

Full Report

Background

Since the late 1990s Chinese cities have been swamped with low skilled rural migrants living in marginal conditions. Their numbers are added to by the millions of laid-off workers resulting from large-scale industrial restructuring and enterprise reforms. The resulting poverty problem is two fold. First, migrants moving into the cities are disenfranchised from rights bound up in rural collective land ownership. Second, laid-off workers are disenfranchised from rights conferred by former state enterprises. In both cases, there is a loss of capability to live at some minimally acceptable level (housing, education and other services being formerly tied into employment and land rights). The new urban poor in China are confronted with systematic institutional constraints, discriminative policies and many administrative as well as economic and social assimilation difficulties. Our research investigates the institutional determinants of urban poverty, looking at the urban growth-poverty paradox from the perspectives of institutional change and the property rights and entitlement reallocations affected by those changes. While there is an extensive body of literature on land rights and security of tenure among the urban poor, there is a lack of systematic research into the formal urban institutions that mediate the relationship between rapid urbanization and poverty.

The publication of Asian Development Bank report (2004) marked the beginning of systematic research on urban poverty in Chinese cities after the country had successfully reduced rural poverty. There have been many publications on social inequalities in China. Our research, however, has two distinctive features: first we adopt the perspective of property rights changes; and second we focus on low-income neighbourhoods and the livelihood of the poor in these neighbourhoods. Therefore, our approach is a microscopic one, complementing national surveys which often give an overall picture of poverty without considering spatial concentration, neighbourhood conditions and variations among the poor. Our research adopts a similar spatial scale to the studies of ghettos and working-class estates in advanced market economies (e.g. Wacquant, 2007) and considers the role of state and market changes as well as neighbourhood changes and their implications for the urban poor.

Our study systematically surveyed 25 poor neighbourhoods in six Chinese cities (Xi'an, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Wuhan, Harbin, and Kunming) and creates a profile of poverty groups and their spatial patterns. The results provide insights on the institutional mechanism of poverty generation in transitional China.

Objectives

The objectives of the research remained unchanged during the course of the project, and each was fully and appropriately addressed. The original research objectives can be summarized into three:

1) To examine the mechanism of poverty generation in China's urban development

This objective has been achieved through case studies of landless farmers and rural migrants in the city. We examined systematically the institution of land requisition and the dynamics of property right redistribution during land requisition. In particular, we investigated the compensation system of land acquisition and the position of farmers in the process. Because this kind of study requires in-depth understanding of development processes, a case study approach has been the most appropriate one.

2) To examine the spatial partitioning of the urban poor and poverty concentration

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This objective has been achieved through a survey. The neighbourhoods are drawn from the poorest neighbourhoods in their respective cities. Through indicators measuring concentration, we calculated a series of indicators across different social groups and different poor neighbourhoods to see how particular groups might be concentrated in particular neighbourhoods. We relate the findings of concentration with the development history (especially property rights change in housing tenure and labour) of individual neighbourhoods.

3) To identify coping strategies of urban poor and review policies to address emerging deprivation

This objective has been achieved through a review of urban policies (especially land development policies, minimum living support policies, migration policies, and policies towards redevelopment of low-income neighbourhoods) to understand the role of state in poor neighbourhood changes and tactics of the poor in developing their livelihoods. We develop a theoretical understanding of poverty in relation to rights deprivation and therefore suggest policy implications to address the issue of deprivation.

Methods

Our research methods combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. Through discussion with local officials such as those who work in the local Civil Affairs Bureau and academics in each city and gathering information about a) the distribution of migrants, b) the distribution of minimum income support recipients, we manage to identify an initial list of neighbourhoods. We dedicated one week in each city to compare and verify these neighbourhoods to make sure that they are respectively the most deprived poor neighbourhoods in the cities. In total we have identified 25 neighbourhoods in six cities in the fieldwork. While a statistical approach to selecting neighbourhoods might be more desirable, such census-tract information is not publically available in China. The population for our analysis is the residents in these poorest of neighbourhoods. No inference has been made in respect of the overall poverty rates of the cities.

In this research we do not attempt to compare differences between these six cities, but make comparisons between different types of low-income neighbourhoods and social groups located in these neighbourhoods. Moreover, we have not sought to generalize the types of poor neighbourhood from a citywide survey because we have already conducted conceptual work in previous research to categorize poor neighbourhoods and conducted extensive empirical fieldwork in the past ten years to verify this categorization. Rather, the purpose of the survey is to examine the detailed profile, dynamics and variations of poverty in these neighbourhoods.

