UC Berkeley
UC Berkeley Previously Published Works

Title

Community-based approaches to social exclusion among rural-to-urban migrants in China

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5h4561xx

Journal

China Journal of Social Work, 8(1)

ISSN

Authors

Chow, Julian Chun-Chung
Lou, Christine Wei-Mien

Publication Date

2015-01-02

DOI

Peer reviewed

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Community-based approaches to social exclusion among rural-to-urban migrants in China

Julian Chun-Chung Chow* and Christine Wei-Mien Lou

School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley, CA, USA

Rural-to-urban migrants in China face numerous forms of social exclusion. This article argues that community-based approaches offer innovative ways with which to tackle the problems of social exclusion for rural-to-urban migrants, yet these approaches have been neglected. This article first provides an overview of the concept of social exclusion, as developed by Western European scholarship and policy discourse. Next, it examines the ways in which these concepts are relevant to the context of rural-to-urban migrants within China. Finally, this article conceptualizes the social exclusion paradigm from a community practice perspective and offers the implications of this paradigm for community-level interventions.

农民工在中国面临各种形式的社会排斥。本文认为以社区为本的方式可以提供创新的方法解决农民工的社会排斥问题，但这些方法都被忽视。本文首先概述由西欧学术和政策讨论发展而成的社会排斥概念，然后审视这些概念如何与农民工的处境有关。最后，本文从社区实践的角度，概念化社会排斥范式，并提出该范式对社区层面干预措施的影响。

Keywords: social exclusion; rural-to-urban migrants; China; community practice; community social work

Introduction

Over the past three decades, China has witnessed an unprecedented and extensive migration of rural labourers to urban areas. In 2012, more than 260 million people moved from rural regions to urbanized villages and cities in search of increased employment opportunities, with more than 163 million of these migrant workers leaving their hometowns for other provinces (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2013). Rural-to-urban migrants frequently experience severe economic, political and social marginalization within their new host neighbourhoods, and thus represent one of the most socially excluded groups within China's urban communities (Li 2004; He *et al.* 2008; Li and Chui 2011; Wang and Fan 2012). In accordance with the promotion of social harmony and social equality as key principles shaping its developmental goals, the Chinese government has implemented a number of national level policies addressing the social exclusion of rural-to-urban migrants (Li and Chui 2011).

This paper posits that the *community* represents an important level at which to target policy and practice, yet community-based approaches to social exclusion have largely been neglected in China and elsewhere. The goals of this paper are fourfold. First, it seeks to provide an overview of the concept of social exclusion, as developed primarily by Western European scholarship and policy discourse. Second, it examines the ways in which these concepts are relevant to the context of rural-to-urban migrants within China. Next, it conceptualizes the social exclusion paradigm from a community practice

perspective, including identifying the indicators of social exclusion at the community level. Lastly, it seeks to determine the implications of the social exclusion paradigm for community-level interventions, both generally and as applied specifically to Chinese rural-to-urban migrant communities.

Definitions and dimensions of social exclusion

The concept of social inclusion has gained increasing influence over social policy discourses in recent years, particularly in Western European countries. Regarded as a paradigm shift away from a traditional and more static poverty-centric model, social exclusion is argued to offer a multidimensional and cohesive framework that better represents the interrelated material and non-material aspects of deprivation, and consequently, accommodates more flexible and comprehensive policy responses.

However, a recurring critique of social exclusion is that it is a poorly understood and contested concept plagued by ambiguity, in part because the ways in which it has been defined by government bodies and social policy scholars greatly vary (Silver 1994; Peace 2001; Farrington 2002; Davies 2005; Fischer 2011). On the one hand, narrow conceptualizations have regarded social exclusion essentially as a synonym for income poverty, referring to 'either those people who are not attached to the paid labor market (exclusion from the paid workforce) or to those people in low-wage work' (Peace 2001, 26). Used in this sense, critiques that social exclusion does not represent an innovative organizing framework for public policy are valid; as Amartya Sen (2000) claims, it is redundant and already inherent to existing approaches in understanding poverty.

Moreover, there are several major problems with these limited conceptualizations. The first is that the change from the poverty to the social exclusion paradigm is then relegated to merely a change in semantics, by repackaging less popular terminology associated with poverty into more 'acceptable' language (Saunders 2008). The second is that social exclusion faces the same limitations of the poverty approach, namely that it is one-dimensional and can be 'solved' through forms of income maintenance and transfers without addressing structural and underlying causes (Boushey *et al.* 2007; Saunders 2008). Accordingly, exclusionary dynamics that may occur outside of poverty, such as marginalization, disadvantage, discrimination and conflict, are not captured (Fischer 2011, 1). From a community practice perspective, these definitions are also lacking because emphasis, and thus potential solutions, are placed at the individual level, precluding interventions that tap into the relational aspects of deprivation.

Broader definitions seek to incorporate elements of social exclusion beyond those primarily focused on poverty, lack of income and unemployment, including the following:

> disadvantage in relation to certain norms of social, economic or political activity pertaining to households, spatial areas or population groups; the social, economic, and institutional processes through which disadvantage comes about; and the outcomes or consequences for individuals, groups or communities. (Percy-Smith 2000, 3)

For example, the government of the United Kingdom has defined social exclusion as 'a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown', the most important characteristic being 'that these problems are linked and mutually reinforcing, and can combine to create a complex and fast-moving vicious cycle' (Social Exclusion Unit 2001, 10). The European Commission provides a more comprehensive definition (1997, 1):

> Social exclusion refers to the multiple and changing factors resulting in people being excluded from the normal exchanges, practices, and rights of modern society. Poverty is one of the most obvious factors, but social exclusion also refers to the inadequate rights in housing, education, health and access to services. It affects individuals and groups, particularly in urban and rural areas, who are in some way subject to discrimination and segregation; and it emphasizes the weakness in social infrastructure and the risk of allowing a two-tier society to become established by default.

