March 2000 Occasional Paper No. 107

The Occupational Attainments of the Five Major Dialect Groups in Hong Kong

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HK$30.00
ISBN 962-441-107-7

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Acknowledgements

I express my thanks to my supervisor, Professor Anthony Heath, and my college supervisor, Professor Duncan Gallie, for reading the first draft of this paper. Both of them gave me very useful and insightful comments. My thanks also go to Professors S. Chiu and K.F. Ting at the Department of Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and Dr T.W. Chan for allowing me to use their data set. Due acknowledgement is also given to John Swire and Sons Ltd. If not for their financial support, this research would not be possible.

ISBN 962-441-107-7

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Introduction

Hong Kong is an immigrant society with its population consisting of six major groups of immigrants and their descendants: Cantonese, Sze Yap, Hakka, Chiu Chau, Fukien and Shanghainese. Each group has its own dialect (or dialects), organizations, regional religious rituals and practices.[1] Moreover, there is economic disparity between the different groups. In our data set, I found that Chiu Chau immigrants were on average the most successful group among immigrants. About 17.8 per cent of them were in the salariat classes. On the other hand, Fukien immigrants were the most disadvantaged in the labour market with 0 per cent of them being in the higher salariat class and only 2.4 per cent in the lower salariat class. Immigrants from Shanghai and Sze Yap were the most entrepreneurially oriented groups, with 11.8 per cent and 18.2 per cent of them being self-employed, respectively. In contrast, none of the Fukien immigrants in our sample was self-employed. Nevertheless, despite this diversity, so far no systematic comparative research has been done on the educational profiles and occupational attainments of different dialect groups in Hong Kong. Moreover, relatively little attention is paid to the dialect group factor when considering the different economic situation of these groups. The paper tries to fill this gap. I am interested in whether after controlling for gender, age, educational qualifications, the economic opportunities encountered on arrival and the length of stay, immigrants from different dialect groups had the same opportunities in accessing the salariat classes, in starting their own businesses and in avoiding being "trapped" in the non-skilled jobs. In other words, I am interested

in whether the economic disparity observed between the Cantonese, Chiu Chau, Sze Yap, Fukien and Shanghainese immigrant communities was the result of demographic factors (i.e., age and gender), human capital factors (i.e., educational qualifications), the different economic opportunities they encountered at the time of arrival or some other factors, such as their differential access to and use of social capital.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

In this section, I present the five competing theories explaining the differential labour market outcomes of immigrants. Moreover, based on these theories, I develop three hypotheses which will be tested subsequently in this paper.

Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory is one of the most commonly used approaches to explain the differential labour market outcomes of immigrants. The concept was introduced by economists, such as Becker (1993). By human capital, Becker refers to those resources that are inherent in human beings and which can yield income and other useful outputs over long periods of time. Human capital is the result of education, on-the-job training and medical care which improves health, raises earnings or adds to a person's other marketable abilities over much of his or her lifetime (1993:16). The distinction between human capital and other capital, such as physical or financial capital, lies in the fact that you cannot separate a person from his or her knowledge, skills, health or values the way it is possible to move financial and physical assets from their owners. In other words, human capital is those resources in people that can influence future monetary and psychic income. The concept of human capital is widely used to explain inequalities in earnings between various social groups. Human capital analysis assumes that schooling raises earnings and

productivity by providing knowledge, skills and a way of analyzing problems (Becker, 1993:12). As Becker puts it,

> Inequality in the distribution of earnings and income is generally positively related to inequality in education and other training. To take a final example, unemployment tends to be strongly related, usually inversely, to education. (1993:12)

The general assumption behind this model is:

> All human behaviour can be viewed as involving participants who maximize their utility from a stable set of preferences and accumulate an optimal amount of information and other inputs in a variety of markets. (Becker, 1981:164)

Thus, individuals are assumed to act in pursuit of their maximum personal utility, defined as the accumulation of scarce means. Competition among individual maximizers takes place on a level field — the market — where buyers and sellers meet. Market supply and demand are kept in equilibrium through the price mechanism. In the case of immigrants, this theory will argue that the differential labour market outcomes of immigrants are the result of free competition and are largely due to differences in individual endowment. The amount of human capital, such as educational attainment and occupational qualifications that immigrants bring with them to the host country, directly determines their economic prospects and mobility. This perspective also suggests that in the short run immigrants may suffer disadvantage in the labour market due to language problems or lack of knowledge about employment opportunities. However, in the long run these disadvantages will be corrected. Based on this theory, I develop hypothesis I:

Other things being equal, immigrants having higher educational qualifications, which is a proxy for human capital, would fare better in the labour market compared to their equivalent counterparts do.

Social Capital Theory

Although human capital theory has received some empirical support, its assumptions are highly criticized. Granovetter (1985), for instance, argues that human capital theory's assumption that individuals are atomized actors engaged in market competition is unwarranted. It produces an under-socialized view of human actors as regards economic behaviour in which actors are abstracted from all kinds of social relations. As he points out,

> In classical and neo-classical economics, therefore, the fact that actors may have social relations with one another has been treated, if at all, as a frictional drag that impedes competitive markets. (1985:484)

Instead of viewing individuals as atomized actors, Granovetter argues that in modern industrial society economic action is embedded in structures of social relations. He argues that actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories that they happen to occupy. Their attempts at purposive action are instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations. These relationships enter into every stage of the economic process, from the selection of economic goals to the organization of relevant means. Thus, any theory that attempts to comprehend individuals' economic actions must incorporate the social context in which they are embedded. This standpoint is taken by many sociologists of migration, who emphasize how the "social capital" of different immigrant groups affects their labour market outcomes.

The term "social capital" in its contemporary guise was first identified by Jane Jacobs, Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Passeron and Glenn Loury but has been developed by Ronald Burt, Robert Putnam, Alejandro Portes and most extensively by James Coleman. Social capital, according to Coleman, refers to those,

> Social-structural resources as a capital asset for the individual, that is, as social capital. Social capital is *defined by its function*. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they *facilitate* certain actions of individuals who are within the structure. Like other forms of capital, such as physical or human capital, social capital is *productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence....* Unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relations between persons and among persons. It is lodged neither in individuals nor in physical implements of production. (1990:302, italics added)

Coleman identifies five types of social capital: obligations of reciprocity, trust, privileged access to information, norms and effective sanctions, and organizational capacities. The concept has been widely used by sociologists to explain ethnic entrepreneurship (Borjas, 1992; Graaf and Flap, 1988; Marsden and Hurlbert, 1988; Lin et al., 1981; Portes and Stepick, 1993; Waldinger et al., 1990; Yoon, 1998; Waldinger, 1995; Tseng, 1996; Gold, 1994). These researchers explore how social capital generated from ethnic networks helps immigrants to start their own businesses, to survive severe competition and to maintain their monopoly of a specific market niche.

