Donggen Wang · Shenjing He   *Editors*

Mobility, Sociability and Well-being of Urban Living

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Editors
Donggen Wang
Department of Geography
Hong Kong Baptist University
Kowloon Tong
Hong Kong

Shenjing He
Department of Urban Planning and Design
The University of Hong Kong
Pok Fu Lam
Hong Kong

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Introduction

The twenty-first century marks the advent of an urban age. In 2014, about 54 % of the world's population resided in urban areas, and this figure is expected to increase to 66 % by 2050 (United Nations 2014). Urban living is distinguished from lives in small towns and rural areas by its fast pace and multiplicity of economy, occupation, and social life (Simmel 1997; Sheller and Urry 2006). Mobility, sociability, and well-being are three distinctive yet highly interrelated facets of urban living. They are also the most important quintessence and three essential aspects of urban living addressed by the sustainable urban mobility campaign that the European Union has recently been actively promoting. Through sensitizing public opinion on the importance of a sustainable and taking an integrative and participatory approach to urban mobility, the sustainable urban mobility campaign does not purely focus on transport modes *per se*. It urges for coordination of policies among public authorities and specialized sectors, including transport, land use, environment, social policy, health, energy, economic development, and safety. Mobility, sociability, and well-being are the three keywords sketching out the story line of this edited volume.

The increased and diversified mobilities of urbanites, resulted from, among others, globalization and the evolutionary embedment of information and communication technology in everyday life, have redefined the contour of social science studies. Mobility is considered central to the complicated and globalized world and 'lies at the center of constellations of power, the creation of identities and the micro-geographies of everyday life' (Cresswell 2011). The so-called mobility turn in social science has been declared (Sheller and Urry 2006). This mobility turn, also called 'new mobilities paradigm,' has emerged as an interdisciplinary research field, which links science and social science to arts and humanities (Cresswell 2011). As 'moving between places physically or virtually can be a source of status and power' (Sheller and Urry 2006), mobility is an issue of not only utilitarian and practical relevance, but also ethnical and political importance (Cresswell 2010). The new mobilities paradigm examines the mobilities of not only people, but also objects and ideas at different scales ranging from small-scale bodily movements to global flows of people or finance; it is concerned about not only the measurable and

modeled forms of movements, but also the meaning and politics of movement (Cresswell 2011). The 'mobility turn' in social science has transcended the dichotomy between fields of research such as transport research and social research (Sheller and Urry 2006).

Mobility is contended to be a constitutive element of both objective and subjective well-being in a number of studies including Qian (this book) and Ettema et al. (this book). In a broad sense, mobility is conceptualized as a means of distributing resources and opportunities through which personal and collective well-being are affected (Kaufmann et al. 2004). In particular, the embodied experience of various forms of mobility is an important component of subjective well-being measured by momenta affect and sense of satisfaction (Cresswell 2010, Ettema et al., this book).

Meanwhile, sociospatial experience is an integral part of urban living that closely connects to mobility and the well-being of urban residents. Sociability and well-being has long been a classical topic in social research (see Barresi et al. 1983; Emmons and Diener 1986; Helliwell 2006; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005a; Morrow 1999; Oerlemans et al. 2011; Simmel 1949). Yet, most research is confined in the domain of psychological and built environment studies. For instance, Barresi et al. (1983) have pointed out environmental satisfaction and neighborhood sociability as key determinants of well-being in people's later life. Emmons and Diener (1986) reported that sociability was strongly related to positive affect of subjective well-being and was significantly related to life satisfaction. Most recently, a spatial dimension has been added to studies on sociability and well-being (see Du Toit et al. 2007; Ken and Thompson 2014; Schwanen and Wang 2014; Sutko and Silva 2011; Yip et al. 2013). There are ample evidences on the connection between sociability and well-being at different geographical scales and contexts, e.g., public spaces, streets, and residential neighborhoods. For instance, Schwanen and Wang (2014) contend that geography matters to not only overall well-being but also momentary well-being, while the former is associated more strongly with geographical context. Number of friends, social activities, and social support at intra-urban level and neighborhood scale affect well-being in a significant way. In particular, sense of community and neighborly interactions have been widely recognized as important factors improving urban residents' well-being and mitigating physical and emotional traumas (Browning and Cagney 2003; Liao et al., this volume; Liu et al., this volume; Yan and Gao, this volume; Yip et al. 2013).

As a classical research topic in geography, quality of life or well-being research has been concerned with the objective condition or quality of the environment (air quality, housing conditions, amenities, or disamenities) and attributes of people (e.g., education attainment, life expectancy) (Smith 1973; Pacione 2003; Ballas and Tranmer 2012; Ballas 2013). Pacione (2003) proposed a five-dimensional structure to synthesize the research of quality of life: geographical level, temporal scale, level of specificity, objective/subjective, and social groups of study. The research interests in quality of life have led to the development of territorial social indicators, which are composite indices of different factors including natural and human-created amenities. Such indicators are often used to compare the quality of

life of different regions or places (Pacione 2003; Ballas and Tranmer 2012). Perhaps inspired by the rapid proliferation of the literature in positive psychology and happiness economics (Easterlin 1974; Veenhoven 1991; Diener et al. 1995; Diener 2000), geographers' conventional emphasis on the objective aspects of well-being has recently shifted somehow to the subjective dimension of well-being, which focuses on people's evaluation of their own lives (Diener et al. 1995), and is often expressed in terms of individuals' cognitive and emotional well-being directly measured by means of reliable psychometric scale (Diener 2000). The constituent components of well-being include positive affect and negative affect of immediate experiences and cognitive component of satisfaction with life as a whole (Diener 2000; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005b), or different aspects of life such as work, residence, and family life (Campbell et al. 1976). Subjective well-being is increasingly considered as an important yardstick alternative to income growth to evaluate economic, social, and urban developments (Diener 2000). Subjective well-being also offers a new perspective to investigate critical urban issues related to sociospatial segregation, housing, daily travel, mobility of the elderly, etc. For instance, the daily travel has long been evaluated by time and cost. The subjective well-being perspective suggests that travel should also be assessed by the affective experiences during travel, which may be important factors influencing travel decisions (Abou-Zeid and Ben-Akiva 2012).

