

Mapping China's Global Migration Networks: A Structural Perspective

Xingyun Wu and **Eric Fong**

Over recent decades, the role of China in the world's migration system has changed a lot. This paper looks at how China fits into the bigger picture of global migration, filling the gap between studies that focus on specific migration routes or countries and broader analyses of the entire system. Using bilateral migration-flow data and structural network analysis, we trace the evolution of China's emigration patterns. We find that China remains a major sending economy with selective destination ties. While China continues to send large volume of migrants to major receiving economies, its role as a destination remains comparatively limited. China's migration destinations became increasingly diversified through 2019 but have concentrated sharply since the COVID-19 pandemic. While the leading destinations for migrants from China Mainland continue to be concentrated in East Asia and Western economies, several Gulf and Southeast Asian economies have emerged as increasingly important destinations to China over the past two decades. The paper further identified the economic, political, socioeconomic, and cultural factors associated with these changing patterns.