

Applying Multiple Streams Theoretical Framework to College Matriculation Policy Reform for Children of Migrant Workers in China

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Abstract

Pre-decision, as the first step in the process of public policy-making, includes agenda setting and alternative specification. In order to make a better understanding of Chinese pre-decision processes and explore Chinese special characteristics presented in the processes of pre-decision, the article researches the case of college matriculation policy reform for children of migrant workers by applying multiple streams theoretical framework in the Chinese context. It analyzes how the political stream can move this policy reform problem up on the governmental agenda directly and points out that it always fails to enter the decision agenda due to the absence of the policy stream. The article also argues that a surviving proposal in our case not only need to satisfy necessary criteria, but to consider obstructions of Chinese particular institutions. Finally, the article concludes that the multiple streams theory is generally applicable in China and proves the significance that the policy stream has been ready to wait for the link of other two streams. Through this case research, we can provide theoretical supports and practical experiences for Chinese governmental officials in the processes of their pre-decision and make them optimize the processes well in future.

Keywords: multiple streams, policy window, college matriculation policy reform (CMPR), agenda setting, alternatives

1. Introduction

In previous time, the process of public policy-making in China, to a large extent, were always influenced by government authorities (Kenneth & Michel 1988; Wang 2006). With the increasing tread of social diversity and deepening interdependence relationships among all the social subjects, governments are not the only actor playing a decisive part in the public policy process any more, and other actors can also participate in this process and influence policy results (Kooiman 1993; Reddel & Woolcock 2004). This article, according to use multiple streams theoretical framework pushed by Kingdon, seeks to understand Chinese pre-decision processes--the agenda setting and the specification of alternatives from which authoritative choices are made. Through researching the case of Chinese college matriculation policy reform for children of migrant workers (short for CMPR), the article analyzes how policy participants in the political stream promoted or impeded the agenda setting after the problem stream had attracted their attention, and how the alternatives, proposals and solutions in the policy stream are generated. It also discusses functions served by policy communities and policy entrepreneurs in this case. The article explores the reasons why the policy stream can not couple with other two streams for a long period. As is known in our case, from the view of all the local policies introduced finally, some places has achieved the reform purpose in the main. But unfortunately, some areas that were in great need of reform did not give satisfying answers, so CMPR can not be thought successful. Quite a few experts even argued CMPR should not be carried out at this time because it was doomed to failure. Why was this education reform viewed as an unsuccessful case? What were the crucial reasons to explain it? According to our research, we can provide a comprehensive understanding of Chinese pre-decision processes and find out the exact reasons of this ineffectual reform so that government administrators will not make similar mistakes. Furthermore, the article proves Kingdon's multiple streams framework is applicable in China. Meanwhile, it presents Chinese characteristics when analyzing the absence of the policy stream.

The article is structured as follows: we first give a brief introduction about the multiple streams theoretical framework pushed by Kingdon. And then, the article applies this analytic framework to the case of CMPR to understand Chinese pre-decision processes and to explain the real reasons for why this reform is thought to be a failure one. Finally, the conclusion follows.

2. Multiple Streams Theoretical Framework

Multiple streams theoretical framework is pushed in a book named "Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies" written by Kingdon. In his book, it mainly argues why some subjects can enter the governmental agenda while others are ignored, and why some alternatives can be paid great attention while others are abandoned; the

answers to these questions concentrate on how specific policy participants out of different interest demands affect processes of agenda setting and alternative specification; these processes are involved in three streams, which are the problem stream, the policy stream and the political stream. Among them, the problem stream or the political stream by themselves can construct the governmental agenda or open a policy window and the alternatives are influenced more by the policy stream (Sabatier 1991; Wolman 1992). When all of them are coupled together with the advocacy and promotion of policy entrepreneurs, the open window can create an opportunity to move them up on the decision agenda.

2.1 The Problem Stream

Kingdon (2006) indicates that some representative mechanisms reflecting problems' appearances, such as indicators, focusing events and feedbacks, can set governmental agendas independently. These mechanisms must be so significant and urgent that they can easily attract governmental officials' attention and reach into agendas (Birkland 1997). However, he also states there exist some factors making these issues drop from a conspicuous agenda even if problems have been in the agenda. For examples, governmental officials feel they have addressed this problem or they fail to deal with it; a certain mechanism for stressing a problem has changed in an opposite direction; people have been used to a condition or a problem; other items replace those which should have been given more attention.