Addressing these highly interrelated hot topics, this edited volume is an interdisciplinary endeavor by researchers actively working in the fields of geography, urban studies, urban planning, transport, and sociology. Distinguished from existing studies on well-being that predominantly rely on social indicators, this book emphasizes the geographical and spatial dimension of well-being of urban residents through combining the analytical perspectives of mobility, sociability, and well-being. Covering the well-being of a wide range of urban population, especially those marginal groups such as African immigrants, rural migrants, and elderly people, this edited volume attempts to introduce a broad scope in well-being studies. This book also aims to present a comprehensive understanding of contemporary urban living by looking at both overall well-being and momentary well-being concerning different life events and daily activities such as career development, residential choice, travel behavior, and leisure and social activities. Overall, the book explores the social practices and everyday living of urbanites in different parts of the world. More than half of the chapters document the latest transformations of urban living in China, where accelerated mobilities, dynamic sociability, and pressing issues of well-being are among the most important concerns addressed by policy makers and researchers. This book also reports on the experiences of urban living from more developed countries and regions, such as USA, Japan, and Taiwan. In addition to empirical studies based on first-hand data and official statistics from a variety of contexts, this book also offers comprehensive reviews on the latest advancements in the field. This edited volume consists of 13 chapters that are organized into four parts: Mobility and Immobility (Part I); Urban Living and Sociospatial Experiences (Part II); Travel and Life Satisfaction (Part III); and Neighborhood and Subjective Well-being (Part IV).

Part I comprises three chapters dealing with the issues associated with mobilities at different geographical scales. Lan's chapter ethnographically documents the living experiences of those undocumented African immigrants in Guangzhou, China. Through examining their lived realities, this chapter reveals their decisions and choices in navigating the gray area between legal and illegal and discloses a liminal space between mobility and immobility. Lan argues that because of their illegality, undocumented African immigrants may have limited physical mobility at the local scale, but their knowledge about the Chinese market and connections with local suppliers help them gain competitiveness and transnational mobility. Drawing upon recent scholarship on the politics of mobility and new mobility paradigms, the chapter by Qian analyzes the outlawing of motorcycle mobility and the regulation of motorcycle taxis in Guangzhou and demonstrates that transport mobility entangles with the production of meanings, discourses, and more importantly relations of power. Qian's chapter also acknowledges the role of mobility in distributing resources and opportunities and its contribution to well-being, as well as the emotional aspect of the embodied experience of motorcycle mobility in terms of endless fear, stress, and frustration, which bear negative implications for subjective well-being. Ding and Wang's chapter addresses the issue of on-street parking in Chinese cities, which is considered an integral part of automobility. From the perspective of competing for urban space, they liken the on-street parking phenomenon to the occupancy urbanism of the urban poor in India as a strategy of resistance against the rigidity and inflexibility of urban regimes in governing urban space. They argue that on-street parking is at the same time rebellious and assertive in claiming their shares of urban space by the Chinese urban middle class.

The three chapters of Part II document the sociospatial experiences of the urban marginal groups. The chapter by He and Wang analyzes the urban experiences and well-being of China's new-generation migrant workers through the lens of field and habitus proposed by Bourdieu. Compared with the old generation, the new generation is found to be better educated, more adaptable to urban living, and more creative and adventurous. However, the new generations suffers from a similar level of precarity that the old generation has experienced. The urban experiences of the new generation are characterized by 'self-stigmatization' and 'ambiguous identities,' two common 'habitus' in the highly unequal and contested urban field shaped by state institutions and social and market forces. Hao's chapter provides a comprehensive survey of the processes that have produced the built environment and social space in Shenzhen's urban villages, which shelter millions of migrant workers. It highlights the importance of the economic and institutional forces and the actors holding scarce resources in producing the space of urban villages. Hao argues that urban villages provide affordable housing opportunities for migrant workers to reside in close proximity to employment and urban amenities, hence contributing to a fairer society. The redevelopment of urban villages that is underway in Shenzhen and elsewhere may jeopardize the well-being and life chances of the underprivileged and imperil the co-presence of different social classes in the urban core. Feng's Chapter presents a qualitative investigation into the living experiences of senior citizens co-residing with their adult children in

Nanjing, China. Although co-residing with adult children may sacrifice senior citizen's opportunities to engage in physical and social activities because they need to share household responsibilities including home maintenance and child care, the study shows that for those seniors with low education level and without post-retirement plans, co-residing with adult children increases their satisfaction with life.

Part III focuses on the connections between mobility and subjective well-being especially life satisfaction, a topic that has recently received much research attention in the field of travel behavior studies. The chapter by Ettema et al. outlines the recent advancements in the research on the affective experience of travel by different transport modes. It offers a comprehensive account of the instrumental, affective, and symbolic aspects of using various major transport modes in terms of theories, empirical findings, and policy implications. The chapter also discusses the well-being implications of transport mode change and its relevance to transport policy design. This is a highly relevant chapter for researchers interested in transport subjective well-being. The chapter by Cao and Wang applies econometric modeling approach to examine the association between travel and life satisfaction in Twin cities of the USA. Structural equation models are developed to empirically verify the statistical relationships between travel behavior, and satisfaction with travel and life in general. Travel satisfaction is found to be positively associated with life satisfaction. Most measures of travel behavior especially trip frequencies are reported to negatively impact on travel and life satisfaction. A similar modeling approach is adopted by Xiong and Zhang, who analyze a panel data collected in Japan. Their study also intends to establish links between travel behavior and life satisfaction but in the context of other life choice behaviors including residential choice and engagement in and time allocation to leisure and social activities. Moreover, the panel data allow the study to capture and differentiate the effects of past and current life choices on the current level of life satisfaction. A major finding of this chapter is that the current and past choices in other life domains rather than travel choices play a more important role in determining individuals' current level of life satisfaction.

