment of low-income migrant population, the education received by their children and their willingness to stay in Beijing for development. Those aspects reflect.

2. BEIJING'S POLICIES ON LOW-INCOME MIGRANT POPULATION IN DIFFERENT PERIODS

In 2000, the population policy in Beijing was still governed by the "Beijing Management Measures for Non-local Workers' Work" that was enacted in 1989. This policy mandated that non-local workers in Beijing must obtain a "temporary residence permit" and a "work permit" in order to work and reside in the city. However, in 1995, this policy underwent further tightening measures, which included imposing management service fees on migrant workers and additionally requiring them to hold an "employment certificate."

On the other hand, despite the strict population control measures in place for the city center, the registered residence of the floating population in the suburbs of Beijing was more open to purchasing houses. This distinction highlights the transitional nature of the population policies during this period,

which aimed to balance between controlling the influx of migrants into the city center and accommodating their presence in the outskirts.

The suburban areas provided a space for the floating population to settle and potentially purchase homes, while the stricter measures in the city center aimed to maintain a certain level of order and manage the influx of non-local workers. Overall, the policy landscape in 2000 reflected a delicate balance between the need for social control and the reality of an increasingly mobile and diverse population seeking opportunities in Beijing.

3. EDUCATED SITUATION OF LOW-INCOME MIGRANT POPULATION AND THEIR CHILDREN

3.1. Educational Level of Low-income Migrant Population

According to Beijing's "points based household registration" policy, those with a college degree will receive an additional 10.5 points, those with a bachelor's degree will receive an additional 15 points, those with a graduate degree will receive an additional 26 points, and those with a doctoral degree will receive an additional 37 points. <2>In the "points based household registration" policy, the proportion of bonus points for education is the highest, so a high degree is the key to obtaining a Beijing household registration. However, according to statistics from 2017, about 9% of people with agricultural household registration have a bachelor's degree or above, while 53% of people with non-agricultural household registration have a bachelor's degree or above<3>; A large number of migrant workers without high education have low competitiveness in the "points based household registration" and cannot obtain Beijing household registration. Under the influence of policies, many migrant workers are unable to obtain a Beijing household registration and enjoy the benefits it brings, resulting in a decrease in their willingness to integrate into Beijing society.

3.2. Educated Situation of Low-income Migrant Population's Children

Between 2000 and 2010, the majority of migrant workers' children attended schools specifically established for them. However, from 2011 to 2012, the Beijing government closed down approximately 30 such schools<4>, posing a significant challenge for these children. If migrant workers' children opt not to attend these designated schools, they face the obstacle of being unable to participate in the college entrance examination under normal circumstances if they enroll in other institutions.

Since the implementation of the double certification policy for school registration and registered residence in 2005, migrant children who are not registered in their official residence are ineligible to take the college entrance examination in Beijing. Consequently, many migrant children choose to return to their original registered residence to continue their high school education after completing junior high school in Beijing.

For low-income migrant families, this situation hinders their children's ability to progress academically and achieve a better life through higher education. It also diminishes their willingness to remain in Beijing for long-term development, as they struggle to provide their children with the educational opportunities necessary for a prosperous future.

