

Ethnic Enclave of Transnational Migrants in Guangzhou: A Case Study of Xiaobei

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Abstract

Market reform and economic restructuring is reshaping Chinese cities. A spate of studies have examined the transformation of Chinese cities, few, however, is known about the sociospatial implication of globalization. This paper examines a newly appeared ethnic enclave in *Xiaobei*, Guangzhou. It targets on the enclave's sociospatial feature as well as its underlying mechanisms. Using questionnaires and interviews surveyed in 2006 and 2007, it found that Guangzhou's transnational social space is an outcome of 'globalisation from below'. Transnational migrants of *Xiaobei* come from West Africa and work as merchants, floating or fixed, trading products such as shoes, clothes and electronic facilities. As a result, *Xiaobei* is becoming a typical ethnic enclave featured by Black residents of both high mobility and socioeconomic diversity. The importance of locality is highlighted, such as Guangzhou's entrepreneurial tradition, religious history, and opened political-economic settings. It is argued that globalization adds a new dimension of sociospatial segregation, i.e. ethnicity, to Chinese cities such as Guangzhou.

Keywords: Transnational social space, African traders, Guangzhou, Xiaobei

1 Introduction

China, once a socialist country isolated by the West, is becoming a new world factory that markets products labelled 'Made in China' across the world. Through above two decades of market reform and open door, China has successfully embraced the global

economy especially after its entry of WTO (World Trade Organization) in 2001. The extent of China's globalisation is presented by the unprecedented amount of the exchange of products, information and people between China and the outside world. The total import & export quota of China, for instance, has increased from just 115.4 billion US dollars in 1990, to 474.2 billion US dollars in 2000, and to 1760.6 billion US dollars in 2006 (Bureau 2007), ranking the second of the world, only after German. Meanwhile, FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) pours into China - between 2000 and 2006, the total amount of FDI has amounted to 377.7 billion US dollars (Bureau 2007). In this way, foreigners, the eye-catching landscape of pro-reform China, are becoming more and more familiar to urban China residents. Between 2000 and 2006, for instance, foreign visitors of China amounted to 94.39 million, though the majority of them are Japanese, South Koreans, Russians and Americans (Bureau 2007). Some of them even become long-term residents of China, not only students or diplomats, but also traders, businessmen and pure residents. Shanghai, for instance, recorded a total of 119,876 long-term staying foreigners, and above 90% of them held residence permits in 2006 (Bureau 2007). As such, a reporter of Washington Post even argues that China now has become the first choice for international immigrants (Cha 2007).

Foreign accumulated communities, or so-called *Guoji shequ* (international community), *Waiguoren shequ* (foreigner community), has surged as a phenomenal landscape of post-reform urban China (Wen et al. 2005). *Wangjing*, a large scale commodity housing estate of *Chaoyang* District in Beijing, has become a South Korean enclave where above 60,000 South Koreans live, making it the largest South Korean village in Beijing (CCTV 2005). In Shanghai, it is reported that both *Gubei* in *Puxi* and *Huamu* in *Pudong* have become the major communities of international residents live. *Huamu*, for instance, houses around 5800 foreign entrepreneurial elites from across the world (Shen 2006). Consequently, China's openness to foreigners is evident in the re-emergence of ethnic enclaves. Not only in big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenyang, but also in small cities such as Suzhou, Yiwu and Dongguan.

'...Larger and more permanent than those frequented by expatriate businessmen on temporary assignment, the new enclaves evoke pre-revolutionary China, where cities such as Shanghai bustled with concessions dominated by French, British and Japanese...' (Cha 2007, *Washington Post report*)

As a recent phenomenon mainly recorded by media, however, few researches have shed light on it. In terms of the three forces that shape contemporary urban China, i.e. market reform, migrants and globalisation (Logan 2001), the impact of former two forces have been extensively studied, the latter, especially the practical undertakers of globalisation, immigrants and their sociospatial implications, has been largely ignored (Wu and Webber 2004; Lin and Tse 2005). As such, this paper will target on *Xiaobei*, an ethnic enclave in Guangzhou, to fill the vacuum of researches in this filed. Also,

since *Xiaobei* is an enclave of African Blacks, this study will also contribute to the literature of sociospatial segregation with a case study against the context of urban China, which has never been explored (Kempen and Ozuekren 1998; Marcuse and van Kempen 2002).

