

*Social Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities: A Survey of Rural Migrant Workers' Attitudes in China**

Kun Yang, Huamin Peng, and Jia Chen

Abstract

Rural migrant workers have made huge contributions to the rapid development of urbanization in China. However, owing to the influences of institutional constraints and cultural factors, there may be gaps between expectations and practices of social citizenship rights and responsibilities for rural migrant workers. Based on the survey data of 973 rural migrant workers in four cities in China, this study compared expectations and practices of social citizenship rights and responsibilities for rural migrant workers in terms of four welfare dimensions, including employment, basic livelihood protection, child care, and elder care. The study concluded that rural migrant workers perceived a responsibility surplus and a rights deficit in social citizenship regarding both expectations and practices. Under the impact of a family-oriented welfare culture, the rights–responsibility gaps were more prominent in the two dimensions of child care and elder care. Rural migrant workers

Kun Yang is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, Hohai University.

Huamin Peng is Professor in the Department of Social Work and Social Policy, Nanjing University. Correspondence should be sent to penghm@nju.edu.cn.

Jia Chen is Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work, School of Sociology and Political Science, Shanghai University.

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believed that they had fewer social citizenship rights in practice in comparison to their expectations for these rights. Moreover, there were generational and significant regional differences in the attitudinal patterns of rural migrant workers.

During China's reform and opening-up era in the 1980s, hundreds of millions of farmers moved to cities looking for jobs and to improve their lives, mostly on a temporary basis at first; this movement constitutes the large-scale labor migration in human history, and it has drawn much public and academic attention.¹ Undoubtedly, rural migrant workers have contributed tremendously to the development of urban areas and China's economic miracle. Nevertheless, due to some institutional constraints and cultural factors, such as "the household registration system" (户口 *hukou*), the residual welfare system, and family-oriented welfare culture, there may be gaps between expectations and practices of social citizenship rights and responsibilities for rural migrant workers. This article presents a study comparing expectations and practice of social citizenship rights and responsibilities for rural migrant workers in terms of four welfare dimensions (i.e., employment, basic livelihood protection, child care, and elder care) and explores whether there are gaps between their expectations and the actual practices of social citizenship. Furthermore, it tests whether the attitudinal patterns of rural migrant workers vary significantly by key characteristics of the sample in this study, such as gender, age, marital status, and regional factor. These findings may be practically more helpful for providing guidance on narrowing the rights-responsibility gaps in terms of expectations and practices for rural migrant workers.

1. Social Citizenship and Public Expectations of Social Citizenship

Citizenship is divided into three parts: civil, political, and social citizenship. The rights-based concept of social citizenship includes the right of people to enjoy appropriate economic welfare and security, the right to fully share social heritage, and the right to maintain basic living standards in accordance with the general standards of society.² These rights correspond to government responsibility for social welfare,³ and they can act as the benchmarks against which minority groups can strive for equal treatment.⁴