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Spatial deprivation of urban public services in migrant enclaves under the context of a rapidly urbanizing China: An evaluation based on suburban Shanghai

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ABSTRACT

The rapid economic growth of Chinese cities has attracted an increasingly migrant population. Faced with institutionalized discrimination caused by the *Hukou* system, however, rural migrants are excluded from local welfare, including certain types of urban public services. By taking suburban Shanghai as a case study, this research adopts the theoretical framework of urban deprivation and evaluates the deprivation level of migrant enclaves in terms of the provisions of public service, including educational, cultural, park, sports, healthcare, public transit, and postal service facilities through a combination of population census data, online and survey data. We then conducted questionnaire surveys and interviews in 14 migrant and local communities in order to acquire detailed socioeconomic information of residents and to understand their degree of satisfaction and information on how often they utilize public services. A multilevel regression model is run to examine the influence of indicators, including the socioeconomic status of respondents and provision of public services, on the degree of satisfaction. The paper concludes with policy implications needed to make spaces more socially equitable and inclusive in the rapidly urbanizing Chinese landscape.

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1. Introduction

With China's rapid economic growth, income disparity between urban and rural residents increased from 2.57% in 1978 to 3.03% in 2013, resulting in large-scale migration from rural to urban areas. While the urbanization rate reached 53.73% in 2013, only 35.88% of the urban population owned *Hukou* (the household registration system), meaning 16.85% of the total population, around 240 million migrants, had left rural areas and stayed in the cities. This large influx of migrants to urban areas has caused housing, healthcare, and education needs to go unmet, leading to problems of social separation (Tian, 2015).

Deprivation is defined as having limited access to the social world due to low socioeconomic status or poor education (Bassouk & Donelan, 2003). Since the introduction of the term "deprivation" by Townsend (1987), we have witnessed a wealth of literature on social deprivation, most of it originating from rapidly developing or already developed countries (Arbaci & Rae, 2013; Bailey & Livingston, 2008; Bassouk & Donelan, 2003; Gangopadhyay & Nath, 2001; He, Wu, Webster, & Liu, 2010; Kearns, Gibb, & Mackay, 2000; Langlois &

Kitchen, 2001; Ley & Smith, 2000; Liu, He, & Wu, 2008; Wu, He, & Webster, 2010). Recently, in the UK, there has been a growing concern by government that the poorest neighborhoods often receive the poorest services (SEU, 2000). At the turn of the last century, a new agenda was developed in which core, mainstream public services are identified as the 'main weapons' for tackling neighborhoods-level disadvantages and socio-spatial polarization (Hastings, 2007; SEU, 2000).

In China, social deprivation has one fundamental institutional reason for its existence, namely, the *Hukou* system, a household registration system and an important institution of social control in post-1949 China. One of its major functions is migration control and management (Zhang, 2001), and by nature, *Hukou* is exclusive. The lack of local *Hukou* deprives migrants opportunities to access affordable housing, healthcare, and education. Over the past several years, there has been a surge of literature documenting migrant enclaves in China (Huang & Yi, 2014; Liu, Dijst, & Geertman, 2015; Liu et al., 2008; Tian, 2008; Yuan, Wu, & Xu, 2011). The most significant of these were the study on *Chengzhongcun* (Village in cities) (Lin, Meulder, Cai, Hu, & Lai, 2014; Tian, 2008; Zhang, Zhao, & Tian, 2003). Nevertheless, the evaluation of spatial deprivation of public services at the city level in China has been relatively limited. The spatial planning system in China mainly addresses the needs of local residents with *Hukou*, and the needs of migrants have not been on the agenda of urban planning professionals,

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aggravating the inequity of public services between migrant and local communities. This research is an attempt to fill the gap of spatial deprivation evaluation, taking the periphery of Shanghai as a case study, and we address three major research questions: (1) To what extent have the migrant enclaves of Shanghai been deprived of public services? (2) What are the major factors affecting the degree of satisfaction of residents in the migrant enclaves? (3) Is the provision of public services related to the satisfaction of the residents?

This paper focuses on how a set of urban public services, including educational, cultural, park, healthcare, public transit, and postal services, have been distributed among migrant enclaves and more affluent local communities. By taking 23 migrant enclaves and 25 local communities in the periphery of Shanghai as case studies, this research adopts the theoretical framework of spatial deprivation and evaluates the deprivation level of migrant enclaves in terms of public services through the combination of population census data and questionnaire surveys. The following section identifies the factors affecting degrees of satisfaction of residents and examines the influence of provision of public services on satisfaction through a random effect regression. The research concludes with policy implications to alleviate spatial deprivation and ways to make spaces more socially equitable in the rapidly urbanizing Chinese landscape.

