

**RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS' SENSE OF PLACE  
IN BAODING CITY, CHINA**

by

**SUN QINGJIU**

**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**December 2016**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The long and arduous journey towards a PhD is destined to become a unique and memorable experience in my life. I am very grateful that I have accomplished the journey, and I sincerely wish to thank the people who have been guiding, supporting and accompanying me throughout the entire process of my study.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest respect and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Nor Zarifah Binti Maliki. Thank you so much for all your kind, generous, and sound motivation, support and guidance.

Next, I am grateful to Hebei University, China, for providing me the opportunity to pursue my PhD in USM. And I would also like to extend my gratitude to USM for enrolling me at School of Housing, Building and Planning. The well-established academic atmosphere, harmonious and beautiful campus environment, and nice student amenities and sports facilities made my PhD experience in USM a great journey.

Third, I am grateful to the people who participated in this study. Although you will remain anonymous, I will always be thankful for your time, honesty, and migration experience and stories. Without your cooperation and willingness, there would not have been a thesis.

Fourth, I also wish to acknowledge my close friends and colleagues here and back in my country for their help, support, faithful friendship, and motivation.

Finally and most importantly, the largest debt I owe and the strongest appreciation I hold are to my beloved wife, my sweet daughter, my parents, my parents-in-law, and other family members for their constant and unwavering love, faith, understanding, and support in my journey through school and life.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMBS	Beijing Municipal Bureau of Statistics
BMCE	Beijing Municipal Commission of Education
BSB	Beijing Statistical Bureau
CAM	China Association of Mayors
CNN	Cable News Network
CNS	China News Service
CNY or RMB	Chinese Dollar (Chinese Yuan or <i>Renminbi</i> in Chinese)
CPA	Place Attachment to City
CPD	Place Dependence on City
CPI	Place Identity with City
CSCIEAS	The China Science Center of International Eurasian Academy of Sciences
CSOP	Sense of Place in the City
DFPSM	Department of Floating Population Service and Management of National Health and Family Planning Commission of China
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOSCC	The General Office of the State Council of China
HBSB	Hebei Baoding Statistical Bureau
HFPCH	Health and Family Planning Commission of Hebei Province
HSOP	Sense of Place at Home
MEC	Ministry of Education of China

MHURDC	Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China
MLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics of China
NBSITB	The National Bureau of Statistics Investigation Team in Baoding City, China
NBSSOB	NBS Survey Office in Beijing
NCDOVQ	National Council for Dictionary of Occupation and Vocational Qualification
NPA	Place Attachment to Neighborhood
NPD	Place Dependence on Neighborhood
NPFPC	National Population and Family Planning Commission of China
NPI	Place Identity with Neighborhood
NSOP	Sense of Place in the Neighborhood
RTICFT	Research Team on the Issue of Chinese Farmer-Turned
SCSB	Sichuan Statistical Bureau
SMCE	Shanghai Municipal Commission of Education
SMDRC	Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission
SMHRSSB	Shanghai Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau
SMPSB	Shanghai Municipal Public Security Bureau
UNH	UN Habitat

## LIST OF GLOSSARIES

<i>Chunyun</i>	The Spring Festival travel rush period in China
<i>Guanxi</i>	The system of social networks and influential relationships that facilitate business and other dealing in China
<i>Hukou</i>	Household Registration System or Registered permanent residence
<i>Laoxiang</i>	Fellow-townsmen, native-place fellows, or persons from the same village, town or province
<i>Laoxiang hui</i> or <i>tongxiang hui</i>	An association of fellow provincials or townsmen