Part IV is a cluster of four chapters devoted to the study of neighborhood impacts on subjective well-being. The chapter by Wang and Wang offers a comprehensive review of the literature concerning geographical patterns of life satisfaction and the contribution of spatial factors to subjective well-being. This chapter covers the conceptualizations and measurements of subjective well-being. It also summarizes the empirical findings about the spatial variations in life satisfaction and the geographical determinants of subjective well-being at different geographical scales including the neighborhood level. The chapter will be an important reference for readers interested in the geographical approach to study the subjective well-being. The chapter by Yan et al. is an empirical study of neighborhood determinants of elderly's life satisfaction. This study collected data from the elderly residents living in different types of neighborhoods in Beijing. Structural equation models are developed to examine the impacts of neighborhood factors including elderly care facilities, neighborhood social support, and accessibility to services on life

satisfaction of senior citizens. The chapter by Liu et al. is concerned with the effects of neighborhood factors on the emotional well-being of social housing residents in Guangzhou, China. Emotional well-being is measured by five indicators of positive effect and four indicators of negative effect. Neighborhood factors include the availability of different types of amenities and the perception about various aspects of social cohesion. The empirical findings of this study highlight the importance of neighborhood social milieu in promoting social housing residents' emotional well-being. This finding is also verified to some extent by the last chapter of this section. In this chapter, Liao et al. examines the importance of social support in moderating the negative effects of heat wave on emotional well-being and mental health. Their study of social vulnerability and adaptation under a heat wave in Taiwan shows that community social support is conducive to mitigate the negative impacts of heat wave on emotional well-being and adverse moods.

Overall, this book offers various perspectives and diverse analytical approaches for academics and research students to better understand different aspects of contemporary urban living in relation to mobility, sociability, and well-being. The book makes novel and important contributions to the literature in a number of ways. Firstly, the chapters on mobilities supplement the currently Euro-American dominated literature with empirical studies in Chinese and Japanese cities and shed light on the power relations embedded in mobilities and the connections between mobilities at different geographical scales. Secondly, the book adds to the literature with new empirical evidences on the predicament of Chinese migrant workers and reveals that the well-being and life chances of the marginalized groups in Chinese cities are severely compromised by institutional, social, and market forces in the highly unequal and contested urban field. Thirdly, the chapters on travel well-being contribute to the well-being literature by establishing the links between mobility and life satisfaction. They also enrich the mobilities literature by conceptually and empirically construe the well-being meaning of travel. Finally, the book explores the neighborhood effect on well-being and reveals that the availability of amenities and social support at neighborhood level appears to be important determinants of both life satisfaction and emotional well-being of the senior citizens. Research findings presented in the book are highly relevant for practitioners and policy makers in the pursuit of improving urban livability and promoting well-being.

The book is not intended to be a textbook. However, it can serve as a supplementary reading for postgraduate courses concerning with urban studies, urban geography, urban planning, urban sociology, gerontology, etc. The book will provide postgraduate students exposure to diverse perspectives and study approaches that bridge transport/mobility research and social research and incorporate quantitative and qualitative analyses.

This book is partly a follow-up product of the International Conference on Spatial and Social Transformation in Urban China held in December 2012 in Hong Kong and partly the endeavor of the Centre for China Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) of Hong Kong Baptist University in promoting urban studies. The book is also benefited from three research grants of National Science Foundation of China (NSFC): 41371181, 41271180, and 41322003.

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Part I
Mobility and Immobility

Chapter 1
Between Mobility and Immobility: Undocumented African Migrants Living in the Shadow of the Chinese State

Shanshan Lan

Abstract With China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 and the enormous growth of Sino-African trade, Guangzhou, a mega city in South China, has become the Promised Land for many African migrants seeking wealth and fortune in the global economy. Differing from the previous generation of African migrants who were mainly from elite backgrounds and who traveled to China to receive higher education training, this recent wave consisted of mainly traders and petty entrepreneurs who have relatively small amount of capital and who tend to operate their businesses in the informal economy. Based on ethnographic fieldwork within the African diaspora communities in Guangzhou, this chapter examines the structural constraints faced by undocumented Africans under China's stringent immigration policy and their various coping strategies. It questions the strict division between mobility and immobility by recognizing the existence of a continuum between the two. It further argues that the relationship between mobility and immobility is mediated by both the scale of analysis (local, national, and transnational) and migrants' different levels of interactions with local society. In the Guangzhou context, the limitation of undocumented African migrants' motility options can be complemented by their business collaboration and partnership with migrants from less developed areas of China. Collaboration with Chinese migrants enables African traders to bypass some of the constraints imposed by state immigration law. It also expands their motility options beyond Guangzhou to other cities in China.

Keywords Mobility · Immobility · Motility · Undocumented Africans · Chinese state

S. Lan (✉)
Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Achtergracht 166, Room B 5.18, 1018 WV Amsterdam, The Netherlands

1.1   Introduction

With China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 and the enormous growth of Sino-African trade, Guangzhou, a mega city in South China, has become the Promised Land for many African migrants seeking wealth and fortune in the global economy.[1] Differing from the previous generation of African migrants who were mainly from elite backgrounds and who traveled to China to receive higher education training, this recent wave consisted of mainly traders and petty entrepreneurs who have relatively small amount of capital and who tend to operate their businesses in the informal economy. In July 2009, an undocumented African was severely injured after jumping from the second floor of a trade mall to evade a passport check by the Chinese police (Tang and Gong 2009). The event drew worldwide attention to the presence of illegal African migrants in China.[2] 3 years later, the African community was under the spotlight again when open clashes broke out between African traders and the Chinese police on 19 June 2012 over the death of a Nigerian man in police custody (Beech 2012; Branigan 2012). While such media coverage reflects the growing tensions between African migrants and the Chinese authorities, relatively little is known about the daily life experiences of undocumented African migrants in Guangzhou and how they interact with the local Chinese community.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork within the African diaspora communities in Guangzhou, this chapter examines the structural constraints faced by undocumented Africans in urban China and their various coping strategies. Specifically, it focuses on "illegal" residence as a business strategy maintaining vital transnational trade networks between China and Africa. For many African migrants, "illegal" residence in Guangzhou is just one special phase of their life for the purpose of capital accumulation. It enables them to maintain a transnational advantage over traders in Africa. By voluntarily choosing a lifestyle of circumscribed mobility in Guangzhou, undocumented African migrants have been playing an important role in facilitating transnational trade activities between China and their home countries.