Kuo (1991), for instance, gives a vivid account of how obligations of reciprocity between mainland Chinese and Singaporean traders helped the latter to escape being replaced by a Malaysian trading institution. Traditionally, Malaysian wholesalers imported mandarin oranges from China through middlemen in Singapore. These middlemen in turn charged a commission of 4 to 5 per cent. However, in 1970, the Malaysian government set up an official body, PERNAS, as an attempt to bypass any third country and to have direct trade with China. However, China responded coolly to the gesture of PERNAS, and traders in China were reluctant to abandon their ties with the traditional middlemen. According to Kuo, the failure of PERNAS was mainly due to the fact that,

> Through many years of business exchanges accompanied with personal contacts, importers/wholesalers from Singapore have cultivated and established long-

> term personal relations (*guanxi*), which go beyond purely business contracts to entail obligations of reciprocity, with staff of the Shantou group (China). (1991:166)

Obligations of reciprocity can be a type of social capital merely because of the existence of trust. Indeed, the notion of trust has dominated the discussion of social capital since the 1980s. Various studies on the economic behaviour of immigrants have provided some examples of how the level of trust in a community helped its members to achieve certain goals. Wong (1988), for instance, gives a succinct account of how the trust among the Shanghainese cotton spinners enabled them to obtain loans from the British-owned banks in Hong Kong. According to him,

> Regional ties are often activated to help initiate a business relationship. It is customary when dealing with strangers, for Chinese businessmen to enlist the assistance of intermediaries with whom they have some common particularistic bonds. When the Shanghainese spinners arrived in Hong Kong, they also followed this practice in seeking bank loans. As the large banks were initially reluctant to lend them money an intermediary was needed as a guarantor.... (As such, these Shanghainese) sought the help of a Shanghainese banker who arrived in the early 1950s. (1988:117)

These spinners enlisted the help of a fellow Shanghainese, who used to work for the Bank of China in industrial lending, to act as a go-between. It is merely the existence of trust between this middleman and the cotton spinners, on the one hand, and between the local British banks and this middleman, on the other hand, that enabled the successful granting of loans from the banks to the spinners.

The above examples vividly illustrate how the access to social capital affects the economic development of immigrants. Based on this theory, I develop hypothesis II:

Other things being equal, immigrants having a higher endowment of social capital would perform better than their equivalent counterparts in the labour market.

Ideally in order to test this hypothesis, I should develop indicators of components of social capital, including the level of trust, information, norms of reciprocity and organization a specific set of networks possesses. However, the data set I used does not contain this type of information. Following Portes (1995), I therefore develop a variable, "dialect group," which is a proxy for the differences in community networks and social capital, to test the hypothesis.

Economic Opportunity Model

Advocates of this theory emphasize how the economic opportunities different groups of immigrants encounter in the labour market affect their economic fortune. For instance, Jenkins argues that "ethnic minority business activity is essentially no different from routine capitalist entrepreneurial activity, depending for its success or failure upon the opportunities presented by the market" (1984:234).

The "economic opportunity model" is supported by some empirical research. In my study of the occupational attainments of different ethnic groups in Britain, I found that the unemployment rate in the year of arrival, which acted as a proxy for the initial labour market conditions an immigrant encountered at the time of arrival, was a significant factor in determining his/her economic fortune thereafter. Those who arrived in Britain during years with a high unemployment rate, were disadvantaged in the labour market in terms of access to the salariat class and the petty bourgeoisie and were more likely to be unemployed. On the other hand, those who arrived in years with low unemployment rates were generally better off at the time of the survey (Choi, 1998). Based on this theory, I develop hypothesis III:

Other things being equal, immigrants who arrive in years of prosperity would fare better than those who arrive in economic recession do, due to the more economic opportunities the former group encounters.

Cultural Endowment Theory

The fourth type of theory is the cultural endowment theory. Advocates of this theory argue that the main reason some immigrant groups are over-represented in self-employment and entrepreneurship is their distinct cultural endowment (Bonacich, 1973; Boissevain et al., 1990). According to this view, some cultures predispose their members towards the successful pursuit of entrepreneurial goals — very much as in Weber's classic analysis of the relationship between Calvinism and European capitalism (Jenkins, 1984:231). Bonacich, for instance, argues that "Chinese, Indians, Jews, in every country show a similar occupational concentration.... This regularity suggests that culture of origin is an important contributory factor" (1973:588). Likewise, Boissevain et al. argue that Asian and Mediterranean immigrants have been successful in setting up small enterprises because of some of their cultural attributes. As they state, "They are willing to work longer hours, are able to draw on family labour, and have an intense desire for economic independence" (1990:34). In a similar vein, Werbner (1984) maintains that the success of the Pakistani entrepreneurs in Manchester is largely due to their ability to draw on cultural resources, which are unavailable to long-established minorities or the host society. He even suggests that some minority groups, such as the Pakistani in Britain, develop a "culture of entrepreneurship." According to the author, this culture informs the actions and dreams as well as the attitudes and beliefs of increasing numbers of immigrants and therefore is the basis for understanding the formation of ethnic minority businesses. This cultural model of business activity is also used to explain the economic behaviour of Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong. It is often suggested that Confucianism influences immigrants to seek avenues for profitable enterprise (Wong, 1986). Wong, for instance, argues that there are at least "four major Chinese cultural elements which facilitate the adoption of industrial capitalism — incorporative cosmology, high achievement motivation, familism and utilitarian discipline" (1986:307). Likewise, Herman Kahn

suggests that the Confucian ethic promotes economic growth through,

> The creation of dedicated, motivated, responsible, and educated individuals and the enhanced sense of commitment, organizational identity, and loyalty to various institutions. (1979:122 quoted by Wong, 1986)

Although the theory has received a lot of attention recently, I do not think that it is applicable in my research on the economic disparity between different dialect groups in Hong Kong. All dialect groups in China claim that they are influenced by Confucianism. For instance, the Chiu Chau often claim that their people possess the two most valuable Confucian virtues, the ability to work hard and honesty, and these two attributes are the very fundamental reasons of their success. On the other hand, though less successful, the Fukien also claim that their people have these cultural endowments. The question is, if both the Chiu Chau and Fukien are hard working and honest, and if Confucianism really plays a role in their economic behaviour, the impact of it on them should be equal. Thus, Confucianism should not be one of the contributing factors causing the economic disparity between these two groups.

