

China's 'Chocolate City': An Ethnic Enclave in a Changing Landscape*

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Abstract

The recent rise of African communities in Guangzhou has been widely noted. To understand this 'Chocolate City,' with a series of field surveys in 2006-2010, we examine its different development stages and shed particular light upon its internal and external linkages. Three modalities: the emerging enclave, the prosperous enclave and the collapsing enclave, have been identified. The rise of the 'Chocolate City' has been mainly attributed to the rise of Sino-Africa trading and the efforts of local entrepreneurs. The prosperity of the City was backed by the local states. However, the involvement of local polices, the reform of the local immigration regime and the deterioration of economic relations resulted in its recent collapse. We argue that this 'Chocolate City' is a restructuring ethnic enclave underlying the impacts of 'transient glocalization.' The rise and fall of the 'Chocolate City' indicates the dynamic relations between the transient global-local nexus, immigration regime, and local geography.

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Keywords

migrant, Chocolate City, Guangzhou, transient glocalization, Chinese local state

Résumé

L'essor récent des communautés africaines à Guangzhou a été largement constaté. Pour comprendre cette « Cité Chocolat », sur base d'une série d'études sur le terrain datant de 2006 à 2010, nous examinons ses différents stades de développement et mettons particulièrement en lumière ses connexions internes et externes. Trois modalités ont été identifiées: l'enclave émergente, l'enclave prospère et l'enclave qui s'effondre. L'émergence de la « Cité Chocolat » a souvent été attribuée à l'essor du commerce sino-africain et aux efforts d'entrepreneurs locaux. La prospérité de la Cité était appuyée par les gouvernements locaux. Cependant, l'implication des polices locales, la réforme du régime local d'immigration et la détérioration des relations économiques ont conduit à son récent effondrement. Nous soutenons que cette « Cité Chocolat » est une enclave ethnique restructurante qui sous-tend les impacts de la « Glocalisation éphémère ». L'essor et la chute de la « Cité Chocolat » indique les relations dynamiques qui existent entre le réseau éphémère global-local, le régime d'immigration et la géographie locale.

Mots-clés

migrant, 'Chocolate City', Guangzhou, glocalisation transitoire, autorités locales chinoises

Introduction

'China-Africa,' a term now very widely used, epitomizes a recent development of Sino-Africa relations that has never been noted (Beuret et al. 2008). After the first Ministerial Conference 'Forum on China-Africa Cooperation' held in 2000 in Beijing, Sino-African cooperation, particularly over economic relations, has seen an unprecedented boom. In 1999, for instance, the total Sino-African trade volume was just USD6.5 billion; by 2009 it had already reached USD91 billion (Xinhua Net 2010). China has become one of Africa's largest trading partners. A growing literature sheds light upon Chinese diasporas involved in the Sino-African trading in African cities (for a review, see Haugen and Carling 2005). In contrast, the counter flow of African traders to China has been less studied, yet recently is making a significant impact on African economies and societies, and is creating new changes in Chinese cities.

This article explores the African traders and their space in Guangzhou, China – the major center of the exports of manufactured goods from China to Africa, concentrating on the period 2006-2010. The primary aim is to understand the African actors in the flow of Sino-Africa trading, the challenges and opportunities they face, and how these are mediated in a particular time and space. We will first review the literature on rising ethnic enclaves against the recent boom of transnational migration and try to contextualize the trajectory of ethnic enclave developments against various social, cultural, and economic

backgrounds. In particular, with a highlight of the spatial dimension as well as local responses, we will interrogate the extant literature of African communities in Guangzhou and join the debate on its modalities. Following a brief account of the research methods and a database we built upon a survey of local communities, media and governments of Guangzhou during 2006-2010, the paper addresses three key questions: what is the profile of these immigrants? What is the geography of their communities? In particular, what are the responses of local society and the local states?

Ethnic Enclaves and the Modality of African Communities in Guangzhou

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, the revolutionary improvement of communication and transportation technologies, along with the transition of political ideology such as decolonization and human rights, signaled a new era of the 'borderless' world. Grassroots cross-border activities generated a new wave of 'globalisation from below' (Portes 1996; Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Schiller and Fouron 1998; Smith 2001). Among them, transnational traders achieved success in entrepreneurial activities through grasping the advantages created by national boundaries and through culturally linked networks within ethnic communities (Zhou and Logan 1989, 1991). Research has shown that the interactions of the new Diaspora with host societies create distinct imprints on host cities. Migrants typically occupy space 'abandoned' by locals, colonizing public spaces for housing, work, or leisure (Murdie and Borgegard 1998; Olmos and Garrido 2007). Though the disadvantages of ethnic segregation and concentration have long been examined, and such studies have left a rich legacy (Shevky and Bell 1955; Wilson 1987; Massey and Denton 1988; Massey and Denton 1989), ethnic enclaves provide a distinctive case to disclose the positivity of ethnic concentrations. In contrast to traditional studies, which concentrate on the marginalization of unskilled or semiskilled manual immigrants, recent works call for analyzing the international flows of highly skilled or managerial personnel – professionals, and entrepreneurs – and their ethnic spaces (Cristaldi 2002; Lin and Tse 2005; Miera 2008). This reflects the broader impacts of globalization in terms of both an increasing mobility of capital, population, and the rise of the global city as a nexus of flexible capital accumulation; but also in terms of the increasing diversity of the groups involved (Sassen 1994, 2001).