2. Urban deprivation: its measurement, characteristics, and causes

2.1. The measurement and characteristics of urban deprivation

In the urban context, deprivation describes a condition of relative poverty, which is a reflection of social exclusion and spatial inequity (Kearns et al., 2000). Townsend (1987) defines it as an “observable and demonstrable disadvantage” related to diverse conditions experienced by materially poor people (Kearns et al., 2000). Individuals who lack material goods and social opportunities, such as access to employment and social activities, can be identified as in a condition of multiple deprivation (Broadway & Jesty, 1998). Typically, deprivation can be measured based on a multiple index or a specific index, such as the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in the UK and the New Zealand Deprivation Index (NZDep). These indices consist of several domains with specific indicators, for instance, income, employment, education, health, housing and services, living environment and crime. During recent decades, attempts have been made to optimize the overall indicator system (Kearns et al., 2000; Langlois & Kitchen, 2001; Rae, 2009). Additionally, there has also been a growing concern about some specific deprivation patterns, such as the relative accessibility deprivation to grocers and deprivation of local goods (Gangopadhyay & Nath, 2001; Páez, Mercado, Farber, Morency, & Roorda, 2010).

Recently, focus has shifted toward deprivation of public services in the deprived neighborhoods. It is widely accepted that public services in deprived areas are less suited to meet the needs of residents (Duffy, 2000; Hastings, 2007; SEU, 2000). Due to socio-spatial variations in residents' expectations, the extent to which deprived neighborhoods receive poor public services and how the residents in these areas think of the services vary. For instance, an analysis presented in Duffy (2000) suggests that residents in deprived neighborhoods are more satisfied with services they use frequently, but less satisfied with services they may not use as often like public parks or services they deem to not be very important such as street cleaning. The study of He et al. (2010) reveals there has been a disparity between the actual hardship rural migrants endure and their perceived sense of deprivation. They often make positive comparisons with their former rural situation and their anticipated future, tending to understate their hardships. Overall, whether the residents feel deprived or not depends on both the physical condition and their characteristics and expectations.

2.2. Impact factors of deprivation

Due to distinct economic backgrounds, social structures, and policy discourse, the root of urban deprivation can be very complex. Generally, mainstream European research finds that deprived areas are primarily caused by global and local economic restructuring as well as labor market changes, which are also the general processes of social segregation, exclusion, and poverty (Andersen, 2002). Due to budgetary restraints, the rules and procedures that work to include some groups while excluding others emerged (Judge, 1978; Hastings, 2009), leading to bias in resource allocation, and an under-provision of public services (Hastings, 2009).

Moreover, there exists a path dependency in the interaction between deprivation and residential mobility. Clark and Morrison (2012) explore the relationship between residential mobility and degree of deprivation based on a survey of migration and New Zealand's deprivation index, and they demonstrate that where residents previously lived will influence their socio-spatial mobility and neighborhood outcomes. This is similar to the “spatial mismatch hypothesis,” which states that minorities in the inner-city are more easily deprived of appropriate suburban job opportunities due to limited residential mobility (Kain, 1968). This process also results in employment barriers such as high unemployment, low wages, and long commutes (Abramson, Tobin, & VanderGoot, 1995; Kain, 1968). Generally speaking, when we analyze the source of deprivation, a cumulative effect of a residents' migration behavior needs to be considered.

2.3. Urban deprivation and its characteristics in China

In China, a long-standing urban–rural dualism makes the background and factors of deprivation more distinct from those in Western countries. Although an official measurement of multiple deprivation is absent, migrant enclaves have a high possibility of being deprived (He et al., 2010; Wu, 2004). Under the planned economy, farmers were institutionally inferior against the background of emphasizing city-based industrialization. With the market reform, pressures from large-scale unemployment and the lack of urban public goods and services forced urban governments to retain the *Hukou* system (Liu et al., 2008). In recent decades, with the relaxation of the *Hukou* system, there has been an influx of migrants into Chinese cities.

Generally, faced with institutionalized discrimination caused by the *Hukou* system, rural migrants are excluded from formal employment and urban services resulting in their becoming a marginal group within the urban landscape. Deprived of access to formal subsidized housing and other welfare benefits, migrants have to reside in informal houses on the periphery of the city (Zhang, 2001). Social inequalities in relation to quality of life between local people and migrants have been increasing since the 1990s (Zhao, 2013). In other words, a two-class urban society with inferior migrants and privileged urban residents has been created (Chan, 2009). Moreover, migrants living on the periphery of cities are more likely to be deprived than local residents. For instance, migrants usually obtain a job at the cost of living environment, resulting in a noticeable higher level of job-housing spatial mismatch than those of the local population. (Fan, Allen, & Sun, 2014). The local fiscal system is another cause which ignores the needs of migrants. Since the 1994 tax-sharing fiscal decentralization system was instituted, tax revenue has been shared among local and central governments, with the central government taking the largest share. Meanwhile, local governments have had to take responsibility for their own expenditures (Tian, 2015). The reduction of financial burdens incurred by subsidies promised to urban residents is a matter of great concern (Zhang, 2014). Saving money by refusing to take responsibility for the migrant's welfare becomes a choice often taken by local governments. Therefore, Huang and Yi (2014) argue that the process of excluding migrants in Chinese cities is a deliberate process by defining differences to delineate migrants as “other” and denying their rights and entitlements.

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