These definitions of social exclusion expand the poverty paradigm by identifying both non-material and material facets of social exclusion, acknowledging the interrelated nature of these facets, and, importantly from a community practice perspective, including groups and areas as units of focus.

Millar (2007) provides a synthesis of the key dimensions and characteristics, emerging from these and other definitions that have been proposed by several social policy researchers (see, e.g., Room 1995; Atkinson 1998; Tsakloglou and Papadopoulos 2002; Millar 2007):

- Multidimensional: across a wide range of indicators of living standards, not based on income alone and also including neighbourhood or community resources and facilities, access to goods and services, political engagement, leisure and social activity
- Dynamic: relates not just to the current situation but also prospects and opportunities for the future and capabilities to take advantage of these, requires *understanding processes* and identifying the factors which can trigger entry or exit
- Relativity: implies exclusion from a particular society at a particular time and place
- Relational: meaning a major discontinuity with the rest of society; not treating people as separate individuals but locating them within the contexts of family, household, community, and nation; refers to *inadequate social participation, lack of social integration, and lack of power*
- Agency: lies *beyond the narrow responsibility of the individual*; implies that people are excluded by the act or actions of other individual and institutions, and also that individuals have different ways of coping with the risk or actuality of social exclusion
- Collective: refers to the *collective resources (or lack of these) in the neighbourhood or community*; these can include insufficient or unsatisfactory community facilities, such as run-down schools, remotely sited shops, poor public transport networks, etc. (Millar 2007, 2–3)

The major implication of these is that social exclusion operates at multiple levels and is contextual, and that individual-level deprivations and disconnectedness are embedded within larger spheres. However, rather than supplanting a community-level focus as suggested by Labonte (2004), the social exclusion paradigm instead locates the community/neighbourhood between the individual experiences of social exclusion and larger global/national processes and institutions. As such, the community provides an important locus at which to analyse social exclusion and provide interventions that influence both the micro individual and macro global/national levels. Moreover, research has overwhelmingly indicated the additive neighbourhood effect has on social exclusion (Buck 2001; Brännström 2004; Murie and Musterd 2004; Atkinson, Buck, and Kintrea 2005; De Boyser *et al.* 2009).

While the definitions discussed above give a *descriptive* account of social exclusion, the succinct and much-cited definition given by Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud

(1999, 230) emphasizing participation offers *prescriptive* possibilities: 'An individual is socially excluded if (i) he or she is geographically resident in a society and (ii) he or she does not participate in the normal activities of citizens in that society.' One main critique of this definition is that it does not allow for agency; that is, 'individuals may exclude themselves as a result of a history or previous experience of exclusion or discrimination', including those 'who decide to "opt out" of paid work and are dependent on state benefits those who choose alternative lifestyles which are regarded as problematic to mainstream society' (Percy-Smith 2000, 4). Another is that the notion of citizenship and the social rights accorded to those who hold legal citizenship status, complicate the question of 'who' should be targeted and benefited by policies attempting to ameliorate social exclusion. A simple solution is to revise the definition to state that an individual *can* not participate in the normal activities of *members* of a society. The critical point is that *participation*, and not necessarily *integration* or even *inclusion*, which are contested terms due to the controversial implications that these terms pose with regard to the ways in which they may enforce social control and conformity, represents the solution to problems of social exclusion (Steinert and Pilgram 2007; Millar 2007). As Millar (2007, 3; emphasis added) states: 'The conceptualization of social exclusion, therefore, points towards empirical approaches that encompass various different elements to which people *can participate in the society in which they live*.'

Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (1999, 231) suggest five dimensions representing areas of activity in which people can participate, or alternatively, be excluded from, and can serve as the basis for indicators of social exclusion. These include consumption, savings, production (i.e., 'engaging in an economically or socially valued activity, such as paid work, education or training, retirement ... or looking after family'), and social dimensions. Additionally, they assert that 'the ability of an individual to participate in each of these dimensions is affected by a wide range of factors, operating at different levels, and interacting with each other', including the individual's own characteristics, events in the individual's life, characteristics in the area she or he lives in and the social, civil and political institutions of society, and 'participation in one dimension is itself likely to influence participation on the others' (Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud 1999, 231).

Types of social exclusion of rural-to-urban migrants

Using these paradigms, there are a number of ways that rural-to-urban migrants in China experience social exclusion, which can be categorized as institutional and community/ interpersonal. Institutional social exclusion consists of governmental regulatory legacies that have limited rural-to-urban migrants' opportunities for and access to social welfare provisions, employment, education and political participation. Community/interpersonal social exclusion refers to the rural-to-urban migrants' socio-spatial segregation and experiences of discrimination and stigmatization. While these categorizations serve as an aid in understanding the various domains in which rural-to-urban migrants face barriers to participation, it is important to note that these categories are interrelated and that exclusion in one domain may and typically does have bearing on exclusion in another domain, as is emphasized by the multi-dimensionality of the social exclusion framework.