Most transnational social spaces have been studied in developed countries such as the UK and the US, as most immigrants traditionally move towards these countries. There is a big vacuum of studies upon this phenomenon in

other nations, especially transitional countries. As one of the fastest-growing and most powerful economies in the world, China is undergoing a remarkable transformation, featuring urbanization and globalization (Logan 2001, 2008). The process is highly associated with both internal and external migration. Rural migrants work in urban factories that produce products selling to the world through markets and shops that attract international traders. The recent rise of population mobility, property privatization, and the newly appeared housing markets, provide migrants opportunities to obtain accommodation in cities (Wu 2007). A number of migrant enclaves appear in post-reform Chinese cities, such as migrant villages (Zhang et al. 2003), Hui minority enclaves (Wang et al. 2002) and foreigner communities (Dai 2007).

The (re)emergence of transnational urban space in post-reform Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou is a very new phenomenon and has only recently been noted (Li et al. 2009). In Beijing for instance, a newly established commodity housing sector, mainly clustered in the north-eastern area, is found providing privileged housing for foreigners (Wu and Webber 2004). The number of overseas staff from transnational companies has massively increased, not only in gentrified central Shanghai, but also in the suburbs, for example Pudong. Guangzhou is a unique case as Africans and their communities have been widely noted, and its academic study has become a hotspot. Li et al. (2009), among others, have systematically recorded the rise of the African community in Xiaobei district and taken it as not only a gateway for burgeoning Sino-Africa economic linkages, but also a sojourning place where African migrants struggle to survive. In contrast with transnational migrants in the segmented labour markets of the US, the rise of a transnational ethnic enclave in Guangzhou is largely attributed to the 'world factory' status of mainland China. Lyons et al. (2008) examined the social network of African traders in Guangzhou, and termed their diasporic communal networks as a 'third tier' of globalization, after world organizations and nation-states. Based on an observation of Guangzhou's ethnic congregation, especially Africans, Zhang (2008) highlighted the under-side of the global-local nexus with an examination of local efforts, such as place-making, functional changes in neighborhoods, and so on. Also, on the basis of an anthropological survey, Yang (2010) linked the larger context of globalization, grassroots and informal economy with Guangzhou's African traders, and articulated a pattern of 'economic globalisation from below'. Mathreus (2011) asserted that the clustering of Africans in Hong Kong and Guangzhou can be defined as 'low-end globalisation,' distinguished by the small size of capital involved, informal economy, illegal transactions, and so on. This group of scholars has made efforts during recent years to

establish the profile of African traders and their social networks, and consider the theoretical implications of this migration, as for example 'the third tier of globalization,' 'globalization from below,' 'low-end globalization,' and so on.

There is consensus that inter-ethnic confrontations between transnational traders and local residents allow them to face barriers, challenges, and opportunities created in the locality. However, the modalities of the African congregation in Guangzhou have been disputed. For example, Bertonecelo and Bredeloup (2009) studied both Chunking Mansion in Hong Kong and Xiaobei in Guangzhou, and asserted that African traders represented the forefront of a migration wave and conceptualized their space as 'outposts' (see their paper in this issue). In contrast, Bodomo (2010) developed a 'bridge' theory to describe the migration, highlighting the links forming between Africa and China, taking the African communities in Guangzhou as a social and cultural 'bridge' between the two sides, contrasting this to its depiction as an 'enclave' (Li et al. 2009). Focusing particularly on business relations, Haugen (2011) found three types of relationship that have emerged between African and Chinese traders: competition, complementarity, and cooperation. It could be argued that the differences between these models are due in part to the dynamic nature of this migration. This research aims to contribute to the debate by introducing the concept of '*transient glocalization*' to underscore the dynamic modality of African communities, and articulate it as an important local feature of recent globalization. Drawing on an empirical study of Xiaobei and Sanyuanli, Guangzhou's 'Chocolate City,' the paper argues that the 'Chocolate City' is an ethnic enclave constantly responding to the changing demands of globalization. The term 'Chocolate City' was first used by local Chinese cab drivers and later became popular after having been picked up by media reports. This name is intriguing, denoting not only the exotic flavor of the place – but also involving the issue of skin color. It shows a problematic imagination, representation and articulation of this identifiable ethnic group by the local society and highlights its status of sociospatial segregation. The modality of this ethnic enclave is characterized by restless restructuring, instability, and conflict, creating a particularly transient glocalization. The notion of modality is useful because it can reveal more explicitly how different components shift, without suggesting that a new model has been reached. As in the literature, ethnic enclaves in this study are defined as 'highly visible geographically or spatially bounded ethnic centres' in cities (Ong 1993).

First, it is the global-local nexus initiated by Sino-African trading relations that marks out Xiaobei from an unknown local community and makes it an important gateway of the global business network. As argued by the glocalization

