Global Learning from the Periphery: An Ethnographic Study of a Chinese Urban Migrant School

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Abstract: This paper presents an ethnographic study on the global learning practice of teachers and students in a Chinese internal migrant school. Rural children have relocated to urban centers with their parents on a massive scale over the past decades, as China undergoes rapid economic changes. Many migrant children have to attend privately run migrant schools which often function within limited budgets. Drawing on various types of data, this study investigates informal learning in a global context. In particular, the research focuses on a Scout program that is modeled on world Scouting movements and that is tailored for the migrant pupils' educational demands. The data collection tools include participant observation, in-depth interview and document collection. The research finds that, with limited educational resources, the informants learn globally to improve the sustainable development of the migrant pupils, to fight against educational inequality, and to facilitate mutual understanding between the migrant and the urban communities. This paper concludes that global learning plays an important role in the informants' ''up-scaling'' progress facilitated by their linguistic capacity, computer literacy, and social network.

1. Introduction

Globalization has changed learning as well as learners' relationships with the world. Globalization can be described as flows of capital, information, technology, and people across the continents [1,2]. The notion of global learning for sustainable development (GLSD) was introduced in the 1960s [3]. Originated from environmental education, education for sustainable development includes a dimension of social justice and empowerment, and highlights the interdependence between human activities and the natural world. Several international summits have been devoted to this field, and world organizations such as the UN and UNESCO have been active in promoting and implementing its objectives. Education for sustainable development has been one of the priorities for national policymakers, and its meanings have been debated, defined, and redefined. Schools increasingly assume the role of educating young people about global challenges such as climate change and global migration [4–8]. However, we have inadequate knowledge about how effective the GLSD programs are in terms of facilitating learning in local contexts [9], and more empirical research is needed on GLSD in developing countries or in the "peripheries" of Wallerstein's model of world-systems analysis [10]. Over the past decades, the economic forces of globalization have driven greater inequality both within countries and between regions of the world. To achieve transitions towards sustainability, a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of economies and societies is needed, to grasp the wider implications of globalized economic markets. Importantly, inequality and extractivist economic models have led to an increase in migration and loss in social cohesion. As a result, many learners worldwide

now live in marginalized and precarious positions, with reduced access to education and where their cultural capital is not recognized.

At the same time, as a result of globalization, learners have new ways of accessing knowledge. Knowledge has acquired new features in globalization. For instance, knowledge becomes increasingly specialized, relative, and short-lived. The Internet not only offers its users instant access to worldwide information, but also, with Web 2.0, enables its users to take an active role in producing and circulating information [11]. These factors call for new modes of learning in a globalized world. Global learning, learning in a global context, can be seen as a kind of learning that connects everyday problems with global processes. Its core value is not to find the "right" answers, but to deal with the uncertainty of knowledge in a global context and to encourage self-determination among learners [12–14].

The current research presents a case study of a Chinese urban migrant school and its teachers who may not be aware of GLSD, nevertheless mobilize all possible resources, learn globally, actively design and implement an educational program. Drawing on various types of data, this paper aims to analyze the informants' global learning practices and to demonstrate that global learning empowers the migrant teachers and students with more knowledge and skills, and facilitates them to achieve greater social justice and educational equality. The following sections are organized in this sequence: Research background of Chinese internal migrants, informants and methods, data analysis, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Research Background

This section gives a brief description of Chinese internal rural–urban migration from a macro perspective. In the Chinese context, an important aspect of social sustainability is the educational opportunities of internal migrant children in urban centers [15]. Rapid urbanization and industrialization have attracted millions of laborers from rural to urban areas within the country's borders in the past forty years. The migrant population reached 277 million in 2015 [15]. By 2010, more than 35 million migrant children had moved to cities with their parents [16]. These migrant children's educational opportunities have caused much public concern and debate [17–20]. The main concern is that urban public schools have inadequate capacity to accommodate the 'influx' of migrant children, and therefore, migrant parents either have to pay higher fees for public schools or send their children to privately run migrant schools. Moreover, their educational opportunities are likely to be hindered by the national household registration (*hukou*) that groups people into agricultural/rural or non-agricultural/urban *hukou*-holders at birth, and transgenerationally, as children depend on their parents' *hukou* status. Possessing a local *hukou* means one is entitled to local social services [21]. Mostly without a local *hukou*, however, migrant children face not only financial but also institutional difficulties in schooling.