Institutional social exclusion

Hukou-based social exclusion

One of the most widely recognized sources of the social exclusion of rural-to-urban migrants is the household registration *hukou* system (Li 2004; Liu, He, and Fulong 2008;

Huang, Guo, and Tang 2010; Li and Chui 2011; Xu, Guan, and Yao 2011; Zhan 2011; Wang and Fan 2012; Zhang, Zhu, and Nyland 2014). The Chinese household registration *hukou* system was established in the early 1950s in order to attain more uniform population distribution by enforcing restrictions on labour mobility through the assignment of an 'agricultural' or 'non-agricultural' status to Chinese households and individuals. *Hukou* status continues to be a primary determinant of the nature and extent of social welfare benefits, as well as employment opportunities, for Chinese citizens (Smart and Smart 2001; Wong, Li, and Song 2007; Ngok 2012). In the 1980s and 1990s, rural-to-urban migrants were not permitted to transfer their *hukou*, and thus could not receive the social welfare provisions accorded to urban residents, including pensions, healthcare, social services and unemployment insurance (Li and Chui 2011; Xu, Guan, and Yao 2011).

In response to the needs of the growing rural-to-urban migrants, the Chinese government in more recent years initiated reforms that permitted rural-to-urban migrants to apply for urban *hukou* and relaxed their eligibility requirements in small cities, in addition to creating employment-based, rather than resident-based, social insurance programmes (Xu, Guan, and Yao 2011; Zhan 2011). However, these reforms have been plagued with low participation rates, in large part due to inadequate funding on the part of the Chinese central government and the role of local governmental discretion in their implementation (Chan and Buckingham 2008; Davies and Ramia 2008; Guan 2008; Li and Chui 2011; Ngok 2012). Consequently, rural-to-urban migrants continue to be excluded from the 'consumption' and 'savings' dimension of participation, as delineated by Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (1999).

Employment exploitation

Another related source of social exclusion for rural-to-urban migrants is employment exploitation (Bei and Chan 1997; Wang and Zuo 1999; Wong, Li, and Song 2007; He *et al.* 2010b). As stated above, *hukou* status historically circumscribed the occupational categories for which rural-to-urban migrants were eligible. Although the Chinese government removed these restrictions and strengthened the protection of labor rights for rural-to-urban migrants (Li and Chui 2011), the disadvantaged status of rural-to-urban migrants has resulted in their vulnerability for depressed wages, unfair work terms, and delays or withholding of pay, and thus vulnerability for poverty, especially in an environment of fierce competition for employment opportunities in urban areas (Bei and Chan 1997; Li 2006; Li *et al.* 2006; Wong, Li, and Song 2007; He *et al.* 2010b). Moreover, many rural-to-urban migrants tend to occupy employment categories that are considered inferior by urban residents, such as street food/goods venders, bicycles or shoe repair, and garbage and recycling collection (Li *et al.* 2006, 5). Under Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (1999) framework, rural-to-urban migrants are thus essentially excluded from the 'production' dimension of participation.

Inadequate child education

Institutional social exclusion also affects the children of rural-to-urban migrants, in that eligibility for compulsory public education, as well as state-subsidized preschools, have traditionally been determined by *hukou* status and thus was geographically bounded (Kwong 2004; Li 2004; Yan 2005; Li *et al.* 2006; Liang and Chen 2007; Goodburn 2009; Hu and Szente 2010). Although reforms passed by the central government in 2003

required local governments to provide compulsory education to children of migrants at public schools, these have not been achieved due to circumvention by local governments (Li and Chui 2011). For example, local governments often require strict entrance requirements for migrant children, demand documentary evidence regarding statutory compliance from parents and charge unaffordable market or sponsorship education fees, thereby excluding migrant children from access to public education (Li 2004; Yan 2005; Li *et al.* 2006; Hu and Szente 2010; Li and Chui 2011).

Community and interpersonal social exclusion

Urban poverty neighbourhoods and segregation

At a community level, these institutional forms of social exclusion, particularly the restrictions imposed by the *hukou* system, contribute to the spatial segregation of rural-to-urban migrants into poverty neighbourhoods and poor housing conditions (Li 2004; Wu 2007; Liu, He, and Wu 2008; He *et al.* 2010b, 2010a; Wu, He, and Webster 2010; Zhaohui 2011; Madrazo and van Kempen 2012). Moreover, while *hukou* status excludes migrants from eligibility for social-market housing, their limited economic means also constrain their ability to buy or rent housing in the private market (Li 2004). Consequently, the housing, and thus neighbourhood, options available to rural-to-urban migrants tend to be heavily dependent on their employment situation: if provided as a condition of their employment, they may reside in company dormitories or temporary accommodations; a second possibility is to live with local urban residents, typically as domestic workers; and lastly, a large segment of migrants stay in informal settlements consisting of private unregulated housing that offer affordable rents, commonly referred to as 'urban villages' (Li 2004; He *et al.* 2010a; Zhaohui 2011; Madrazo and van Kempen 2012). Except in the case of domestic workers residing with urban resident employers, these living situations in effect physically separate rural-to-urban migrants from local urban residents into poverty-concentrated enclaves; these are characterized by housing that is densely populated, lacking in sanitary conditions, and lacking in basic safety. Alongside this spatial segregation, rural-to-urban migrants are socially excluded from urban resident social networks and involvement, inhibiting their ability to adapt to and participate in urban community life, as well as contributing to a stratified social structure (He *et al.* 2010a; Zhan 2011; Wang and Fan 2012).