2.2 The Policy Stream

This book discusses the policy stream can affect alternatives specification directly; the process of alternatives specification which are participated in by policy communities are generated and narrowed in the policy stream. Policy communities which are composed of specialists in a given policy field can connect with each other tightly or loosely. These specialists can try out their ideas on others from the policy communities to make their favorite proposals and alternatives concerned and accepted by decision-makers (Miller *et al.* 2010). Thus, a large number of ideas and proposals can float around freely in this policy primeval soup, but policy entrepreneurs called ideas advocates do not permit this process to be completely free-floating. They seek to "soften up" both policy communities and larger publics in a variety of ways (e.g., bill introductions, speeches, papers and forums), acquiring more approvals of new ideas and building acceptances for proposals, as Kingdon (2006) points out. In addition, he argues proposals which can survive must meet a series of criteria, including technical feasibility, congruence with values of community members and the anticipation of future constraints.

2.3 The Political Stream

For the political stream, the book presents that the national mood, organized political forces, events in governments all constitute primary factors of the political stream; related cases indicate that a modification of administration or a change of top personnel in a government organization can alter agendas substantially, and that the combination of national mood and elections can facilitate a more powerful agenda than organized interest groups having rich resources. As with the problem stream, the political stream by itself can also take a strong effect on agendas. Noteworthy is the fact that it is crucial to reach consensus in the political stream for improving the probability of constructing governmental agenda. Nevertheless, different from the policy stream which builds consensus by persuading and diffusing, the political stream's consensus is established through bargaining (Jenkins 1995).

2.4 The Policy Window and Coupling

The policy window is defined as a chance for complacent methods raised by advocators of policy advice, or an opportunity of special problems paid serious attention by them (Kingdon 2006). Reasons for promoting openness of a policy window contain changes in the political stream or a new problem capturing governmental officials' attention (Zahariadis 2003). It is thus clear that not only can the problem stream or the political stream set a governmental agenda, but also they can open a policy window independently (i.e., a problem window or a political window). But a window does not stay open long. Such a short duration of an open window requires that policy entrepreneurs must seize the precious opportunity to facilitate a coupling of all three streams in time (Kendall 2000; Petchey *et al.* 2008; Oborn *et al.* 2011). Once they are joined together, the probability of a project entering the decision agenda is significantly increased. If one of three streams is absent, then it is highly difficult for the project to rise on the decision agenda. The policy window might be open for a short time, but if the coupling of three streams is not made immediately, it would close.

3. Applying Multiple Streams Analytic Framework to the Case of CMPR

At the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, local policies of migrant children taking college entrance examination (short for CEE) in in-flow areas were published successively at last through unremitting endeavors of all policy participants. In 2014, 28 provinces have carried out the policies made by themselves, which

increased by 16 provinces compared with last year. It meant that there were at least 56,000 examinees participating in CEE in in-flow areas. From this aspect, CMPR could be viewed as successful. However, in other places, especially in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Guangdong where more migrant children and more complex interest relationships were involved, CMPR was considered to be unsuccessful. Policies in these areas did not solve substantive problems. In this part, we apply multiple streams theoretical framework to research the case of CMPR, aiming at analyzing how the agenda was set and how the alternatives were discussed, and exploring the reasons why CMPR was thought to be a failure case in general.

3.1 The Problem Stream Opening the Policy Window Indirectly

In the case of CMPR, the problem stream firstly played a role that makes preparations for opening policy window well.

In 2003, the State Council put forward a principle of "Two Mains" for solving the problem about accepting compulsory education by children of rural migrant workers who live in cities: one was based on management in-flow areas; another was based on public schools (Zheng 2012). This principle permitted children in compulsory education stage to study in in-flow areas. In 2008, the State Council ordered that this problem must be settled earnestly. Since then solutions of compulsory education of migrant children was launched. However, those who had enjoyed compulsory education rights in in-flow areas were about to take CEE, so the problem whether they could participate in CEE in in-flow areas or not must be confirmed as soon as possible. It asked for governmental officials to concern and solve. Unlike crucial indicators or focusing events, this problem, at first, did not perform so urgent and important. Governmental officials did not sense the problem actively, let alone placed it on the governmental agenda. But it did motivate the development of the political stream which opened the policy window.

3.2 The Political Stream Opening the Policy Window Directly

Although the problem stream could not fully attract government officials' attention, it aroused the appearance and development of the political stream that gradually strengthened the significance and urgency of this problem afterwards.

In this case, three groups of organized political forces in the political stream either promoted or impeded the process of setting the agenda. The first group referred to migrant families who worked and lived in in-flow areas for a long time (short for GA); the second group represented families at locals (short for GB); the third group was families who migrated other places lack of competitiveness temporarily for entering key universities easily (short for GC). GA are protected objects in the reform while GC should be managed strictly.