Disadvantage Theory

The "reaction model" or "disadvantage theory" is another commonly used theory to explain the economic behaviour of immigrants. This theory argues that the economic behaviour of ethnic minorities can only be understood in terms of the blocked mobility and discrimination they encounter in the labour market. For instance, it is argued that discrimination in the labour market, the lack of fit between available jobs and qualifications and restricted avenues of promotion are factors which push Asians and other ethnic minorities into self-employment (Srinivasan, 1992). The theory emphasizes the social disadvantages newcomers face in the host society and their negative economic consequences. According to this theory, minorities are frequently

discriminated against in the labour market and are thus either excluded from employment or relegated to the least attractive jobs. Given this situation, it is not surprising that they find self-employment, even in marginal businesses, an attractive alternative. Thus, self-employment is not, at least initially, an avenue for economic mobility but a means for material survival. Groups that are discriminated against tend to pool their resources, forming rotating credit associations and other similar co-operative organizations in order to provide mutual support. This theory seems to explain the high propensity for self-employment among Asian minorities, such as the Chinese in the United Kingdom and the United States. Nevertheless, it fails to account for the low rate of self-employment and entrepreneurship among other ethnic minorities, such as the Bangladeshis in Britain and the African Americans in the United States. These minority groups also suffer from continuous discrimination over time, but they are not particularly active in self-employment or entrepreneurship. Moreover, empirical studies also show that economic opportunity, personal preference and the ability to mobilize resources play equally important roles in ethnic minorities' decision to go into independent proprietorship (Srinivasan, 1992; Hassell et al., 1998; Choi, 1998).

Data and Methodology

The data set used in this study is from "Social Change and Economic Life: A Sociological Study 1994-95." The survey was carried out jointly by Stephen Chiu and K.W. Ting at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Department of Sociology), and T.W. Chan at the Max Planck Institute between 1994 and 1995. The survey covered questions on household characteristics, education, work and residential history. The total number of cases in the data set is 1,743, which, though small, is by far the largest sample size achieved with a complex questionnaire. According to Chiu, the response rate of 59.4 per cent compares favourably with other

surveys of a similar length and complexity. In addition, the researchers do not find any particular sampling bias apart from the common one, i.e., the very small number of the élite interviewed. Moreover, all the information obtained was vigilantly double-checked.

The sample of this survey came from a population aged between 25 and 55 and who had lived in Hong Kong for at least ten years at the time of the survey. The sampling list consisted of 5,000 randomly drawn addresses provided by the Census and Statistics Department. If more than one family resided at the same address, a family was selected on the basis of a random numbers table. All persons who satisfied the sampling criteria within the chosen family were ranked by age, and the interviewer used the Kish Grid to select one person randomly for interview.

Personal interviews were conducted between November 1994 and February 1996. The researchers contacted a total of 4,105 addresses and successfully interviewed 1,743 respondents. According to Chiu, all questionnaires returned went through an initial consistency check before they were accepted as a complete case. To improve the accuracy of the data, a follow-up telephone check on cases in which a telephone number was provided was conducted. Table 1 summarizes the demographic data of the respondents in the data set.

Turning to methodology, in the logistic models of class destinations, I examine how gender, age, qualifications, the course of migration and dialect group affect the relative chance of an individual of reaching the salariat, the petty bourgeoisie, or being "trapped" in non-skilled manual jobs. The class scheme used in the data set was devised originally by John Goldthorpe (1980), who distinguished the class position of individuals according to their employment conditions. Broadly speaking, the scheme identifies 11 classes:

(1) Higher salariat
(2) Lower salariat
(3a) Routine non-manual upper division
(3b) Routine non-manual lower division

Table 1 Demographic data of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	25-44	1292	74.6
	45-55	440	25.4
Gender	Male	843	48.7
	Female	888	51.3
Place of birth	Hong Kong	1118	64.6
	China	527	30.4
	Other regions	87	5.0
(N=1743)			

Notes: For the variables "age" and "place of birth," the missing value is 11. For the variable "gender," the missing value is 12.

(4a) Small proprietors and small holders, self-employed with employees
(4b) Self-employed without employees
(4c) Farm workers
(5) Lower grade technician
(6) Skilled manual
(7a) Semi-skilled manual
(7b) Non-skilled manual

In all the models, I combined classes 1 and 2 to form the salariat class because of the small number of respondents in the data set. Likewise, classes 3a and 3b were combined to form the routine non-manual class, classes 4a, 4b and 4c the petty bourgeoisie class, classes 5 and 6 the foremen and skilled working class, and classes 7a, 7b plus the unemployed the semi- and non-skilled working class. I added the unemployed into the semi- and non-skilled working class because I wanted to examine how far the independent variables affected the relative chance of the respondents being "trapped" in the least desirable labour market positions, which obviously included being unemployed.

The following is the class scheme used in the logistic regression models:

(1) Salariat Class
(2) Routine Non-manual Class
(3) Petty Bourgeoisie Class[2]
(4) Foremen and Skilled Working Class
(5) Semi- and Non-skilled Working Class (plus the unemployed)

Since the dependent variable (class position) was a non-continuous variable, I used logistic regression models, which were specifically developed to handle binary response variables, such as employed or unemployed, single or married, etc. The equation for logistic regression is as follows:

$$\text{Log } P/1\text{-}P = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \ldots + b_nX_n$$

Where "log P/1-P" is known as the log odds. P is the probability of an event happening. Odds are the chances of something happening compared to its not happening. The model thus describes how the odds of belonging to a particular category depend on the values of the explanatory variables. After fitting a logistic regression model, one can predict probabilities at various settings of the explanatory variables (Agresti and Finlay, 1997).