Discrimination and stigmatization

Related to social segregation, a growing body of scholarship has found that rural-to-urban migrants face high levels of community- and intrapersonal-level exclusion outside of state regulations, particularly in the form of discrimination by urban residents (Li 2004; Li *et al.* 2006; Wong, Li, and Song 2007; Wang *et al.* 2010; Lin *et al.* 2011; Zhan 2011). Migrants are often negatively stereotyped as being 'poor, dirty, ignorant, and prone to violence' (Li *et al.* 2006, 7), and are subject to mockery and bullying by urban residents (Li 2004). The discriminatory actions resulting from these stereotypes and stigmatization include the prohibition of rural-to-urban migrants from various public places, such as public transportation and lavatories; harassment from law enforcement in the form of frequent permit checking, and blame for increased crime and the HIV/STD epidemic in urban areas (Li 2004, 2006; Li *et al.* 2006). Moreover, these experiences of discrimination negatively affect rural-to-urban migrants' mental health and perceived quality of life (Wang *et al.* 2010; Lin *et al.* 2011).

These fissures in community life and structure likely play a part in rural-to-urban migrants' lack of identification with their urban communities. In a survey conducted among several types of low-income communities in six Chinese cities, rural-to-urban migrants reported the least sense of neighbourhood attachment and social participation (Wu 2012). Yet, this survey and other studies have found a higher willingness to stay in their urban neighbourhoods, especially compared to earlier generations of rural-to-urban migrant workers (Hu, Xu, and Chen 2011; Liu, Li, and Breitung 2012; Wu 2012). These new patterns of migration suggest that community development and participation will be increasingly important for recent rural-to-urban migrants, though currently community-level and interpersonal forms of social exclusion (geographical/social segregation and discrimination) prohibit rural-to-urban migrants from participating in the 'social' dimension of participation in the framework proposed by Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (1999).

Community practice perspectives

From a community practice standpoint, policies and interventions may specifically target participation in this social dimension, as well as the area and neighbourhood factors influencing opportunities for the other dimensions of participation of the rural-to-urban migrants. This section highlights the ways in which social exclusion can be addressed through community practice at a general and conceptual level, followed by the ways these can be applied to the rural-to-urban migrant population in particular.

Percy-Smith (2000, 10) explicates the implications of Burchardt and colleague's typology for indicators of social exclusion at the level of neighbourhood, which includes both spatial and social aspects:

> environmental degradation, a decaying housing stock, the withdrawal of local services (e.g., shops, public transport), increasingly overstretched public services and the collapse of local support networks (related to the political aspects of social exclusion, namely low levels of participation in community and voluntary activities.

Other indicators of socially excluded communities include a sense of oppression, poverty and unemployment, high level of conflict, a sense of isolation, insecurity and high levels of crime and poor facilities (Henderson 2005, 15).

Berman and Phillips (2000, 345) emphasize the psychosocial nature of community-level social exclusion, relating it 'to the consciousness and significance of the interaction and relationship between person and his/her identified community ... social exclusion in the community-individual relationship is a result of the weakness of social bonds'. Thus, they maintain that both the domains of community-level participation and identification should be considered, with the indicators of identification being membership and self-identification, common interests, feeling of belonging and indicators of participation being organizational affiliations, cultural and leisure activities, use of free time and friends. Table 1 presents a synthesis of these indicators of social exclusion at the community-level. These spatial, social and psychosocial community-level indices of exclusion identify areas and causal mechanisms for which community-oriented strategies can enhance outcomes, particularly those related to social participation, and better reflect the relational aspect of social exclusion than predominantly individually-oriented ones.

While these indicators provide a starting point from which to identify those communities that exhibit or are at risk for the conditions of social exclusion, understanding the principles that promote participation at the community level guides the development of practice and policy interventions that can address these conditions, as well as specifies

Table 1. Community-level attributes of social exclusion.

Domain	Attributes
Community physical quality	Environmental degradation
	Decaying housing stock
	Poor facilities
Economic participation/opportunities	Poverty
	Unemployment
	Concentration/marginalization of vulnerable groups
Service availability and access	Lack/withdrawal of local services, such as shops and transport
	Overstretched public services
Community safety	High level of crime
	High level of conflict
	Insecurity
Identification with the community	Lack of feelings of membership
	Lack of common interests
	Lack of belonging, sense of isolation
	Lack of shared language and communication
	Sense of oppression/disempowerment
Participation within the community	Lack of affiliation with organizations
	Lack of shared interaction
	Lack of participation in cultural and leisure activities and events
	Minimal investment (time) in community and voluntary activities
	Collapse of social support networks

Sources: Berman and Phillips (2000), Percy-Smith (2000) and Henderson (2005).

evaluation criteria for improved outcomes. Moreover, social exclusion indicators tend to be deficit-focused; on the other hand, establishing practice principles informs the positive aims and goals towards which policies and programmes should strive.

