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Moving towards an Inclusive Housing Policy?

-Migrants' Access to Housing Subsidies in China

CHINA PLANNING RESEARCH GROUP EVENT

Speaker: Prof. Youqin HUANG
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Abstract:

China is in the midst of an urban revolution with hundreds of millions of migrants leaving villages for cities. Due to the discriminatory household registration (Hukou) System, migrants have been treated as second-class citizens and have been denied urban welfare benefits. The Chinese government has been promoting inclusive urbanization with significant policy changes in recent decade; yet, its impact on migrants is not clear. This paper examines whether housing is becoming more inclusive to migrants in Chinese cities. Through assessing recent policy changes and conducting an empirical analysis of migrants' housing access using two waves of China Migrants Dynamic Survey, this paper shows that while migrants are increasingly qualified for subsidized housing, they are often subject to additional and strict requirements. Few migrants have access to subsidized housing despite policy changes, even though educated migrants are increasingly welcomed by local governments through "talent housing" strategy. Institutional barriers continue to shape migrants' access to housing subsidies, although they have become less important over time. It is clear that housing discrimination persists, and migrants continue to be largely excluded from housing subsidies. Housing inclusion remains a distant dream for most migrants in China.

Dr. Youqin Huang is a Professor of Geography and Planning, Executive Director of the Confucius Institute for China's Culture and Economy, and a Research Associate of the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at University at Albany, State University of New York. Her research focuses on housing, migration and urban development during the unprecedented market transition in China, and aims to understand its impact on Chinese people and places. She serves as a Standing Committee member of Urban China Research Network (UCRN). She received 'Outstanding Service Award' by the American Association of Geographers (AAG) China Geography Specialty Group (CGSG) in 2019, and the '2020 President's Award for Exemplary Public Engagement' by University at Albany in 2020.