

Project Title: Social Capital and Social Inequality – A Study of Rural Migrants in Shanghai.

Co-investigator: Wang Feng, Zuo Xuejing, and Gina Lai

Research Grants Council, 2003-2005 (HK\$794,000; HKBU 2142/03H)

Description:

The proposed project seeks funding to conduct a survey in Shanghai, China. The purpose of the project is to explore the social world of the rural migrants in urban China. Specifically, it aims to study how the migrants are connected with each other and with urban residents, and how such connections affect their occupational and income achievement. Specifically, the study will explore the extent of economic segregation between rural migrants and urban residents. Then, it will examine the social network patterns of the rural migrants and compare them with those of the urban residents in order to explore the extent of social segregation between the rural migrants and urban residents and the extent of differential possession of social capital between the two groups. Finally, the study will try to see to what extent differential possession of social capital between the rural migrants and urban residents contributes to the economic inequality between the two groups. By studying the social networks of the migrants, particularly their ties to the local community, the proposed study will fill a research gap in the studies of migrants in urban China, in the studies of international migration, and in the studies of the role of social capital in creating social inequality among social groups.