Henderson (2005, 53–54) proposes the following principles that are both the foundation of 'good' practice for community-level interventions addressing social exclusion and provides pragmatic measures with which to evaluate evidence of impact and benefit: accessibility; personal benefit in tangible terms; personal benefit in emotional terms; partnership, solidarity and cooperation; empowerment; and creative and innovative organization. The specific approaches that may be taken to incorporate these principles will vary by time and place, as well as with the pre-existing relationships within the community and between the community and the larger society. A central issue in the implementation of many programmes and policies combating social exclusion has been failures to take into account the local context and to address previous mistrust and disillusionment (Hibbitt, Jones, and Meegan 2001; Kährik 2006; Carlisle 2010; McAlister 2010). In order to overcome these challenges, policy and practice initiatives must truly apply the principles of empowerment and cooperation from initial planning stages to avoid the perception, or reality, of local individuals and groups being only tokenistic actors that are left out of meaningful decision-making and engagement. Building arenas that promote communi-cation and interaction between local residents, policymakers and community organizations, such as local councils, are important mechanisms that can help achieve these goals.

Additionally, the realization of concrete community physical and social improve-ments, such as the development and improvement of community facilities, creation of resident organizations and other local groups and renovation of the environmental

surroundings, contribute to social interaction, community participation, reduced social conflicts, resident's satisfaction with the neighbourhood and sense of security (Hibbitt, Jones, and Meegan 2001; Kährik 2006). The key point is that the extent to which policymakers and community practitioners can genuinely incorporate these practice principles in the design and implementation of interventions will determine to a large degree how successful the interventions may be in reducing social exclusion and facilitating social and other forms of participation.

Application of community practice principles to rural-to-urban migrants

With *hukou* status remaining one of the largest sources of the social exclusion of rural-to-urban migrant workers at the institutional level, the development of a common citizenship status between rural and urban residents is crucial. Very recent policy developments in China indicate that *hukou* reform is on the horizon; however, these reforms will likely be incremental and gradual (Back 2012; Roberts 2013); moreover, the *hukou* system represents only one source of social exclusion for this population. As such, there is a need for policies and interventions that can ameliorate the current social exclusion derived from multiple sources for rural-to-urban migrants.

To date, relatively little is known regarding the application of these principles of community-based approaches to tackling social exclusion issues among rural-to-urban migrants. Even among urban residents, community participation in neighbourhood development and governance proves challenging due to strong social control by the state, residents' uneasiness with active decision-making, and an 'absence of opportunities for residents to intervene in project designation and design' (Shin 2008, 11). For urban-to-rural migrants, their inferior and essentially powerless position in the social structure of urban communities likely make active participation even more difficult.

Nevertheless, a few community-level interventions are emerging in addressing the social exclusion concerns of rural-to-urban migrants, particularly in the area of childhood education. Specifically, in the absence of access to state schools, informal private 'migrant schools', including private kindergartens, have been created by rural-to-urban migrant communities themselves to address the educational needs of migrant children (Kwong 2004; Li 2004; Yan 2005; Goodburn 2009; Li and Chui 2011). Rural-to-urban migrants 'used their own resources, and harnessed support from other sectors of civil society' to provide affordable and accessible schooling, exemplifying the community practice principles of empowerment, provision of tangible benefit, and creative and innovative organization (Kwong 2004, 1073). However, because many of these 'migrant schools' are mainly staffed by rural-to-urban migrants themselves, the overwhelming majority of whom do not meet the standards and training requirements for teaching, the education provided is considered sub-par. Moreover, these schools lack instructional resources and equipment, are frequently located in unsafe and unsanitary facilities and generally suffer from very poor conditions.

Although there has been some government action regarding 'house cleaning' of private kindergartens, these schools are largely tolerated by the national government (Kwong 2004; Hu and Szente 2010). In some cities, such as Shanghai, the local government provides training to 'migrant school' instructors to improve teaching quality, thus the partnership and cooperation principle of community-based approaches are better realized (Li 2004). In another case exemplifying successful outcomes in implementation of community practice principles, Nyland, Nyland, and Yan (2011) found that informal playgroups established in Beijing were able to increase level of immunization among

children, provide adequate preschool experience, increase parent knowledge about early childhood education and increased children's language ability.

Given the dearth of research regarding community-based approaches to tackling social exclusion among rural-to-urban migrants in China, scholarship regarding approaches adopted elsewhere can inform the development of interventions that can aid this specific population. However, rural-to-urban migrant workers differ significantly from other socially excluded groups and in other countries, particularly in the characteristic of chronic unemployment. Though they suffer from limited types of employment opportunities and subordinate position within the urban labour market, migrant workers, by definition, are active participants (Wong, Li, and Song 2007).

In addition to being denied based on the eligibility requirements, the lack of access and awareness of public and social services, health services, housing, social insurance and education are major contributors to social exclusion in this context. Although provincial governments have made initial steps to provide welfare schemes tailored to rural-to-urban migrant workers, these suffer from low participation rates due to lack of knowledge of these programmes and unwillingness to participate, which are likely to be mutually reinforcing (Guan 2008; Huang, Guo, and Tang 2010; Xu, Guan, and Yao 2011). In the European Union, 'local partnerships' have been developed as a policy response to social exclusion in general, and improving service access in particular (Percy-Smith 2000; Benington and Geddes 2001). This policy response focuses on local governments' development of 'a "community leadership" role, fostering the development of key local economic and political actors in private, public, voluntary and community sectors, [and] building "social networks"' (Percy-Smith 2000, 119).

In the case of Chinese urban communities, this could take the form of provincial and local governments partnering with and encouraging the development of migrant workers' supportive networks, such as the emerging informal mutual-aid organizations. These partnerships could improve service access through promoting information exchange and awareness of services that are available. Second, they could contribute to the cultivation of trust between the local community and migrant workers, thereby enhancing willingness to use services. Finally, 'local partnerships' could inform the development of more appropriate services where they are not available, through the establishment of formal routes of communication between multiple levels of government and rural-to-urban migrant workers, resulting in improved and more efficient use of resources.