# MAKNA TEMPAT PEHIJRAH LUAR BANDAR KE BANDAR DI BANDAR

## BAODING, CHINA

### ABSTRAK

Sejak tahun 1978 hingga 2015, kadar perbandaran di China meningkat daripada 17.92% ke 56.10%. Migrasi luar bandar-bandar, yang menjadi pemacu utama pertumbuhan bandar sejak beberapa dekad yang lalu, tidak hanya mengubah landskap sosial, ruang dan ekonomi di bandar-bandar di China, malah juga menjadikan latar bandar lebih pelbagai, hidup dan dinamik. Walaupun terdapat banyak penyelidikan berkenaan migrasi luar bandar-bandar dalam pelbagai bidang, tidak banyak kajian sedemikian di China dari perspektif perhubungan manusia-tempat. Kajian ini menggunakan makna tempat (*sense of place*) sebagai lensa untuk mengkaji saling kait di antara pehijrah dengan tempat di bandar, terutamanya dari segi cara mereka membentuk ikatan dengan tempat mereka di bandar melalui pengalaman di tempat. Bandar Baoding dipilih sebagai kes dan kedua-dua pendekatan kuantitatif (analisis statistik dengan 431 soal selidik) dan kualitatif (14 temu bual secara mendalam) diaplikasi bagi mengkaji makna-tempat pehijrah luar bandar-bandar bagi persekitaran bandar untuk mengenal pasti faktor utama yang dikaitkan dengan makna tempat pehijrah, dan juga mengkaji perkaitan di antara keterikatan luar bandar pehijrah dan makna tempat di bandar. Dapatan utama kajian ini termasuklah: pertama, pehijrah membentuk keamatan makna tempat yang sederhana pada rumah dan keamatan yang rendah pada skala bandar. Namun demikian, ia tidak menjana makna tempat terhadap kejiranan. Dapatan ini selaras dengan kajian

terdahulu yang memaparkan perkaitan bentuk U di antara skala tempat dan keamatan makna tempat. Kedua, tiga kategori peramal makna-tempat menunjukkan kesan yang berbeza-beza mengikut skala tempat. Peramal demografi lebih menyumbang kepada pembangunan makna-tempat di rumah lebih daripada di kejiranan dan di bandar. Walaupun kedua-dua peramal sosial dan fizikal berkaitan secara signifikan dengan makna tempat pehijrah, peramal-sosial-khusus-tempat lebih berkesan untuk meramal makna tempat pehijrah terhadap kejiranan dan bandar berbanding peramal fizikal. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa hukou (sistem pendaftaran isi rumah) – satu faktor institusi, memberi impak secara signifikan bagi makna tempat pehijrah terhadap kejiranan dan bandar. Ketiga, pehijrah menunjukkan perkaitan positif di antara keterikatan luar bandar dan makna tempat di persekitaran hidup semasa di bandar. Dapatan kajian ini menyumbang kepada teori hubungan manusia-tempat dalam dua aspek: pertama, penglibatan faktor institusi telah memperkayakan kategori peramal bagi makna tempat. Kedua, dimensi temporal, dalam bentuk pengalaman luar bandar dan keterikatan luar bandar yang dimasukkan dalam kajian ini adalah penting untuk kajian makna tempat pada masa hadapan. Adalah dicadangkan agar pembuat keputusan dalam pembinaan dan pengurusan kejitiranan dan bandar pada masa hadapan dapat meningkatkan lagi usaha untuk memupuk makna tempat dalam kalangan pehijrah di bandar.

## **RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS' SENSE OF PLACE IN BAODING CITY, CHINA**

### **ABSTRACT**

From 1978 to 2015, China's urbanization rate rose from 17.92% to 56.10%. Rural-urban migration, the main driver of urban growth in the past few decades, has not only changed the social, spatial, and economic landscapes of Chinese cities but also made the urban scene much more diverse, lively, and dynamic. Despite the proliferation of research on rural-urban migration in various disciplines, there is little study on rural-urban migrants in China from the perspective of people-place relationships. This study adopted sense of place as a lens to investigate the migrants' interconnections with the urban place, particularly regarding how the migrants reestablish their place bonding with city through place experience. Baoding City was carefully selected as a case, and both quantitative (statistical analysis with 431 questionnaires) and qualitative (14 in-depth interviews) approaches were applied to investigate the rural-urban migrants' sense of place in the urban environment, to identify the salient factors associated with migrants' sense of place, and to explore the association between migrants' rural attachment and sense of place in the city. Major findings of this study included: first, migrants had developed a moderate intensity of sense of place at home and a low intensity in city scale, but they had not generated sense of place in their neighborhood. The current finding was in accordance with the previous studies which presented a curvilinear, U-shaped relationship between place scale and intensity of sense of place. Second, the three-predictor categories of sense of place performed differently according to place scales.