This paper will be organized as followings. First, the literature of transnational social space/ethnic enclaves will be explored. Recent theoretical perspectives upon this fresh issue will be examined. After that, it will focus on Guangzhou to understand the resurging of transnational social spaces/communities in urban China. As a major trading centre of China for above 200 years, Guangzhou can be representative to further decipher the restructuring of post-reform urban China, especially with respect to the impact of globalisation. After a general mapping of transnational social space in Guangzhou, *Xiaobei* will be selected as the major empirical target. Using data obtained through two times of fieldwork surveys along with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, it will disclose the features and sociospatial mechanisms of this specific ethnic enclave. Following that, discussions and conclusions will be further given.

2 Literature Review

Transnational migration is by no means complete novelty in human history. During the construction history of the US, for example, millions of Europeans moved across Atlantics to explore the new continent. It is argued that cross-border movement of capital, people, goods, at the global scale existed long before the 19th century (Schwartz 2000). At the last two decade of the twentieth century, however, because of the revolutionary improvement of technologies in terms of communication and transportation, along with the transition of political ideology such as decolonisation and human rights, we enter a new era of 'borderless' world. As a historical continuation, globalisation per se has entered a new stage. Transnational practices, therefore, has risen to become a major issue of contemporary sociology, anthropology and geography. A number of novelty concepts such as 'transnationalism', 'transmigrants', 'transnational social field/social space/community', 'Diaspora' have initiated attentions upon the novelty of such new phenomena (Portes 1987; Portes 1996). 'Transnationalism', for instance, was defined by this pioneering group as 'the process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies or origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders' (Basch et al. 1994; Gugler 2004). It points to the new group of migrants whose work family, social ties and identities are base on both their host country and home country. In response to the process of globalization, enterprises have been established by immigrants to export/import goods to and from their home countries; migrants maintain extensive social and cultural ties with more than one nation. By crossing national borders, transmigrants achieve the success of entrepreneurial activities through grasping the advantages created by national boundaries. In this sense, the grassroots cross border activities show a new type of

globalisation featured by 'globalisation from below' (Portes 1996; Guarnizo and Smith 1998; Schiller and Fouron 1998). Moreover, it is argued that this model of migration at odds with the established models of migrants theories such as immigrant assimilation (Portes 1987; Zhou and Logan 1991). The notion of transnational migrants extend the research of globalisation from the prevailing paradigm of macrolevel discourse such as 'time-space compression' (Harvey 2000) and 'the end of the nation-state' to the microlevel to examine the complex constitution of the people who develop their own strategies against the uneven geography under globalisation (Smith 2001; Lin and Tse 2005).

The literature of transnational migrants, however, preoccupied with the single case of the US (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004), mainly focus on the transmigrants crossing borders between the core and the peripheral nations. On the one hand, most transnational social spaces appear in developed countries such as the UK and the US, since migrants, under 'push and pull', move traditionally towards these countries; on the other hand, it is enclave economy, beyond the dual or segmented capitalist labour market of primary and secondary sectors, that make the enclave alive (Wilson and Portes 1980), whilst such an economy appear exclusively in developed nations in history. Accordingly, there is a big vacuum of studies upon this phenomenon in other nations. Especially, though the nations of transitional economy embrace the West in the 1990s, while the residential control upon foreign migrants is loosen, few empirically studies have been conducted to look closely at the rising number of transnational immigrants.

As one of the top economies of the world, China is undergoing remarkable transformation featured by both urbanisation and globalisation (Song and Timberlake 1996; Shen et al. 2002; Zhou and Ma 2003; Wu 2004). However, little is known about the spatial implication of transnational migrants in Chinese cities. As China gradually open its door towards outsiders, its advantage especially in terms of the cheap price of manufacturing sectors has attracted traders across the world. Though rural migrants and their enclaves such as *Zhejiangcun* (Ma and Xiang 1998) and *Chengzongcun* (Zhang et al. 2003) have been extensively studied, few is known about the so-called international migrants (*Guoji yimin*). Although a vast literature has been involved in the debate upon market transition, few studies have ever put ethnic economy into consideration (Kim 2003).

In terms of the spatial restructuring of Chinese cities (Ma and Wu 2005; Wu et al. 2006; Wu 2007), though a number of studies have engaged in the exploring of social space or communities issues, transnational social space has only recently been noticed (Kim 2003; Wu and Webber 2004). In Beijing, for instance, it is found that the newly established sector of commodity housing provides foreign housing though built them into gated communities. And such foreign housing projects are mainly clustered in the north-eastern area of the city, along the highway leading to the airport (Wu and Webber 2004). It is claimed that the construction of such gated communities will

exacerbate residential segregation of post-reform urban China. Nevertheless, little information has been given out about the people who live in these foreign enclaves. In Yanji, a border city at the north-eastern corner of China, 449 ethnic Koreans are surveyed and it is found that working in the Korean enclave economy is positively associated with significant earnings advantage, whilst ethnic sectors typically attract those who lack substantial human capital required for entering 'mainstream' (state-owned) labour markets (Kim 2003). Little, however, is known about the sociospatial implication of these ethnic enclaves.