Different from private elite schools, private migrant schools often function within tight budgets and, therefore, classrooms and teaching facilities are in unsatisfactory conditions. Moreover, migrant teachers are likely to quit jobs because of low prestige and low salary, and this may add to school managerial difficulties. Usually, without official registration and recognition, migrant schools are under closedown pressures as policymakers emphasize potential negative impacts of some underachieving migrant schools on pupils' development. Cities such as Beijing vow to accommodate all migrant children within the publicly funded education system and to close down "underachieving" migrant schools. This ambition, however, is not easy to achieve and migrant schools, on the one hand, remain to be an important supplement in meeting the educational demands of migrant families, and on the other hand, struggle to survive under the on-going closedown pressure.

Internal migrant children's education has attracted much public and scholarly attention. Issues such as educational inequality, school management, teaching quality, pupils' and teachers' identities are investigated in a body of recent academic literature both in China and internationally [14,22–28]. Migrant pupil's learning, especially learning for their sustainable development in a global context, has been rarely addressed. Globalization, however, is very relevant to these children as the Chinese

internal migration is part of a bigger and more general process of globalization [14]. For instance, many migrants work in factories that produce goods for global markets, and when the global economy declines, migrant workers' jobs are negatively influenced. Without a job, they and their families can hardly survive in the city. In this sense, they are positioned at the bottom of production chains and globalization for them is globalization in the periphery.

3. Informants and Methods

This paper reports an ethnographic study of a migrant school in Beijing. This section gives information on the fieldwork site and the participants (teachers and pupils of the school), the data collection tools and procedure.

3.1. Ethnographic Approach

Different from methods that aim at reducing the complexity of human societies, ethnography focuses attention on complexity and on part-whole relations in social systems. The ethnographer has to be flexible and realistic in order to adequately contextualize the lived reality of people and to produce detailed and situated accounts of "thick descriptions" [29,30]. Moreover, the researcher usually does not have a pre-defined hypothesis to test but follows data and lets data reveal social reality [31,32]. Another important feature is that the researcher's involvement is a necessary part of ethnography, and it is crucial that the researcher is reflexive on her or his role in the fieldwork, as well as on the effects she or he brings to the fieldwork sites and the informants. It is "a mutual relation of interaction and adaptation" between the ethnographer and the people she or he works with, "a relation that will change both" [31].

3.2. The Fieldwork Site

The current research is part of a five-year ethnographic project between 2016 and 2021. The fieldwork site is Hongli School located in Baicun (School, village, teachers and students are anonymized.), an "urban village" (城边村) on the outskirts of Beijing. Similar to many urban villages in China, Baicun used to be a farming village but rapid urbanization absorbed it into quasi-urban areas of Beijing. An urban village remains a village as its land is officially registered as farmland and villagers are registered as rural population, although its residents are no longer engaged in agricultural activities. Over two decades, many local villagers have left Baicun and rented their houses to migrant workers. Among its six thousand regular residents, one sixth are local villagers and the rest are migrant workers [33]. Baicun is of a five-stop bus ride from its nearest tube station. On the bus, one can observe that large glassy office buildings gradually give way to shabby two-story houses and wide clean asphalt roads narrow into small lanes covered by dust. People are no longer smartly dressed, white-collar workers but factory workers, street vendors, shoe menders, and garbage recyclers. In short, Baicun is located in a spatially marginalized area of Beijing city and its residents, most of whom are migrant workers, are socially marginalized in the urban society.

3.3. The School and the Local Situation

Some of the migrant workers in Baicun took the initiative to establish Hongli School in 2005 because increasingly more migrant children in Baicun and its nearby regions needed primary education, and most of their families could not afford the cost of attending publically funded local schools [34]. Hongli School was built on the site of an abandoned plant and it offers preschool and primary education to about 350 children. The classrooms are shabby and uncomfortable although they have been renovated a few times since 2005. The teachers and students use dry squat toilets. During class, the teachers take much time to repair their teaching facilities, such as computers and projectors, as these facilities are in poor conditions and often break [35]. Moreover, the school has to merge classes in order to save heating in the winter, and a merged class can have as many as 70 pupils in one room. Although the school follows the same curriculums and uses the same textbooks as public schools, the teachers usually have

to spend more time disciplining students, and therefore, can hardly meet basic teaching requirements. As a consequence, some teachers have low job satisfaction and tend to quit within a short time.

