



Department of Geography --- Public Seminar Series

“Migrant housing needs and urban villages in China: A social capital perspective”

Speaker:

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Date: 26th April, 2018 (Thursday)

Time: 2:30 – 4:00 pm

Venue:

Room AAB1217, Resource Centre, Department of Geography,
Academic and Administration Building (AAB), Baptist University Road Campus
Hong Kong Baptist University

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Rural to urban migrants are the dominant component of population growth in China's coastal cities and the source of an affordable housing challenge. China's unique household registration system has concentrated most migrants in urban villages --a social phenomenon that has come to be China's greatest urban social planning challenge. In this paper we analyze urban village features and migrants' housing needs from a social capital perspective. A case study of Shenzhen shows how social capital is generated and migrants become attached to particular urban villages. We found that classical cost theory cannot fully explain the significance of urban villages to migrants and that social capital plays an important role in their housing choices. Social networks, social norms, trust among neighbors, and a sense of belonging are of key importance to migrants' establishment in urban village communities. This study reveals a new aspect of urban villages that will be useful to planners by paying greater heed to social capital in consideration of urban village demolition and migrant housing provision. A more inclusive and human-oriented community model for migrants is identified in lieu of the homogeneous, isolated and gated model that prevails in China today.

Yu ZHANG was born and raised in Shandong Province and completed her Bachelor's degree in Land Resource Management at Zhejiang University. She is currently a second-year graduate student in the School of Urban Planning and Design, Peking University. Her research focuses on housing and migration related to urbanization and she is currently working on a social capital approach to understanding the growth of urban villages in China. She has served as a research assistant in two consulting projects: Integrative Development of Shenzhen and the Shenzhen-Shanwei Special Cooperative Zone (SSSCZ) and the Reform of Reserved Land in SSSCZ.

Ian MacLACHLAN is a Visiting Professor of Geography at Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School with broad interests in economic and urban geography and planning history. A Montreal native with a PhD from the University of Toronto, his international experience includes Japan, Mexico, Scotland and Western Australia. He became Professor Emeritus at the University of Lethbridge at year-end 2015 and now divides his time between China and Canada.