literature (Swyngedouw 1997), the development of 'non-state' spaces such as the 'Chocolate City,' indicates the 'hollowing-out' of state control in relation to local space. At the same time the socio-spatial components of this glocalized community are characterized by informality, marginality, and instability, which result in the constant remaking of ethnic enclaves. Through an aggregation of co-ethnic groups with social, economic, and information networks in demand, African traders take advantage of this place to be embedded into both the global economy and the host city. Nevertheless, the process of glocalization is transient, determined not only by unstable macroscopic factors such as Sino-African relations, international markets, domestic situations in Africa and so on, but also by transforming local conditions such as local policies, residential relations, city governments, etc. Sino-Africa business, the driver behind the existence of this enclave rather than its by-product, is central to the development of the ethnic enclave. Moreover, the impact of the local state is very important as its (re)involvement will decisively change the enclave landscape. This phenomenon *per se* is by no means unusual – the state will have significant impacts upon transnational spaces within its territories. Nevertheless, we highlight the impact of the Chinese states – in particular the local state – for several reasons. First, the Chinese state has been found to be the most prominent factor underlying China's urban development (Ma and Wu 2006); thus we have to take a careful look at the state when we try to understand the development of these ethnic enclaves. Second, the state has been largely ignored by extant literature on the topic of African communities in China. We will fill this vacuum with an examination of the Chinese states' responses to the recent development of African enclaves in Guangzhou. Third, as we will see below, there is an important linkage between the attitudes of the local states and the enclave landscapes. Nevertheless, the subjective attitude of the Chinese local state to the African enclaves is marked by instability, which will make this glocalization transient. In all, contingent on the transient glocalization, the modality of this ethnic enclave will be characterized by restless transformation.

Background, Methodology, and Data

Guangzhou has been one of China's most important foreign trade centers for the last two thousand years. *Shisanhang* (Thirteen Hongs), the famous treaty port in the Qing Dynasty, for instance, made Guangzhou the only city permitted to handle China's export trade (Xu and Yeh 2003). After 1949, Guangzhou

kept its status as the leading city in opening and absorbing foreign interactions. For example, the Chinese Export Commodities Fair (Canton Fair) has been held in Guangzhou for over 50 years and attracts hundreds of thousands of foreign businessmen every year. Guangzhou's export and import to Africa increased from below USD500 million in 1996, to about USD3.4 billion in 2010. In particular, the exports from Guangzhou to Africa increased more than tenfold, from about USD165 million in 1996 to above USD2.1 billion in 2010 (Bureau 2011). Concerning the major products exported, four types predominate: cells and batteries, motorcycles, garments and clothing accessories, and steel products (Li et al. 2009). The booming economic connections between Africa and Guangzhou therefore created new spaces for migrant entrepreneurs.

The city lacks official statistics for permanent or temporary foreign immigrants. According to the Guangzhou Municipal Statistics Bureau, the number of visitors staying over-night in Guangzhou had reached 2.31 million in 2009. Notably, the number of African tourists had risen from 6,300 in 2000 to 63,600 in 2009, increasing by 39% per year, far outstripping the growth rates of visitors from any other area. However, there is no official or reliable source on the number of African residents in Guangzhou. According to the Guangzhou Municipal Statistics Bureau, the number of Africans staying in the city's hotels had reached 60,000 in 2007 (Bureau 2008), but this only includes those who hold visa and residence permits. Several media organs have attempted to estimate the numbers, some suggesting that as many as 100,000-200,000 African immigrants were registered as residents in Guangzhou (See Li et al. 2009).

Guangzhou's African visitors are clustered. While foreign élites cluster near the city's new CBD, Ersha Island's former colonial district, and the new high-rise suburb of Panyu District (Li et al. 2009), Africans congregate in poorer areas, convenient for transport to the port and manufacturing centers, and providing cheap accommodation in apartment blocks, hostels, and hotels. Two main concentrations have been identified (Figure 1). The Tian Xiu Building in Xiaobei Road, near the Huaisheng Mosque, is a purpose-built 36-storey building with four storeys of wholesale shops with apartments, offices, and restaurants above. This is the focus for the polyglot close-knit francophone community, mainly from West Africa, facing the common divide of language, as few speak English, and French is rarely spoken by the Chinese. Commercial opportunities and cafes combine with the general feeling of *bonhomie* to attract Anglophone Africans as well. As one informant said, 'everyone comes here – you can find all the 53 countries of Africa in this building.' North of Xiaobei is Sanyuanli, a more run-down area near the Guangzhou Train Station, where over 10 trading centers have developed, such as Canaan, Tian'en,

No: 88, on either side of the eight-lane highway of Guangyuanxi Road, providing a large wholesale complex which serves a large proportion of the Sino-Africa manufactured consumption goods trade (Figure 2). These buildings provide a focus for the loose-knit Anglophone community, of whom Nigerians are the largest group. These two sites, Xiaobei and Sanyuanli, compose the so-called 'Chocolate City' of Guangzhou (Figure 1, 2).

The methodology deployed in this study mainly contains in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and field observations between 2005 and 2010. It is composed of a series of surveys including semi-structured questionnaire-based and in-depth interviews with African traders, local residents, officials, and scholars. The period 2006-2010 covers both the time before and after the 2008 financial crisis. First, with the help of five students from Sun Yat-sen University in Xiaobei in April 2006, we conducted a preliminary investigation and collected 46 semi-structured interviews with African traders in English. In May 2008, another survey was conducted at the same place when we successfully interviewed 43 African traders, also in English. Different to the last survey, the design of this questionnaire focused on the changing relations between the migrants and the host at Xiaobei. In both surveys, we recorded qualitative information when the samples talked about their stories.