Guangzhou's African population began increasing in 1998 when the Asian financial crisis prompted African merchants to leave Indonesia and Thailand in search of new markets (Bodomo 2012; Osnos 2009). The capital of Guangdong Province, Guangzhou has a rich history of foreign trade and exchange. Since its inauguration in 1957, the Canton Fair (renamed the Annual China Import and Export Fair in 2007) has attracted merchants from all over the world. Guangzhou also became a popular destination for Africans because of its warm weather,

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[1]This follows the popular Chinese understanding of African migrants, which mainly refers to sub-Saharan or black Africans. In Guangzhou Arabic-speaking migrants from North Africa are usually identified by Chinese as whites or Arabs, not as Africans.

[2]The English-language media carried a different version of the story, claiming that the African man died. Interviews with African migrants who witnessed the 2009 incident revealed that the man was severely injured but did not die.

religious diversity and relatively tolerant political and economic setting. The African population in Guangzhou is extremely diverse and almost every country in Africa is represented in the diaspora. The majority of Africans in Guangzhou are traders from West Africa, but there are also significant numbers of East and Central African migrants. According to Bodomo (2012), the top five groups are Nigerians, Senegalese, Malians, Guineans, and Ghanaians. About 80 % of the migrants surveyed by Bodomo are between 24 and 40 years old, and close to 82 % of them are men.

There are no available government statistics on the exact number of Africans in Guangzhou. According to some scholarly estimates, the number is probably around 20,000 (Li et al. 2009a; Haugen 2012; Yang 2012). African migrants are commonly found in two major areas of the city: the Xiaobei area, where most of the French-speaking Muslims gather, and the Sanyuanli area, where most of the English-speaking Christians frequent. The division between the two areas is not clear cut. In reality there is a constant flow of people and goods from one area to another. This research mainly focuses on the Anglophone Christian migrant communities in the Sanyuanli area, with special attention to undocumented Nigerians.

Although undocumented migration is a global phenomenon, the existing literature mainly focuses on migrant experiences in Europe and North America (Koser 2005). China provides an interesting case study for undocumented African migration for several reasons. First, the recent African migration to China is based on trade migration, not labor migration. It is not mediated by China's structural demand for low-cost, flexible, foreign-born labor, but by China's position as the global manufacturing powerhouse of cheap consumer goods. In fact, the majority of African migrants in Guangzhou are traders who function as middlemen between factories and suppliers in China and clients in Africa. Due to its long history as an immigrant-sending country, China has not yet developed "a clear legal and administrative framework and apparatus to deal with the entry, residence, and employment of foreigners" (Pieke 2012: 58). The concentration of undocumented African migrants in Guangzhou is the result of complex interplays between structural constraints, such as gaps and contradictions in China's immigration policy, and individual migrant survival strategies (Lan 2015). As an example of South–South migration, the African presence in China is also mediated by changing political and economic relations between China and Africa, and the intersection of internal and international migration in global cities such as Guangzhou.

The data for this research was gathered between April 2012 and June 2014 through archival research (government legal documents, Chinese language newspapers, and journals) and participant observation in the African markets in the Xiaobei and Sanyuanli areas of Guangzhou. From July to August 2013, the author made a 3-week research trip to Lagos, Nigeria. In Guangzhou, the author and her research assistants conducted over 50 open-ended interviews with Africans from Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Togo, Gambia, Tanzania, Niger, Senegal, Cameroon, and other countries. The team also interviewed 40 Chinese who had various levels of interaction with Africans. Their backgrounds include real estate agents, small business owners, government officials, migrant workers, and wives of African men.

In Lagos, the author conversed informally with 43 Nigerian traders on their business experience in China and encounters with the police in Guangzhou. Due to the extreme heterogeneity in the African diaspora community, this chapter can only present a partial picture of the undocumented African experience in Guangzhou.

1.2 "Illegal" Residence as a Transnational Mobility Strategy

The transnational flow of people, goods, and ideas not only challenges geographically defined borders but also transforms social economic relations in different political and cultural contexts. Identifying the linkages between spatial and social mobility, scholars have noted that different social groups' access to mobility opportunities are mediated by unequal power relations (Massey 1993; Liu 1997; Nonini 1997). Glick et al. (2013) propose a "regimes of mobility" framework to explore "the relationships between the privileged movements of some and the co-dependent but stigmatized and forbidden movement, migration and interconnections of the poor, powerless and exploited" (188). Kaufmann et al. (2004) introduce the concept of motility, or the potential of mobility, to illuminate the connection between spatial and social mobility. According to this group of authors, motility encompasses three elements, "*access* to different forms and degrees of mobility, *competence* to recognize and make use of access, and *appropriation* of a particular choice, including the option of non-action" (750). They further conceptualize motility as a form of capital that can be transformed into other types of capital. This chapter offers a nuanced analysis of the transnational mobility dreams of undocumented African migrants in Guangzhou by examining some of the contradictions in their motility options. On the one hand, undocumented African migrants encounter severe restrictions to their physical and social mobility in China due to state immigration control policy and their vulnerable legal status. On the other hand, African migrants can expand their motility capital, to a certain extent, by making strategic choices in regard to a shifting range of statuses between the "legal" and "illegal," and by building personal and business relations with migrants from other parts of China.

Scholars in migration studies have noted that migrant "illegality" is legally, politically, and socially constructed (Chavez 2007; De Genova 2002, 2004; Ngai 2004). Anderson and Ruhs (2010) emphasize the importance of studying "illegality" not as an end-state by itself, but as a processual and temporal phenomenon. Since most African migrants enter China on a valid business or tourist visa, there is a process of migrant choice and decision making when confronted with the constraints of immigration control. Instead of merely being victims of state policy, migrants may carefully evaluate the risks and benefits of living as an undocumented migrant in China and make their strategic choices accordingly. As noted by Cvajner and Sciortino (2010a), irregularity is "a status that may be both attained and left

behind in very different ways" (214). Some migrants may start with a valid legal status but end up losing that status for various reasons; others may manage to legalize their status after living as an undocumented migrant for a certain period.

Anderson and Ruhs (2010) use the term "status mobility" to describe migrants' ability to move between a shifting range of immigration statuses. This chapter argues that illegal residence started as an involuntary coping strategy for some early African traders as China tightened its control over immigration, but it gradually became a voluntary choice for newcomers, especially Nigerian Igbo, as they developed alternative motility options that move beyond the binary of the legal and illegal.