The result is a cross-regional collection, i.e. a purposive sample of the poorest neighbourhoods with various population compositions such as workers' villages, old urban neighbourhoods, and urban villages in both central and peripheral locations.

A questionnaire survey in each neighbourhood was conducted through face to face interviews, each taking about 40 minutes. We selected households through a fixed interval approach based on address. This approach allowed us to collect representative information from poor and non-poor households, which make possible an analysis of poverty incidences in different types of neighbourhoods. In total we collected 1809 completed and valid questionnaires.

For qualitative studies, we conducted 38 interviews with poor households and officials in these neighbourhoods. These interviews are discussed and reviewed among the research team so as to interpret their individual cases within a broader understanding of poverty experience. That discussion also formed a process of validation of these cases.

The overall workload of administering the survey in six cities was heavier than we had anticipated. The complexity of managing the project lay in multiple partnerships in different cities. Fortunately, our partners were cooperative and worked with us well. Our research associate spent more time than planned in the field to coordinate data collection.

Results

Our major results so far are outlined below.

Poverty concentration and determinants

Although our survey is drawn from selected poor neighbourhoods and therefore it does not represent the nationwide situation or city averages, the study shows a consistent high poverty rate at an incidence of 22.4% in these neighbourhoods. This is much higher than the official national statistics would suggest. This signifies that despite a general decrease of absolute urban poverty since the late 1990s (e.g. World Bank 2007), the spatial and social concentration of poverty has become an issue. We argue that it is not the average but rather the concentration of pockets of poverty that matters. The study fills a gap in existing poverty studies in contemporary China by revealing, in considerable detail, the morphology of poverty – its concentration and determinants in different types of poor neighbourhoods and in the different social groups who live in those neighbourhoods.

In terms of neighbourhood concentration, we recognize three types of low-income neighbourhood: dilapidated inner city neighbourhoods, declining workers' villages, and urban villages. Occupying these are four categories of poor groups: working urban residents, laid-off/unemployed urban residents, retired urban residents, and rural migrants. We first measured poverty concentration across different types of neighbourhood and different groups. The highest poverty concentration is found in dilapidated inner city neighbourhoods and the laid-off/unemployed group which endure multiple disadvantages. Meanwhile, mismatches between actual hardships, sense of deprivation, and distribution of social welfare provision are described.

Second, we examine poverty determinants in different neighbourhoods and groups. Variation in institutional protection and market remuneration are becoming of equal importance in predicting poverty generation, and these are associated with poverty generation in different ways. As China's urban economy is increasingly shaped by markets, the mechanisms of market remuneration are becoming a more important determinant of poverty patterns, especially for people who are eliminated or excluded from state institutions, notably, laid-off workers and rural migrants. This study shows that laid-off / unemployed workers rather than rural migrants are the poorest in terms of cash earnings. This is because under the redundancy policy, laid-off workers not only become jobless but are also 'state-less'. The amount of laid-off subsidies and minimum living support is limited. In contrast, despite their disadvantaged status, rural migrants are more active in selling their labour, even for a lower price than their urban counterparts would accept, and are thus better able to survive urban poverty. They are willing to take low profile jobs such as low-level manual work and social service jobs, which temporarily but effectively help them go through hardships and avoid a poverty trap.

A general finding is that China's urban poverty shares some common characteristics with the new urban poverty in more developed western economies. The withdrawal of social welfare provision and exclusion from regular employment are two important factors leading to urban poverty. An inferior entitlement position from urban institutions, for example *bukou* status, and

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an inferior position in the market remuneration system leads to the high incidence of urban poverty in neighbourhoods populated by vulnerable groups.

The extent of the high poverty rates in the selected neighbourhoods is significant. It suggests the need for a pinpointed approach rather than a broad-brush method of poverty alleviation. This has an important implication for policy design. We suggest future research should investigate feasible designs for area-based policies.

Property rights changes and entitlement failure

Through case studies of landless farmers we try to establish a relationship between property rights redistribution, entitlement failure and the impoverishment. We examine how farmers' *de facto* rights to collective land, including farmland and housing plots (*zhaijidi*), are forcefully redistributed to the state and thereafter to private developers during the process of urban expansion. Deprived of secured livelihood, some landless farmers become trapped in poverty. Others find that the property rights restructuring in urbanised villages gives them an opportunity to earn rental income. But the opportunities are not equally distributed and the processes are, in general, stacked against the interest of villagers. We find farmers are caught up in China's relentless urban expansion program. Our research shows farmers' entitlement sets and vulnerability to poverty have changed as a result of changes in land rights.