As such, this paper will use Guangzhou as a case to examine the sociospatial implication of the new arrivals, transnational migrants and their social space, in Chinese cities. In order to dissolve the mystery of the property of these transmigrants, the focus will be concentrate upon their composition and their functional social networks. Moreover, since most transnational migrants of Guangzhou are African Blacks, the classic issue of sociospatial segregation will also be mainly concerned.

3 Transnational ethnic enclaves in Guangzhou

As the starting point of Maritime Silk Road, Guangzhou is always one of the most important foreign trade cities of China during the last 2000 year history of the city. *Shisanhang* (Thirteen Hongs), the famous treaty port at the end of Ming Dynasty, for instance, has made Guangzhou the only city for China's export trades. After the foundation of the PRC (People's Republic of China), Guangzhou has been in the leading city in opening and absorbing foreign impacts. Plus its advantaged geographic location as neighbouring both Hong Kong and Macao, and situating in the centre of PRD (Pearl River Delta) - the new world factory, Guangzhou is permeated with overseas-founded enterprises and is chosen by foreigners as the first station to Chinese business fields. Initiated as early as 1957, CECF (Chinese Export Commodities Fair), two times a year, one in spring and one in fall, has been holding in Guangzhou, which allures numerous foreign businessmen. After China joined in WTO in 2001, the scale of foreign businessmen soared up, especially after the fair adjusted as CIECF (China Import and Export Commodities Fair) to hold both import and export functions in 2006. As the 100th CECF, the CIECF has seen around 190,000 foreign traders from above 200 countries and areas, the contracts of which amount to about 34 billion US dollars.

Supported by the superior geographical condition as well as entrepreneurial locality, the economy of Guangzhou has maintained high increasing rates for the last two decades. Alike other PRD cities, Guangzhou attributed its success largely to an export-oriented economy. In details, most of Guangzhou's export commodities are light industry products. Between 2002 and 2005, for example, 75% of the export value of industrial sectors of Guangzhou stem in textile industry. Through Guangzhou, millions of garments and shoes produced in the PRD or YRD (Yangtze River Delta)-the other world factory of China, export to countries across the world. Therefore, the export amount of garment and shoe products ranks the top two among

all other export products (Table 1).

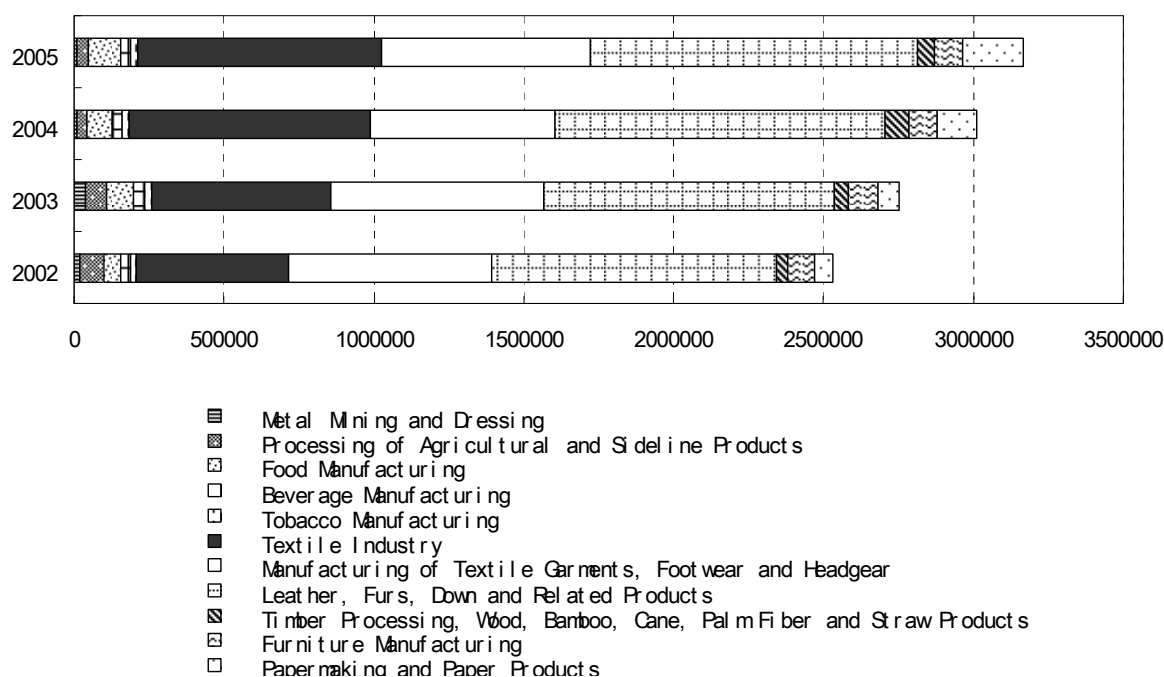


Figure 1 Export of the industrial enterprises of Guangzhou, 2002-2005 (RMB yuan)