In order to cancel the household registration (hukou) restriction of CEE as soon as possible and guarantee their children to take CEE in in-flow areas, GA started to make great efforts to attract governmental decision-makers' attention and promote the problem to reach into the governmental agenda through all kinds of methods. In March 2010, they organized themselves into teams called "Volunteers for Education Fairness"; they held press meet-and-greet; they visited and resorted to experts and scholars who concerned education issues; they made appointments with officials of education ministry and communicated with them face-to-face; they wrote open letters and submitted proposals to the officials; and etc. Since July of the same year, part of GA in Beijing and Shanghai submitted a proposal to the ministry of education every month for appealing to cancel household registration restriction of CEE and striving for the opportunity of their children taking CEE in in-flow areas (Wu & Li 2013). Besides, they even created website to express their demands. To some extent, these organized political forces and their political activities made governmental officials pay more attention to their interest demands and brought the openness of the policy window. We can illustrate at least two points: firstly, on July 29th, 2010, "National Outline of Medium-Term and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development Project (2010-2020)" (short for National Outline) was unveiled, regulating that the approach of migrant children taking CEE in in-flow areas after accepting compulsory education would be researched; secondly, education ministry instructed that local governments could raise pilot programs concerning CMPR. At the end of 2010, Shandong, Hunan and Chongqing attempted to explore pilot plans (Li & Wu 2013). In the next year, minister of education ministry Guiren Yuan expressed that reform policy was being carried forward gradually on the basis of conducting research work with Beijing and Shanghai. Generally, at this stage, solutions and policies were a bit premature; the oppositions from GB began to appear. These adverse factors directly resulted in the closure of the policy window.

At "Two Sessions" of 2011, the ministry of education proclaimed that the program aiming at addressing the problem of migrant children participating in CEE in in-flow areas would be introduced as quickly as possible. Taking this opportunity, GA continued to organize political activities in the hope of opening the policy window again. On March 24th, 2011, 20 parents submitted "Suggestions Project" to the education ministry, suggesting that school roll and household registration be separated and that the places of CEE be determined after taking account of places of living and household registration. What's more, in October of the same year, parents even

issued "Solutions of CMPR" in the form of folk version and handed over to the education ministry, which indicated the importance of school roll and long-live settlements of GA in the process of identifying CEE qualification (Zheng 2012). It was worth mentioning that these suggestions and solutions were documented based on advices from experts, scholars, parents and journalists. In contrast to activities in 2010, GA in the political stream tried to push some solutions and policies on CMPR in the process of interacting with governmental officials in 2011, which made a further acceleration for setting governmental agenda and opened the policy window for the second time in spite of lacking authority. In January, 2012, the education ministry announced "Work Outlines in 2012", urging local governments to research related policies on CMPR. Because of drawing lessons from the first closure of the policy window, one month later, GA in Beijing continued to put pressure on the education ministry. They delivered open letters to the education ministry every day and explicitly put forward their demands (Li & Liu 2013):

We hope that the ministry of education can provide fair education opportunity regardless of household registration, fortune as well as status; we hope that school roll and household registration are separated; and we hope that school roll should be regarded as basic condition of CEE qualification.

Subsequently, in March of the same year, volunteers from GA published "An Open Letter on Behalf of 90,000 Migrant Parents to Deputies to National People's Congress (short for NPC) and Representatives of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (short for CPPCC)" (short for Open Letter), strongly appealing to cancel household registration restriction of CEE as early as possible (Li & Liu 2013). At this stage, not only did GA submitted proposals of their own to the governmental officials, but also they resorted to experts and scholars, deputies to NPC and representatives of CPPCC, expecting they could propel the production of available alternatives in the policy stream and increase the probability the problem enter the decision agenda.

3.3 Policy Communities, Policy Entrepreneurs and the Policy Stream

Policy communities were mainly composed of local governments, experts and scholars, deputies to NPC and members of CPPCC in this case. Some people in policy communities had double status: they were both experts or scholars, and deputies to NPC or members of CPPCC. As a matter of fact, these policy participants except local governments had expressed their support and approval for CMPR since 2008 and 2009.