Hongli School's motto is "Study in a good school, become good people (上好学, 做好人)". Although the school functions with limited resources, some of its teachers developed an extracurricular activity program "Hongli Tongzijun (HT Scout), in order to provide the pupils with diversified learning activities. Due to historical reasons, Mainland China has no formal association with the worldwide Scouting movement. However, what the Scout learn, such as citizenship, leadership, and community service, has a considerable appeal to Chinese youngsters, their parents, and educational practitioners. Moreover, Scout activities, such as camping, backpacking, and first aid, can offer young people practical skills that they may need in life. Therefore, Hongli School teachers started to develop a "Hongli Tongzijun program (HT Scout program)" in 2015, which was inspired by and modeled on the worldwide Scouting programs. The HT program has two parts: Weekend in-school training sessions during semesters and summer outdoor activities (from July to August). The weekend training sessions are designed to prepare the pupils with life skills (e.g., cocking, washing clothes), camping skills (e.g., pitch a tend), and social skills (e.g., work in teams). Volunteers play an important role in the program and the school recruits volunteers regularly and trains them for the summer outdoor activities.

3.4. The Participants

The participants include teacher Li, two of his colleagues, four volunteers, and more than thirty pupils who regularly participate in the weekend sessions. Teacher Li is in his late twenties. He joined the school in 2013 and proposed the Scout program in the next year. He has been in charge of the program since then. For the weekend session reported in this paper, four volunteers (Mianhua and her husband, a college student, and the researcher) were recruited to help organize pupils to do their tasks. More than thirty pupils (aged between 6 and 12) attended the session. They registered for the sessions at the beginning of the semester and came to school at eight AM on Saturdays.

3.5. The Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The data collection tools were documentation, interview, and participant observation. Materials of documentation included pupils' homework, school leaflets, cards, and photos (63 items), and the HT online information (55 items). Online information was mainly obtained from HT Scout official account on WeChat (微信, a Chinese SNS similar to Facebook messenger and What'sUp but with more functions). The ethnographic interviews were conducted as conversations in order to make the informants, especially children, feel relaxed and speak freely. The interviewees of the current research included teacher Li, his two colleagues, four volunteers, and two pupils (aged 10 and 11, respectively). The interviews and participant observation were recorded in field notes (87 entries of field notes). In participant observation, the ethnographer's role was to facilitate a small group of pupils to do their tasks and to ensure their safety. As a participant of the informants' activities, the ethnographer would have an impact on the informants. However, the pupils were used to working with volunteers in the weekend sessions, as the school principal and the teachers were eager to involve volunteers in school activities.

The weekend session reported in this paper was about "becoming a little journalist" and the session focused on developing pupils' social skills such as designing interview questions, working in groups, approaching suitable interviewees, and fulfilling the interview tasks. The volunteers arrived at the school and attended a brief training at 7:30 AM. When the pupils arrived, teacher Li organized them to do warming-up games. After the games, the pupils were split into three age groups and each group was assigned two teachers or volunteers. Teacher Li explained to the pupils how to prepare for an interview, and asked them to design their own interview questions. When they finished writing down their questions, they started practicing with each other. The volunteers helped them to work on their questions and practice their interviews. The groups were ready at about 10 AM and set off for out-of-school interviews. Each group was supervised by two adults (teachers or volunteers).

The interviews were finished at about half past eleven, and the groups were brought together for a review and discussion. The session ended at noon and I subsequently interviewed Teacher Li and two volunteers. The pupils were interviewed during breaks of the morning session. The informants were fully informed of this research and gave their consent to participation.

4. Data Analysis

In this section, I present and analyze four examples. Example 1 is a comparison of HT Scout goals with those of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). Example 2 is a field note of brief chats between a pupil (Fei Fei) and me. Example 3 is a transcribed interview with teacher Li. Example 4 is a thank-you card I received at the end of the session. The selection of the four examples is based on the following criteria: (1) Relevant to the HT Scout program, (2) diversified data types, and (3) diversified informants, in order to obtain a fuller and more comprehensive view of the program.