Demographic predictors better contributed to the development of sense of place at home rather than in the neighborhood and city. Although both social and physical predictors significantly correlated to migrants' sense of place, the place-specific social predictors were more effective in predicting migrants' sense of place in the neighborhood and city compared to physical predictors. This study also indicated that *hukou* [household registration system], as an institutional factor, had significantly impacted migrants' sense of place in the neighborhood and city. Third, migrants indicated a positive relationship between their rural attachment and sense of place in current urban living environment. Findings of this study contribute to the theory of people-place relationships in two aspects: first, incorporating institutional factor enriches the predictor categories of sense of place. Second, temporal dimensions incorporated in this study taking the forms of rural experience and rural attachment are essential in the future study of sense of place. It is suggested that the decision makers in construction and management of neighborhood and city in the future should heighten their efforts to promote migrants' sense of place in the city.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Every year, the Chinese living away from home, regardless of long-distance travel, will manage to return home before Spring Festival and attend the “Grand Dinner on New Year’s Eve” which is also called “Family Reunion Dinner.” During the Spring Festival travel rush period, *Chunyun* in Chinese, “public transportation is expected to accommodate about 3.41 billion travelers nationwide during the holiday, including 225 million railway passengers” (Lin, 2013) according to the official estimates. The Spring Festival travel rush is considered as “by far the largest human migration (though temporary) in the world” (China Daily, 2013). “Most of the *Chunyun* travelers are students and migrant workers leaving in Chinese cities for their hometowns” (Cable News Network [CNN], 2013). “In pursuit of better job prospects and a more prosperous urban lifestyle” (H. Gao, 2012), migrant workers are “alienated and struggling to get by in China’s cities” (H. Gao, 2012). Generally, “the sense of confusion and displacement that chases nearly every migrant . . . can often only be escaped when late January rolls around and the migrants step onto homebound trains and trucks” (H. Gao, 2012). “I have been in Beijing for 10 years, but I like my hometown better. There’s nowhere like your hometown,” Zhang Jian said, a 40-year-old man who travels alone to see his wife and two daughters for the first time in two years (Bardsley, 2011). As migrants move from city to city, the notion of home becomes broader and richer. The meaning of home is still complicated and is combined with “the question whether or not home is (a) place(s), (a) space(s), feeling(s), practices, and/or an active state of being in the world” (Mallett, 2004, p. 62). For the rural-urban migrants in China, the migrants’ sense of place might be more complicated to



their rural hometown and to the urban area where they work and live after experiencing the migration from the rural to the urban.

“Space and place are basic components of the lived world” (Tuan, 1977, p. 3). Space is around us, while we human beings live in places which mean spaces are endowed with meanings (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977). People residing in one place are aware of that place and build up a storehouse of an intimate bond with their place. They pursue security, belonging, and rootedness from the place as they experience day-to-day life. Thus, a sense of place is created gradually in the mist of feelings, sensation, and deep connections to the place. Sense of place is crucial to human beings, as it is the basis for people to involve within the physical and social world. When separated from their previous bonds with places, people may suffer from pressure or grievance. Fried (2000) points out that displacement from the community may lead to grief and mourning because of the discontinuity between physical space and social relationships. From a health perspective, recent studies also show that there is a strong association between sense of place and mental health (Agyekum, 2016; Agyekum & Newbold, 2016; Kitchen, Williams, & Chowhan, 2012; A. Williams & Kitchen, 2012; Wilson et al., 2004). Considering that the large amount of rural-urban migration is based on spontaneous urbanization and state-sponsored urbanization in China (Shen, 2006), the Chinese rural-urban migrants are “subject to difficulties in material aspects of surviving and socializing, are also faced with predicaments in reestablishing psychological bonding with place” (J. Qian, Zhu, & Liu, 2011, p. 172); in addition, they are experiencing some institutional obstacles such as the household registration system. The massive rural-urban migration in China has attracted scholars in various disciplines, such as economics, sociology,

psychology, and others, but the bonds of migrants to place are seldom studied in the field of people-place relationships. This study uses sense of place as a lens to investigate a broader understanding of Chinese rural-urban migrants' interactions with the urban environment.

In the remaining part of this chapter, the background and problem statement of this study will be provided. Next, research objectives and research questions will be elicited. Then the scope and significance of this study and the definition of some key terms will be presented. Lastly, the organization of the following chapters will be introduced briefly.

## **1.2 Background**

China is among the many developing countries that are undergoing enormous increases in the size of urban populations, levels of urbanizations, and number of cities (Goldstein & Goldstein, 1991). The population redistribution in China has enhanced the importance of demographic change and national development.

### **1.2.1 Economic Growth and Rural-Urban Migration**

Since the adoption of the well-known reform and opening-up policies in 1978, China has experienced dramatic economic growth (Liu, Li, & Zhang, 2003). Nearly 10% annual growth rate in the last few decades has guaranteed a sustainable economic development process in China (Cao & Dai, 2001). Under the rapid economic development, China becomes the largest recipient of foreign investment (Carrillo, 2004) and a lot of domestic enterprises boom, both of which demand a huge number of labours. As in most developing countries, rural-urban migration is driven by employment initiated by the government or by individuals (Chan, Liu, & Yang, 1999).