During "Two Sessions" of NPC and CPPCC in March, 2008, Linzhong Zhao, a deputy of NPC, submitted "Suggestions on Caring for Migrant Children Participating in College Entrance Examination in In-Flow Areas", which suggested national authorities to relax the threshold appropriately and to allow those migrant children to participate in CEE in in-flow areas; and then, over 20 deputies to NPC and members of CPPCC gathered in the public interest forum called "Education Changes China" and made a heated discussion on this problem (Jiang *et al.* 2013). They agreed that the places where migrant children studied should be the places where they could take CEE and that the household registration system should be canceled. In 2009, those possessing double status began to discuss this problem and accept interviews. For examples, Binglin Gu, former president of Tsinghua University and member of CPPCC, held that canceling CEE residence restriction was not realistic since it would bring more inequity and unfairness; Hailiang Gu, former president of Wuhan University and deputy to NPC, pointed out that the acquisition of school roll should have some qualifications and conditions on the premise of not changing household registration system, and advocated the reform of independent recruitment system. Qingshi Zhu, former president of University of Science and Technology of China and member of CPPCC, advocated balanced developments of education through drawing on the experience of Japan, which could be accepted as a good idea of reforming household registration. Under the influence of these original alternatives, the ministry of education made a regulation that migrant children could participate in CEE in in-flow areas only if test papers in in-flow areas were the same as those in places of domicile. This regulation did not settle any practical questions and a majority of migrant children did not obtain benefits, because almost half of Chinese provinces and cities exercised independent test-designs. As the policy window did not open completely during 2008 and 2009, ideas and suggestions floated in the policy primeval soup did not receive active and effective responses from governmental officials.

As analyzed before, GA promoted the openness of policy window for the first time in 2010, and the announcement of "National Outline" could be viewed as one of the openness sign. In the outline, the household registration reform about CEE was not mentioned because the reform opportunity was not mature yet. For this reason, representatives of "Two Sessions" suggested that school roll be separated from household registration. But they did not consider specific situations in all parts of China and could not push concrete projects about separation as well. During this period, on the one hand, alternatives lacked maneuverability and availability at large; on the other hand, nobody served as a policy entrepreneur. Because the policy stream was not formed for a long time, the problem were not pushed on the decision agenda. Similarly, after "Two Sessions" of 2011, policy communities continued to express their opinions one after another, which mainly concerned barrier of household registration, carrying capacity of education resources in metropolis and the problem of GC. Some important factors impeding smooth publishing of related policies and solutions were discussed increasingly in this period.

It was likely to cause long absence of concrete and available alternatives and coupling failure of three streams.

With the introduction of "Work Outlines in 2012" and "Open Letter", during "Two Sessions" of 2012, Yongxin Zhu, vice chairman of China Association for Promoting Democracy and former vice secretary-general of CPPCC, submitted "Suggestions on Introducing Policy to Resolve Education Problem of Children from Permanent Non-Household Population" to the ministry of education and the ministry of public security. He argued that children from permanent non-household population (GA) was so large that the education carrying capacity of in-flow areas was confronted with severe challenges and the interests of local children (GB) was influenced adversely. At the same time, he also advocated solutions involved in household registration administration and school register management. In this case, we label him one of policy entrepreneurs. Firstly, his proposal was raised in the nick of time. Secondly, compared to previous alternatives, his proposal displayed more distinct and concrete. Thirdly, under the influence of his proposal, a wide range of representatives of "Two Sessions" pushed their pet ideas. For instances, Yiping Li (a deputy to NPC) emphasized that the reform of household registration system was regarded as an essential path to tackle this problem; Qidi Wu (a deputy to NPC) indicated that the issue was involved rather complex interest relations and that it was impossible to be resolved depending on education ministry merely; Binglin Zhong (a member of CPPCC) pointed out that local governments should be responsible for working out a set of standards for examinees who took CEE in local areas and that central government and the ministry of education had the obligation for supplying planning enrollment index to all different cities and provinces; and etc. Last and the most important, his proposal and subsequent alternatives attracted governmental officials' high attention. As an important entrepreneur in our case, he made a further promotion of governmental agenda and opened the door of decision agenda preliminarily--the education ministry expressed that a new policy on CMPR would be introduced in the first half of 2012 and claimed that local governments in all areas raised measures for its implementation at the end of the same year.

