



Residential segregation and well-being inequality between local and migrant elderly in Shanghai



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The tremendous political, economic and social transition in China has brought about a prominent socio-spatial differentiation and segregation in cities between urban locals and migrants. Such segregation will act as a barrier, particularly for the group of physically and economically disadvantaged elderly. This paper aims to analyze the implications of residential segregation on the well-being distribution between the local and migrant elderly in Shanghai. The well-being of the elderly is assessed by the availability and accessibility of social and physical resources, which are employed as the proxies of well-being based on Lindenberg's theory of social production function. The results show that the degree of well-being differs between community types. Local elderly people dominate the traditional and work-unit communities in the city centre and have relatively good access to social and physical resources. By contrast, migrant elderly people are scattered and partly segregated in the peripheral communities, resulting in their relatively poor access to various well-being resources. This paper concludes that the residential segregation between local and migrant elderly people in Shanghai, largely caused by *Hukou's* institutional constraints, has produced evident inequality in well-being, making migrant elderly people more disadvantaged in their urban life. Several planning measures are proposed to mitigate these negative effects.

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Introduction

Over the last three decades the unprecedented political-economic transition, from a planned and state-dominated economy to a market-oriented one, has not only brought the Chinese cities huge economic prosperity but has also intensified social stratification and social inequality (Bian, 2002; Wu & Li, 2005). Chinese cities, which were once characterized by socialism and egalitarianism, seem to have become the most unequal cities in the world (Li & Wu, 2008). This is, for example, expressed in the development of a two-class urban society comprising local residents and migrants (Li & Huang, 2006). Due to institutional barriers, rural migrants are not entitled to full citizenship and benefits enjoyed by local residents in cities (Liu, 2005; Wu, 2002). As a consequence, the local-migrant disparity has become a major inequality in transitional Chinese cities, jeopardizing social stability and social sustainability (Zhao & Howden-Chapman, 2010).

Local-migrant inequality has also been translated into social space, creating socio-spatial segregation in cities (Wu & Li, 2005). Empirical studies on housing and residential segregation (Huang & Jiang, 2009; Wang, Wang, & Wu, 2010; Wu, 2008) have shown that migrants are distributed over private rental housing, factory dormitories, construction sites and urban villages, mostly located in the urban fringe. However, the locals primarily inhabit public and commercial housing in the central city. The segregation of locals and migrants is largely a consequence of the *Hukou* system which excludes migrants from state-sector employment and housing welfare provided by the state (Fu & Tang, 2008; Logan, Fang, & Zhang, 2009).

The implication of this local-migrant residential segregation for their well-being and life quality has scarcely been studied (Wu, 2008). One can wonder whether residential segregation also leads to inequality in well-being, making migrants even more disadvantaged in their urban life. Residential segregation might imply unequal access to facilities, services, opportunities, healthy and safe environments, and supportive social relationships (Bullard, 1995) which might cause unequal well-being effects on locals and migrants. Local-migrant residential segregation can have serious consequences, particularly for the elderly in a rapidly ageing Chinese society. Due to declining health conditions, physical

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capabilities and mobility, and limited income after retirement, the elderly in the final stage of their lives have fewer opportunities to overcome the negative consequences of segregation. This might jeopardize their well-being, and especially that of more disadvantaged migrants.

This paper aims to analyse the implications of residential segregation on the distribution of well-being of the local and migrant elderly. Shanghai was selected because it has the highest ageing population rate in China (Chai, 2010) and because of its role as a major migration destination. For the analysis, the mechanism of housing inequality and residential segregation, their influence on resource distribution, and the associated well-being theory is elaborated on first (Theoretical framework section). Thereafter, the methodological part (Data and methodology section) discusses the specific assessment methods of elderly people's well-being. Residential segregation and well-being inequality between the local and migrant elderly in Shanghai are then analysed and interpreted (Results section). Conclusions and planning suggestions are discussed in the final section.

Theoretical framework

Human well-being is inevitably influenced by the characteristics of urban space itself and its associated amenities and social environment (Oswald & Wu, 2010). Residential segregation between the local and migrant elderly implies differentiations with regard to spatially enjoying and accessing resources which are valuable for their well-being. This part discusses the relationships between residential segregation, resource distribution, needs satisfaction and well-being production.