At the beginning of the 1950s, the central government adopted an urban-rural dualistic economic structure to give priority to developing the urban and industry rather than the rural and agriculture. In the government planning system, urban workers are provided with lifetime employment and various social benefits, while rural residents are organized in collective communes that provide necessities. The institutional difference leads to sharp inequalities in income and living conditions. From 1978, some economic and institutional reforms and policy improvement are adopted to balance the uneven development between the rural and the urban. However, in contrast with the original intention, the rural-urban inequality has exacerbated. According to *The Urban Blue Book: China City Development Report No.5*, the ratio of urbanites' disposable income to rural residents' net income reaches 3.13:1 in 2011 which is 26.2% higher than the ratio in 1997 and 68.3% higher than that in 1985 (J. Pan & Wei, 2012). The income disparities between rural and urban areas and vast job opportunities in cities make it more attractive for rural people to migrate (Park, 2008; Yusuf & Nabeshima, 2008).

### **1.2.2 Urbanization and Rural-Urban Migration**

In the last few decades, as the economy grew, the urbanization also has experienced quick development. Analyzing the cross-provincial pattern of urban growth during the reform era, Zhang and Song (2003) find that economic growth has fostered urban growth rather than vice versa. Urbanization and urban development, which have already brought enormous changes in China, “will leave a deeper imprint on economic, social, and structural change for decades to come” (Yusuf & Saich, 2008, p. ix).

Internal migration can also drive urbanization (Willmore, Cao, & Xin, 2012). Since the 1980s, rural-urban migration has become the main driver of urban growth in China (Fan, 2008). From 1980 to 2000, 268 million Chinese, mainly from the rural sector, migrated into the urban areas. “By 2020, urbanization could pass the 60 percent mark, with 200 million or more rural dwellers joining the ranks of the urban population” (Yusuf & Saich, 2008, p. 1).

Urbanization is considered as the driving force of economic restructuring dynamic growth (G.-Y. Cao, Chen, Pang, Zheng, & Nilsson, 2012). Especially, when facing the most headachy “agriculture (*Nongye*), farmers (*Nongmin*) and rural areas (*Nongcun*)” problems which are widely abbreviated as “*San Nong*” in China’s official documents, the Chinese government realizes that these problems cannot be solved by farmers themselves, inside the agriculture sector, and rural areas. Promotion of urbanization to reduce rural population is regarded as the best way to enrich farmers. Thus, the bounding of China’s urbanization and rural-urban migration is expected to exert tremendous impacts on its agricultural development and policy making. Realizing that the active promotion of the urbanization process is a way to propel the sustained and rapid economic growth, the Chinese government defines urbanization as one of the strategic priorities of China’s economic development during the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year (2011-2015) Plan period. The boost of urbanization will bring a larger number of rural-urban migrants in the following decades.

### **1.2.3 The Household Registration System and Rural-Urban Migration**

As a unique phenomenon in China, the household registration system may be the most important factor that influences rural-urban migration. As a link between the individual

and society, the household largely affects its members' migration behavior (X. Yang, 1993). It has been found that many household characteristics, such as household structure and income, are crucial determinants of migration.

The household registration system, formally implemented in the late 1950s, has been an effective measure to control rural-urban migration. Many scholars (Chan et al., 1999; Chan & Zhang, 1999; Fan, 2008; Goldstein & Goldstein, 1991; Sun & Fan, 2010; X. Yang, 1993; Y. Zhao, 1999b) argue that any meaningful research of Chinese migration must start by making reference to the household registration system which influences migration in many ways. In the pre-reform era, the household registration system functions as a de facto internal passport mechanism that strongly regulates and controls the rural-urban migration (Chan et al., 1999). The regulating mechanism of the household registration system is greatly undermined following with the economic reforms since 1978 and some rules and regulations in particular which are promulgated to facilitate and promote rural-urban migration. In recent years, the central government has devolved responsibility for household registration policies to local governments (Willmore et al., 2012). The regulation and suppression of the household registration system are on the decrease so that the rural-urban migration booms.