If Yongxin Zhu was called the first policy entrepreneur on the policy stage, the second policy entrepreneurs were made of a group of experts and scholars in this case. As a collectivity, they did their best to offer authoritative and professional proposals to governmental officials for facilitating a coupling of three streams. Specifically, on May 23rd, 2012, 15 experts and scholars submitted a written statement--Citizen Advices about the Education Ministry's Policy on CMPR (short for Citizen Advices)--to the State of Council and the ministry of education to accelerate the pace of a new policy's publishing. In the statement, basic requirements of the new reform policy were summarized as follows (Sun 2013):

Firstly, the new reform policy made by the ministry of education should explicitly regulate the policy publishing deadlines to local governments. Secondly, the new reform policy should include specific plans, stipulating basic conditions GA must meet and requiring schools to establish students' archives. Thirdly, the new reform policy should regulate that GA were admitted to colleges or universities according to local admission standards so as to promote and fulfill the education equality. Fourthly, in the process of policy making, the ministry of education should fully listen to public opinions through expression channels, such as the hearing, demonstration will, and etc. Particularly, demands and requests from GA must be paid more attention. Fifthly, the new reform policy should regulate strict executive force and effectively control local governments' discretion. 15 policy entrepreneurs combined primary contents of previous alternatives and properly increased several new elements to declare this statement. Citizen Advices, to a large extent, played an extremely important part in promoting the reform problem to enter decision agenda: on August 30th, 2012, four governmental authorities--the ministry of education, the national development and reform commission, the ministry of public security and the ministry of human resource and social security--jointly published "Suggestions about Working on CMPR after Accepting Compulsory Education" (short for Suggestions Working) (Yao 2013):

Comprehensively consider CEE demands from GA and the education resources' carrying capacity in in-flow areas; promote the job concerning GA actively and steadily; make the concrete policy on GA based on local conditions.

In general, Suggestions Working, aiming at the problem of CMPR, put forward basic spirits and overall ideas in the form of government document. It regulated that concrete policies which would be made by local governments should be published at the end of 2012 in principle. Besides, this document particularly noted that some areas carrying a big migrant population, such as Beijing and Shanghai, should establish and improve the management system for migrant population. But there still existed several obvious drawbacks (Lu 2012):

(1)The authority of setting qualifications and conditions for GA was fully exercised by local governments, which could easily create a wide policy interspace to be operated at liberty and gave local governments strong discretionary power to execute.

(2)Concrete methods and technical approaches involved in the enrollment index of CEE that were assigned to in-flow areas, marks calculation in in-flow areas and insuring the quality of CEE were not made a further explanation.

(3)Before the introduction of Suggestions Working, central government did not solicit public opinions; this document also did not clearly ask for local governments to listen to public sentiments before they published

concrete policies; central government did not regulate that local policies be checked on by them.

(4) This document lacked guarantee measures about supervision and accountability, which was likely to cause unfavorable results of policy implementation.

3.4 The Formation of the Final Alternatives in the Policy Stream at Locals

Suggestions Working regulated the publishing deadline of local policies, which meant that the policy stream would take shape at that moment. It would couple with other two streams and send the problem to decision agenda. What's more, Suggestions Working extend the time of the openness of policy window to the deadline. Actors from the political stream and the policy stream, like GA, GB, policy communities as well as policy entrepreneurs, had the opportunity to raise their ideas and thoughts to affect local governments before the deadline.

It showed, specifically, GB, as a powerful political force against GA, prevented GA from participating in CEE at locals since the appearance of the problem. With the problem moving on gradually, they constantly organized themselves and tried their utmost to fight against GA and defend their own rights and interests. After the introduction of Suggestions Working, the opposing voice from GB became more and more violent. In October, 2012, GB in Beijing and Shanghai, on behalf of the interests of their children, launched a massed movement against GA. Not only did they express their dissatisfaction and protest to local governments, but also gave convictive reasons:

Relaxing the restrictions for GA can easily trigger a bad phenomenon of GC; bringing about a new unfairness to GB; giving rise to a great impact on local resources, such as leading to severe shortages of education resources, medical resources and social security resources; housing price rising higher and higher; serious traffic congestion; lower residents' happiness index; and etc.

While considering GB's rights and interests, demands and alternatives from GA, policy communities and policy entrepreneurs should also be taken into account well. That was to say, local governments need to balance the interests of both of them when making policies. Besides, they also took precaution against GC. Concrete policies made by local governments are presented as follows (See Table1).