4.1. HT Scout Goals

The Internet is an important domain of the informants' globalized activities. New media, such as WeChat, provide its users not only with a wide range of functions, including text and voice messaging, sharing of photographs, mobile payment, but also with opportunities to access global information and to produce and circulate information among a wide audience. WeChat users can register official accounts that allow them to push feeds to and interact with subscribers. I subscribed to HT Scout official account in 2018 and checked its contents regularly. Example 1 is an extract from a section called "About us" that appears at the end of every update item of the HT Scout official account. Below is a screenshot of "About us" on the left and its English translation on the right.

Example 1. *HT Scout introduction.*

X ▇ 童子军 ···	{small icons on the mobile phone screen, time, battery…}
▇▇ 童子军介绍	X HT Scout …
	Introduction of HT Scout
▇▇ 童子军成立于2015年3月：致力动员社会公众参与，赋能流动儿童，促进流动儿童与城市儿童共融，推动教育公平。	HT Scout was established in March 2015: (It is) devoted to mobilizing the general public to participate (in migrant children's education), to empower migrant children, to encourage mutual understanding between migrant children and local children (共融 *gong rong*), (and) to improve educational equality.
2015年▇▇童子军夏令营经中国新闻网、大公报等媒体报道；2017年荣获北京市妇联妇女儿童优秀公益项目金奖。	In 2015, HT Scout's summer camp was reported by Chinanews.com, (Hong Kong) Takungpao Newspaper and other mass media, (it) won Beijing Women Federation "Excellent Non-profit Program" Gold Medal in 2017.
2015年3月至2018年12月：▇▇童子军已服务流动儿童2698人次（其中115名共融夏令营营员：93名流动儿童，22名城市儿童），动员社会人士、大学生492位参与其中。	From March 2015 to December 2018: The HT Scout program has served 2698 migrant children (115 children joined camping, 93 migrant children, 22 local urban children), has mobilized (involved) 492 volunteers.
相关阅读： 人生下一个五年，你会在哪里 ▇▇童子军| 创业日记 3	Related reading: <u>Where will you be in the next five years of (your) life?</u> <u>HT Scout| Startup diaries 3</u>
{愿每一位儿童都能够 心怀希望}	{A picture of grassland with a sentence (motto) in white, big and calligraphic font}
	(We) Wish (that) every child may have hope in their heart

This is online data, including a textual part and a pictorial part. The textual part is a description of HT Scout's goals, the honors it has earned, and the children they have been able to reach. The first paragraph defines HT Scout's goals from four aspects. First, the program aims at attracting the attention of the general public. Second, the program aims to empower migrant children. Many migrant children have to return to their hometown for secondary education (age 12–18) while their parents remain in the city. Back in their hometown, they usually have to attend boarding schools or live with their older relatives, such as grandparents. In either case, they would need more life skills and social skills in order to live independently [36,37]. Therefore HT Scout trains them with life skills such as washing clothes and cooking, and social skills such as cooperating with others. Third, the program facilitates integration between the migrant and the local urban children (*gong rong* 共融). Different from the traditional connotation of integrating migrant children to the urban society, which may put migrant children at a disadvantaged position as someone who needs to be mainstreamed, the term *gong rong* (共融) means "integrating together" or "integrating to each other". In other words, it does not simply require migrant children to fit into the urban society but calls for mutual efforts of the migrants and the locals. Fourth, HT Scout is to improve educational equality. While the other three aspects focus on practical issues, the fourth addresses a more abstract social justice problem of the aforementioned unequal educational opportunities.

HT Scout's goals can be seen as an instance of global learning from the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) and teacher Li confirmed that they learned from WOSM websites and books (see Example 3). When comparing HT Scout goals to the mission statement of WOSM ([38], see also Appendix A), one can observe resemblance at the individual, community, and societal levels. At the individual level, the WOSM mission statement says that it is "to contribute to the education of young people ... people are self-fulfilled as individuals", which shares an important, individualistic perspective with the HT Scout's empowerment goal. At the community level, WOSM's mission statement says, "(it will be) enabling young people to be active citizens creating a positive change in their communities". Similarly, HT Scout aims to promote mutual understanding between the migrants and the urban communities. At the social level, WOSM "is ... to help build a better world where people ... play a constructive role in society". Although HT Scout is more specific in defining educational equality as a goal, because of HT's migrant background, it essentially falls within the domain of building a better world and playing a constructive role in society. What HT Scout does not learn, however, is WOSM's value system. As the WOSM mission statement emphasizes "a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law", and the Scout Promise and Law has a religious dimension [39], which is not compatible with the Chinese social contexts. The localization of the WOSM mission statement addresses the specific needs of migrant children and avoids inappropriate content. This echoes Erikson's discussion of the impacts of globalization on local situations, that an analysis of globalization is inadequate unless it is positioned in local contexts, and questions may be global, but the answers must be particular and local [13].

