

HURDLES AND HOPES: AN ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MIGRANT CHILDREN IN CHINA

Children are found to be increasingly involved in China's massive waves of rural-to-urban migration in the post-reform era. The academic discourse regarding this particular social group is divided along methodological fault lines. To bridge this narrative gap, this mixed-method project rigorously interrogates both a national representative survey data (China Education Panel Studies, 2014) and qualitative data with 23 migrant families recruited from two schools respectively in Guangdong and Hunan under an ecological framework to explore how multiple contexts stratify Chinese rural migrant children's educational achievement. This study documents coexisting "hurdles and hopes" in rural migrant children's educational experiences in urban China. At the family level, the CEPS data shows that migrant children significantly outperform their rural-remaining peers in cognitive skills, which is mediated by their higher family SES, better home environment and higher parental aspirations. Discourse analysis of interview data reveals that these families engage in a process of "doing family" to advance children's education. At the school level, interaction analysis suggests that migrant children are confronted with a school segregation system that channels them systematically to low-ranking and less academically competitive schools. A case study of the two schools in the field illustrates how institutional inequalities are reproduced in everyday organization of school life. At the regional level, attending schools in the East is positively associated with migrant students' cognitive skills.



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Gu Xiaorong formerly trained in English literature with a four-year lectureship experience in Sun Yat-sen University, China. She is a "half-way" sociologist who shows great passions in understanding social consequences of China's economic reform through the lens of family changes. Her wider research interests cover child and youth development, migration, family, education, social stratification, China's post-reform political economy and mixed-methods research. A paper published in 2015 in the *Journal of Marriage and Family Review* is titled, "Left behind by Parents in China: Internal Migration and Adolescents' Well-being" (co-author: Professor Jean Yeung).

Chaired by: Dr Kriti Vikram, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, NUS

Date: 24 March 2017, Friday | **Time:** 12.00nn - 1.30pm

All are Welcome! Refreshments will be served. Registration is required.

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/h5nyn99> by 23 March 2017