

Public and private safety nets for low-income families in Taipei and Shanghai: A qualitative examination

Chinese societies have traditionally been characterized by relying on strong informal networks in meeting welfare needs, and government welfare has played a subsidiary role in assisting families in need. In the present day, does the welfare mix in Chinese societies still adhere to these traditional arrangements? This study examines strategies of low-income Chinese families in using public and private welfare support in meeting their needs in the face of financial hardships. Methods: We recruited low income families in Taipei and Shanghai through local organizations and residents' committees. We conduct qualitative in-depth interviews with these families. Results: Different from western literature, community-level government institutions served as important resources for low-income families in both Shanghai and Taipei. Also, respondents in Taipei and Shanghai showed a growing sense of entitlement to utilize public safety nets as a strategy to achieve self-sufficiency. In Taipei, the prominent roles of family members in providing support showed signs of weakening and the third sector offered strong support, while in Shanghai informal sector remained a fundamental source of financial buffers and the role of the third sector was still weak.



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Chaired by: A/Prof Tan Ern Ser
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