Some pioneering studies have been conducted on the adaptive strategies of different groups of African migrants in response to China's inconsistent visa policy and police abuse of power (Lyons et al. 2008, 2012; Yang 2012). Li et al. (2012) identify that the local state has a key role in contributing to the "prosperity" and "collapse" of the African enclave in Guangzhou. Haugen (2012) describes the spatial entrapment and restricted movement of undocumented Nigerians in Guangzhou as "a second state of immobility," in comparison with their "involuntary immobility" in the home country. This chapter questions the strict division between mobility and immobility by recognizing the existence of a continuum between the two. In other words, the relationship between mobility and immobility is relative and is mediated by both the scale of analysis (local, national, and transnational) and migrants' different levels of interactions with local society. Undocumented African migrants may have limited physical mobility at the local scale (i.e., Guangzhou city), but their knowledge of the Chinese market, competence in the Chinese language, and connections with local suppliers, may help them gain competitive advantages at the transnational scale. By functioning as intermediaries between suppliers in China and customers in Africa, undocumented Africans are instrumental in facilitating the transnational flow of people, goods, and information between the two regions. In this vein, "illegal" residence can be a transnational mobility strategy for some Africans who wish to find a business niche in Sino-African trade relations.

This research also extends Haugen's analysis on migrants' physical and spatial mobility by adding the dimension of social mobility. In the Guangzhou context, the limitation of undocumented African migrants' motility options can be complemented by their business collaboration and partnership with migrants from less developed areas of China. As one of the first cities that benefited from China's open-door policy, Guangzhou is a popular destination not only for African traders, but also for migrants from other parts in China. The city's thriving export-oriented markets and concentration of African traders has attracted migrant workers and entrepreneurs from different regions of China, who find business and job opportunities by providing trade or trade-related services to Africans. Recent scholarship in migration studies has de-centered the national scale by paying attention to relationships between different types of mobility trajectories (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; King and Skeldon 2010; Ellis 2012; Kalir 2013). This research regards Guangzhou as a contact zone where China's internal migration converges

with international migration. Collaboration with Chinese migrants enables African traders to bypass some of the constraints imposed by state immigration law. It also expands their motility options beyond Guangzhou to other cities in China.

1.3 Reasons for Migration

The African migration to South China has been boosted by the enormous growth of Sino-African trade relations and the increasing presence of mainland Chinese enterprises and small entrepreneurs from Africa (Alden et al. 2008). The influx of inexpensive Chinese products has significantly changed consumer culture and marketplace hierarchies in some African countries (Dobler 2009; Marfaing and Thiel 2013). To bypass the Chinese middlemen, an increasing number of Africans prefer to travel directly to China to purchase cheap consumer goods and bring them back for sale in Africa. This connection between Chinese migration to Africa and African migration to China is confirmed by Bodomo (2012), whose African research subjects summarize their reasons for migration to China in one sentence, "We are here because they are there" (230). Sam, a 32-year-old Nigerian trader in Guangzhou, told me that he had no knowledge about China when his father asked him to go there to do business. He said, "A Chinese man I met in the market told me that Chinese people are very nice and Chinese women are very beautiful and I would enjoy staying in China. My friends thought I should go and see China because they had never been to China themselves." Sam's father had traveled to China in 1997 to do business. With the help of one of his father's Chinese friends, Sam obtained a business visa to travel to Guangzhou in 2007. At the time of my interview with him, Sam was running a clothing shop in the Tangqi market, one of the busiest African markets in Sanyuanli area.

Another major reason for African migration to China is the relative ease of obtaining a visa. Traditional countries for immigration in Europe and North America are continuingly challenged by the increasing diversity in undocumented migration, and the draconian immigration control policies in these countries have forced migrants to look for new destinations in the developing world. Some of the African migrants chose China as their destination because of the business opportunities there, others ended up in China because their agents failed to obtain a visa to more developed countries in the West. As noted by Haugen (2012), the proliferation of visa and document services in Nigeria encourages hasty migration decisions and unrealistic expectations about business and job opportunities in China. As China tightens its immigration control, African migrants can still easily purchase forged passports and traveling documents through transnational brokerage service networks maintained by cross-border and cross-cultural collaboration between Chinese and African agents (Lan and Xiao 2014). Due to its history as an immigrant-sending country, China has not yet developed a mature immigration system to handle the increasing diversity of foreign migrants. The lack of systematic state policies for the administration of the business activities of grassroots foreign

traders in China has contributed to the thriving informal foreign trade activities in Guangzhou, which often blur the line between being legal and illegal.

Depending on their migrant trajectories, Castillo (2014) identifies three types of African traders in Guangzhou: (1) the more established, (2) the itinerants and semi-settled, and (3) the newly arrived. The first category includes those who have been doing business in Guangzhou for more than a decade and who have established important personal and business relations with local authorities and business partners. The last category refers mainly to fortune seekers who have no previous business experience and cultural knowledge of China. Unlike the first two groups who generally hold valid visas in China, these latecomers tend to have a vulnerable legal status and have to rely on ethnic community networks for survival. Most of the African migrants interviewed in this research belong to the semi-settled and newcomers' groups, whose immigration status often shifts between being legal and illegal depending on their economic circumstances, social connections with the Chinese community, and changes in state immigration policy. The majority of our interviewees learned about business opportunities in China through friends and family networks and decided to try their luck in the Promised Land. There are several ways for migrants to acquire start-up capital for the China trip, which generally involves various types of family obligations and social reciprocity. One is to combine all family resources, including loans from distant relatives or the sale of family assets, to send a son to China. This person is usually under great pressure to succeed in China due to all the family expectations. Another way is to work for an experienced trader or a relative for a few years (usually seven or eight) as an apprentice. At the end of his service, the person is offered a plane ticket to China and a modest sum of money as start-up capital. A third way is through the help of friends. One Nigerian informant reported that a friend who has been traveling to China for business paid for his China trip, on the condition that he would return the money in a few years.