Demographic Profiles

In our sample as in the Census, the people of Guangdong origin were the biggest dialect group in Hong Kong, followed by those of Sze Yap, Chiu Chau, Fukien and Shanghai origin (Table 2). Among our respondents, 64.6 per cent were born in Hong Kong while 30.4 per cent were immigrants from China. People of Fukien origin were the group with the highest percentage of immigrants (more than 80 per cent), followed by the Shanghainese and the Chiu Chau (Table 3). Considering the population as a whole, Hong Kong seemed to have achieved gender balance though

Table 2 Dialect composition

Dialect group	Frequency	Percentage
Hong Kong origin	7	0.4
Guangdong	985	56.9
Sze Yap	255	14.7
Chiu Chau	202	11.7
Shanghai	51	2.9
Fukien	74	4.3
Others	158	9.1
Total	1732	100.0

Note: Others include those who identified themselves as from other places in China and other countries.

Table 3 Immigrants by dialect groups (%)

Dialect group	Born in Hong Kong	Immigrants from China	Immigrants from other regions	(N)
Hong Kong	85.7	14.3	—	(7)
Guangdong	66.6	29.8	3.6	(985)
Sze Yap	77.3	17.6	5.1	(255)
Chiu Chau	62.4	32.7	5.0	(202)
Shanghai	49.0	49.0	2.0	(51)
Fukien	18.9	75.7	5.4	(74)
Others	59.5	25.3	15.2	(158)

Note: See note to Table 2.

women still slightly outnumbered men by 2.6 per cent. However, among immigrants, men outnumbered women by 9 per cent. The gender imbalance among immigrants confirms the general trend found in other countries, in which men tend to be the pioneers of migration and therefore often outnumber their women counterparts (Choi, 1998). Among different dialect groups, the Guangdong, Sze Yap and Chiu Chau all had more male immigrants. However, the two newest dialect groups, the Fukien and Shanghai both had more female immigrants (Table 4). The gender distribution of different dialect groups matters because I suspect that there is a substantial difference between the participation rates of men and women in dialect organizations, which are crucial for the formation of social capital.

Dialect Group Differences: Immigrants Only

Considering immigrants from different dialect groups, the Sze Yap were the earliest arrivals with nearly 50 per cent of them migrating to Hong Kong before 1959. A substantial number of Shanghai and Chiu Chau immigrants also came to Hong Kong before 1959. The Fukien immigrants, as a whole, were late arrivals. Nearly 40 per cent of them came to Hong Kong after 1980 (Table 5). In our sample, immigrants who came to Hong Kong during the period from 1970 to 1979 accounted for over one-third of the total number of immigrants, while those who came in the 1950s only accounted for 17.5 per cent. Given the fact that Hong Kong experienced the biggest migration waves after the Communists came to power in China in 1949, those who came during the 1950s were probably under-represented in our sample. In addition, since only those who had lived in Hong Kong for at least ten years at the time of the survey were included in the survey, new immigrants were thus not represented in the analysis.

Regarding the employment status, Sze Yap and Chiu Chau immigrants were roughly seven times more likely than Fukien immigrants to be self-employed (15.6 per cent, 13.6 per cent and

Table 4 Sex distribution by dialect groups: immigrants (%)

Dialect group	Male	Female	(N)
Guangdong	56.5	43.5	(294)
Sze Yap	66.7	33.3	(45)
Chiu Chau	54.5	45.5	(66)
Shanghai	36.0	64.0	(25)
Fukien	48.2	51.8	(56)
Others	45.0	55.0	(40)
Total	54.5	45.5	(526)

Notes: From Tables 4 to 9, immigrants referred to immigrants from China. There was one person of Hong Kong origin. This category was omitted in the table because the N was too small.

Table 5 Year of arrival by dialect groups: immigrants (%)

Dialect group	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980 or after	(N)
Guangdong	4.5	17.6	19.7	39.8	18.3	(289)
Sze Yap	2.2	44.4	28.9	2.2	22.2	(45)
Chiu Chau	10.6	12.1	22.7	36.4	18.2	(66)
Shanghai	4.0	28.0	16.0	24.0	28.0	(25)
Fukien	0.0	7.1	5.4	50.0	37.5	(56)
Others	7.7	2.6	17.9	28.2	43.6	(39)

Note: See note to Table 4.

1.8 per cent, respectively). In fact, Fukien immigrants had the lowest self-employment rate in our sample (1.8 per cent) (Table 6).

Turning to their class and income profiles, the Chiu Chau was the most successful group among immigrants, and 17.8 per cent of them were in the salariat classes. On the other hand, the Fukien was the most disadvantaged group with 0 per cent of its people was in the higher salariat class and only 2.4 per cent of them were in the lower salariat class. Immigrants from Shanghai and Sze Yap were the most entrepreneurially oriented groups. Of them, 11.8 per cent and 18.2 per cent were self-employed, respectively. In contrast, none of the Fukien immigrants in our sample was self-employed. Besides having the lowest concentration in the salariat and petty bourgeoisie classes, Fukien immigrants also had the highest concentration in the semi- and non-skilled working class, which clearly illustrated their unfavourable economic situation compared to other dialect groups (Table 7).

The income gap between immigrants of different dialect groups was quite substantial as well. For instance, nearly 30 per cent of the Shanghainese, Chiu Chau and Sze Yap earned more than 20,000 HK dollars a month while the figure for immigrants from Guangdong was only 6 per cent. Interestingly, although Fukien immigrants had the least favourable class profile, they were not the lowest income group. On average they earned more than immigrants from Guangdong did (Table 8). I suspect that was because a large proportion of immigrants from Fukien working in the manufacturing sector were piecework workers. Since they were very likely to work very long hours, they could boost their income by extra hours of work or extra effort.

What is surprising is that Fukien immigrants, being the least successful group of all, were in fact quite well educated on average. As Table 9 shows, Shanghai and Fukien immigrants were on average the best qualified groups with over one-third of them having secondary five qualifications. On the other hand, Sze Yap and Chiu Chau immigrants had the most polarized educational profiles. Both groups were disproportionately concentrated in both the higher qualification and the "below Form 3" categories.