In April 2009, we changed our target to Sanyuanli and a systematic interview was carried out, followed by a large-scale questionnaire survey in 2010. The 2009 interview lasted for three weeks, when we worked with a group of eight students from Sun Yat-sen University to interview Africans and Chinese traders. The interview focused on the traders' experiences, life stories, and attitudes. In the end we compiled a qualitative database containing the information of 95 African immigrants and 50 Chinese traders. Two field studies were conducted in 2010. A major questionnaire survey was carried out in April 2010, organized by Sun Yat-sen University, China and the University of Cologne, Germany. The questionnaire was mainly designed to collect information about the profiles, business, and housing of African traders, and their relations with local residents. In May 2010, we further expanded our previous, business-focused surveys to cover Xiaobei, Sanyuanli, and Huangqi (as mentioned in the following empirical study), and a total of 300 questionnaires including both English (250) and French (50) were randomly distributed with the help of 23 students from Sun Yat-sen University. Thus, through face to face communication, a total of 269 African migrants were successfully interviewed. Specifically, we have completed 89 questionnaires at Xiaobei, 149 at Sanyuanli, and 31 at Huangqi. Besides the questionnaires concerning the socioeconomic profiles of migrants, a major concern of this survey was changes post-2008.

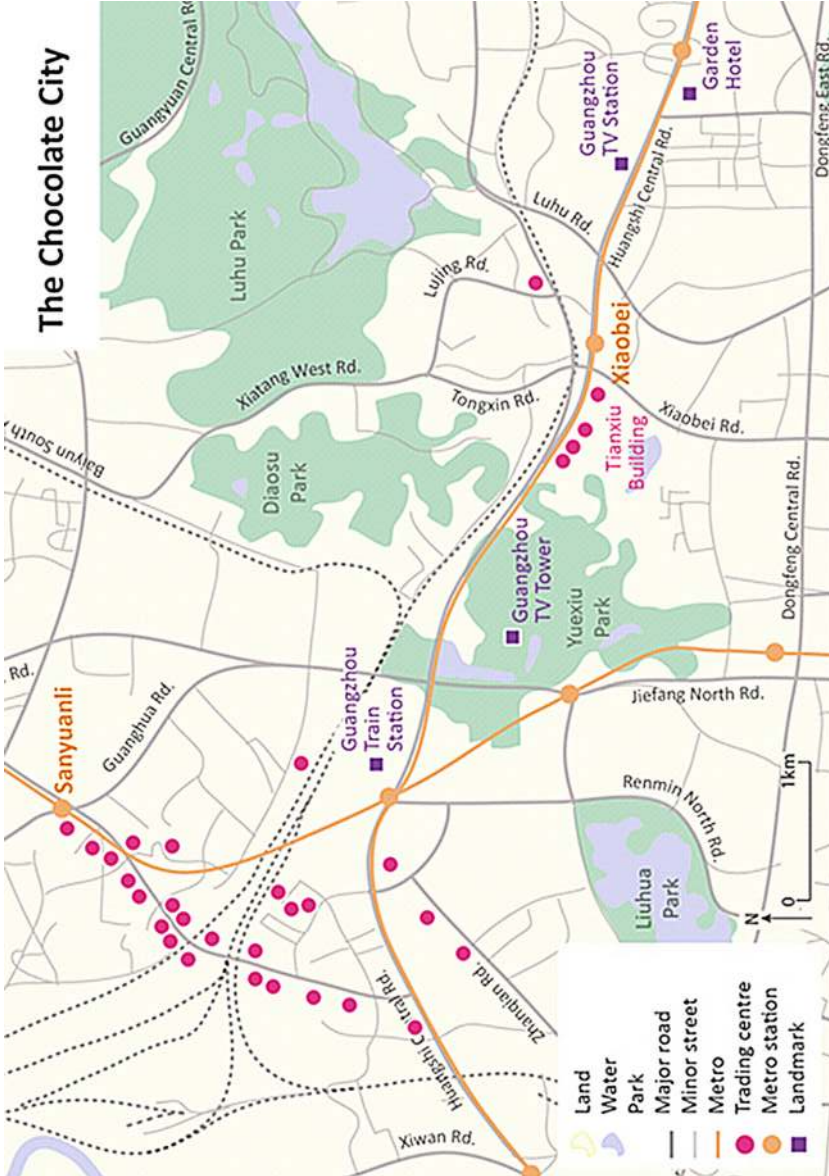


Figure 1: Map of the 'Chocolate City' (source: Liang K 2009).

'Chocolate City' in a Changing Landscape

Since 1998, the community of African residents in Xiaobei has become conspicuous. In general, African traders of the 'Chocolate City' come from most countries in Africa and include French speakers, English speakers, Arabic speakers, and Portuguese speakers. The surveys indicate that the largest group is from West Africa, including the francophone countries of Guinea (Conakry), Benin, Mali, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and the Anglophone countries of Nigeria and Ghana. This section first examines the profiles of the African traders interviewed to complement and enrich extant literature. Then the focus of the session will be the transformation of the 'Chocolate City' during the last decade, and its modalities will be explored by an interpretive analysis of the interactions among the changing global-local nexus, local society, and local state.

African Traders: Profile, Business, and Life

By and large, our large-scale survey confirms the findings of extant studies in terms of the profile of African migrants. First, the sample covers almost all the countries of Africa. Three countries: Nigeria, South Africa, and Mali are most prominent (Figure 2). About 52% of the samples are Nigerians, 9% of them coming from South Africa and 6% from Mali. Most of the African migrants surveyed are men (95.5%) aged 30-39 (41.3%), and a large proportion, 45.7%, are single. Almost all the respondents are either Christians (75.1%) or Muslims (19%). Notably, 42.8% of the samples hold an educational attainment equal to or above college level. Africans in Guangzhou are by no means refugee Diasporas. Instead, they are well-educated entrepreneurs trading for Sino-African businesses; for instance, 95.2% of the samples indicate business as the only reason for their migration. For the first time when studying Africans in Guangzhou, the visas of Africans in the 'Chocolate City' have been recorded. There are five types of Visa for the samples: L visa-Tourist Visa, F visa-Business Visa, Z visa-Work Visa, X visa-Student Visa, and D visa-Residence Visa. The majority of respondents hold F visa (Businessmen, 74.6%), and the second largest group is L visa (Tourist, 12.1%). Because the interviews were necessarily held in a public place, there may well be a bias in favor of those who hold visas, and only 1.2% of our sample admitted to having no visa. Because of the tightened visa controls as well as police inspections at the moment, it is difficult to find or communicate with those who have no visas.

