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LINGNAN UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Residential Segregation in Chinese Cities

23 November 2026 (Mon)
11:00–12:30

WYL314, 3/F, Dorothy Y. L. Wong Building, Lingnan University



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BIOGRAPHY

Prof. Yizhen GU is an Associate Professor of Economics at Peking University HSBC Business School. His research interests include urban economics, transportation economics, and the Chinese economy.

ABSTRACT

The economic transition of China provides an ideal setting to study how housing market and agglomeration force contributed to residential segregation in a short time span. Leveraging granular smartphone data from a leading internet company, this paper presents the first detailed examination of residential segregation in Chinese cities. Our analysis reveals substantial variation in segregation levels across Chinese cities, with overall residential segregation less severe than in the developed countries. We show the increase in segregation in the past two decades using the home mortgage data from one large city. We find that newly added residential building volume, agglomeration level of firms, population size, grid-like road network, and latitude explain almost half of inter-city variation in residential segregation. Estimating a spatial equilibrium model of residential sorting using the mortgage data shows that heterogeneous housing demand, housing supply constraints, and skill-biased agglomeration jointly contribute to the rise in within-city segregation.

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