Table 6 Current employment status by dialect groups: immigrants (%)

Dialect group	Employee	Employer or self-employed	Un-employed	House-wife	Retired	Others	(N)
Guang-dong	61.2	7.5	5.1	22.4	2.7	1.0	(294)
Sze Yap	51.1	15.6	6.7	17.8	6.7	2.2	(45)
Chiu Chau	53.0	13.6	1.5	28.8	3.0	0.0	(66)
Shanghai	56.0	4.0	8.0	32.0	0.0	0.0	(25)
Fukien	67.9	1.8	3.6	26.8	0.0	0.0	(56)
Others	57.1	14.3	2.9	20.0	5.7	0.0	(35)

Note: See note to Table 4.

Table 7 Class position by dialect groups: immigrants (%)

Dialect group	Salariat class	Routine non-manual class	Self-employed	Skilled working class	Non-skilled working class	Missing value	(N)
Guangdong	7.8	10.1	5.4	37.8	37.3	1.6	(217)
Sze Yap	15.1	6.1	18.2	33.4	27.3	0.0	(33)
Chiu Chau	17.8	6.6	6.6	17.8	46.7	4.5	(45)
Shanghai	11.8	5.9	11.8	41.2	29.4	0.0	(17)
Fukien	2.4	14.7	0.0	26.8	51.2	4.9	(41)
Others	15.4	3.8	11.5	23.0	38.5	7.8	(26)

Note: Only the economically active were included in this analysis and see note to Table 4.

Table 8 Income distribution by dialect groups: immigrants (%)

Dialect group	≤4,000	4,001-7,999	8,000-14,999	15,000-19,999	≥20,000	Missing value	(N)
Guangdong	11.1	25.3	42.9	12.9	6.0	1.8	(217)
Sze Yap	10.5	11.2	30.3	14.5	30.9	2.6	(33)
Chiu Chau	8.0	12.0	37.0	16.0	25.0	2.0	(45)
Shanghai	5.0	15.0	35.0	15.0	30.0	0.0	(17)
Fukien	10.0	20.0	40.0	20.0	10.0	0.0	(41)
Others	4.2	9.9	33.8	15.5	19.7	16.9	(26)

Note: See note to Table 7.

Table 9 Educational qualifications by dialect groups: immigrants (%)

Dialect group	Higher education	High or A Level	Form 5	Form 3	Below Form 3	(N)
Guangdong	10.9	4.5	7.9	18.1	58.5	(265)
Sze Yap	14.0	2.3	9.3	16.3	58.1	(43)
Chiu Chau	14.0	3.5	8.8	8.8	64.9	(57)
Shanghai	8.3	8.3	20.8	29.2	33.3	(24)
Fukien	13.0	11.1	11.1	20.4	44.4	(54)
Others	15.2	0.0	27.3	21.2	36.4	(33)

Note: See note to Table 4.

The questions which arise are: To what extent are the differences among different dialect groups results of differences in their human capital, the economic opportunity they encountered on arrival, their length of stay in Hong Kong, their different endowment of social capital? Or, are they results of the different levels of disadvantage and discrimination they experienced? As mentioned above, in this paper I develop a variable "dialect group" to see whether, after controlling for gender, age, education, the economic opportunity encountered on arrival and the length of stay, immigrants from different dialect groups had equal opportunities of reaching the salariat and the petty bourgeoisie classes. If, other things being equal, immigrants from different dialect groups did not have equal chance of accessing the most favourable labour market positions, they therefore incurred some "ethnic penalty." The term, "ethnic penalty," was first developed by Heath and McMahon (1997) in their studies of the occupational attainments of ethnic minorities in Britain. It refers to "all the sources of disadvantage that might lead an ethnic group to fare less well in the labour market than do similarly qualified Whites" (1997:91). In our case, it refers to all the sources of disadvantage that might lead one dialect group to fare less well than do similarly qualified people from other dialect groups. However, by using the above descriptive data, we are unable to examine whether some dialect groups in Hong Kong incurred some "ethnic penalty" in the labour market. I therefore turn to the logistic regression models.

Logistic Regression

Since I am interested in the labour market outcomes of immigrants, which are measured as their class positions at the time of the survey, the dependent variables are the log odds for access to the salariat or the petty bourgeoisie classes and for being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category. These variables are all binary variables and are all in a "yes" and "no"

formula. By dichotomizing the dependent variables, I am able to study, firstly, compared to the population as a whole, the proportion of immigrants of different dialect groups managing to reach the secure and relatively advantaged positions of the salariat; secondly, the proportion of them managing to enter the petty bourgeoisie, which is often regarded as critical in facilitating upward social mobility; and finally, the proportion of them being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category. Besides comparing immigrants with the whole population, I also compared the chance of the locals of accessing the salariat or the petty bourgeoisie classes and of being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category with that of the immigrants. By doing so, I attempted to see how far descendants of the immigrants had proceeded in the labour market, and to what extent the gaps between immigrants of different dialect groups had persisted among the second generation.

In the models comparing immigrants from different dialect groups, people of Chiu Chau origin were chosen as the reference category because they had the highest percentage of people in the salariat class. All the explanatory variables are treated as categorical variables and the parameters are expressed as contrasts with the base category for the variables.

The following formulae represent our three basic models:

Model A:

$$\text{Log } C_1/(C_2 + C_3 + C_4 + C_5) = b_0 + b_1\,(\text{Sex}) + b_2\,(\text{Age}) + b_3\,(\text{Qualification}) + b_4\,(\text{Dialect group})$$

Model B:

$$\text{Log } C_3/(C_2 + C_4 + C_5) = b_0 + b_1\,(\text{Sex}) + b_2\,(\text{Age}) + b_3\,(\text{Qualification}) + b_4\,(\text{Dialect group})$$

Model C:

$$\text{Log } C_5/(C_1 + C_2 + C_3 + C_4) = b_0 + b_1\,(\text{Sex}) + b_2\,(\text{Age}) + b_3\,(\text{Qualification}) + b_4\,(\text{Dialect group})$$

C represents social class plus the unemployed; the Arabic numerals refer to the five-fold scheme described earlier in the text; and the bs are parameters to be estimated. These parameter-estimates indicate the size and directions of the effects the independent variables have on the dependent variables. In the case of comparing immigrants with the population as a whole, one independent variable, "the place of birth," was added to the model. The aim was to see, compared with the whole population, how far immigrants were disadvantaged. While comparing the economic success of immigrants of different dialect groups, two independent variables, "the net per capita GDP growth rate at the time of arrival" and "the length of stay" were added to the model. These variables aimed at finding whether the economic gap between different immigrant groups was the result of their length of stay and the different economic opportunities they encountered at the time of arrival, or other factors.[3] Table 10 summarizes the results of the logistic regression for the population as a whole.