Specifically, we find the dynamics of impoverishment faced by landless farmers is closely related to the institution of land requisition and the poorly defined property rights over collective land. Since land requisition is not treated as a market transaction but rather controlled by the local state, unjust and illegal transactions become unavoidable and endemic. Our studies suggest that clearly defined property rights for individual farmer households, not just for the village collectives, would help improve the prospects of landless farmers. Were peasants to have clearer property rights over their shared village land, they could make much better deals with the city government and developers over land transaction. The reassignment of property rights would mean that urban projects would be more costly and urban development would proceed more slowly. But it would proceed with farmers having better land entitlement mappings; able to make better choices about their own future; and having a clearer and longer term stake in the urban economy.

This finding is important in the context that China recent dramatic change in land law (in 2008) that redefines the rights of farmers to allow them to sell contracted land to others through the land market. A follow-on project is proposed to assess the impact of such change on farmers' rights and wellbeing.

The concentration effect in poor neighbourhoods

In order to assess the effect of poverty concentration on poverty generation, this study estimates the contribution of resident/household factors, neighbourhood factors and their interaction, to the likelihood of falling into poverty. We explain the concentration of poverty with reference to institution-derived inequalities in China.

We find that even when the major socio-economic attributes are controlled for, the neighbourhood poverty rate still presents a significant effect on the households' probability of living in poverty. That is, holding age, year of schooling, party membership, household size, number of dependent children, the number of unemployed in the family the same, living in poverty neighbourhoods enhances the chance of being poor. For every 1% increase in the neighbourhood poverty rate, the chance of living in poverty increases by 4.4% for all

households. This conclusion is, however, valid only for the residents in poor neighbourhoods. Further research might be directed to see whether such an effect holds across a wider spectrum of poor and non-poor neighbourhoods.

Our research reveals that the intersection of two dimensions of vulnerability – social vulnerability of laid-off and unemployed households and geographic vulnerability of old urban neighbourhoods – produces the worst deprivation in Chinese cities. For the social group in which the head of household is laid-off or unemployed, a poverty rate of 44.2% was found. But living in old urban neighbourhoods pushes the poverty rate of this social group up to 50.6%.

While the existence of a neighbourhood effect is a statistically valid observation, the underlying mechanism has widely been regarded as a mystery; for example, the ‘culture of poverty’ thesis (Lewis, 1969) has been seriously criticised (e.g. Wacquant, 2007). Our study highlights the institutional foundation of neighbourhood effects in China’s urban transition. That is, the neighbourhood effect is built upon the residential geography inherited from the socialist era. Since households in old urban neighbourhoods were more likely to be outside the state enterprise system, they did not benefit from the housing corporatisation and then privatisation enjoyed by employees of core enterprises. The administrative system of rewards that characterised the pre-reform era benefited worker villages (where housing was built and allocated by relatively well-off work units) but pre-1949 neighbourhoods suffering chronic underinvestment. After reform, residents of the former neighbourhoods benefited from a redistribution of tenure rights while those in the latter remained renters in the cities’ residualised slums.

The role of the state in poverty neighbourhoods

Although this process involves residualisation, poverty in our surveyed neighbourhoods is not generally the same as the ghettos of isolated urban outcasts in advanced market systems (Wacquant, 2007). In China, the poor are not ‘isolated’ from mainstream production. In fact, the working poor of migrant workers are engaged in the production of commodities for the global economy or serving the mainstream economy. Or in other words, they are within the capital circuit of commodity production. Poverty in urban China is associated as much with the dominance of capital over the labour; specifically, the suppression of labour cost to whatever possible levels. This results from the intensely competitive mass movement of urban migrants coming from very low productivity agriculture. The low-wage regime is maintained by the local state, which operates under economic, political and fiscal devolution, as aggressive entrepreneurial cities. To compete for foreign investment, local states maintain a stable social order and invest heavily in productive infrastructure such as roads and airport, while being reluctant to roll-out welfare services. There are divisions between different segments of the labour force but these divisions are played out through their different relations with state institutions. For example, there are divisions between ‘those who have been within the state system’ (such as cadres and state employees) and ‘those who are outsiders’ (such as migrant workers).