Based on the introduction above, China qualified and indeed has experienced the largest flow of internal migration in the history around the world since the barriers to migration from rural to urban areas been gradually removed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. It is estimated that rural-urban migration accounted for 79% of China's urban growth during 1979-2003 (Li, Li, & Chen, 2010). The momentum of rural-urban migration is still gaining strongly. The rural-urban population flow not only constitutes "the phenomenon of the century"

for China, it also composes the largest flow of labour out of agricultural land in the world history (Carrillo, 2004). The rural-urban migration also has been part and parcel of huge transformations of every social, economic, and political issue in China (Carrillo, 2004; Sun & Fan, 2010).

The increasing rural-urban migration benefits both the urban and the rural on the whole. For the urban, the migration not only meets its fluctuating labour demand in the construction sectors and companies of foreign investment but also creates an important informal service sector that helps cities more to meet the growing demand for daily services. For the rural, it is widely acknowledged that migration raises rural income through remittance, alleviate poverty and speed up rural development (Fan, 2008; X. Yang, 1993). However, the large number of rural-urban migration may also increase some social problems, such as the crime in the urban areas (L. Cao & Dai, 2001; G. Ma, 2001; S. Zhao, 2000) and left behind children in rural areas (Biao, 2007; Chang, Dong, & MacPhail, 2011; Y. Gao et al., 2010; M. Shen et al., 2009).

In practice, most of the rural-urban migrants have stayed at the urban destination for quite a long time and made no plan to return (Goldstein & Goldstein, 1991; X. Yang, 1993). They are de facto long-term migrants in urban areas. They are called “temporary” migrants because their official household registrations are not transferred to the urban destination. Therefore, *hukou* status becomes “an important watershed in the social and economic contours of the migrants” (Chan et al., 1999, p. 428). The migrants without a local household registration are excluded from education and many job opportunities, especially those in the state sectors. In Beijing, migrants’ children are not allowed to attend public schools without

Beijing household registrations (Christian, 2010). If the parents want their children to be educated in Beijing, they have to pay “sponsorship fees.” Furthermore, without Beijing household registrations, the migrants’ children cannot even attend the university entrance exam in Beijing. They have to travel all the way back to their hometown. Under the competitive conditions in China today, education is one of the best ways to create equal opportunities for children (Q. Wang, 2014). If the access to education is blocked, how could the migrants and their children share the happiness of the harmonious society that the central government devotes to build? In Beijing, university graduates who wish to apply for government jobs must obtain a Beijing registered household (Lei, 2006). Many enterprises in Beijing also set restrictions – hiring the candidates with Beijing registered households (Jing, 2006). If the job hunters are judged by the place of their birth instead of the content of their characters, how could their personal ambitions be realized? There is still an unbridgeable chasm, which interprets in the social exclusion, between rural-urban migrants and local city residents. The rural-urban migrants are experiencing an intricate life combined with dream and reality, and aspiration and frustration.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Place is essential to people’s daily life because it is the center of “felt value where biological needs, such as those for food, water, rest, and procreation, are satisfied” (Tuan, 1979, p. 4). “Physical environment itself [is] a very meaningful aspect of urban social life” (Fried, 2000, p. 193). People have become bonded to their places because the places can meet their basic needs for security, belonging, and rootedness when they develop a deep experiential and

emotional connection to the place. Many researchers pay increasing attention to the emotional bonds that people create with their residential places. And “there is a common agreement among researchers that this interest is a reaction to economically and politically driven processes of globalization, homogenization, migration, and integration of world territories that endanger unique identities of places” (Lewicka, 2010, p. 35).

In modern society, the migration of population is growing rapidly that the relationship between people and place is split. Fried (2000) argues that “displacement from the community entails widespread grief and mourning” (p. 193). Fullilove (1996) also points out that “dislocation [is] one of the sources of poor mental health,” (p. 1516) and “displacement causes serious psychological disturbance for the displaced person” (p. 1521). Taking into account the large scale of rural-urban migrants in China, place transformation, with changes in economic, social, cultural, and political conditions, forces them to re-imagine and rebuild their place-based identity (H. Zhu, Qian, & Feng, 2011). They migrate from the rural to the urban under the motivation of many factors. Being migrants in other places, they have to not only survive and socialize in material aspects but also suffer from the loss of home and the longing for reestablishing bonds with the urban. In addition, some institutional obstacles with Chinese characteristics also exacerbate their predications in the urban, such as the household registration system. Despite the recent proliferation of research on rural-urban migration in diverse disciplines, the seminal literature reveals that there is little study on rural-urban migrants in China from the perspective of people-place relationships. The “sense of place” perspective can help people to explore the migrants’ interconnections within the urban environments and help to understand the complete image of the migrants.