Results and Interpretation

Looking at the population as a whole, in models A and C (access to the salariat class and being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category), educational qualifications proved to be the most important factor in determining the economic fortune of an individual. Those who had higher qualifications had a higher chance of accessing the salariat class and had a lesser chance of being found in the non-skilled and unemployed category. This seems to reflect that educational qualifications were the major criteria for social stratification and the major route for individuals to achieve upward mobility in Hong Kong. However, educational qualification was not a significant variable in determining an individual's chance of being self-employed. This may mean that, although credential was vital in achieving upward mobility in Hong Kong, those without credentials could still climb up the social ladder through entrepreneurship, which was not determined by one's educational qualifications.

Given the importance of educational qualifications in determining an individual's chance of accessing the salariat class and avoiding being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category, the results seem to partially confirm the claims of the human capital theory and hypothesis I. Nevertheless, the theory is only partially validated in this case because not everyone was equally rewarded for his or her qualifications. Immigrants, regardless of their qualifications, gender and age, were disadvantaged in the labour market compared with the locally born individuals. They were particularly disadvantaged in respect to accessing the salariat class. Compared with a similarly qualified local-born, being an immigrant reduced one's chance of accessing the salariat class by 59 per cent.

Among immigrants, female immigrants incurred an especially high labour market penalty. As the interaction term, women*immigrant, in Table 11 clearly shows, compared to male immigrants, who had already a lesser chance of accessing the salariat class compared to their local counterparts, female immigrants had an even lesser chance of doing so. Being a female immigrant reduced one's chance of accessing the salariat by 21 per cent. Moreover, female immigrants had also a lesser chance of becoming self-employed compared to their male counterparts. Without the interaction term, sex was a significant variable in determining one's chance of becoming self-employed. Adding the interaction term made the sex variable no longer a significant variable in model B. It means that it was mainly female immigrants who incurred a gender penalty in becoming self-employed. The unfavourable labour market situation of female immigrants was further reflected in their having a much higher chance of being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category. In model C of Table 11, we see that being a female immigrant increased one's chance of being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category by nearly 300 per cent. Indeed, the interaction term in model C was a highly significant variable.

Turning to the variable "dialect group," people of different dialect group origin, including locals and immigrants, were not

Table 10 Logistic regression models of class destinations: without interaction term women*immigrants

	Parameters, standard error and level of significance		
	Model A	Model B	Model C
	Access to the salariat	Access to the petty bourgeoisie	Being "trapped" in non-skilled jobs
Sex			
Men	1.00	1.00	1.00
Women	.99 (.15)	.47 (.31)**	1.24 (.14)
Age			
45-55	1.00	1.00	1.00
25-44	.56 (.21)***	.47 (.32)**	.73 (.17)
Qualifications			
Higher education	1.00	1.00	1.00
Form 3 to A Level	.21 (.16)***	.83 (.38)	3.09 (.23)***
Below Form 3	.07 (.16)***	.62 (.40)	10.47 (.23)***
Place of birth			
Hong Kong	1.00	1.00	1.00
China	.41 (.19)***	.80 (.30)	1.31 (.15)
Dialect group			
Chiu Chau	1.00	1.00	1.00
Guangdong	.82 (.23)	.86 (.41)	.88 (.22)
Sze Yap	1.33 (.25)	1.30 (.45)	.72 (.25)
Shanghai	1.08 (.47)	1.17 (.84)	.95 (.45)
Fukien	.51 (.49)	.00 (14.64)	2.13 (.37)*
Model	279.06***	25.40***	217.9***
Improvement (df)	9	9	9
Unweighted cases	1276	1276	1276
No. of cases analyzed	1230	879	1230

Notes: Sample: Men and women aged 25-55 who were economically active (employed or identified as unemployed).

Figures in brackets give the standard errors.

* significant at 0.05 level; ** significant at 0.025 level; *** significant at 0.005 level.

The category Sze Yap includes those who were of Sze Yap origin and those who claimed their origin as from regions of China other than Guangdong, Chiu Chau, Fukien and Shanghai. The category Shanghai includes those who claimed their place of origin as Zhejiang and Jiangsu.

equally rewarded for their qualifications. Other things being equal, compared with the Chiu Chau, those of Guangdong and Fukien origin were disadvantaged in the labour market. In particular, the Fukien was the most disadvantaged group of all in the labour market. Compared to the Chiu Chau, the Fukien had a lesser chance of accessing the salariat class, of being self-employed and had a much higher chance of being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category. Compared with the Chiu Chau, being a Fukien increased one's chance of being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category by 213 per cent. Thus, it is clear that there was a dialect group impact or, more aptly put, the Fukien incurred some sort of ethnic penalty in the labour market.

However, it may be argued that the Fukien was disadvantaged because a substantial number of them were immigrants and they came to Hong Kong much later than their Chiu Chau counterparts did. Consequently, they might have poorer language skills or were less familiar with the labour market. It may also be argued that the economic disparity observed between immigrants of different dialect groups was due to the different economic opportunities they encountered on arrival. In order to test these two hypotheses, I ran the same logistic regression models separately for the immigrants. I added two variables to the models, "the length of stay," and "the net per capita GDP growth rate in the year of arrival," which was a proxy for the economic

Table 11 Logistic regression models of class destinations: with interaction term women*immigrants

	Parameters, standard error and level of significance		
	Model A	Model B	Model C
	Access to the salariat	Access to the petty bourgeoisie	Being "trapped" in non-skilled jobs
Sex			
Men	1.00	1.00	1.00
Women	1.06 (.17)	.63 (.35)	.86 (.18)
Age			
45-55	1.00	1.00	1.00
25-44	.56 (.21)**	.47 (.32)**	.72 (.17)*
Qualifications			
Higher education	1.00	1.00	1.00
Form 3 to A Level	.21 (.16)***	.83 (.38)	3.31 (.23)***
Below Form 3	.07 (.23)***	.62 (.63)	10.77 (.23)***
Place of birth			
Hong Kong	1.00	1.00	1.00
China	.44 (.23)***	.99 (.33)	.90 (.19)
Dialect group			
Chiu Chau	1.00	1.00	1.00
Guangdong	.89 (.24)	.85 (.44)	.87 (.22)
Sze Yap	1.46 (.26)	1.30 (.45)	.69 (.25)
Shanghai	1.09 (.49)	1.25 (.85)	.95 (.46)
Fukien	.50 (.52)	.00 (14.64)	1.95 (.38)
Interaction term			
Women*immigrant	.79 (.40)	.30 (.83)	2.97 (.30)***
Model	270.04***	24.88***	227.23***
Improvement (df)	10	10	10
Unweighted cases	1276	1276	1276
No. of cases analyzed	1230	879	1230