4. DATA ABOUT CONTRIBUTION OF THE TERTIARY INDUSTRY IN TOTAL GDP

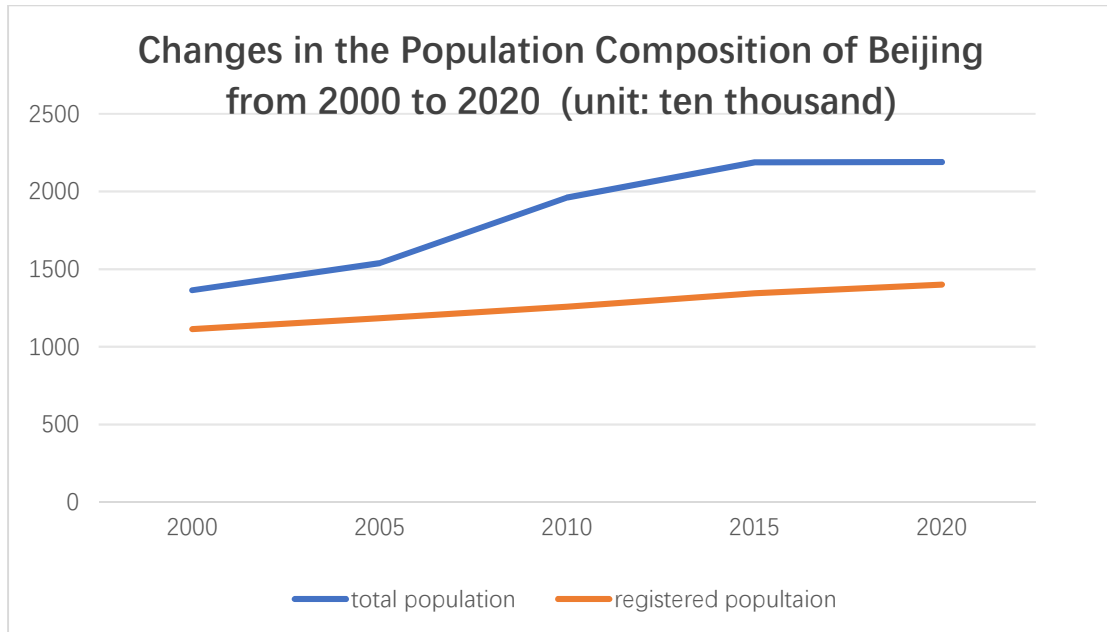


Fig. 1 <1> Changes of Population Composition in Beijing

As shown in Figure 1, from the population composition of Beijing, we can get a glimpse of the number and proportion of migrant population in the total population, and infer the growth rate of migrant population and the scale of informal employment in Beijing. These migrant workers mainly engage in the tertiary industry in Beijing, making great contributions to the city's economy and making daily life more convenient for the people of Beijing.

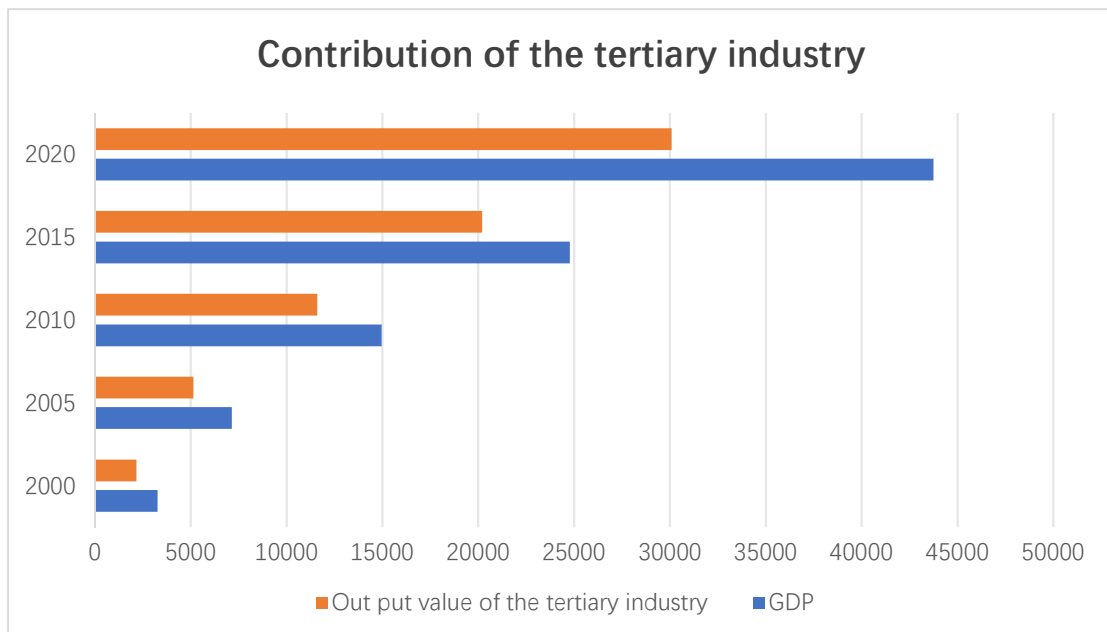


Fig. 2 <1> output value of the tertiary industry

As shown in Figure 2, the floating population in Beijing has indeed made substantial contributions to the development of the tertiary industry, leading to a steady increase in the output value of this sector. However, there exists a notable contradiction between the significant contributions of the floating population and their expulsion by the Beijing Municipal Government.

5. LIVING AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF LOW-INCOME MIGRANT POPULATION

The migrant population resides between the Third and Sixth Ring Roads, with over half of them living outside of the Fifth Ring Road. According to a 2017 survey, the second ring road has the smallest permanent population, reaching 1.481 million people; The permanent population from the Fifth Ring Road to the Sixth Ring Road is the largest, reaching 5.802 million people; The second largest permanent population outside the Sixth Ring Road is 5.177 million. From this perspective, the permanent population outside the Fifth Ring Road reached 10.979 million, accounting for 51% of the city's permanent population.<5>

The occupations pursued by the floating population encompass the logistics industry, traditional service sectors, as well as numerous individuals who establish stalls and operate small restaurants along the second and third ring roads. Despite having a relatively low income level, the floating population enjoys a high employment rate, enabling them to secure stable yet low-paying jobs in Beijing.

Housing conditions, however, are generally subpar. High population densities and inadequate hygiene measures characterize their living environments. Most floating population members opt for renting, particularly group rentals, which offer stability but come with dilapidated and outdated facilities. These conditions are often inferior to their original residences.