People tend to be attached to the place where they live for a long time. The places in which people reside for many years are full of meanings associated with several unduplicated life stages. It brings a rich network of place-related meanings and offers a deep sense of self-continuity (Lewicka, 2011b). When people describe a locale referring the phrase “a sense of place,” it is a subjective manner which is related to people’s “feelings, sensations, and structural limitations to form a gestalt ‘whole’” (Hay, 1990, p. 1). The sense of place “affect our lives, and the ways in which we create our own” (Steele, 1981, p. ix).

People also have different place bonds on different geographical scales. The favorite research target of people-place relationships is neighborhood, followed by home, city and, much less often, national regions, and continents (Lewicka, 2011b). Voluntarily and involuntarily changing the place of residence has significant effects on attachment, and feelings and emotions with regard to the new place (Hernández, Carmen Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, & Hess, 2007). In case facing space transformation, people tend to attach to their former living place, and need quite some time to adapt to their new residential place.

Shamai (1991) argues that sense of place can be much more than one’s own personal experience. People who had experienced the same transformation of places tend to generate some similar sentiment. Groups of people with some same place experience or place change are always the key research objects of sense of place.

The growing level of mobility in contemporary societies arouses much research on sense of place (Agyekum, 2016; Cuba & Hummon, 1993a; Hay, 1998a; J. Qian et al., 2011; Shamai & Ilatov, 2005). However, as the largest mobility in human history, there is little research on the rural-urban migrants from the perspective of sense of place during China’s

rapid process of urbanization. To fill such a gap, this project explores the rural-urban migrants' place dependence, place attachment, and place identity which are covered in a more broad concept of people-place relationship – sense of place.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives and Research Questions**

The general goal of this research is to investigate the rural-urban migrants' perception of their current living settings and their place memory of the past rural life. In short, the research objectives are:

1. To investigate the rural-urban migrants' sense of place in the urban environment;
2. To identify the salient factors associated with rural-urban migrants' sense of place;
3. To explore the association between the rural-urban migrants' rural attachment and their sense of place in the city.

The main research questions in this project are:

1. What is the rural-urban migrants' sense of place in their current living settings?
2. What are the salient factors associated with rural-urban migrants' sense of place?
3. What, if any, association it is between the rural-urban migrants' rural attachment and their sense of place in the city?

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study is limited to medium-sized cities due to reasons as below. First, statistics show that 75% of rural migrant labourers are employed in their own provinces in 2000 (National Bureau of Statistics of China and Ministry of Labour and Social Security [NBS &

MLSS], NBS & MLSS, 2001). Most migrants have not moved to metropolitan areas or large cities even though there are more employment opportunities and presumably higher salaries; they choose small or middle-sized ones in their own provinces. Only 30.18% of employed migrants moved to provincial capitals in 2000 (Huang & Zhan, 2005; NBS & MLSS, 2001).

Second, the case city should be an old city with a large number of rural-urban migrants and locals in the city which facilitate the investigation of social inclusion and exclusion to achieve the purpose of this study – exploring the association between social factors and migrants’ sense of place. Therefore, Baoding City, a prefecture-level city with a history of 2300-year, is selected as the case city in this study.

The rural-urban migrants in this study refer to all people who leave the countryside for better social-economic opportunities in cities including the floating population and temporary and permanent rural-urban migrants. According to the survey data conducted by the Public Security Bureau of Baoding, the floating population in Baoding was approximately 435,000 in 2009 (Wang, 2009). If incorporating the temporary and permanent migrants under the definition of this study, the number of rural-urban migrants in Baoding will be quite huge.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The investigation on rural-urban migrants’ sense of place is significant for the development of China’s current society. It will be indicated in the following parts.

### **1.6.1 Benefits to a Full Understanding of the Group of Rural-Urban Migrants**

China's urbanization develops continuously, and net migration is an important determinant of urban population growth (G.-Y. Cao et al., 2012). It is projected that some 350 million more people will be added to the country's urban population by 2025, and one billion people will live in Chinese cities by 2030 (Y.-G. Zhu, 2012; Y.-G. Zhu, Ioannidis, Li, Jones, & Martin, 2011). Taking into account the great number of migration in the present and the future China, although a plethora of studies make an endeavor to explore rural-urban migration and migrants in diverse disciplines, this study can benefit to fully understand the group of rural-urban migrants from the perspective of sense of place. Through investigating the development of migrants' emotional bonds with the urban environment, this study can help them to overcome (place) identity crises and reestablish psychological bonding with the place.