Note: See note to Table 10.

opportunities immigrants encountered at the time of arrival. Moreover, I also ran the logistic regression models separately for the locals. My aim was to see what was the important factors determining the economic situation of the locals compared to that of the immigrants. I was particularly interested in whether the dialect group variable was a significant variable in determining the occupational attainments of the locals (the second and third generation of the immigrants). Tables 12, 13 and 14 summarize the logistic regression results of the immigrants and the locals.

The findings further confirmed our previous findings in Table 11. Immigrant women were far more disadvantaged in the labour market than their male equivalents. Being an immigrant woman reduced one's chance of being self-employed by 81 per cent. At the same time, it increased one's chance of being "trapped" in the non-skilled and unemployed category by nearly 300 per cent. Recalling the fact that immigrants as a whole, compared to the locals, were disadvantaged in the labour market, female immigrants were thus the most disadvantaged of all.

Surprisingly, "the net per capita GDP growth rate at the time of arrival" was not a significant variable in all the models. There are two possible explanations for that. First, the per capita GDP growth rate was not a good indicator of or proxy for the economic opportunities different groups of immigrants encountered at the time of arrival. Secondly, immigrants were always provided with abundant economic opportunities that made the variable an insignificant variable in explaining the economic disparity among them. The second explanation has some empirical support. From 1950 to 1995, due to the rapid expansion in the manufacturing sector, Hong Kong had always had a very tight labour market.[4] Given the special economic condition in Hong Kong, hypothesis III is thus not confirmed. Turning to "the length of stay" variable, we see that it was not a significant variable in all the models. I suspect that this is because new immigrants, who had lived in Hong Kong for less than ten years at the time of the survey, were not included in the survey.

Table 12 Logistic regression model of access to the salariat class: local-born vs immigrants

	Parameters, standard error and level of significance	
	Local-born	Immigrants from China
Sex		
Men	1.00	1.00
Women	1.04 (.17)	.91 (.44)
Age		
45-55	1.00	1.00
25-44	.50 (.27)**	.70 (.42)
Qualifications		
Higher education	1.00	1.00
Form 3 to A Level	.18 (.18)***	.47 (.47)
Below Form 3	.06 (.27)***	.14 (.54)***
Net per capita GDP growth rate		
8.1% - the highest		1.00
-14.1% - 0%		1.96 (.50)
0.1% - 5.0%		1.72 (.51)
5.1% - 8.0%		.77 (.69)
Length of stay		1.0025 (.011)
Dialect group		
Chiu Chau	1.00	1.00
Guangdong	.90 (.26)	.50 (.52)
Sze Yap	1.33 (.29)	.60 (.61)
Shanghai	1.31 (.57)	.47 (.95)
Fukien	1.19 (.74)	.10 (1.14)*
Model	182.4	27.34**
Improvement (df)	8	13
Unweighted cases	866	380
No. of cases analyzed	853	347

Note: See note to Table 10.

Table 13 Logistic regression model of access to the petty bourgeoisie class: local-born vs immigrants

	Parameters, standard error and level of significance	
	Local-born	Immigrants from China
Sex		
Men	1.00	1.00
Women	.64 (.35)	.19 (.79)*
Age		
45-55	1.00	1.00
25-44	.34 (.42)**	.90 (.50)
Qualifications		
Higher education	1.00	1.00
Form 3 to A Level	.67 (.46)	1.24 (.74)
Below Form 3	.72 (.48)	.53 (.76)
Net per capita GDP growth rate		
8.1% - the highest		1.00
-14.1% - 0%		1.38 (.61)
0.1% - 5.0%		.93 (.67)
5.1% - 8.0%		.68 (.81)
Length of stay		.999 (.013)
Dialect group		
Chiu Chau	1.00	1.00
Guangdong	.91 (.52)	.50 (.72)
Sze Yap	.90 (.58)	1.95 (.74)
Shanghai	.00 (27.22)	1.82 (1.05)
Fukien	.00 (39.87)	.00 (25.78)
Model	14.4	25.37**
Improvement (df)	8	13
Unweighted cases	866	380
No. of cases analyzed	558	309

Note: See note to Table 10.

Table 14 Logistic regression model of being "trapped" in non-skilled jobs or being unemployed: local-born vs immigrants

	Parameters, standard error and level of significance	
	Local-born	Immigrants from China
Sex		
Men	1.00	1.00
Women	.83 (.18)	2.73 (.28)***
Age		
45-55	1.00	1.00
25-44	.95 (.25)	.53 (.26)***
Qualifications		
Higher education	1.00	1.00
Form 3 to A Level	4.00 (.28)***	1.47 (.44)
Below Form 3	12.44 (.29)***	5.33 (.42)***
Net per capita GDP growth rate		
8.1% - the highest		1.00
-14.1% - 0%		.66 (.35)
0.1% - 5.0%		.76 (.35)
5.1% - 8.0%		1.18 (.35)
Length of stay		1.005 (.008)
Dialect group		
Chiu Chau	1.00	1.00
Guangdong	1.08 (.29)	.76 (.39)
Sze Yap	.85 (.32)	.74 (.47)
Shanghai	1.42 (.63)	.59 (.68)
Fukien	3.69 (.75)	1.74 (.50)
Model	117.4***	64.03***
Improvement (df)	8	13
Unweighted cases	866	380
No. of cases analyzed	853	347

Note: See note to Table 10.

The findings thus confirmed that the economic disparity between immigrants from different dialect groups in our sample were not due to their different length of stay nor the different economic opportunities they encountered on arrival. More important, from the models, we see that the dialect group impact or "ethnic penalty" was much bigger among immigrants than among the locals. Other things being equal, being a Fukien immigrant, compared with his/her Chiu Chau counterpart, reduced one's chance of reaching the salariat class by 90 per cent and increased one's chance of being found in the non-skilled and unemployed category by 74 per cent.