Moreover, the government's housing purchase policies impose limitations, casting uncertainty over the future of group rental housing for the floating population. The threat of demolition looms, and a lack of maintenance by tenants contributes to a dirty, cluttered, and impoverished living environment. Consequently, living conditions deteriorate further, with per capita living spaces shrinking and more individuals being forced into cramped quarters.

6. CONTRADICTION BETWEEN LOW-INCOME MIGRANT POPULATION AND GOVERNMENT'S EXCLUSIONARY POLICIES

The Beijing Municipal Government has consistently maintained control over the number of floating population from 2000 to 2020. Due to the economic siphon effect of Beijing on surrounding areas, income in Beijing is higher than in other regions, and a large number of people from Hebei, Henan, and Shandong are flocking to Beijing to engage in the tertiary industry. In the face of a large number of floating population, the Beijing Municipal Government will coordinate the policy of controlling floating population with the registered residence policy, and use coercive means to control the floating population in each district of Beijing. It cannot be denied that the social order of a large number of floating population is poor, causing health and safety hazards. There is a serious conflict between the Beijing Municipal Government's eviction policy, which lacks warmth and affection, and the migrant population seeking a better life. The two main contradictions are the contradiction in the number of floating population and the contradiction in urban development.

6.1. The Contradiction between Excessive Floating Population and Government Restrictions on Population Size

The growth rate of Beijing's permanent population has been declining year by year from 2013 to 2017, and by 2017, the population had achieved negative growth. The registered residence population of Beijing increases steadily every year, with an average of 2 million people growing in five years. For example, in 2017, a large number of floating population were expelled from Beijing, resulting in a negative growth of the total population. For many migrant workers engaged in setting up stalls and opening shops, the Beijing Municipal Government strictly enforces inspections on illegal buildings and whether they have business licenses, forcibly demolishing storefronts and relocating them to the suburbs; Adopt a one size fits all law enforcement approach of violent eviction for street vendors.

6.2. The Contradiction between Employment of Low-income Migrant Population and Urban Development

The floating population mostly engages in physical labor downstream of the tertiary industry chain, such as courier, delivery person, restaurant waiter and other professions. The Beijing Municipal Government announced in the 12th Five Year Plan the requirement to relocate non capital functions, such as general manufacturing, logistics bases, and wholesale markets out of Beijing. The clothing wholesale market of Beijing Zoo has been relocated to Langfang City, Hebei Province, and other clothing markets have also been relocated to Xiong'an, Cangzhou, Yongqing and other places. Correspondingly, the floating population engaged in these industries are expelled from the main urban area and even Beijing along with the industries.

7. THE INTEGRATION WILLINGNESS AND SENSE OF BELONGING OF THE LOW-INCOME MIGRANT POPULATION

The low willingness and sense of belonging of the floating population towards Beijing is partly due to the unfavorable policies introduced by the government towards the floating population, and partly due to the discriminatory social public opinion environment towards the floating population. The Beijing Municipal Government has used what is jokingly called "demolishing walls and filling holes" demolition to demolish the workplaces of migrant workers, and there have also been incidents of urban management beating people. Because the Beijing government adopts the policy of "controlling employees with certificates", that is, to treat employees differently according to whether they are registered in registered residence or not, the public opinion of "discrimination against registered permanent residence" arises. Among them, the term 'low-end population' is particularly insulting to the floating population. This term first emerges in a government document in 2008, and brought about oppose from online users. In a survey in 2012, 40% of floating population deemed they were discriminated by local people. Unreasonable policies and discriminatory social environment make the floating population only see Beijing as a place to work and earn money, without feeling the warmth of this city.

8. CONCLUSION

The study found that policy exclusion, strict registered residence system, and children's lack of equal access to education are the main reasons for the low willingness of Beijing's migrant population to integrate into society. The research of this paper analyzes the specific registered residence policy, education policy and population data, and feels the dilemma faced by the migrant population from the perspective of entering Beijing. Beijing has high levels of economic and educational resources, and it is inevitable for a large number of migrants to enter the city. As a mega city, Beijing also needs a large number of migrants. Therefore, the author suggests that the Beijing government relax

restrictions on migrants and use more scientific methods to plan urban development. The data and some viewpoints used in this article are sourced from the official websites of the National Bureau of Statistics, the government, relevant news reports, and other papers, and lack on-site research and investigation. In the future, it is necessary to supplement the results of on-site inspections and continue to pay attention to Beijing's population policy.

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ANNOTATION

<1>National data

<2>Beijing Management Measures for Integral based Residence Registration

<3>Zhu Lin.(2021).Research on the Impact of Education Level on Income of Floating Population in Beijing.Beijing Jiaotong University

<4>Nearly 30 schools for migrant workers' children in Beijing will be closed, involving nearly 30000 students.New Beijing News.2011.8.16

<5>Regional distribution of permanent migrants in Beijing.Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics

<6>65% of the migrant population in Beijing lives between the Fourth and Sixth Ring Roads,Jinghua Times.2015.5.22

<7>Statistical Communique on the National Economy and Social Development of Beijing in 2017