4.2. Fei Fei

The second example is a field note of brief chats between Fei Fei and the researcher. Fei Fei is an 11 years old girl who attends the weekend sections regularly. Her hometown is Henan province, seven hundred kilometers south to Beijing. She was born in Beijing and has lived in Beijing since. We were in the same team during the warming up game, interview preparation, and out-of-school interview task. The conversation took place when our team had finished the out-of-school interview task and was in the schoolyard waiting for the other groups. The "her" in the conversation referred to Xiao Hong, who served as an interviewee in our out-of-school task. She was a friend of Fei Fei's. The conversation was translated into English (on the right) by the ethnographer.

Example 2. *"Full of bugs!"*

1. DJ: 那为什么都已经六年级了，她还没有回去（老家）上学？ 2. Fei Fei：她在杨子庄上学，杨子庄是公立的，特别好 3. DJ：：哦，是吗！ 4. Fei Fei：嗯 5. DJ：杨子庄远吗？ 6. Fei Fei：还可以，有点远 7. DJ：那她住在这儿，去杨子庄上学，那不是很辛苦吗？ 8. Fei Fei：不用，她爸妈送她，但是回来基本上都是她自己回来 ...... 9. Fei Fei：我今年就得回去 {声音低 犹豫} 10. DJ：是吗！那你觉得回去怎么样？回去的话是你父母也回去吗？ 11. Fei Fei：不知道呢 12. DJ：：你回去过吗？ 13. Fei Fei：回去过，之后我就被吓哭了 14. DJ：：是吗？！ 15. Fei Fei：全是虫子！ 16. DJ：：全是虫子！ 17. Fei Fei：别人对老家留下的都是美好印象，我对老家留下的全是恐惧	1. DJ: Why hasn't she returned (to her hometown) if she is already in her sixth grade? 2. Fei Fei: She studies at Yangzhizhuan, Yangzhizhuang School is a public school, very good 3. DJ: Oh, isn't it! 4. Fei Fei: Yeah. 5. DJ: Is Yangzizhuang far? 6. Fei Fei: It's OK, a bit far. 7. DJ: She lives here, and goes to Yangzizhuang school, isn't that tiring? 8. Fei Fei: not really, her parents give her a lift, but she usually has to come back home on her own … 9. Fei Fei: I will go back to my hometown this year {in lower voice, hesitating} 10. DJ: Really! So what do you think about it? Are your parents going with you? 11. Fei Fei: I don't know yet. 12. DJ: Have you ever been back to your hometown? 13. Fei Fei: Yes I have, and I was so frightened that I cried. 14. DJ: Yeah?! 15. Fei Fei: Full of bugs! 16. DJ: Full of bugs! 17. Fei Fei: Other children have only good memories of their hometown, I have only scary memories

The extract of our conversation was about two issues: Xiao Hong's school, and Fei Fei's hometown. Fei Fei and Xiao Hong were neighbors in Baicun. When we were looking for interviewees, Xiao Hong was passing by and Fei Fei asked her to answer a few questions. Reflecting on the interview, Fei Fei told me that Xiao Hong was in a good public school (Turn 2). Most migrant children who lived in Baicun attended HT school because it was the only migrant school that could admit *non-hukou* students, and because its tuition fees were affordable. Better-off migrant families could send their children to public schools by paying higher fees. Xiao Hong's parents not only paid a lot to send her to a public school, but also took her to school every morning, because the school is a little far from Baicun (Turn 5-8). Different from urban children who usually were taken to and picked up from school by their parents or caretakers (usually older relatives), many migrant children needed to take care of themselves, as their parents worked long hours and they could not afford a caretaker. In this sense, Xiao Hong's family belonged to the group of migrants who were rather established in the urban centers and were aspired to urban education and urban lifestyle. It remained unclear to me, however, why Xiao Hong had not returned to her hometown for her secondary education (Turn 1). As we knew from previous research [14,18,19,22], many migrant children, especially those who wanted to reach higher education, needed to return to their hometown when they approached the end of primary education (age 12). Fei Fei did not answer my question (Turn 2) but emphasized that Xiao Hong was in a "very good" public school. One could infer that it was either because the school was too good to quit, or because her parents could afford secondary education and that is why Xiao Hong did not have to return to her hometown.