Table 1 Top ten export commodities of Guangzhou, 2004-2005 (Unit: 10,000 USD)

	2004		2005	
1	Garments and Clothing Accessories	234,434	Garments and Clothing Accessories	294,962
2	Automatic Data Processing Machines	194,182	Automatic Data Processing Machines	243,400
3	Footwear	104,384	Textile Yarn, Fabrics and Related Products	122,124
4	Textile Yarn, Fabrics and Related Products	101,961	Footwear	113,551
5	Jeweler of Precious Metals or Rolled Precious Metals	70,347	Pearls, Precious and Semi-precious Stones	81,311
6	Pearls, Precious and Semi-precious Stones	70,031	Printed Circuits	78,802
7	Printed Circuits	54,099	Jeweler of Precious Metals or Rolled Precious Metals	77,109
8	Parts of Automatic Data Processing Machines	52,872	Parts of Automatic Data Processing Machines	66,860

9	Travel Articles, Handbags and Similar Containers	44951	Furniture	58041
10	Furniture	43572	Travel Articles, Handbags and Similar Containers	50900

(Data source: GSB, 2005, 2006)

The growth of Guangzhou as a trading centre of the world therefore attracts the massive in-flow of foreign businessmen and visitors. Alike the West, it lacks of official statistics for permanent or temporary foreign residents, but existed data can still indicate the scale of the increasing of foreign visitors (Figure 3). For instance, it is reported that Asian tourists, the main body of foreign visitors, see the keep rising of their numbers along with people from other continents, the total of which has aggregated to above 17 million till the end of 2005. Particularly, the number of African tourists has risen up from 6,358 to 31,766 over the period from 2000 to 2005, an annual increasing rate of 37.9%, far surmounting the rates of other areas (11.5% on average). A report from Border Administration Office points out that there are 15,000 long-term foreigners reside in Guangzhou, whereas the transitory foreign visitors sum up to around 500,000. According to the Ministry of Public Security, there were 30,819 foreign people, excluded people of Hongkongese and Taiwanese, reside in Guangdong Province. In addition, it is estimated that foreign residents of Guangzhou and Shenzhen account for 70% of those in PRD. So that there will be around 15,000 foreigners reside in Guangzhou. Moreover, according to a report of the Public Security Bureau of Guangzhou, long-term foreign residents in Guangzhou amount to 18,000, of which African, Middle Eastern, European or American and Asian account for 6%, 6%, 55% and 34%, respectively (Agency 2006). In this sense, there would be around 1080 African residents of long-term living in Guangzhou. Nevertheless, this figure is far below the record of staying-overnight African visitors, 31,766, in 2005, collected from hotels and restaurants.

In Beijing, it is found that foreign housing is mainly developed into two types: apartment complexes which offer high-rise living; and villa compounds which are low-rise, spacious, and usually contain individual gardens (Wu and Webber, 2004). Likewise, Guangzhou's transnational social space is also mainly composed of such two types of buildings. In *Huanan xincheng*, a suburb commodity housing estate of south Guangzhou, for instance, hundreds of foreigners live in high-rise apartments of above twenty floors. In *Ersha* Island, however, foreign residents live in western-style villas with high quality of designs. Though foreign residents can be found in nearly every districts of Guangzhou, transnational social spaces accumulate and can be mainly identified in five sites (Figure 4).