We find the role of the state in poor neighbourhoods is significant. In the case of Chinese cities, if viewed from the abandonment of the totalitarian type of welfare provision characterized by the so-called ‘from cradle to grave’ approach, there has been a massive retrenchment of the local state. On the other hand, the provision towards the poor has been expanded through the establishment of so-called minimum living standard support which is a means-tested program. The program has been expanded significantly to cover those who are under the poverty line (Solinger, 2002). The state is directly responsible for creating a class of poor by converting the

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all-inclusive entitlements allocated via work units, into a singular minimum entitlement for qualified formally registered urban residents, while pushing workers into the labour market. The underlying rationale is one of using growth to solve social problems. For millions of migrant workers, they are not entitled to welfare provision and therefore are vulnerable to the uncertainties of markets.

We have analysed this shift from state to market allocated property rights (or entitlements) through qualitative analysis based on cases studies and formal statistical models using the survey data. In both cases we find, not surprisingly, that there are winners and losers within the poorest neighbourhoods.

Activities

Two workshops were organized during the project. The first one was held in Guangzhou on 24th - 25th March 2007. This was an expert meeting with Chinese experts and partners from Qinghua University, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, People's University, Nankai University, Yunnan University, Haerbin Normal University, Zhongshan University, and Nanjing University, in addition to researchers from Cardiff University (Professors Fulong Wu, Chris Webster, Drs Shenjing He and Yuting Liu). The workshop consisted of two parts. The first began with an introductory talks and presentations by experts in the field. The discussion expanded the perspective of poverty analysis and deepened the understanding of key issues such as rural migrants, landless farmers, and marginal population. The second part was a project partners' meeting dedicated to field survey strategies and methods.

The second workshop, entitled 'Workshop on Comparative Urban Marginalization and Poverty Studies', was held at Cardiff University in 12–13th June 2008. The workshop aimed to disseminate our project to a wider audience of poverty studies and bring in comparative perspectives. These include studies in the context of advanced market systems, developing countries and transitional economies. We focused on the perspective of property rights but also related the study to other relevant perspectives such as neoliberalization. In addition to researchers in the UK, invited speakers came from Canada, the Czech Republic, South Africa, China, USA, and Netherlands. An edited book from the workshop is currently being prepared (proposal has been submitted to Routledge). More than this, we have participated in various conferences and given invited talks and seminars (see the output section) to disseminate our research findings.

Impacts

In terms of academic impact, our research has drawn focused attention to and triggered a refined and detailed debate about China's poor neighbourhoods and poverty groups. For example, Fulong Wu has been invited to contribute a paper in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* to offer China's perspective on urban poverty and to debate an influential study *Urban Outcast* (Wacquant, 2007) that focuses on American ghettos and French poor working class neighbourhoods. Chris Webster gave invited talks drawing on the project at MIT, Cambridge University and Manchester University and gave a keynote speeches in Xiamen, China and Reston Virginia. Our research has also had inter-disciplinary impact on sociological poverty studies and the economic study of poverty line definition. The key impact is the emphasis on space and neighbourhood level changes in the process of poverty generation. This enriches the understanding of poverty which is usually defined through national statistics.

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In terms of user impacts, the project has engaged with potential users through the workshop organized in Guangzhou (2007) and various discussions during the fieldwork with municipal and local officials. The project has helped to identify key urban themes in the UK-China Sustainable Development Dialogue, initiated by the UK Government DEFRA. Two key topics were identified in this dialogue, including the regeneration of old and industrial areas and the provision of low-income housing. They are consistent with the working priority of the Ministry of Construction in the host country and accepted by the Dialogue. Findings have also been disseminated to Chinese senior planners, for example, in *International Conference on China's Urban Transition and City Planning* held in Cardiff in 2007. Fulong Wu and Chris Webster were also invited by Guangzhou City Planning Association to give public lectures respectively on urban regeneration and property right changes to an audience of 200+ professionals. We also used fieldwork opportunities to engage in small focus groups which have been reported on Chinese websites.

Outputs

Books

Fulong Wu and Chris Webster (editors) *Marginalization in Urban China: Multiple Perspectives* (proposal to Routledge)

Fulong Wu, Chris Webster, Shenjing He and Yuting Liu (2009) *China's Urban Poverty*. Edward Elgar (forthcoming)

Journal papers

Fulong Wu, Shenjing He, and Chris Webster. Deprivation in poor neighbourhoods in Chinese cities (manuscript submitted and is now under revision).