Although most of our African informants migrated to China for economic reasons, not all of them traveled to China for trading purposes. Quite a number of them became traders involuntarily due to the lack of alternative mobility opportunities for foreign migrants in China. Linda, a 24-year-old woman from Cameroon, migrated to China for an English teacher's job promised by her visa agent, but ended up in Guangzhou buying and selling counterfeit goods to survive. John, a 27-year-old man from Uganda, paid an agent US $2000 for a visa and plane ticket to China to find a factory job in Guangzhou. Yet, after his arrival at the airport, he found that the Chinese contact number provided by his agent was a fake one. At the time of the interview, John's visa had already expired, and he was stranded in Guangzhou with no money to start a business or buy a return ticket. Lucky, a 28-year-old Nigerian from a wealthy family came to China with the intention to attend law school there. But he found Chinese universities do not offer English language instruction and the educational system in China is quite different from the system in his own country. He finally gave up his dream of law school and turned to trading activities. At the time of the interview, he was selling shoes in the Canaan market in Sanyuanli. The

three examples cited here show that a lack of knowledge about education, job, and business opportunities in China may lead to unexpected difficulties in post-migration life in China, including financial constraints, loss of legal status, a change in career paths, and other tragic consequences.

1.4 The Social and Legal Construction of African "Illegality" in Guangzhou

Within the Chinese language, the term *sanfei* is often used in both official and popular media to describe illegal immigrants. *Sanfei* literally means "triple illegal." It includes three types of illegal immigrants: those who enter illegally, stay illegally, and work illegally in China. The term first gained popular usage in coastal and border areas of China, where the pressure to curb undocumented immigration was more keenly perceived (He 2009; Wu 2013). On May 15, 2012, when Beijing launched the 100-day crackdown on *sanfei* foreigners in the city, the term started to gain national popularity. Unlike "foreign experts" who are generally considered contributors to the development of Chinese economy, in many Chinese analyses *sanfei* foreigners are often related to social problems such as "terrorism, organized and petty crime, drinking, drugs and violence, prostitution, and unemployment" (Pieke 2012: 57).[3] Although *sanfei* foreigners are from a variety of countries in both the developing and developed worlds, in the Guangzhou case, *sanfei* are primarily associated with African migrants.

Reasons for Chinese prejudice against Africans at the personal level include the following: traditional esthetic values, ignorance of African cultures and societies, influence of Western media, language barriers, and cultural misunderstandings. Despite the state rhetoric of the Sino-African friendship, the majority of Chinese citizens still have very limited knowledge of Africa. In a 2006 survey conducted by *China Youth Daily,* the official organ of the Communist Youth League, and Sina.com, the biggest Chinese Internet news portal, 71.7 % of the 5119 respondents reported that they knew very little about Africa. Around 30.4 % associated Africa with poverty, underdevelopment and AIDS (Li and Rønning 2013). In the Guangzhou context, Africans are identified primarily by their black skin color, not by their country of origin, language, or religious beliefs. The Chinese term *heiren* (black person) is often used, in both popular media and daily life settings, as a generic term to refer to Africans from diverse backgrounds. Because of this conflation of black and African identities, Chinese perceptions of Africans tend to be rather homogenous, and oftentimes are tainted with negative stereotypes. For example, the Cantonese term *hakgwai* (literally meaning black devil or ghost) is

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[3]According to Brady (2000), "foreign expert" is a polite term used by the Chinese to describe all foreign technicians and workers. In its specific sense, it is the highest rank of the sliding pay scale for foreigners who work for the Chinese government.

sometimes used, by local Cantonese and migrant workers from other parts of China, in a derogatory manner to show contempt for African migrants.[4]

The local Chinese media also plays a key role in constructing a negative image of Africans as guilty of illegal immigration, drug dealing, sex offenses, and the spread of AIDS (Li et al. 2009b). The media production of the "African threat" was achieved in several ways. First was the exaggeration of the number of undocumented Africans in the city. In 2007, a report in *Guangzhou Daily* claimed that there were 200,000 Africans in the city and only about 20,000 were officially registered with the government (Ke and Du 2007).[5] Since then, news reporters and individual Chinese frequently quote the figure of 200,000 as the most popular estimate of the African population in Guangzhou. The "African threat" discourse was also highlighted by the demonization of black masculinity over the internet. One news website in Shenzhen reprinted the *Guangzhou Daily* report with a sensational title, "There are 200,000 blacks in Guangzhou and rape cases committed by blacks have been rapidly rising"[6] Racist comments such as the black invasion, the 57th ethnic group in China and the AIDS threat can be found among Chinese netizens from different parts of China (Cheng 2011).[7] The criminalization of Africans as drug dealers in popular media also played an important role in the racialization of the black identity in Guangzhou. Although several groups of foreigners are involved in drug-related crimes in the city, including Southeast Asians, Middle-Easterners, and overseas Chinese, Africans are often singled out as the most visible group (Liao and Du 2011; Qiu 2011).

At the government level, the influx of Africans to Guangzhou was first considered a positive stimulus to the city's economy (Li et al. 2012). However, as media reports of "black-related crimes" increased, African migrants soon became the target of the local government's anti-*sanfei* campaign. Prior to the Beijing Olympics in August 2008, the Chinese government tightened its visa policy for foreigners. The government rejected multi-entry visa applications and no longer allowed foreigners from 33 countries to apply for a visa to China in Hong Kong or Macau, but instead required them to return to their home countries to apply and provide extra documents such as a return ticket and a hotel reservation (AsiaNews 2008; Cheng and Chao 2009). In Guangzhou, the police carried out special anti-*sanfei* raids every 2 months in the areas where Africans were concentrated (Li et al. 2012). In August 2008, the Guangzhou government announced that foreigners would be included in the "floating population" category and were subjected to the corresponding rules and regulations (Ju 2008). In parallel with the well-publicized

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[4]The naming of foreigners as "barbarians" or "devils" originated from an ethnocentric tradition in ancient Chinese society when Chinese culture was celebrated as the culmination of human civilization.

[5]*Guangzhou Daily* is the official newspaper of the Guangzhou municipal party committee and is one of the largest circulations of the daily papers in China.

[6]http://www.sznews.com/news/content/2007-12/13/content_1718395.htm, last accessed February 20, 2014.

[7]China currently has 56 ethnic groups.

stigmatization of the internal "floating population" in urban China (Zhang 2001), *sanfei* foreigners were blamed for the increasing crime rates in cities, creating pressure for China's labor market and draining social resources reserved for Chinese citizens (Zhuang 2007). After the African protest in 2009, the Guangzhou municipal government began to receive pressure from Beijing to implement more stringent immigration control policies.