### **1.6.2 Expanding and Enriching People-Place Relationships Theory**

Human being's mobility is always the focus of people-place relationship theory. The massive wave of rural-urban migrants in China provides a unique context to investigate the relationship between people and place. This research not only contributes to the scholarship on Chinese rural-urban migrants, particularly in terms of how rural-urban migrants reestablish their psychological connections with place of destination through specific place experiences (J. Qian et al., 2011), but also expands the sense of place theory by including China's rural-urban migrants as its research target.

Besides three categories of factors (namely socio-demographic predictors, social predictors, and physical predictors) presented in previous research on the people-place relationship, this study also incorporates institutional factors (the household registration system) into investigating migrants' sense of place. Thus, it enriches the people-place relationship theory.

### **1.6.3 Benefits to Government Policy Making**

The rural-urban migrants in China have to face a lot of difficulties caused by changes of physical settings, social relationship network, and their own cognitions and experiences. Through identifying the salient factors which influence the migrants' adaptation and integration to the urban environment, this study can help the central and local governments conduct specific policies and urban construction to enhance the migrants' sense of place.

### **1.6.4 Benefits to the Construction of Meaningful Place**

Under the situation of globalization and industrialization, the constructions of urban landscape and settings in modern China are losing distinctive personalities or lacking sense of place which Relph (1976, p. 79) names "placelessness." The Chinese have deep sentiment to the land and rural life because of the rooted agrarian culture lasting thousands of years. The citizens, especially rural-urban migrants, always have some attachment to the memories of the rural landscape which can never be substituted by the urban landscape. Through exploring the association between migrants' rural attachment and their sense of place in the city, this study stresses that the urban landscape should meet the migrants' strong emotional

attachment for rural areas – which may also be demands for the urban dwellers – by incorporating rural landscape into cities. Smith (2002) finds that the preservation and creation of some highly visible features, such as some familiar symbols and landscape styles from rural areas to urban community, can hold public significance and serve to enhance people's sense of place. Hence, through investigating the migrants' rural attachment and their sense of place in the city, some suggestions to the city design and urban planning can be concluded.

## **1.7 Definitions of Key Terms**

### **1.7.1 Rural-Urban Migrants in China**

Any review of migration literature will first reveal that every discipline views migration from its own particular perspective and partly to the data sources available for study (Courgeau, 1976). “Within the field of migration there are also some well-established concepts and measurement techniques in regular use, yet, the manner in which they are defined and used have crucial repercussions for the findings of particular studies” (Lewis, 1982, p. 6). In this study, therefore, it is necessary to define precisely the phenomena of migration in China as well as derive a framework and construct the analysis.

Lee (1966, p. 49) points out that every act of migration involves an origin, a destination, and an intervening set of obstacles no matter how short or how long, how easy or how difficult. Migration is also a social phenomenon. In no way can it be separated from its initiation and consequence (W. Qian, 1996, p. 23). Therefore, Lee's definition of migration is not helpful in the context of social scientific research. However, he has put forward the basic components of migration – an origin, a destination, and an intervening set of obstacles.

Summarizing and refining lots of literature on migration definition, Lewis (1982, pp. 7-8) concludes that five aspects should be included to define migration from a geographic perspective to differentiate from mobility. Firstly, in order to define the migrant precisely, some territorial schema should be adopted. Furthermore, migration has to be specified by some time interval, usually the interval between the date of arrival and the date of departure. The third dimension is emphasized by sociologists and anthropologists. They argue that since migration involves a move to a new social setting, migrants will experience changes in their interactional system. The fourth one addresses that migration is a form of motivated behavior. Lastly, if migration is an act of volition it implies decision-making based on some underlying criteria, which usually involve a hierarchy of values.

The definition of migration covering all these dimensions above is given by Mangalam and Morgan:

Migration is a relatively permanent moving away of a collectivity, called migrants, from one geographical location to another, preceded by decision-making on the part of the migrants on the basis of a hierarchically ordered set of values or valued ends and resulting in changes in the interactional system of the migrants. (Mangalam & Morgan, 1968, p. 8)

The most important point of this definition is that it distinguishes migration from mobility which is a more general term (Lewis, 1982). Eisenstadt (1953) defines migration as the physical transition of an individual or a group from one society to another. This transition usually involves leaving one social setting and entering another one.