Table 1. Policies of Migrant Children Participating in CEE in In-Flow Areas at Locals in China (Arranged in Reverse Chronological Oder of Implementation Year)

Areas	Implementation Year	Main Points
Tianjin	Uncertain	Migrant children must attend school in Tianjin for a certain year; parents must possess legal and steady vocation and domicile, and pay taxes in accordance with law and contribute to social security payment.
Guangdong	2016	Migrant children must participate in high school entrance examination in Guangdong Province and possess high school roll for 3 years; parents must have legal and steady vocation and domicile and hold "Residence Permit of Guangdong Province" continuously above 3 years, and contribute to social security payment above 3 years.
Shaanxi	2016	Migrant children have high school roll of Shaanxi for 3 years and acquire high school diploma; parents hold "Residence Permit of Shaanxi" above 3 years and contribute to basic old-age insurance above 3 years.
Beijing	2014	Migrant children who possess school roll of Beijing and attend high school for 3 years can be permitted to enter higher vocational college; their parents must have legal and steady domicile and job for 6 years and contribute to social security payment continuously for 6 years.
Shanghai	2014	Migrant children possess the whole study experience of high school for 3 years and take high school academic proficiency test in Shanghai; parents must hold "Shanghai's Residence Permit" continuously above 3 years and get standard scores.
Fujian	2014	Migrant children must possess the whole study experience of high school for 3 years in Fujian Province.
Sichuan	2014	Migrant children possess high school roll in the places where their parents work and live and the whole study experience of high school for 3 years; parents have legal

		and steady vocation and domicile.
Shandong	2014	Migrant children must possess high school roll of Shandong Province and the whole study experience of high school for 3 years.
Jiangxi	2014	Migrant children possess the study experience of high school above 1 year and acquire high school roll in Jiangxi Province.
Shanxi	2014	Migrant children possess high school roll of Shanxi Province and the whole study experience of high school for 3 years in the places; parents have legal and steady vocation and domicile.
Guizhou	2014	Migrant children have high school roll of Guizhou Province for 3 years and the whole study experience of high school for 3 years; parents have legal and steady vocation and domicile and contribute to social security payment for 3 years.
Hainan	2014	Migrant children must attend school in Hainan from junior grade 1 to senior grade 3; parents have legal and steady vocation and domicile for 6 years, and contribute to social security payment continuously for 6 years.
Ningxia	2014	Migrant children must possess high school roll of Ningxia and attend school in Ningxia from junior grade 1 to senior grade 3, and take high school academic proficiency test; parents must have legal and steady vocation and domicile above 6 years, and contribute to social security payment continuously above 3 years.
Anhui	2013	Migrant children possess the high school roll of 3 years entirely in Anhui Province.
Hei Longjiang	2013	Migrant children possess high school roll of Hei Longjiang Province and the whole study experience of high school for 3 years; parents possess legal and steady vocation and domicile.
Hunan	2013	Migrant children attend school from senior grade 1 and acquire high school roll and take high school academic proficiency test in Hunan Province; parents need to hold "Residence Permit of Hunan".
Chongqing	2013	Migrant children possess the entire high school roll of 3 years in Chongqing; parents (father or mother) possess steady and legal vocation and domicile
Xinjiang	2013	Migrant children attend high school continuously for 3 years and can provide the archive of high school roll of 3 years and have the result of high school academic proficiency test in Xinjiang; parents have permanent household registration of Xinjiang and migrate here no more than 2 years.
Hebei	2013	Migrant children attend high school continuously above 2 years in Hebei Province and can provide relative certifications (e.g., Residence Permit, High School Roll Certificate).
Liaoning	2013	Migrant children possess high school roll of 3 years and the whole study experience of high school for 3 years in Liaoning Province.
Jilin	2013	Migrant children possess the whole study experience of high school for 3 years in Jilin Province; parents have legal and steady vocation and domicile, and contribute to social security payment above 3 years.
Zhejiang	2013	Migrant children must have continuous study experience of high school for 3 years and high school roll of

		Zhejiang Province.
Inner Mongolia	2013	Migrant children possess high school roll of Inner Mongolia and attend high school continuously for 2 years; parents have legal and steady vocation and domicile and pay taxes (or contribute to social security payment) for 2 years.
Jiangsu	2013	Migrant children acquire high school roll in Jiangsu Province and possess the whole study experience of high school; parents have legal and steady vocation and domicile.
Guangxi	2013	Migrant children must acquire graduation certificate of middle school and have high school roll of Guangxi for 3 years and take high school academic proficiency test; one of their parents has legal and steady vocation and domicile in Guangxi above 3 years.
Hubei	2013	Migrant children possess high school roll of Hubei Province and complete the whole study experience of high school for 3 years; parents have legal and steady vocation and domicile.
Henan	2013	Migrant children have high school roll of Henan Province; one of their parents have legal and steady vocation and domicile.
Yunnan	2013	Migrant children possess household registration of Yunnan for 3 years and attend middle and high school in Yunnan for 6 years; parents possess legal and steady vocation and domicile for 6 years, and contribute to social security payment.
Gansu	2013	Migrant children must have household registration of Gansu Province above 3 years and high school roll for 3 years; parents must have household registration of Gansu Province above 3 years and have legal and steady vocation and domicile and contribute to social security payment.
Qinghai	2012	Migrant children can take CEE after offering household registration booklet, identity card, and etc.
Xizang	***	***

The mark *** indicates that Xizang did not make any rule and regulation about this problem. Source: Summarized and formulated by authors based on related policies at locals.