On May 1, 2011, the *Interim Provisions of Guangdong Province on Administration of and Services to Aliens* went into effect. This was the first local government-level legislation in China concerning the administration of foreigners. Designed to specifically target *sanfei* foreigners in the Pearl River Delta area, the Guangdong Act promotes a reward and penalty scheme by encouraging ordinary Chinese civilians to report illegal foreigners to local authorities.

This law ends up breeding hostility, suspicion, and mistrust between local residents and African migrants and helps to perpetuate the media stereotypes that every black African is a potential *sanfei*. The Guangdong Act also expanded the power of local police to stop foreigners for passport and visa verification. This encourages the arbitrary nature of law enforcement and corruption in the police force. Due to their black skin color, African migrants are the easiest to identify among foreigners, and they became the most vulnerable group in the local government's anti-*sanfei* campaign. The Guangdong Act highlights the Pearl River Delta area as a pilot of China's anti-*sanfei* campaign. On June 30, 2012, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed a new *Exit-Entry Administration Law*, which took effect on July 1, 2013. The new law contains tougher provisions for *sanfei* foreigners (Mao and Bai 2012). It also incorporated some of the key principles in the Guangdong Act, such as the reward and penalty scheme and the expansion of authority for visa officers (Lan 2015).

1.5   "Illegality" as Lived Experiences

Like Japan and South Korea, China is reluctant to admit its status as an emerging new destination for immigrants. The Chinese state still treats foreign migrants as temporary, and there is no official effort to integrate them to Chinese society. The relative ease of obtaining a visa for China and the tightening of immigration control in the country has created a dilemma for some African migrants. Unlike developed countries where immigrant workers can be readily absorbed into the second- and third-tier market, in China, no labor-intensive jobs are available for unskilled African migrants due to the big supply of the migrant labor force from rural China. The only option for them is to engage in international trade or trade-related services. Due to the higher risk and longer business cycle of doing international trade, and their relatively small amount of capital, some Africans find it necessary to stay in China to personally handle details at each stage of business transactions. However, China's stringent immigration policy makes it difficult to renew their visa for an extended period of time. Due to several high-profile drug-dealing cases concerning

undocumented Nigerians and their involvement in the two public protest events in Guangzhou, Nigerians have encountered more difficulty than other Africans in extending their visa (Haugen 2012; Li et al. 2012). Nigerian Igbo are often identified by both researchers and other Africans as constituting the largest number of visa overstayers in Guangzhou (Haugen 2012; Yang 2012). Igbo are more likely to become overstayers due to the structural marginalization they face in Nigeria and the tremendous cultural pressure for success in a foreign land.

Undocumented Nigerian Igbo can be roughly divided into two groups: the first constitutes those who became "illegal" immigrants involuntarily, either due to poverty, an inability to pay the expensive visa renewal fee or by failed attempts to renew one's visa. The second group constitutes of newcomers who travel to China with the intention to overstay. These migrants already knew about the challenges of living in China as undocumented migrant from communicating with their fellow countrymen who have done business in China, but they still desire to try their fortune in China to escape poverty and unemployment in their home country. In addition, there is a third group of Nigerian migrants who make a circular migration between China and Nigeria by moving between different immigration statuses—legal, semi-legal, illegal, and legal again. For example, an undocumented migrant may become successful in business and decided to register a legal office in China. A deportee may obtain a new passport from an agent in Nigeria and enter China again with a valid visa. An undocumented Nigerian trader may enroll in a Chinese university to obtain a valid student visa while keeping his business activities. Each of these examples has its own complications, but together they challenge the strict binary between legal and illegal as prescribed by state law.

Compared with the many obstacles to maintaining one's legal status in China, the challenges for living as an undocumented migrant is even more formidable. Increased police surveillance in Guangzhou has severely restricted the physical mobility of undocumented African migrants in the city. After the 2009 protest, local landlords in Sanyuanli refused to rent to undocumented Nigerians under pressure from the police. Many Nigerians had to relocate to Nanhai, a district in the nearby city of Foshan. Others moved to smaller cities such as Dongguan, Shenzhen, and Zhongshan, where fewer Africans are concentrated and police surveillance is less strict. However, since some of the major African markets are located in Guangzhou, many still had to commute to Guangzhou regularly to continue their trade activities. Due to their vulnerable legal status, undocumented Africans have to limit their travel in the city and avoid certain public spaces at certain times of the day to minimize their chance of being intercepted by the police (Haugen 2012). A 40-year-old undocumented Nigerian man told me, "There is no peace and security for blacks in Guangzhou. The police check papers everywhere: in people's homes, on the bus, in the street, in the market, in the restaurants, everywhere. When I am walking on the street, it is purely by the grace of God. If not for God's protection, there won't be any Africans in this city." A lack of physical mobility not only jeopardizes undocumented migrants' business activities, but also poses a threat to their psychological well-being. A 31-year-old Nigerian man attributed his business failure to his undocumented status. He said, "If I had papers, I could travel

to other cities to buy cheaper goods, but now I'm trapped in Guangzhou." Most undocumented Africans I interviewed expressed feelings of vulnerability and insecurity in the face of police harassment. One Nigerian deportee in Lagos told me, "Now I can sleep well at home. In Guangzhou you could only sleep with one eye closed."

To a large extent, undocumented African migrants' fear of the Chinese police can be interpreted as their fear of detention or imprisonment, which is an extreme form of immobility.

When an undocumented migrant is arrested by the police, he is kept in the detention center for a few weeks and then deported. This usually results in the loss of all personal belongings and business opportunities in China because there is little chance for the migrant to return to the market to collect the orders he had placed for customers in Africa or to claim the deposit already paid to Chinese merchants. Some of the lucky ones managed to call their friends before they were taken away by the police. But since their friends could not produce the original receipts, most of the time they were unable to collect the goods for the arrested person. Being arrested by the police usually represents an abrupt interruption and termination of business activities in China. Some deportees faced lawsuits because of their inability to pay back the debts to customers in Africa. Restricted mobility in the city also aggravates issues of credibility and trust between African migrant traders and their Chinese suppliers. Chinese traders who have little knowledge of the structural constraints faced by African migrants in Guangzhou generally interpret the latter's failure to keep promises or appointments as evidence of their lack of business integrity. Others have learned to take advantage of African migrants' vulnerable legal status by threatening to call the police whenever a business dispute arises between Chinese and Africans. In many cases, Africans have to suffer a business loss by fleeing from the scene to avoid encounters with the Chinese police.