However, "dialect group" was not a significant variable in determining the economic success of the locally born individuals in all the models. More interestingly, if we compare the immigrants with the locals, we see that educational qualifications played a more significant role in determining the economic success of the locals than that of the immigrants in all the models.

This may reflect that the second/third generations of immigrants were well integrated into the society and they were not "punished" because of their particular dialect group origin. The implication of that hypothesis is that discrimination was less likely to be a major component of the dialect group impact found among the immigrants. Hence, the disadvantage the Fukien immigrants experienced might relate to some other sources of disadvantage, such as their differential access to and use of social capital. If this suggestion is correct, hypothesis II is thus preliminarily confirmed.

Conclusion

To sum up, the logistic regression models confirmed that there existed an economic disparity between immigrants from different dialect groups. Fukien immigrants, for instance, regardless of their gender, age, educational qualifications and the timing of

arrival, fared less well than their Chiu Chau counterparts in the labour market. How do we explain this disparity?

As mentioned in the previous section, there are five types of theories explaining the economic disparity between immigrants from different dialect groups: the human capital theory, the social capital theory, the economic opportunity model, the cultural endowment theory and the discrimination theory. Our findings partially validated the human capital theory because educational qualifications were significant variables, in fact the most significant variables in determining an individual's chance of accessing the salariat class and avoiding being found in the non-skilled and unemployed category. Yet, it did not explain all the differences between different dialect groups. After controlling for educational qualifications, Fukien immigrants still fared less well than their Chiu Chau counterparts.

Moreover, since the "net per capita GDP growth rate at the time of arrival," which served as a proxy for the economic opportunities immigrants encountered on arrival was not a significant variable in all the models. It is thus problematic to argue that the disparity between immigrants of different dialect group origin was due to the different economic opportunities they encountered on arrival. In addition, "the length of stay" was not a significant variable in all the models. I hence contend that the disadvantage some immigrant groups, in particular the Fukien, experienced might not be solely attributed to their later arrival.

Regarding the cultural endowment theory, as mentioned in the Introduction, some dialect groups are culturally very close to each other. For instance, both the Chiu Chau and Fukien are influenced by the Chinese culture, and geographically they are adjacent to each other. In addition, both their dialects belong to the Min dialect group. Despite the fact that culturally they are very close to each other, we still find the economic disparity between them. It is therefore doubtful that the economic disparity between them is the result of their different cultural traits and endowments. It is likely that the answer lies in some of the other aforementioned theories, such as the social capital theory.

However, it is clear that statistical data of the kind available in most large-scale surveys, including the data set I used in this study, do not give detailed information on social capital. In order to more adequately explore how the differential access to and use of social capital affect the economic fortune of immigrants, it is essential that future research develops appropriate tools to obtain the related information, such as developing direct measures of social capital.

Notes

1. This classification is both a linguistic and cultural one. Before 1981, the question of one's "place of origin" was asked in the Census. "The place of origin for the Chinese population was defined as that part of China from which the family came, their Heung Ha. For the non-Chinese population, it was nationality or country of origin" (United Nations, 1974:19). To a certain extent, this question helps to identify an individual's "ethnic group," except for the Hakka. Unlike other dialect groups which are relatively concentrated in certain regions of a province, the Hakka is a very disperse group and can be found in Sichuan, eastern Guangxi, Fujian and many parts of Guangdong (Cohen, 1996). In 1966, 1971 and 1991, questions regarding the dialects/languages spoken were asked in the Census. This information helps to identify the Hakka population in Hong Kong. In 1991, those who used Hakka as the usual language and second language numbered 84,134 and 146,834, respectively (Census and Statistics Department, 1992). Unfortunately in the data set which I used, only the question "place of origin" was asked. I was therefore unable to distinguish the Hakka from other dialect groups. Despite this drawback, the data set is by far the most comprehensive data set which provides information for the type of research pursued here.

2. Since there are no farm workers in the data set used in this paper, the term "petty bourgeoisie" and "self-employed" will be used interchangeably.
3. Since the log odds are not a very straightforward concept, I transform the parameters back by getting the anti-log or exponential of the log. We then get the odds, which are the probabilities of something happening compared to something not happening. The parameters presented in Tables 10 to 14 are all odd ratios.
4. The unemployment rates in Hong Kong from 1976 to 1995 are as follows:

Year	Percentage	Year	Percentage
1976	5.1	1986	2.8
1977	4.2	1987	1.7
1978	2.8	1988	1.4
1979	2.9	1989	1.1
1980	3.8	1990	1.3
1981	3.9	1991	1.8
1982	3.6	1992	2.0
1983	4.5	1993	2.0
1984	3.9	1994	1.9
1985	3.3	1995	3.2

The data from 1976 to 1980 were taken from the Labour Force Survey and the General Household Survey. The data from 1981 onward were taken from the Census. I express my sincere thanks to Professor Stephen Chiu for giving me the data.

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The Occupational Attainments of the Five Major Dialect Groups in Hong Kong

Abstract

This paper argues that "dialect group" is still a relevant and pertinent socio-economic variable in determining the economic outcomes of immigrants, at least that of the first-generation immigrants. Our data show that Chiu Chau immigrants were on average the most successful while Fukien immigrants were the most disadvantaged in the labour market. Immigrants from Shanghai and Sze Yap were the most entrepreneurially oriented groups. As for the sources of economic disparity, our models partially validated the human capital theory because educational qualifications were significant variables, in fact the most significant variables in determining an individual's chance of accessing the salariat class and avoiding being found in the non-skilled and unemployed category. On the other hand, our models found that "the economic opportunities immigrants encountered on arrival" and "the length of stay" exerted no direct significant effects on immigrants' economic outcomes.

不同方言族群移民之經濟成就

蔡玉萍

（中文摘要）

本文探討本港不同方言族群的移民之經濟成就。九十年代中的資料顯示，在港潮籍移民在勞工市場的成就平均最爲理想，相反福建移民的平均職業成就最爲不理想，上海及四邑的移民則最常創業。研究顯示人力資本的差異只可解釋部份存在於不同方言族群的經濟成就差異，居港年期及抵港時的勞力市場狀況則對移民日後的經濟成就沒有直接的影響。