Beyond Rural and Urban Differences: Impact of Educational Resources and Family Resources on Children from Urban and Rural Areas

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Migrant children and home-staying children in China are the results of social transition and urbanization. As a disadvantaged and marginalized group, they received full attention from society. This article is an attempt to analyze the differences in accessibility to educational resources and the influencing factors, both social factors and family factors, and to discuss the social consequences of such differences on different children groups.

This survey employed the data from the “Third National Survey on Women’s Social Status (2010)” which examined the group of 10-to-17-year-old children and collected 19,894 valid responses. The sampling was drawn from 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions by means of stratification, and was representative of the whole country. The large quantity, diversity and variety demonstrated by the sampling provided valuable data for a full picture of the differences between different children groups in China, which made the research superior to previous ones drawn on single sampling.

Based on the type of household1 and whether living with parents, we divided children into four groups: urban children, rural children, rural home-staying children and rural migrant children (See Table 9.1).


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1 The Raw data did not include variables on the type of children’s household. However, the survey included questions on the background information of all people in the household, which asked about the household type information of all family members. We were able to locate the children in these questions according to the children’s age and gender and hence get information on the children’s household type.
Regular rural children (or rural children): Household type as “Local Agricultural,” with neither of the parents “permanently away.”

Rural home-staying children (or home-staying children) Household type as “Local Agricultural,” with at least one parent “permanently away.”

Rural migrant children (or migrant children): Household type as “Migrant Agricultural,” with at least one parent “permanently away.”

### Table 9.1 Description of the children sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Group</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban children</td>
<td>7,949</td>
<td>42.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural children</td>
<td>9,552</td>
<td>50.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-staying children</td>
<td>1,172</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant children</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,912</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### I Differences in Educational Resources between Urban and Rural Areas

There exists significant difference in the accessibility to educational resources between urban children and rural children in China, due to the dual system of urban and rural development and the over-emphasis on urban development. This article examines the accessibility to education of the four types of children in four different aspects including a) accessibility to school, b) accessibility to high-quality education, c) level of student-teacher interaction and student involvement and d) accessibility to extracurricular educational resources.

#### A School Resources

1 Accessibility to Schools

Since 2002, with the full-fledged nationwide campaign of shutting down and merging schools, rural children had to travel longer distances to go to school, and more and more of them had to be away from parents and live on campus, which, to some extent, affected their accessibility to education and increased indirect household education cost. An extremely high percentage of children going to boarding schools was found among rural children and home-staying children: 33.02% and 32.33%, which meant that nearly one thirds of students