Fulong Wu. 2009. "The state and marginality: reflection on *Urban Outcasts* from China's urban transition". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (forthcoming)

Yuting Liu, Fulong Wu and Shenjing He. 2009. "The making of the new urban poor in transitional china: market versus institutionally based exclusion". *Urban Geography* (in press)

Shenjing He, Fulong Wu, Chris Webster and Yuting Liu. 2009. "Poverty concentration and determinants in china's urban low-income neighbourhoods and social groups". *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (forthcoming)

Shenjing He and Fulong Wu. 2009. "China's emerging neo-liberal urbanism, urban redevelopment as a forefront". *Antipode* (in press).

Shenjing He, Yuting Liu, Chris Webster, Fulong Wu. 2009. "Property rights redistribution, entitlement failure and the impoverishment of landless farmers in China". *Urban Studies* (in press)

Shenjing He, Yuting Liu, Fulong Wu, and Chris Webster. 2008. "Poverty incidence and concentration in different social groups in urban China, a case study of Nanjing". *Cities* 25(3): 121-132.

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Shenjing He, Chris Webster, Fulong Wu, Yuting Liu. 2008. "Profiling the poor in a Chinese city: a case study of Nanjing". *Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy* 1(1): 193-214.

Zhigang Li and Fulong Wu. 2008. "Tenure-based residential segregation in post-reform Chinese cities: a case study of Shanghai". *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33(3): 404-419.

Liu, Yuting, He, Shenjing and Wu, Fulong. 2008. "Urban pauperization under China's social exclusion: A case study of Nanjing". *Journal of Urban Affairs* 30 (1): 21-36.

Fulong Wu. 2008. "China's great transformation: neoliberalization as establishing a market society". *Geoforum* 39(3): 1093-1096.

Fulong Wu. 2007. "Poverty of transition: from the industrial district to poverty neighbourhood in the city of Nanjing, China". *Urban Studies* 44(13): 2673-2694.

Fulong Wu and Ningying Huang. 2007. "New urban poverty in China: Economic restructuring and transformation of welfare provision". *Asian Pacific Review* 48(2): 168-185.

Conference presentations and invited talks

Shenjing He, "Property rights redistribution and the impoverishment of landless peasants" paper presented at *Workshop on Comparative Urban Marginalization and Poverty Studies*, 12th-13th June 2008, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

Yuting Liu, "Urban villages in China's urbanisation: unregulated asset in transitional neighbourhoods", paper presented at *Workshop on Comparative Urban Marginalization and Poverty Studies*, 12th -13th June 2008, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

Chris Webster, "Property rights and entitlement mappings – a theoretical synthesis with evidence from a study of Chinese urban poverty". *Invited lecture at Symposium on Property Rights in Transition: variations in the equitable distribution of land during economic reform*, held Wednesday, May 21, 2008, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts (lecture sponsored by MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning)

Chris Webster, "Poverty, wealth, planning and property rights in modern China". *Invited guest lecture at Manchester University School of Environment and Development*, 6th May 2008. (lecture sponsored by SED)

Fulong Wu, "Poverty neighbourhoods and deprivation in Chinese cities", *Annual Meeting of Association of American Geographers* 2008, Boston, Massachusetts, 15th – 19th April 2008 (paper co-authored with Shenjing He, Chris Webster)

Fulong Wu, "China's urban poverty", seminar at Brown University, Providence, USA, 15th April 2008 (invited speaker).

Shenjing He, "Property rights redistribution and the impoverishment of landless peasants", paper presented at *International Symposium on Planning, Law and Property Rights II*, 13th -15th February 2008, Warsaw, Poland

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Fulong Wu, "Urban poverty neighbourhoods". Department of Geography, the University of Hong Kong, 1st Feb 2008 (seminar).

