

Sussex China Seminar Series

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China's socio-economic transition: the case of inter-provincial migration

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Abstract

This study of inter-provincial migration in China is based upon the 2000 full Census, 2005 1% sample Census and 2010 full Census datasets. Using 'migration velocities' for inter-provincial flows and location quotients for the provincial in-migrants' occupations and education levels, I test four hypotheses: (i) that distance-decay functions are decreasing, meaning that the Chinese space-economy is becoming more integrated as the market economy develops; (ii) that the migration patterns and trends will reflect the strong spatial clustering of 'neo/peripheral Fordist' capital accumulation in the Shanghai-Guangdong coastal axis, and that this migration will reflect the occupational and educational characteristics typical of such development; (iii) that there will be evidence from the trends in, and compositions of, the inter-provincial flows of the emergence of a 'new spatial division of labour' in China (replacing regional sectoral specialisation); this will imply, amongst other things, the migration of professional, technical and managerial staff to and from Beijing and Shanghai; and (iv) that the trends in migration flows will reflect the weakening control over migration exercised by the central state (manifested, for example, by weaker in-flows to, and stronger out-flows from, those provinces which have received priority status for development in the fairly recent past, such as Xinjiang and northeast China).

Biography

Following undergraduate and postgraduate study at LSE, Tony Fielding joined the University of Sussex in 1964 and has taught there (apart from short periods teaching in the US and Japan) ever since. He is particularly interested in the links between geographical mobility and social mobility, and in migration patterns and processes in East Asia. In early 2015 World Scientific will publish his book entitled 'Migration: The Economic Drivers of Contemporary Labour Mobility in East Asia'

