
”It’s no longer fair” –Chinese perceptions of inequalities based on hukou status, across population groups and over time.

Kristin Dalen*¹

¹Fafo Research Foundation (Fafo) – Borggata 2b, 0608 Oslo, Norway

Abstract (in French and English)

Despite the political leaderships increased focus on social equality and fairness, the hukou system of household registration is still a solid basis for durable inequalities in access and entitlement to social protections and benefits in the Chinese society. Xi and his administration needs to reform the system to secure continued growth and stability, but do they have the popular support to embark on these reforms, and how fast should they be implemented? The presentations will be based on an article that will explore Chinese people’s perceptions towards inequality in access and entitlement based on hukou status. To what extent is it fair that those with urban hukou have more benefits and better chances? Have urban dwellers contributed more to, and benefitted more from the economic reforms in modern China, and is that just? The presentation will compare perceptions on the institutionalization of hukou status across different groups in the Chinese society (hukou status, social-economic background, human capital, age, gender etc.), and look at developments over the last ten years. The presentations will be based on unique data from three comparable Chinese national surveys of distributive justice and perceptions of fairness conducted by Beida (RCCC), Harvard and Fafo in 2004, 2009 and 2014. The data allows for comparative analysis over time and between population groups.

Keywords: Hukou reform, distributive justice, fairness, access and entitlement

*Speaker