According to respondents, a number of African traders enjoy a high frequency of travel between Guangzhou and Africa. Such visits usually last

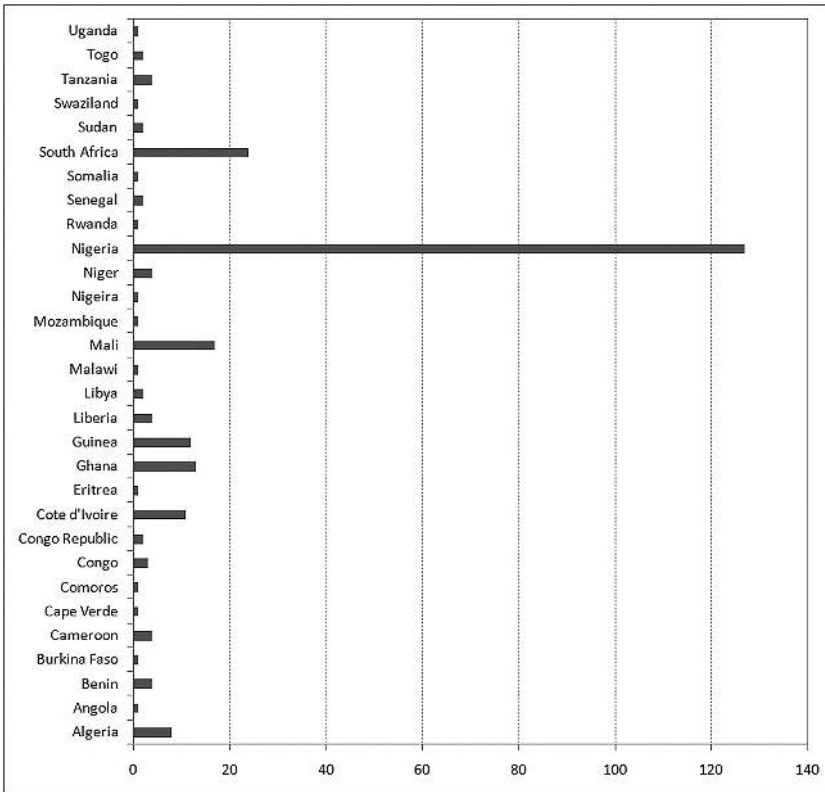


Figure 2: The original countries of African migrants (source: 2010 Survey).

approximately one week if the trader is only buying, and can last up to three weeks if he/she stays to supervise the shipping. A Malian informant, for example, visited Guangzhou every two or three months over the last decade. An informant from Uganda comes and stays for ten days in Guangzhou every two months. Most of them are completely self-dependent, digging deep into the wholesale markets. As short-term residents, they choose to live in hotels and it is quite common for several traders to share one room. On the other hand, some African entrepreneurs have established shipping agencies or other related services and remain for longer periods. They purchase goods from various wholesale markets and shops, but mainly factories in Guangzhou or other places in China, shipping the goods back to African countries, Europe or the US through logistics networks. According to our survey data, all the samples can be divided into three groups: employer (36.1%), employee (4.8%), and

self-employed (53.5%). In particular, 53.7% of the respondents own shops or offices in the 'Chocolate City.' The goods shipped by the respondents are mainly textiles, cosmetics, and electronic products. Most mentioned that they buy and sell clothing, shoes, cosmetics, and electronic products such as mobile phones, DVDs, and so on. As one informant said, 'I sell everything.' The goods are eventually retailed throughout entire sub-Saharan Africa (although goods retailed in East Africa are more likely to have been sourced in the Gulf). Some even sell to suppliers or retailers in European countries such as Spain and Italy.

The Ebb and Flow of the 'Chocolate City'

However, the development of African migrant communities is closely linked to the changing local contexts, especially the attitude of the municipal government. Against the specific context of China's post-authoritarian regime (Ma and Wu 2005), the state is one of the decisive factors in (re)shaping the landscape of the 'Chocolate City.' This section further examines the geography of this enclave by dividing its restructuring modalities into three phases: the rise of the 'Chocolate City' (1990-2003), the heyday of the 'Chocolate City' (2004-2007), and the fall of the 'Chocolate City' (2008-present).

The Emerging Enclave (1990-2003)

Marked by villages, farmlands, and underdeveloped economies, Xiaobei and its surrounding areas have long been one part of the inner suburbs of north Guangzhou. It was the market reforms of China after the late 1970s that brought opportunities to this place, when farmlands began to decrease, high-rise construction appeared, and tertiary sectors developed. Among them, Dengfeng Hotel, one of the major destinations of African traders, was typical. Constructed by the local villagers, it soon joined the mushrooming club of 20-30 storey buildings. Along with the progress of land expropriation by local governments after 1980, the increase of the real estate investments in the 1990s, and so on, the landscape of Xiaobei has been completely transformed. Nevertheless, Guangzhou municipality's major development direction is to the East, for example in Huangpu District, so that Xiaobei has never been the major destination of government investments and its infrastructure, for example transportation links to the city center remain underdeveloped. In addition, the rental costs in Xiaobei are relatively cheaper than in the central city, and the area is known for its mix of both rural and urban features. Before the 1990s,

Xiaobei was mainly composed of deteriorating housing in which investors had no interest. The 5th China Census in 2000, for instance, demonstrates that few residents of Xiaobei reach the relatively low educational attainment of junior high school level (46%).