In contrast, Fei Fei had to return to her hometown later this year (Turn 9). When she told me this news, her voice became lower than her usual volume and she sounded hesitant. Her unhappy

voice made me concerned and trigged my questions, such as whether her parents would go back with her. Returning migrant children often became "left-behind children" (留守儿童), as they were "left-behind" in their hometown while their parents had to go to cities to earn money. Left-behind children typically had to cope with a series of developmental and emotional challenges as a result of parental absence [40–42]. For Fei Fei, the likelihood of becoming a left-behind child did not seem to bother her (or she might not realize that yet), but the prospect of living in her rural hometown, especially with the bugs, was a big issue. Her utterances "Full of bugs!", "I was so frightened that I cried", and "I have only scary memories (of my hometown)" (Turn 13, 15, and 17) showed how much she disliked the idea of returning to her hometown. Although often being labeled "migrant children", or sometimes "children of rural origin", many of them had lived in cities from an early age. They rarely visited their hometowns and the rural lifestyles were unfamiliar to them. Rural hometowns became emblematic, and their rural relatives also saw them as urban kids who would not adapt to a farming life. Hence, they constructed an "in-between" identity: For urban residents, they were rural and hard to fit in, but for their hometowns, they were urban, modern, and were outsiders to the local rural communities. In-between identities were also observed in cross-border immigrants such as Hispanic immigrants in the US [43] and Moroccan immigrants in the UK [44]. For internal migrant children like Fei Fei, they seemed to be both rural and urban, and yet they might actually belong to neither.

4.3. Teacher Li

The third example is an extract of an interview with teacher Li. In the interview, he first reviewed the morning session, commented on the pupils' performance, and then described their Scout program to me. The extracted part of the interview is specifically about the development of the HT Scout. The interview was conducted in Mandarin Chinese (transcription on the left) and translated into English (on the right) by the researcher.

Example 3. *"it is not 'empty'"*

1. Li: 我当时是一二年才第一次听说"童子军"，是我的一个朋友，他之前出过国，他给我讲的时候我就觉得热血沸腾 2. DJ: 特别适合咱们这儿哈 3. Li: 对对对 特别适合，因为和我们以往的教育是不一样的，他这个东西不"空"，有徒步呀，露营啊，一四年我就来咱们这开始做童子军项目了，开始我是在网上买一些书来了解，没有接受过专业培训，我们是问学校的老师，还有孩子们，问他们需要一些什么样的活动，再根据我们了解的网上啊，那些童军书籍，来设计这些课程，我们的很多理念啊，方法啊，都是从国外童子军学来的，包括小队活动，荣誉勋章，就像《飞屋环游记》，讲的就是那个勋章，但是我们的具体的活动和内容，是根据这个群体的特点来开发和设计的。我们也希望，如果有机会的话{smiling}，能够 和国外的 童子军组织来交流啊，去学习	1. Li: I first heard of "Scouts" in 2012 from a friend of mine. He spent years abroad. When he told me (about Scouts), I felt very excited 2. DJ: It suits (the children) here 3. Li: Right, right, right, it suits (our children) very much, because it is different from our education. It is not "empty". There is (training about) hiking, camping. I came here to do this Scout project in 2014. I started by buying some books about Scouts. I didn't get any training (on Scouting). We asked the teachers and students what kinds of activities they would need, plus what we learned online and from the books. We designed a syllabus. Many of our ideas and methods were learned from the international Scout movement, including small groups, merit badges. Just like the movie *Up*, it is about the badges, but our activities and syllabus were designed based on our children's needs. We also hope, if there is a chance {smiling}, (we) can communicate with and learn from international Scouts