As displayed in Table 1, it was not difficult to find that the qualification criteria of GA participating in CEE in in-flow areas at locals were widely divergent. Some provinces, such as Jiangxi, Henan, Anhui, Shandong, made relatively loose policies, because GA in these places occupied a very small proportion and it did not exist a strong competitive relationship between GA and GB. Other provinces, such as Hainan, Ningxia, Yunnan, Xinjiang, made stricter policies to prevent GC from violating GB's interests. Even though governments in these areas upgraded policy criteria for GA, they did not deprive the rights of GA entering key universities. Compared with them, Beijing and Shanghai made the most rigorous policies to GA. Especially in Beijing, GA was only allowed to enter higher vocational colleges, and their rights to apply for key universities were deprived; Shanghai did not merely permit GA to register for vocational colleges, but the number of GA acquiring "Shanghai's Residence Permit" was rather rare. On the whole, both Beijing and Shanghai did not solve the problem and they even failed to make any substantial progress in the process of CMPR despite the fact that the policy stream had combined with the problem stream and the political stream.

3.5 Not a Timely and Perfect Coupling of All Three Streams

Based on researched above, it was indispensable to discuss some thought-provoking questions concerning the policy stream and the coupling of all three streams in our case. For examples, why did the formation of final alternatives in the policy stream wait for quite a long time? Why did not all three streams couple in time? Which criteria did these final alternatives meet? Why were local policies diverse from each other? Why did Beijing and Shanghai make the most severe policies?

In Kingdon's opinion, a proposal that survived usually needs to meet three criteria: (1) Technical feasibility. In the case of CMPR, it involved in a series of intricate technical details. As discussed above, concrete measures to the enrollment index of CEE assigned to in-flow areas were not worked out; marks calculation about those taking part in CEE in in-flow areas but using test papers of residential places was not identified; operable proposals and approaches safeguarding the examination equality of GA were not designed. Additionally, because Beijing and Shanghai where there were a large number of migrant population were rather intractable to reasonably distribute limited education resources to GA and GB when considering cities' capacity. It was also very troublesome for governmental officials to govern cities that carried huge populations effectively and efficiently and to balance the interests of these populations. (2) Value acceptability. Alternatives according with values of specialists in policy communities can be retained easily. In this case, experts and scholars, deputies to NPC and members of CPPCC actively pushed their ideas to promote CMPR. Their alternatives could be implemented in provinces where the policy execution had no difficulty and resistance, but they were impossible to be accepted in areas (e.g., Beijing and Shanghai) where there existed technical problems and powerful resistances from GB. Local governments actually played a decisive part in the process of publishing concrete policies. In theory, local governments must seek a balance among all the stakeholders as far as possible, and they need to emphasize policy effects while giving consideration to policy equity. But in reality, Chinese local governments often proceed from local interests, protecting rights and interests of local residents and groups. From policies in Beijing and Shanghai, we can see that these local policies were completely based on GB rather than GA. (3) Anticipation of future constraints. On the one hand, local governments need to take the budget constraint into consideration. Before policies' publishing, alternatives' costs must be estimated. If a policy's cost exceeds the government budget, this policy will be abandoned at once. In Table 1, local policies' costs were almost calculated in terms of the standard whether they went beyond the budget range. In particular, Beijing and Shanghai enacted such stern policies for the reason that policies' costs (including educational cost, medical cost, social security cost, environmental cost, and etc.) would be far more than governmental budget constraints. On the other hand, any policies made by local governments must be acceptable to the public eventually. To ease interest conflicts between GA and GB and avoid GC to get chances to step in, local governments introduced policies in light of local realistic conditions. Compared with GA, GB--as one of the representatives of local interests--was more likely to capture and convince local governments because both of them had common interests. It was evident that GB possessed much more local resources and connatural advantages to compete with GA. Local governments, especially in Beijing and Shanghai, were bound to make a priority to local residents.