The influx of African traders revitalized Xiaobei. After 1997, Xiaobei became a major destination for migrants from Southeast Asia cities such as Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Kuala Lumpur, which had been hit by the Financial Crisis. Meanwhile, the attempts to attract business opportunities by local market agencies, such as real estate agencies, property managers, and village committees, stimulated its development. After a major refurbishment, the reopening of Dengfeng Hotel in 2004 epitomized the ambition of Xiaobei to be a major destination for African traders. By this point, a number of new apartments, hotels, and market places had begun to concentrate in the 'Chocolate City,' such as Tianxiu Building (1994), Guolong Building (1998), etc., and have been constructed to serve international trading business. Multi-language posters or directories were made available, agents who mastered English or French were hired, and African-styled foods were offered among other efforts to attract international traders. A wide range of related services such as visa applications, ticket bookings, goods packaging, international calling, and medical services were supplied by local shops that target foreigners. Through a collective input by individual shops, companies and individuals, an internationalized milieu was constructed. As put by one informant,

... I like Guangzhou. It is very free here. In Europe, people always consider Africans to be poor and asking for help, while people here do not. We are respected here and people treat us just as businessmen, without any prejudice. (Interview, 2006-04)

These successful efforts also engendered opportunities for local communities. For instance, Canaan, a market place constructed in the early 1990s, was on the point of being demolished after its unsuccessful debut in the leather business. The booming economy of the 'Chocolate City' brought Canaan a second life when its jeans-wear business for African traders opened in 2003. This strategy turned out to be successful, as Canaan soon became one of the major market places of Guangzhou, and the total amount of its business reached USD10 million in 2007. All these gradually accumulated endeavors exhibit the discerning insights of local states to capture the transient opportunities offered by globalization. Moreover, the interactions among African traders and local entrepreneurs as such show an effective modality of glocalization beyond transnational companies.

The Prosperous Enclave (2004-2007)

This period was the 'gold rush' days of the 'Chocolate City.' The growth of the 'Chocolate City' was fully-fledged and the profits of its business reached their peak. A Nigerian informant told us he came to Guangzhou every two months and shipped about 25,000 shirts in containers. The profit of each shirt was about USD1.50; thus the profit from his every visit was about USD37,500. Stories like this attracted more African traders to the 'Chocolate City' to seek their fortune.

A group of new market places opened up in Sanyuanli, such as Jinlongpan (February, 2004), Yulong Clothing Market (May, 2005), Tian'en (August, 2005), Tangqi (July, 2006), and New Tian'en (December, 2006). Several new high-rise complexes appeared in Xiaobei, such as the African Trade Center, Taochi Building, and Xiushan Building. All these buildings concentrated on the business of African traders, so that Xiaobei and Sanyuanli became the core of the prosperous 'Chocolate City.' Along the 1.7km Guangyuanxi Road in Sanyuanli, a total of 25 hotels, 28 restaurants, 30 markets, 13 printing shops, and 12 travel agencies were recorded in our survey in early 2008. A major feature at this stage was the development of an ethnic economic enclave as the modality of the 'Chocolate City.' African traders began to organize a variety of enterprises to serve their own markets, as well as the general population, in which both enclave entrepreneurs and enclave workers could be identified (Portes 1996; Zhou and Logan 1989, 1991). For instance, a Nigerian barber working at Tian'en said,

So many Africans come to Guangzhou, if all the people buy and sell goods, who can serve them? I thought there should be someone to cut their hair. And I noticed the Chinese did not provide any opportunities for us to work, see, so many Chinese come to look for jobs every day that even Chinese cannot get a job. So I decided to create my own business. It is expensive to run a business; we only have Africans here. I hope Chinese can come, but the language is a big problem. (Interview, 2006-04).

According to the interview of a Nigerian informant who runs a logistics company in New Tian'en,

I hired three staff, one Chinese girl and two Nigerian boys. The Chinese girl looks for information on the net and makes contact with Chinese companies and factories. The Nigerians help me take and ship goods, and calculate costs. We don't provide a stable salary, so no business, no money, so we must work very hard. This is my standard to hire people. (Interview, 2006-04).

Moreover, there is a core-periphery structure in terms of the spatial distribution of shops. At the core there were major trade markets such as Tianxiu and Canaan, mainly run by Chinese traders; on the other hand, most shops run by

Africans were located at the surrounding sites. This structure can also be found within the same market place. For instance, about 60% of the 400 shops within Tangqi, a six-storey market place, are run by African traders, but most of them are located on the underground floors, where rents are lower.