The interview extract addressed the global learning of teacher Li in designing the HT Scout program. Global informal learning plays a key role in every stage of the program. Teacher Li came to

the conception of their Scouting program through a conversation with a friend who had been abroad and learned about the Scout movement. Li was inspired by the friend's Scout stories and believed that Scout informal learning approaches could be useful for Chinese children. According to Li, it was "not empty" (Turn 3) as it engaged the children with useful outdoors and survival skills. Li initiated the HT Scout program with some colleagues in 2014 and mobilized all-possible learning resources, including websites (see Example 1), translated American and British books, and the Disney movie *Up*. We can see that Li could access some worldwide knowledge instantly and that the knowledge he acquired in this informal global learning process was fragmented, that he picked up bits and pieces of knowledge and put them together to create a bigger picture of Scouting. The knowledge was relative, and he needed to distinguish between old and new knowledge, between knowledge from different Scout traditions, between helpful and unhelpful knowledge for his program. He adopted the general Scout concepts and goals, and kept the contents close to his students' needs. The HT Scout program was an outcome of informal global learning and although Li did not explicitly assess the influence of globalization on their work, he expressed his intention of establishing a further connection with international Scout programs so that they could continue to learn globally and improve their Scout program.

The HT program is an unauthorized copy of world Scouting. It, therefore, occupies a particular position within the world scouting movement. On the one hand, it is informed by Scouting ideals and practices, but, on the other, it is not an official member of the movement, and cannot, therefore, formally participate in world scouting events or contribute to the formal development of world scouting programs. This limits the Chinese involvement in the wider global learning processes of the scouting movement. Li said in the interview, "I didn't get any training" (Turn 3). By informal learning, he made sense of Scout ideals and some managerial techniques and integrated them with the local demands of the children. In the current case, a complex of Scout features can be found in the HT program, e.g., Scout uniforms, the three-finger salute, and fleur-de-lis badges, in addition to Scout activities. The loose integration of the HT program in the world Scouting movement can also be described in terms of authenticity. As Blommaert and Varis [45] demonstrate, authenticity is usually reflected in emblematic features that are ordered and organized in specific ways. Li did not claim authenticity, and in the interview, he said "We also hope, if there is a chance, (we) can communicate with and learn from international Scouts". This was their ambition of learning more and becoming more authentic, and if this could happen, their experiences might have an impact on the world Scouting movements.

4.4. A Thank You Card

When the morning session finished, I received a Thank You card from Teacher Li and his colleagues.

The pictorial part takes two-thirds of the card space. The picture is colorful. The focus of the picture is a smiley straw man in a white shirt. The straw man is placed in a big golden rye field, and the backdrop of the picture consists of a red rising sun, white cloud, and green hills. There are red flowers and green grass in front of the straw man. The main body of the text contains two sentences, both of which express their gratitude. In the first sentence, Li and his colleagues explicitly use the term "sustainable development". This demonstrates that the sustainable development of the children has been a major concern of the HT program. As the previous sessions demonstrate, sustainable development has different meanings in different contexts. When referring to migrant children, it means their long-term development, especially the sustainable development beyond the city. In order to prepare them for living independently, the HT program trains them in various skills. In these trainings, volunteers are important players because they serve as a connection between the migrant community and urban residents in forging the aforementioned mutual integration (共融). By bringing volunteers together and keeping regular contact with them, Li and his colleagues build a social network that may help the migrant community to have an impact on urban residents.

Example 4. *A Thank You card*

尊敬的守望者：

　　　老师 先生／女士．感谢您支持平民青少年儿童可持续发展事业，
在　心童子军项目／　　　　项目中伸出援手！
　　特颁此证，谨致谢意！

社区儿童
证明人：　　　(盖章处)
2019年 5月1日

Translation of the textual part:

Dear Watchman,

　　Thank you for your support of the sustainable development of children and youth who are from the grassroots background, and for your help in our HT Scout Program!