Conclusion

The intersection between the community practice and social exclusion policies and programmes can be complicated, both generally and specific to the context of rural-to-urban migrants in China, due in large part to the ambiguity and debates surrounding the concept of social exclusion and the challenges facing community practice work. The lynchpin that connects the two is that *participation* in social, economic and political arenas is the main objective of both. The level of the community is an important locus at which policies and practices can target the problems of social exclusion for rural-to-urban migrants; moreover, the community is one of the primary and immediate areas in which their participation can be fostered. This paper offers a number of ways in which social exclusion can be conceptualized and ameliorated at the community level; however, future research can further illuminate case studies of community-level interventions and the processes of social exclusion for rural-to-urban migrants, such as the ways in which individuals move in and out of social exclusion at the community level.

References

Atkinson, A. B. 1998. "Social Exclusion, Poverty and Unemployment." In Chapter 1 in *Exclusion, Employment and Opportunity*, edited by A. B. Atkinson and J. Hills, 1–24. London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion.

Atkinson, R., N. Buck, and K. Kintrea. 2005. "Neighbourhoods and Poverty: Linking Place and Social Exclusion." In Chapter 9 in *Changing Cities: Rethinking Urban Competitiveness, Cohesion and Governance*, edited by N. Buck, I. Gordon, A. Harding, and I. Turok, 154–171. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Back, A. 2012. "China to Speed Up Reform of 'Hukou' System." *The Wall Street Journal*, December 18. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324407504578186704284896948.html

Bei, C. X., and C. L. W. Chan. 1997. "Rural Migrants into the Cities of China: From Starvation to Under-class." *New Global Development* 13 (1): 106–123. 10.1080/17486839708415644.

Benington, J., and M. Geddes. 2001. "Social Exclusion, Partnership and Local Governance: New Problems, New Policy Discourses in the European Union." In Introduction in *Local Partnerships and Social Exclusion in the European Union: New Forms of Governance?* edited by M. Geddes and J. Benington, 1–14. London: Routledge.

Berman, Y., and D. Phillips. 2000. "Indicators of Social Quality and Social Exclusion at National and Community Level." *Social Indicators Research* 50 (3): 329–350. doi:10.1023/A:1007074127144.

Boushey, H., S. Fremstad, R. Gragg, and M. Waller. 2007. "Social Inclusion for the United States." Inclusionist.org. http://www.inclusionist.org/files/socialinclusionusa.pdf

Brännström, L. 2004. "Poor Places, Poor Prospects? Counterfactual Models of Neighbourhood Effects on Social Exclusion in Stockholm, Sweden." *Urban Studies* 41 (13): 2515–2537. doi:10.1080/0042098042000294547.

Buck, N. 2001. "Identifying Neighbourhood Effects on Social Exclusion." *Urban Studies* 38 (12): 2251–2275. doi:10.1080/00420980120087153.

Burchardt, T., J. Le Grand, and D. Piachaud. 1999. "Social Exclusion in Britain 1991–1995." *Social Policy & Administration* 33 (3): 227–244. doi:10.1111/1467-9515.00148.

Carlisle, S. 2010. "Tackling Health Inequalities and Social Exclusion through Partnership and Community Engagement? A Reality Check for Policy and Practice Aspirations from a Social Inclusion Partnership in Scotland." *Critical Public Health* 20 (1): 117–127. doi:10.1080/09581590802277341.

Chan, K. W., and W. Buckingham. 2008. "Is China Abolishing the Hukou System?" *The China Quarterly* 195: 582–606. doi:10.1017/S0305741008000787.

Davies, J. S. 2005. "The Social Exclusion Debate: Strategies, Controversies, and Dilemmas." *Policy Studies* 26 (1): 3–27. doi:10.1080/01442870500041561.

Davies, G., and G. Ramia. 2008. "Governance Reform towards 'Serving Migrant Workers': The Local Implementation of Central Government Regulations." *China Quarterly London* 193: 140–149. doi:10.1017/s0305741008000088.

De Boyser, K., C. Dewilde, D. Dierckx, and J. Friedrichs. 2009. *Between the Social and the Spatial: Exploring the Multiple Dimensions of Poverty and Social Exclusion*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

European Commission. 1997. *First Report on Economics and Social Cohesion 1996*. Luxembourg: http://aei.pitt.edu/id/eprint/42144 Office for Official Publications of the European Commission.

Farrington, F. 2002. "Towards a Useful Definition: Advantages and Criticisms of 'Social Exclusion'." *GEOView: Online Undergraduate Review of Geography and Environmental Studies*, http://unijobs.holon.net/socialexclusion/farringtonsocialexclusiondefinitions.pdf

Fischer, A. M. 2011. "Reconceiving Social Exclusion." Brooks World Poverty Institute Working Paper No. 146. http://ssrn.com/abstract=1805685

Goodburn, C. 2009. "Learning from Migrant Education: A Case Study of the Schooling of Rural Migrant Children in Beijing." *International Journal of Educational Development* 29 (5): 495–504. doi:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.04.005.

Guan, X. P. 2008. "Equal Rights and Social Inclusion: Actions for Improving Welfare Access by Rural Migrant Workers in Chinese Cities." *China Journal of Social Work* 1 (2): 149–159. doi:10.1080/17525090802098088.