Housing inequality and residential segregation between locals and migrants

The *Hukou* (household registration) system is regarded as the crucial institutional factor in local-migrant segregation (Li & Wu, 2008; Logan et al., 2009; Wu, 2004). It was designed in the 1950s under Mao's policy of rapid industrialization and was originally intended to restrict rural-urban migration and maintain social order in cities (Ning, 1997). Each individual is registered in only one place of residence in terms of either urban or rural *Hukou*. Barring a very small number of channels, for instance through being recruited by state-owned enterprises and universities, rural-urban migration was strictly controlled before the 1980s (Liu, 2005). It therefore played a key role in shaping an urban-rural dual society. Because of the absence of migratory population and the homogeneity of residents and housing in the socialist era, local-migrant segregation was not evident in the pre-reform Chinese cities (Wu, 2008). Since the planned-to-market economic transition of the 1980s, the *Hukou* system has been gradually relaxed and reformed to facilitate economic growth in terms of encouraging migration and granting migrants urban *Hukou* and rights. Ever since then, Chinese cities have witnessed a massive influx of migrants. Although all the reforms support migration, they vary between cities in terms of their different standards for granting migrants urban *Hukou* and benefits. More developed cities usually set higher standards, aiming to attract and benefit wealthy and highly educated migrants rather than the great majority of rural migrants. Particularly in prosperous cities and regions like Shanghai and Beijing, *Hukou's* effect on local-migrant disparity still remains potent and intact, denying rural migrants many citywide social benefits, services and housing welfare (Chan & Buckingham, 2008).

Non-*Hukou* migrants are excluded from municipal and work-unit public housing, economic and affordable housing, and low-rent housing (Wu, 2004), the major types of welfare housing

provided by the work units and the municipality and located mainly in the city centre. Neither can they enjoy the commodity housing subsidies offered by many work units to their local employees during the transition from state-led allocation system to market-led housing system. During such a transition, the local tenants of public housing are allowed to purchase their housing for a very cheap price, to upgrade their housing tenure from renting to ownership and turn public housing welfare into their asset. However, such a policy does not benefit migrants, but only gives additional benefits to local residents on the housing market. The rental market and dormitories therefore continue to be the key housing choices for migrants (Wu, 2002). In addition, the *Hukou* system also leads to unequal distribution of educational resources between rural and urban areas, and employment discrimination against rural migrants in cities. Migrants are restricted to jobs which the locals do not want (e.g. construction, factory, domestic and commercial services). These disadvantages in education level and urban labour markets consequently lead to lower income level and worse housing achievement of the migrants. As a result, all the housing disadvantages of migrants are reflected by their segregated situation of living in the rental housing of the dilapidated areas of the central city and migrant enclaves in the peripheries. The same applies to elderly migrants. Because of limited income after retirement and declining mobility, most elderly migrants are less economically and physically able to improve their housing condition and to change their segregated situation. Instead, they tend to remain in the same or similar places.

Elderly people's well-being based on Lindenberg's SPF theory

The question is to what extent the residential segregation has an impact on the well-being of the local and migrant elderly. Well-being generally refers to a good life, which is primarily conceptualized on the basis of one's subjective evaluation of life and feeling (Ettema, Gärling, Olsson, & Friman, 2010; Gasper, 2005). It expresses individuals' cognitive and emotional well-being, directly measured by means of psychometric scales (Diener & Suh, 1997). Lindenberg's theory (Lindenberg, 1996; Nieboer, Lindenberg, Boomsma, & Van Bruggen, 2005; Ormel, Lindenberg, Steverink, & Verbrugge, 1999) builds a theoretical and assessment framework for subjective well-being in which concepts like well-being, goals, needs and resources are properly integrated under his social production function (SPF).

This theory states that people strive to improve their subjective well-being (see Table 1) by optimizing two universal goals: physical and social well-being. The two universal goals can be produced by five instrumental goals or basic needs: stimulation and comfort for physical well-being, status, behavioural confirmation and affection for social well-being (Nieboer et al., 2005). The five basic needs can be further fulfilled and produced by lower level of resources. Those physical and social resources, as well as the five basic needs, are fundamental and significant for people's well-being production. This is specified in more detail here in relation to the elderly. Retirement, abundant leisure time and declining health condition will conjointly change elderly people's behavioural pattern, needs, needed resources and understanding of well-being (Chai & Li, 2005; Chow, 2010; Gui, 2004).

First, stimulation needs are related to the drive for arousal, including mental and sensory stimulation, physical effort and competitive sports (Ormel et al., 1999). The stimulation needs of the elderly can be fulfilled by the cultural and education facilities (e.g. culture centre and elderly university), entertainment facilities (e.g. elderly activity centre), public space (e.g. park), and facilities for non-daily consumption (e.g. retail stores) (Gui, 2004). Education facilities are relevant since they provide the elderly with

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