It should be noted that three criteria had internal relations rather than isolation with each other. Therefore, they need to be treated as a whole to explain questions mentioned above. Actually, in the Chinese special context, besides these criteria, institutional factors can not be neglected. Firstly, household registration system has been ingrained in China since 1950s, which can be viewed as a biggest reason hindering CMPR. Under the negative effect of this system, migrant populations who works and lives in in-flow areas are hardly treated the same as local residents (Wu and Treiman 2004; Chan & Buckingham 2008; Chan 2010). It is quite hard for them to strive for equal opportunities of higher education and employment because they have not household registration in in-flow areas. Secondly, the current CEE enrollment system in China--enrollment quota system based on provinces--do not conform to equal principle and lacks scientific implemental standards (Law 1995; Deng and Treiman 1997; Wu and Zhang 2010). It not only causes unreasonable differences of lowest criterion of CEE in all provinces, but also gives rise to serious enrollment localization of key universities. In China, most key universities are distributed in coastal and developed areas (e.g., Beijing and Shanghai). Because of this system, many enrollment index from key universities can be easily left here to meet the need of local examinees, which largely infringes GA's rights and interests and aggravates the inequality in the process of CEE enrollment. Thirdly, Chinese educational administrative management system suppresses subjective initiative of universities in all provinces. In China, though universities and colleges have a certain management freedom, they are still, to a large extent, at the mercy of local governments; "de-administration" of higher education still takes a heavy burden and embarks on a long road. The biggest reason is that part of educational appropriations of key universities in all provinces are allocated by local governments since the policy of "Building by Ministry and Province Together" has published. So universities have to take the requirements from local governments as an important consideration when determining the final enrollment index. Meanwhile, driven by local interests, local governments hope those which get their financial support can care for local examinees in the enrollment process. Thus, the improper relationship between universities and local governments increases the risk of CMPR.

3.6 The Ultimate Closure of the Policy Window

With the formal establishment of local policies, the policy window closed ultimately. Policy participants, especially government officials at locals, thought they had basically dealt with this problem through publishing policies. Viewed from the policy contents, even though some areas failed to solve the problem exactly, policies

which had been made could in these places could stop concerning and discussing CMPA for a long time. GA in these areas had no way but to wait the opportunity that the policy window opened for the next time. Unfortunately, we were unable to predict when the chance would come again.

4. Conclusion

This article, based on the case of CMPR, discusses whether multiple streams theoretical framework can be applied in the Chinese context. Through our research, it proves that this theory originated from America is generally useful for understanding the pre-decision process in China. It is easy to move a subject or a project up on decision agendas when the policy stream that have been ready couples with the problem stream and the political stream, but this case is quite the contrary.

In this case, the problem stream appeared at first, but it did not get enough attention; the political stream stimulated by the problem stream attracted broad attention from governmental officials. GA, as a group of important organized political force in the political stream, took various measures to promote the problem into the governmental agenda and to make the policy window open twice successfully. Under the orientation of the problem stream, the political stream by itself could structure the governmental agenda. But due to the absence of concrete, effective and feasible alternatives in the policy stream, the reform problem still could not be pushed to the decision agenda until the appearance of policy entrepreneurs--Yongxin Zhu and 15 experts and scholars. From policies introduced by local governments, not all the areas could really give satisfying replies to this problem because a surviving proposal had to meet three criteria at least. They were technical feasibility, value acceptability as well as anticipation of future constraints. After publishing all the local policies, the problem of CMPR was deemed to be worked out, so the policy window closed ultimately.

However, when we apply multiple streams theory to analyze this case, we acquire other valuable findings. Firstly, some special Chinese institutions (e.g., household registration system; CEE enrollment quota system; educational administrative management system) vastly impede the course of CMPR. These institutional factors rooted in China deeply would determine that CMPR should take a heavy burden and embark on a long road. Secondly, since all the provinces and cities in China differ from each other markedly in the aspects of economic development, the number of examinees who possess household registration at locals and the number of those who do not have, proposals offered by local governments must be widely divergent. Thirdly, influenced by three criteria and unique Chinese institutions, the policy stream was in an absent position for too long while the other two streams had been ready. Under the pressure from GA and policy entrepreneurs, the central government set a deadline of policy publishing for local governments to expedite the formation of the policy stream, but it did not explicitly regulate operation details and gave local governments strong discretionary power to execute, which led to the failure of CMPR in some areas that existed fierce competitions of CEE as well.

The future studies can focus on more typical Chinese cases in other research fields to prove the applicability of the multiple streams theory and make a further improvement and optimization for this theoretical framework to be consistent with national situations. In addition, we can also seek to propose a new pre-decision mode with particular Chinese institutional factors.

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