In parallel with these local changes, China's Africa policy shifted as it realized the importance of having African support not only in multilateral forums, but also in meeting its expanding demands for Africa's abundant energy and natural resources. Thus, from 2002-2005, following the establishment of the 'Forum on China-Africa Cooperation' in 2000, a total of 130 political visits that involved top Sino-Africa leaderships have been noted. In August 2004, the promulgation of the 'Measures for the Administration of the Examination and Approval of the Permanent Residence in China of Foreigners' symbolized the opening of China's closed door to immigration, though the conditions for obtaining permanent residency were very tough. However, China's economic engagement with Africa also happened at the micro scales of provincial, municipal, and private levels, which appeared to be less coordinated, sometimes even competitive. Fortunately, the rise of the 'Chocolate City' echoed the 2005 Guangzhou Strategy Planning, in which the central city, including both Xiaobei and Sanyuanli, was taken as the site of regeneration by the municipal government. Moreover, the prosperous economy of the 'Chocolate City' expanded the local tax base which had been the key concern of local officials. Thus, although challenged by the difficulties of managing or controlling the highly mobilized African traders, underground economies, and other problems such as drug dealers, the local governments looked upon the 'Chocolate City' as an important engine for its economic take-offs.

The Collapsing Enclave (2008-present)

Nevertheless, the accumulation of Africans and their economic enclave is gradually becoming seen as 'problematic.' After the reports of several cases of African-related crimes in Guangzhou, a state-owned newspaper 'Guangzhou Daily' made a report, 'The Full Record of Guangzhou Black Tribes' on Dec 13, 2007, and underscored the rising problems with the 'Chocolate City': drugs, AIDs, underground markets, illegal immigration, and so on.

... Africans disappear soon after they enter the border ... they have no intention to go back to Africa, some even throw their passports away when they got off ... (Media report, 2007-12)

This report soon spread far and wide among Chinese media and Internet sites, making it a domestic issue concerning the negativity of not only the 'Chocolate City,' but also the city of Guangzhou. On the other hand, actual

existing misunderstandings, discriminations and conflicts between Chinese and African traders in daily practice further exacerbated the situation. According to our interviews with 50 Chinese traders in 2009, only about 40% of them enjoy the business with Africans. Moreover, in terms of the words they used to describe African traders, only 21 were identified to be positive while 41 were counted as negative, such as 'low *Suzhi*' (impolite) (15 counts), 'haggle over every ounce' (8 counts), 'dishonest' (5 counts), and 'annoying' (5 counts). On the other hand, according to the 2010 survey, about 65% of African traders claimed that they only occasionally received respect, or even never received respect from the local Chinese (9.6%). One informant said,

I shower twice a day. I can't go to sleep without taking a shower. I also know as a matter of fact that some Chinese people don't bathe for two or three days in a row. Even some women do that. How can they cover their noses just because of my skin color, while some fellow Chinese are more smelly and dirty than I am? (2010-04)

Against the background of these misunderstandings and conflicts, the local state began to take action. According to a paper offered by the Chinese People's Consultative Conference (CPCC) in 2008, Guangzhou had been criticized over African immigration issues, for being weak, maintaining unreliable statistics, weak enforcement of tenancy registration, loose control over the housing market for foreigners, insufficient cooperation between government bodies, and shortage of resources for law enforcement (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference 2008). Responding to these pressures, Guangzhou's municipal government began to implement a series of attempts at regulation, with the opportunity provided by the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and then the 2010 Asian Games, these mega-events providing local government with the needed legitimacy to conduct radical reforms.

Accordingly, a new regime targeting migrants who arrive illegally, live illegally, and work illegally, or are 'triple illegal' (*Sanfei* in Chinese) has been established, and various levels of the local state have been involved. In detail, it includes the establishment of a 'Triple Illegal' Management Team involving officials from various administrative divisions such as police, urban management, tax bureau, and so on; the establishment of Foreign Management offices in various departments, bureaus, and institutions; the assignment of a Foreign Management Center, as a branch of the police system, into local communities such as Xiaobei, and a new system of visa inspections. In addition, foreigners in Guangzhou have begun to be covered by the official 'population management system': in addition to the establishment of a specific system for foreigner management for all of the 219 police stations in Guangzhou, in 2007

the municipality installed a new registration software package for 2,175 hotels in the city to collect information on foreign visitors, so that a well-equipped and networked information system has been constructed. In order to enhance its management of foreigner space, the local state undertook a new strategy of so-called 'accumulated residence management' (*Jizhong Juzhu Guanli* in Chinese) to 'accumulate' foreigners into commodity housing communities, i.e. formal residential areas, rather than urban villages or other informal housing areas – the 'non-state space.' On the one hand, the neighborhood-level governments such as residential committees may suggest or direct Africans to choose commodity housing estates when providing them with housing information. On the other hand, the committee officials may suggest to house owners in urban villages that they should not provide rental housing to foreigners. As for some major ethnic enclaves such as Xiaobei and Sanyuanli, a specific foreigner-related patrol zone has been set up by the local police to conduct formal or informal patrols, visa inspections, and so on. Together with the involvement of other official agencies such as the industry and commerce bureau, the foreign trade and economic cooperation bureau, and the bureau of health, regular and intensive inspections of local police started to concentrate on the restaurants, hotels, shops, and markets in the enclaves.

In this sense, 2007 was a turning point, as policemen started to inspect the visas of Africans either on the street or in their houses in the 'Chocolate City' every two months. This game of 'cat and mouse' destabilized the City. This was epitomized by the well-known event of July 15 2009: two Nigerian textile retailers were seriously injured when attempting to escape visa inspection, the aftermath of which involved a demonstration of over 100 angry Nigerians against the local police. One Nigerian informant said,

Now the police always inspect your visa in the street. If they see Africans, they check their visa. If you have no visa, they will arrest you. Even if you have a visa, they ask for a residence permit, and if you have no residence permit, they will directly cancel your visa and give you ten days to go home. You must try your best to avoid police inspections, in case they cancel your visa. (Interview, 2008-05).