While there are also some other definitions of migration, this project must set forth a definition before discussing the subject of rural-urban migration in China. Based on the academic discussion above and the national conditions of China, the rural-urban migrants in

this project refer to all people leaving the countryside for better social-economic opportunities in the cities. Considering the unique phenomenon of the household registration system in China, both the temporary and permanent rural-urban migrants are included in the notion. The definition is simple, but it includes the social and economic consequences on the socio-economic development of society, whether positive or negative (Qian, 1996).

### **1.7.2 Sense of Place**

Sense of place is an important dimension in human beings' daily life. Living in a place for a long time, people tend to become attached to it. Therefore Hay (1990) puts forward that sense of place is the result of both residence in one place and awareness of that place. The awareness, which is largely subconscious and affected by the structure and nature of both the place and society on lives, refers to the "feelings, sensations and structural limitations to form a gestalt 'whole'" (Hay, 1990, p. 1). People become bonded to the place where their basic human desires are met such as security, belonging, and rootedness. The bonding arises slowly in the midst of long-term interactions. The interactions may include "feelings, perceptions, behaviors, and outcomes associated with one's being in that location" (Steele, 1981, p. 12). It is true that sense of place indicates the experiences that people are aware of. It also includes some other unnoticed influences, such as "a consistent avoidance of doing certain things in that particular place" (Steele, 1981, p. 12). Hay (1990) sorts these aspects into long residence, sensory awareness, action space, rootedness, insider status and regional consciousness. Finally, he finds that sense of place eludes precise definition.



Although there are a plethora of discussions about sense of place (Agyekum & Newbold, 2016; Ardoin, 2009; Hay, 1990, 1998a, 1998b; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Lewicka, 2011b; Moskal, 2015; Relph, 1976; Shamai, 1991; Shamai, Arnon, & Schnell, 2012; Steele, 1981; Tuan, 1977, 1979), only the definition given by Steel is precise and comprehensive. He defines sense of place as “the pattern of reactions that a setting stimulates for a person. These reactions are a product of both features of the setting and aspects the person brings to it” (Steele, 1981, p. 12). In the simplification of the definition, the setting combines both surroundings (physical setting) and context (social setting), while the reactions imply the person’s physical and psychological activities. Hence the interaction between the setting and person defined above compose the “sense of place.” Steele (1981) also points out that it is hard to talk about a sense of place unless we know both the place and people we are talking. In this project, people refer particularly to the rural-urban migrants in China, while the place designates the cities.

## **1.8 Organization of This Study**

The main aim of this thesis is to examine and present the rural-urban migrants’ sense of place based on empirical methods. The first chapter develops a general framework including introduction, background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of this study, and the definitions of key terms. The second chapter includes some detailed introduction to the specific conditions of this study. It involves the household registration system, the motivation of rural-urban migration, different measures of migrants in China, and rural-urban migrants’ situations in the urban. Chapter Three reviews

the literature related to some key terms of sense of place and theories about the people-place relationship. It also includes the literature review terms of peoples' movement through space and time, approaches to sense of place, and predictors of sense of place. Research design, methods and instruments, case selection, and validity and reliability are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five covers the analysis and results of the three research questions based on the quantitative data and qualitative data. Chapter Six discusses regarding place scale and sense of place, predictors of sense of place, and migrants' rural experience and rural attachment. And finally, this study closes with theoretical contributions, implication, limitation, and future research suggestions in Chapter Seven.

## CHAPTER 2 MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS IN CHINA

### 2.1 Introduction

Over the past few decades, China has experienced a transformation from a relatively immobile society to one with migrants accounting more than 10% of China's population (Fan, 2008). The rate of China's mobility is relatively low compared to advanced industrial countries. As the world's most populous country, the sheer size of migration has already significantly affected economic growth and urban development. The movement of rural-urban migration has not only fundamentally changed the social, spatial, and economic landscapes of Chinese cities, but also made the urban scene much more diverse, lively, and dynamic (G. Ma, 2001). In the Chinese context, migration for rural people is complicated and challenging.

### 2.2 The Household Registration System and Migration

China is one of the few remaining countries (such as Vietnam and North Korea) that still operate the household registration system (Ha, Yi, & Zhang, 2009). After the adoption of household registration system, the fate of lots of people and the economic development of the country are greatly influenced. Table 2.1 presents the policy changes of the household registration system in China.

In 1958, the National People's Congress passed *Regulations on Household Registration in the People's Republic of China* making the household registration system law. Based on the regulations, every Chinese citizen is tied to a specific location with an "agricultural" (or rural) or "nonagricultural" (or urban) household registration classification which outlines an individual's rights to different entitlements. An agricultural household