　　This card is to show our gratitude for your contribution

<div align="right">

Community Children's Home
Witness: Teacher Li (Stamp)
May 11, 2019

</div>

5. Discussions

　　I have presented four examples of the HT Scout program. The four examples are from different kinds of data (interview, observation, documentation), different kinds of informants (teacher, student), different modalities (picture and text), and online and offline data. The first example compares HT Scout goals on WeChat with those publicized on the WOSM websites and finds significant similarities as well as differences. By accessing the WOSM websites, Li and his colleagues learned globally and developed their HT program. They also used the new medium (WeChat) to voice their own values and visions. The second example is a conversation between an HT student and the researcher. In the conversation, the student explained the difficulties of returning to her rural hometown and constructed an in-between identity of being neither urban nor rural. The third example is an interview with teacher Li, the funder of the HT program. Different from many teachers who quickly move to their next jobs, teacher Li has spent more than six years in HT School in order to develop the Scout program. He recounted how he came to the conception of the Scout program and how he learned from all possible resources to obtain a richer understanding of what being a Scout can mean. The final example

shows that the HT program makes migrant children's continued development and empowerment an explicit goal.

Participation in the HT program offers the migrant children a more positive and empowering self-image, as well as access to a network of social relations with the potential to shift their marginalized position towards a position of actorhood. Importantly, by drawing from world Scouting concepts, the program offers participants a sense of belonging to a global community, that can serve as a basis for understanding human interconnectedness globally. These examples demonstrate that global learning plays an important role in the HT program in three ways. First, teacher Li came to the conception of their Scout program through global learning, i.e., his friend acquired the knowledge of Scout from his or her global experiences. One can observe the flow of knowledge about Scouting, from the global to the local levels. Second, Li and his colleagues wanted to learn more about Scouting, and as there was no formal link between China and the world Scouting movements, he had to learn via informal channels such as movies, books, and the Internet. His knowledge was fragmented and relative, as a result of informal learning, but he was able to capture important knowledge and was able to use them creatively in local activities. Third, the Internet and the new media were important in shaping the Scout program as well as in providing Li a chance to voice his visions and ideas. Fourth, global learning was not deterministic in what the informants learned. Teacher Li decided what to learn and what not to, based on the local situation.

Furthermore, these examples show that global learning contributes to the resilience of children and their communities. The program was designed to improve migrant students' development beyond their primary school. Many migrant children had to return to their hometown and became left-behind children when they finished primary school. For them, coping with parental absence was a key issue that entailed emotional preparation, preparation in social skills and in everyday life skills. The HT program was to prepare them for a life beyond the urban center with these skills. Moreover, the program made an effort to build connections with volunteers who could serve to facilitate mutual understanding between the urban and the migrant. A long-term goal of HT Scout was to tackle educational inequality that was reinforced by structural and institutional reasons. Li and his colleagues started from a micro level, by working with every individual student, to an ambition at a macro level, of making the society an equal and just one. At the same time, Li and his colleagues, as teachers, were learners in this global learning process.

Examining the examples in light of Wallerstein's world-systems analysis [14], I demonstrate that the informants went through "up-scaling" progress. The school was positioned in the periphery of Beijing city, both spatially and socially. Spatially, HT school was in the fringe of the urban center. Socially, it was populated with children of low-income families. And yet Teacher Li and his colleagues were able to jump the scales and to reach diverse learning resources at a global level. This up-scaling process was facilitated by their linguistic capacity (Example 1 and 3), computer literacy (Example 1), and social networking (Example 4). In other words, global learning empowered the learners, facilitated them with more knowledge, and "lifted" them from their immediate local situation, all the way up to a global level.

In short, this research has demonstrated that the migrants, although positioned at the bottom of urban society, are able to mobilize various resources and to learn globally. Educational inequality is a major problem that hinders the students' development, but with the possibility of global informal learning, they and their teachers can be empowered and prepared for a more equal society. At a time when large population groups worldwide are driven to economic migration as a result of globalization, developing approaches that support educational access, empowerment, and resilience has become a major challenge for social sustainability. Further studies may present empirical evidence on how the HT Scout program influences the students and the teachers. More specifically, we need to investigate the students' learning outcomes from these activities, and the possible impacts of global learning on the teachers' attitudes and beliefs.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Appendix A Mission statement of the World Organization of the Scout Movement

Mission

"The Mission of Scouting is to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society."

The Mission was adopted at the 35th World Scout Conference in Durban, South Africa in 1999. Illustrating both the local and global impact of Scouting, the Mission of Scouting has been captured in World Scouting's brand as "Creating a Better World".

Vision

"By 2023, Scouting will be the world's leading educational youth movement, enabling 100 million young people to be active citizens creating positive change in their communities and in the world based on shared values."

The Vision for Scouting, Vision 2023, was adopted at the 40th World Scout Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2014. [38].

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