

Which Hierarchy Matters? Subjective Social Status, Status Incongruence and Well-being among High-skilled Mainland Migrants in Hong Kong

Abstract

Migrants often maintain dual frames of reference, in both the migratory destination and origin, but previous research typically focused on their social status in the destination. We emphasize the significance of migrants' frame of reference in the origin, especially when contemporary migration becomes more circulatory. Previous research also paid less attention to high-skilled migrants, while high-skilled migrants are particularly relevant to the idea of multilocality. In this lecture, Professor Jin focuses on high-skilled Mainland migrants in Hong Kong and ask: how do the migrants' statuses in the Mainland and Hong Kong matter to their well-being? Do the discrepancies between the two statuses matter? The diagonal reference model was applied and found that the majority of the high-skilled migrants reported perceiving higher status in the Mainland than in Hong Kong. Their status in the Mainland is more consequential to their well-being than that in Hong Kong, mainly because they tend to put more emphasis on the status hierarchy in which they occupy loftier positions. Evidence was also found for the detrimental effects of status inconsistency as migrants who perceived different statuses in the Mainland and in Hong Kong tended to report worse well-being outcomes than those who perceived similar statuses in both places.