He, S. J., Y. T. Liu, F. L. Wu, and C. Webster. 2008. "Poverty Incidence and Concentration in Different Social Groups in Urban China, a Case Study of Nanjing." *Cities* 25 (3): 121–132. doi:10.1016/j.cities.2008.02.001.

He, S. J., Y. T. Liu, F. L. Wu, and C. Webster. 2010a. "Social Groups and Housing Differentiation in China's Urban Villages: An Institutional Interpretation." *Housing Studies* 25 (5): 671–691. doi:10.1080/02673037.2010.483585.

He, S. J., F. L. Wu, C. Webster, and Y. T. Liu. 2010b. "Poverty Concentration and Determinants in China's Urban Low-income Neighbourhoods and Social Groups." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34 (2): 328–349. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00907.x.

Henderson, P. 2005. *Including the Excluded: From Practice to Policy in European Community Development*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Hibbitt, K., P. Jones, and R. Meegan. 2001. "Tackling Social Exclusion: The Role of Social Capital in Urban Regeneration on Merseyside—From Mistrust to Trust?" *European Planning Studies* 9 (2): 141–161. doi:10.1080/09654310124536.

Hu, B. Y., and J. Szente. 2010. "Education of Young Chinese Migrant Children: Challenges and Prospects." *Early Childhood Education Journal* 37 (6): 477–482. doi:10.1007/s10643-009-0362-8.

Hu, F., Z. Y. Xu, and Y. Y. Chen. 2011. "Circular Migration, Or Permanent Stay? Evidence from China's Rural-urban Migration." *China Economic Review* 22 (1): 64–74. doi:10.1016/j.chieco.2010.09.007.

Huang, Y., F. Guo, and Y. Tang. 2010. "Hukou Status and Social Exclusion of Rural-urban Migrants in Transitional China." *Journal of Asian Public Policy* 3 (2): 172–185. doi:10.1080/17516234.2010.501160.

Kährik, A. 2006. "Tackling Social Exclusion in European Neighbourhoods: Experiences and Lessons from the NEHOM Project." *Geojournal* 67 (1): 9–25.

Kwong, J. 2004. "Educating Migrant Children: Negotiations between the State and Civil Society." *The China Quarterly* 180: 1073–1088. doi:10.1017/S030574100400075X.

Labonte, R. 2004. "Social Inclusion/Exclusion: Dancing the Dialectic." *Health Promotion International* 19 (1): 115–121. doi:10.1093/heapro/dah112.

Li, B. Q. 2004. *Urban Social Exclusion in Transitional China*, LSE STICERD Research Paper No. CASE 082. London: London School of Economics, http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper82.pdf

Li, B. Q. 2006. "Floating Population or Urban Citizens? Status, Social Provision and Circumstances of Rural-urban Migrants in China." *Social Policy and Administration* 40 (2): 174–195. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9515.2006.00483.x.

Li, Y., and E. Chui. 2011. "China's Policy on Rural-urban Migrants and Urban Social Harmony." *Asian Social Science* 7 (7): 12–22. doi:10.5539/ass.v7n7p12.

Li, X. M., B. Stanton, X. Y. Fang, and D. H. Lin. 2006. "Social Stigma and Mental Health among Rural-to-Urban Migrants in China: A Conceptual Framework and Future Research Needs." *World Health & Population* 8 (3): 14–31. doi:10.12927/whp.2006.18282.

Liang, Z., and Y. P. Chen. 2007. "The Educational Consequences of Migration for Children in China." *Social Science Research* 36 (1): 28–47. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2005.09.003.

Lin, D. H., X. M. Li, B. Wang, Y. Hong, X. Y. Fang, X. Qin, and B. Stanton. 2011. "Discrimination, Perceived Social Inequity, and Mental Health among Rural-to-Urban Migrants in China." *Community Mental Health Journal* 47 (2): 171–180. doi:10.1007/s10597-009-9278-4.

Liu, Y. T., S. J. He, and F. L. Wu. 2008. "Urban Pauperization under China's Social Exclusion: A Case Study of Nanjing." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 30 (1): 21–36. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9906.2007.00372.x.

Liu, Y., Z. G. Li, and W. Breitung. 2012. "The Social Networks of New-generation Migrants in China's Urbanized Villages: A Case Study of Guangzhou." *Habitat International* 36 (1): 192–200. doi:10.1016/j.habitatint.2011.08.008.

Madrazo, B., and R. van Kempen. 2012. "Explaining Divided Cities in China." *Geoforum* 43 (1): 158–168. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.07.004.

McAlister, R. 2010. "Putting the 'Community' into Community Planning: Assessing Community Inclusion in Northern Ireland." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34 (3): 533–547. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00967.x.

Millar, J. 2007. "Social Exclusion and Social Policy Research: Defining Exclusion." In Chapter 1 in *Multidisciplinary Handbook of Social Exclusion Research*, edited by D. Abrams, J. Christian, and D. Gordon, 1–15. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Murie, A., and S. Musterd. 2004. "Social Exclusion and Opportunity Structures in European Cities and Neighbourhoods." *Urban Studies* 41 (8): 1441–1459. doi:10.1080/0042098042000226948.