1.6 Alternative Motility Options

Despite the circumscribed mobility experienced by undocumented African migrants in Guangzhou, many of them still consider Guangzhou a Promised Land. A 25-year-old Nigerian, who had stayed in China for 3 years, compared the situation of undocumented migrants in Europe and in China. He said, "In Europe, undocumented people can move around freely, but they don't give you opportunities like in China. If you don't have proper documents, you can't own a business and ship goods to Africa daily, like we do here in Guangzhou. Life in China is not free, but I can still do my business if I live very carefully here. The Chinese government allows us to stay and run our businesses here, so it is not that wicked." The man's testimony points to the existence of a liminal space between mobility and immobility in Guangzhou, which provide undocumented African migrants with alternative motility options despite stringent immigration control by the Chinese state. This research identifies two major sources for alternative motility options for

undocumented Africans: (1) support from the diaspora African community in Guangzhou and (2) collaboration with Chinese migrants from less developed areas in China.

Based on research in Italy, Cvajner and Sciortino (2010a) describe three types of irregular migratory careers: atomistic, volume-based, and structured. Migrants in the atomistic career usually become undocumented because of unexpected combinations of factors such as individual contingencies and legislative changes. Those in the volume-based category are part of a sudden increase in irregular migration, and they generally depend on weak ties with acquaintances or fellow countrymen for initial survival in the host society. The structured trajectory has a strong link with previously legal flows and can manage the consequences of increasingly repressive policies. While these three types of careers coexist in the African community in Guangzhou, there are generally more Nigerians in the volume-based and structured trajectories than migrants from other African countries. Since Nigerians constitute the largest group of all Africans, they have the most mature ethnic support network in Guangzhou, which can help reduce the challenges and risks for visa overstayers. Undocumented Nigerians mainly work as middlemen between suppliers in China and clients in Africa. Some combine trade activities with unauthorized employment in, for instance, cargo companies, African restaurants, or night clubs. The research team encountered some undocumented Africans from other countries, yet they generally have had a harder time finding employment or business opportunities than undocumented Nigerians.

De Genova (2002) notes the embedded nature of social networks between undocumented and documented migrants, between migrants and citizens. He observes, "…there are no hermetically sealed communities of undocumented migrants. In everyday life, undocumented migrants are invariably engaged in social relations with 'legal' migrants as well as citizens, and they commonly live in quite intimate proximity to various categories of 'documented' persons" (422). Since Guangzhou hosts the largest African diaspora in China, it has a relatively well-developed community infrastructure, which provides crucial survival networks for undocumented migrants. For example, migrants can sometimes obtain a modest loan from ethnic organizations or churches at the time of business failure. Several of our informants reported finding casual jobs in an ethnic business through friends and church networks shortly after their arrival in Guangzhou. In addition to survival needs, the ethnic community also functions as a training ground for newcomers to access information about the Chinese market, develop rudimentary knowledge of the Chinese language, and seek advice about business success in a foreign land. Since most African migrants enter China with a 1-month tourist or business visa, some take advantage of this 1-month's freedom of movement to do market research, that is, to familiarize themselves with the various wholesale markets in Guangzhou and other Chinese cities. For a small fee, they can get help from more experienced traders, who will accompany them to the markets and offer advice on how to find cheaper goods, how to bargain with Chinese people and how to tell the difference between original and copied goods. At the end of 1 month, when the newcomer's visa is about to expire, he is supposed to have developed enough knowledge of the

Chinese market and some survival Chinese to face all the challenges of living as an undocumented trader in Guangzhou.

Another important source of alternative motility originates from daily life interactions between undocumented African traders and migrants from other parts of China. Despite language barriers and cultural differences, the African and Chinese migrant populations in the Xiaobei and Sanyuanli areas have formed an economically interdependent relationship. Migrants from rural China share similar structural marginalization with African traders because both are severed from the state-support system and both belong to the legally ambiguous category of "the floating population." As noted by Cvajner and Sciortino (2010b), "in economics, an irregular status is nearly always translated into the possibility of charging a higher price for goods and services" (398). Chinese migrants and some local Chinese regard the presence of undocumented Africans in Guangzhou as potential economic opportunities and are generally willing to provide various kinds of trade-related services in exchange for financial gain. In their effort to survive outside the state system, Chinese migrants have learned to collaborate with African traders in playing the hide-and-seek game with the local state. Since undocumented Africans cannot open a bank account in China, they have to depend on underground banks operated by Chinese or documented Africans to handle transnational cash flows. Although the business of foreign currency exchange is illegal, plenty of Chinese migrants provide this service to African traders. In Xiaobei, a historically Muslim neighborhood, the majority of the money-changers are Muslim migrants from Northwestern China. An undocumented African only needs to make a phone call to get the service he needs, thus minimizing his chance of being intercepted by the police on the street.

There are generally three types of relations between Chinese and Africans: personal friendships, business relations, and romantic relations. The three often overlap because one can easily lead to the other. Daily interactions with Chinese migrants can significantly expand undocumented African migrants' motility options due to the latter's enhanced knowledge of Chinese language and culture, and growing personal and business networks in China. One unintended consequence of the Guangdong government's anti-*sanfei* campaign is that it actually pushed undocumented Africans to become more embedded in Chinese society; for example, by learning the Chinese language, marrying Chinese women, and forming business partnerships with Chinese migrants. One undocumented Nigerian explained to me why some of his friends are seeking Chinese spaces for social activities. He said, "We go to Chinese restaurants because we love Chinese food, and also because it's safe there. We try to blend in with local Chinese. The police wouldn't expect us to go to Chinese places." Besides socializing in Chinese spaces, some undocumented migrants also rely on their Chinese friends, spouses, or business partners to rent shop spaces in trade malls, collect market information, travel to other cities to make orders or collect goods, and provide other trade-related services. During a national crackdown on drug trafficking in 2013, most African shops in the Sanyuanli area were forced to close due to frequent police passport checks. While some African traders chose to leave China, others went into hiding in