Fulong Wu, "Urban poverty in China: poverty neighbourhoods and geography of deprivation". Public lecture at the University of Nottingham, 29th Jan 2008 (public lecture, invited speaker)

Shenjing He "Poverty concentration and determinants in China's poor urban neighbourhoods and social groups", paper presented at *Perspectives on Development V: A University of Wales Colloquium 'Global and Local Agendas'*, 23rd – 25th January, 2008, Gregynog Hall, Newtown, Powys, Wales, UK

Fulong Wu, "Chinese neoliberalisation", seminar at Department of Geography, National Taiwan University, Taipei, 19th Dec 2007 (Invited seminar speaker)

Fulong Wu, "Social research methods to measuring urban poverty in China", Department of Social Policy, National Chenchi University, Taipei, 19th Dec 2007 (invited speaker of public lecture)

Shenjing He, "Poverty concentration and determinants in China's poor urban neighbourhoods and social groups", paper presented at *International Conference on China's Urban Land and Housing in the 21st Century*, 13th -15th December 2007, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong.

Fulong Wu, "China's neoliberalization as great transformation". *International Conference on China's Urban Land and Housing in the 21st Century*, 13th –15th Dec 2007, Hong Kong.

Chris Webster, "Property right changes and urban planning". *Public Lecture*, invited by Guangzhou City Planning Association, for an audience of 200+ professionals, Guangzhou, 25th Oct 2007.

Fulong Wu, "Culture-led Urban Regeneration: Lessons". *Public Lecture*, invited by Guangzhou City Planning Association, for an audience of 200+ professionals, Guangzhou, 25th Oct 2007.

Chris Webster (and Li Zhigang), "Neighbourhood governance through joint-stock companies", invited talk given at the *Deprivatisation Conference* held at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, 27-28 Sept 2007

Shenjing He, "Property rights redistribution and the impoverishment of landless peasants, A tale of two villages", paper presented at *International Conference on China's Urban Transition and City Planning*, 28th -30th June 2007, Cardiff, UK.

Fulong Wu, "Property rights, citizenship and the making of the urban poor". *2007 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers*, 17th – 21st April 2007, San Francisco, CA.

Fulong Wu, "Market transition and the transformation of poverty neighbourhood in urban China". *Beijing Forum*, Beijing, 27th – 29th Oct 2006 (invited speaker).

Capacity Building

This project has been successful in building capacity. This includes the development of data infrastructure, training of students in the host country to conduct social survey and develop the

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database, training of UK masters students in data analysis and report writing, the development of research capacity in the host country, and research continuation and collaborations. Specifically:

- a) Data infrastructure: deposited in UK data archive, this survey database will be used by urban China researchers and research on poverty and social change in the future.
- b) Student training: students from partner institutions were involved in the survey and trained in poverty survey methods. Masters students at one partner institution (Harbin Normal University) did their theses using the database and a young researcher there is developing research that develops aspects of our project. A group of Masters students at Cardiff University conducted a live project and data analysis and prepared a report of findings.
- c) Research capacity in the host country: researchers involved in this project at our partner institutions have subsequently received three China's National Science Foundation (NSF) projects. Dr. Yuan Yuan, at Sun Yat-sen University, received a NSF project on 'multiple deprivation in China' and also a China Scholarship Council postdoctoral fund to continue to work in social deprivation in Cardiff University. Dr Shenjing He presented her research in various conferences, including at a major network meeting in Hong Kong in Dec. 2007 and in Warsaw in 2008. She has now received a tenured position of associate professor at the Sun Yat-sen University and received an NSF grant on gentrification and inner city neighbourhood changes. Dr Yuting Liu who was involved in our fieldwork and database development returned to Guangzhou in Sept 2007 as Associate Professor at South China Science and Technology University, and received a NSF grant on China's urban poverty. He is co-authoring in the book of 'Urban Poverty in China' with the project investigators. The involvement in this project and attendance to several workshops organised under this project enabled Dr. Zhigang Li, a young academic at a partner institution, to publish a paper in a highly ranked journal *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers* (2008). He continues to work on residential differentiation and villages institutions with project investigators.

In these ways, the project has helped develop capacity for poverty alleviation in the host country. Through the project, we have developed a group of promising researchers in the host country to continue the study of urban marginalization and poverty.

Future Research Priorities

The following future research priorities are identified from this research project:

Low-income housing provision: the change in housing tenure plays a critical role in poverty generation and vulnerability position. There is an urgent need to study the method of housing provision in poor neighbourhoods; in particular the particular property rights and tenure structures affecting the feasibility of alternative models of low cost housing supply.

Property rights adjustment: Recently the Chinese government announced a new policy to allow farmers to sell their contracted land. This change will have immense implications for both rural and urban development. There is an urgent need to study this policy both as an opportunity and threat to poor population and poverty alleviation.

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