National Bureau of Statistics of China. 2013. "Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2012 National Economic and Social Development." National Bureau of Statistics of China. http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/NewsEvents/201302/t20130222_26962.html

Ngok, K. L. 2012. "服务农民工：中国公共服务的挑战 [Serving Migrant Workers: A Challenging Public Service Issue in China]." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 71 (2): 178–190. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8500.2012.00761.x.

Nyland, B., C. Nyland, and Z. Yan. 2011. "Preschool Provision and Children of Migrants in Beijing." *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 31 (1): 77–89. doi:10.1080/02188791.2011.544241.

Peace, R. 2001. "Social Exclusion: A Concept in Need of Definition?" *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, no. 16: 17–35.

Percy-Smith, J., ed. 2000. *Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: Towards Inclusion?* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Roberts, D. 2013. "China Moves on Reforming Hukou?" *Bloomberg Businessweek*, June 28. http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-06-28/china-moves-on-reforming-hukou

Room, G. 1995. *Beyond the Threshold: The Measurement and Analysis of Social Exclusion*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Saunders, P. 2008. "Social Exclusion: Challenges for Research and Implications for Policy." *Economic and Labour Relations Review* 19 (1): 73–91. 10.1177/103530460801900106.

Sen, A. K. 2000. "Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny." Social Development Papers No. 1. Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank. http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29778/social-exclusion.pdf

Shin, H. B. 2008. "Driven to Swim with the Tide? Urban Redevelopment and Community Participation in China." LSE STICERD Research Paper No. CASE 130. London: London School of Economics. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/6194/1/Driven_to_swim_with_the_tide_Urban_redevelopment_and_community_participation_in_China.pdf

Silver, H. 1994. "Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity: Three Paradigms." *International Labour Review* 133 (5–6): 531–578, http://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty/ESRCJSPS/downloads/research/uk/1%20UK-Poverty,%20Inequality%20and%20Social%20Exclusion%20(General)/Articles%20(UK%20general)/Silver-Social%20Exclusion%20and%20Social%20Solidarity.pdf

Smart, A., and J. Smart. 2001. "Local Citizenship: Welfare Reform Urban/Rural Status, and Exclusion in China." *Environment and Planning A* 33 (10): 1853–1869. doi:10.1068/a3454.

Social Exclusion Unit. 2001. *Preventing Social Exclusion*. London: Cabinet Office, http://www.bristol.ac.uk/poverty/downloads/keyofficialdocuments/Preventing%20Social%20Exclusion.pdf

Steinert, H., and A. Pilgram. 2007. *Welfare Policy from Below: Struggles against Social Exclusion in Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Tsakloglou, P., and F. Papadopoulos. 2002. "Aggregate Level and Determining Factors of Social Exclusion in Twelve European Countries." *Journal of European Social Policy* 12 (3): 211–225. doi:10.1177/0952872002012003394.

Wang, W. W., and C. C. Fan. 2012. "Migrant Workers' Integration in Urban China: Experiences in Employment, Social Adaptation, and Self-identity." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 53 (6): 731–749. doi:10.2747/1539-7216.53.6.731.

Wang, B., X. M. Li, B. Stanton, and X. Y. Fang. 2010. "The Influence of Social Stigma and Discriminatory Experience on Psychological Distress and Quality of Life among Rural-to-Urban Migrants in China." *Social Science & Medicine* 71 (1): 84–92. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.03.021.

Wang, F., and X. J. Zuo. 1999. "Inside China's Cities: Institutional Barriers and Opportunities for Urban Migrants." *American Economic Review* 89 (2): 276–280, http://www.jstor.org/stable/11712010.1257/aer.89.2.276.

Wong, D. F. K., C. Y. Li, and H. X. Song. 2007. "Rural Migrant Workers in Urban China: Living a Marginalised Life." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 16 (1): 32–40. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2397.2007.00475.x.

Wu, F. L. 2007. "The Poverty of Transition: From Industrial District to Poor Neighbourhood in the City of Nanjing, China." *Urban Studies* 44 (13): 2673–2694. doi:10.1080/00420980701558376.

Wu, F. L. 2012. "Neighborhood Attachment, Social Participation, and Willingness to Stay in China's Low-income Communities." *Urban Affairs Review* 48 (4): 547–570. doi:10.1177/1078087411436104.

Wu, F. L., S. J. He, and C. Webster. 2010. "Path Dependency and the Neighbourhood Effect: Urban Poverty in Impoverished Neighbourhoods in Chinese Cities." *Environment and Planning A* 42 (1): 134–152. doi:10.1068/a4264.

Xu, Q. W., X. P. Guan, and F. F. Yao. 2011. "Welfare Program Participation among Rural-to-Urban Migrant Workers in China." *International Journal of Social Welfare* 20 (1): 10–21. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2397.2009.00713.x.

Yan, F. 2005. "Education Problems with Urban Migratory Children in China." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 32 (3): 3–10.

Zhan, S. H. 2011. "What Determines Migrant Workers' Life Chances in Contemporary China? Hukou, Social Exclusion, and the Market." *Modern China* 37 (3): 243–285. doi:10.1177/0097700410379482.

Zhang, M. Q., C. J. H. Zhu, and C. Nyland. 2014. "The Institution of Hukou-based Social Exclusion: A Unique Institution Reshaping the Characteristics of Contemporary Urban China." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38 (4): 1437–1457. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01185.x.

Zhaohui, L.. 2011. "An Empirical Analysis of the Community Life of New Urban Migrants." *Chinese Sociology & Anthropology* 43 (3): 5–37. doi:10.2753/CSA0009-4625430301.