

# Household Registration Reform, Points Systems and Migrant Children's Access to Public Schooling in China

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(中国の戸籍制度改革における農民工子女の公教育アクセス)

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博 士 論 文 の 要 約

China has been experiencing large-scale rural-to-urban migration since the 1980s. However, numerous rural migrant children still face barriers to enrolment in urban public schools because of the household registration (*hukou*) system. While previous studies have examined various aspects of this issue, the implications for migrants' access to urban education of a national urbanisation strategy introduced in 2014, and of related reforms to household registration arrangements, remain under-explored.

This study focuses especially on the implications for migrants' access to urban schooling of the recent introduction of points systems for apportioning school places. This approach, first piloted by Zhongshan city in Guangdong province beginning in 2009, has steadily been extended nationwide. Combining documentary analysis and elements of ethnography, I analysed policy documents and various media, undertook school visits and interviewed various stakeholders during fieldwork conducted in 2018 and 2019 in the Yangtze River Delta. I have examined what happens both outside and inside schools, through interviews with officials, teachers, and rural migrants. I analyse the reasons for the points system's spread and for divergence in its implementation across various urban districts.

Notwithstanding official claims that points systems promote 'fairness' or 'equality' in the treatment of migrants, my analysis suggests that they maintain or even exacerbate the stratification of urban society, lending new legitimacy to the hierarchical differentiation of entitlements. This is consistent with the aim of the 2014 'New national urbanization plan' to divert urban growth from megacities towards smaller cities.

The findings of this research indicate that longstanding restrictions on educational access for rural migrant children have acquired new justification and legitimacy from points-based assessments. Migrants deemed to bring significant benefits to the city, by virtue of academic or professional qualifications, taxable wealth, or stability

of employment and residence, are widely given preference by local governments. Although much attention has been given to the significance of points systems for *hukou* reform, there are indications that the basis for exclusion of rural migrant children from public schools is shifting from *hukou* to measurements of *suzhi*, that is, of personal or familial 'quality' or 'worth'. In other words, limitations on migrant childrens 'access to urban public education are increasingly linked to metrics of their parents' 'quality'. More broadly, the use of points systems must be seen in the context of an evolving bureaucratic-ideological project aimed at more rigorously monitoring and assessing China's entire population, invoking the logic of meritocracy for the purpose of control.