Government behaviors of this sort engendered exaggerated worries about the future of the 'Chocolate City.' The situation worsened when it was hit by an assemblage of economic shocks, in particular the 2008 global financial crisis, the substantial increase in the value of the *Renminbi* (Chinese yuan), and the increase in competition from Chinese middlemen working on the African continent. As the once auspicious market places collapsed, building rents slumped, and Chinese and African traders began to move out of the 'Chocolate City'

(Figure 3). One Ghanaian informant estimated that 50% of traders have gone back to Africa. According to our survey in 2010, about 40% of the respondents lived outside the 'Chocolate City' and 26.7% lived in Huangqi Town of Foshan City, i.e. the suburbia of Guangzhou (Table 1).

Huangqi, though it administratively belongs to Foshan, has been closely connected with Guangzhou by its advantageous location and well-served bus and metro lines. In particular, the town is facing an unprecedented opportunity as Guangzhou and Foshan will be merged, spatially and economically, though not administratively, into one metropolis. These conditions make it an appropriate location to host African traders, as they need to commute frequently to do business in Guangzhou. Although misunderstandings and conflicts still exist between local residents and African traders, relatively relaxed government involvement soon made Huangqi a major destination of African traders. Our Huangqi informants said,

Table 1: Residential location of African migrants, 2010

City	Location		N	%
Guangzhou	Chocolate City	Xiaobei	91	49.4
		Sanyuanli	25	13.6
	Other districts in Guangzhou		19	10.3
Foshan	Huangqi		49	26.7
Total			184	100

(Source: 2010 survey)



Figure 3: Emptied trade markets in the 'Chocolate City' (Source: Author 2010).

The Guangzhou government dislikes us, Foshan like us. (Interview, 2009-04)

I don't want to be inspected when I am asleep, so I moved to Huangqi. (Interview, 2009-04)

The fall of the 'Chocolate City' and the rise of Huangqi underscore the restructuring of local spaces in response to changing pressures, and exemplify the transient nature of the glocalization we have seen. For emerging ethnic enclaves of transnational entrepreneurs, the modality of glocalization is contingent on complex interactions at the global-local nexus, of bottom-up efforts, international trends, and local institutions.

Conclusions

This paper sought to empirically investigate the transformation of Guangzhou's 'Chocolate City' in particular its population, geography and restructuring modalities. It is found that transnational Africans are a distinctive group of cross-border traders. Through them, clothes, cell phones, computers, MP3s, and nearly all products made in the world factories of China can be sold to Africa. In particular, the 'Chocolate City' serves as a vital, albeit unorthodox, economic enclave. Ethnicity, transitional economy and local place-making are interrelated in complex ways, together with Guangzhou's commercial milieus, trading networks, and local efforts. The restructuring of Guangzhou's 'Chocolate City' during the last decade has been scrutinized over three phases, and three modalities have been identified: the emerging enclave, the prosperous enclave, and the collapsing enclave. It is by no means unusual to see the rise and fall of migrant communities; nevertheless, it is the speed and strength of recent changes which should be highlighted. All these trends can be captured by the concept of 'transient glocalization': against a highly mobilized, flexible, and unstable milieu of restructuring social, economic, and political contexts, the dynamic interrelation between global and local has become transient, reflecting the restlessness of socio-spatial transformation across globalizing cities. In this way, this study contributes to the extant studies of Africans of Guangzhou in at least two facets. First, the notion of transient glocalization will extend our understanding of the complicated interconnections between African Diasporas, local states, and (re)constitution of local places. Second, using the data of a large-scale survey, we test the findings of other studies in terms of the profiles of African traders, as most extant studies are built upon either sporadic data of small-scale surveys (except Bodomo 2010) or ethno-anthropological observations.

The geography of the 'Chocolate City' will not be the same as classical ethnic enclaves, as the latter is often the major residential destination of ethnic migrants (Zhou and Logan 1989, 1991). The number of long-term migrants living in the 'Chocolate City' has heavily decreased, as African traders are trying to move to other districts or suburbia to escape visa inspections, and in the coming years the residential space of the City may not be dominated by ethnic migrants. The glocalization status of the 'Chocolate City' will be mainly maintained by its trading business. Because of the instability of the international business 'from below,' the geography of the City will be even more transient.

The volatile immigration regime has been found to be the driving force of transient glocalization. China is characterized by its well-developed state apparatus and a long tradition of social controls, so that the state is deeply involved in almost every facet and space of domestic life. Nevertheless, the immigration regime of China is by no means fully-fledged and the vacuum left between pre-reform and post-reform eras is huge. Chinese governments, especially those at the local levels, thus face unprecedented demands as well as difficulties in managing the new wave of immigration. Moreover, as a decentralized system, the attitudes or behaviors of the local state are by no means the same as those of the central government. Even at the present moment China is intensifying its relations with Africa, while the central government is trying to develop further cooperation with African countries, but the resultant landscape at the local scale is still mainly contingent on the local states. It therefore indicates the significance of China's local institutions in shaping transnational enclaves.

The future of the 'Chocolate City' in Guangzhou and other of China's African Diasporas deserves much academic attention. Further studies are necessary to better understand the social networks of African migrants, empirically examining their socioeconomic relations with the local communities and institutions, and interrogating new changes. It will take years to observe whether the 'Chocolate City' will become just an 'outpost' for Sino-African business, will be maintained as an ethnic enclave, or will be upgraded to an important 'bridge', and, for all the obvious difficulties involved, such research would be best suited to a longitudinal study.

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