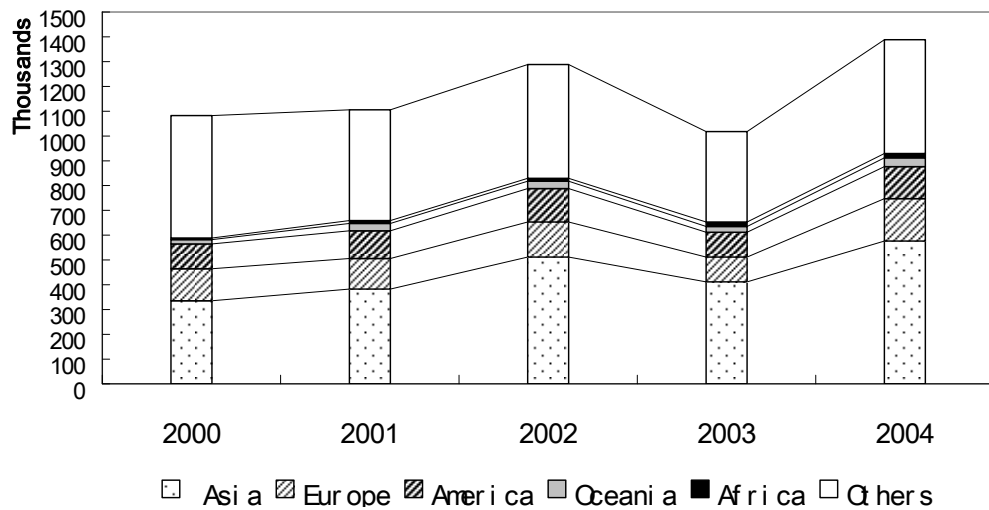


Figure 3 Foreigners staying overnight in Guangzhou, 2000-2005 (Unit 1,000 persons/times)



Figure 4 Immigrants accumulation sites in Guangzhou
(Sources: Survey 2006)

The first site is ‘*Sanyuanli*’, the central part of *Baiyun* District that surrounding the *Sanyuanli* village, the inner suburb of Guangzhou in history. After the expansion of the city in the 1990s, the whole region has been largely urbanised through intensive industrialisation and commercialisation. This site is composed of several separated residential estates, such as *Jingui* Village, *Jinchang* Road Community, *Jiaoshi* New Village, and so on. It accommodates around several hundred Black migrants, mostly

African Blacks running businesses of shoe or clothing. Moreover, Koreans dedicated in the Chinese-Korean trade also have been gathering in this site in recent years. *Xiaogang*, a suburb community about the Airport Highway, has become a 'Korean Village' in the late 1990s. Normally, transmigrants here rent commodity housing within the communities of Chinese, though Blacks sometimes rent the cheap flats of *Chengzhongcun*'s villagers.

The second site is '*Huanshidong*' (East *Huangshi*), referring to the area around a street with this name, sitting in *Yuexiu* District and centralizing *Huanshidong* Road (East Circle Line). Transnational migrants here mostly reside in stretch of buildings such as *Xiushan* Building, Garden Hotel, or within the buildings beside the roads of *Taojin* Road, *Jianse* NO.6 Road, *Jianseda* Road, and so on. Beyond some missionaries working in international institutions such as the British Council or the Embassy of Japan, as they rent offices within office buildings such as Guangdong International Grand Hotel, most international migrants here are African traders. They accumulate in either high-rise apartments such as *Xiushan* Building, *Taochi* Building, *Tianxiu* Building, or local hotels such as *Dengfeng* Hotel, *Dengyue* Hotel, or office buildings like *Yisheng* Building, *Hengjing* Building, *Hengsheng* Building, *Guolong* Building and *Yongyi* Building. Nevertheless, the ethnic compositions of transnational migrants within these buildings are by no means the same. Traders in *Xiushan* Building, for example, varied markedly in terms of the places they come from, covering France, India, Arabic counties, African countries and so on, whilst the tenants of *Taochi* Building and *Tianxiu* Building are almost all from African nations. After 1980, *Huanshidong* is the first among the five sites of Guangzhou to accommodate transnational migrants, also it has become the most renowned site of these novelty landscapes of the city.

The third site is *Tianhebei* (North *Tianhe*), the newly developed CBD within *Tianhe* District. International migrants here mainly live in buildings within the stripes of *Tianhe* Road, *Longkou* West Road and *Linhezong* Road. After 1987, this site experienced a tremendous construction under the ambitious to become Guangzhou's new CBD. With its promising future, this site successfully magnetized a large flow of business elites in the early 1990s. As a good example, the 80-floor Civic Plaza, contains tens of enterprises of the world's 500 most influential brands, along with international institutions such as the Consulate of Italy and Malaysia, and other international organizations like Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Guangdong. Moreover, hospitable apartments within the two 38-floor buildings of the Civic Plaza accommodate hundreds of managers of international corporations such as Korea and Japan. So the majority of international migrants of this site are entrepreneurs and professionals working in either transnational companies or joint ventures.

The fourth site is *Ersha* Island, an island, within the middle of the Pearl River, of south *Yuexiu* District. The island is famous for its gathering of business senior

personals especially overseas managers. Holding one of the most desirable locations of Guangzhou, *Ersha* Island, facilitated with well-equipped infrastructure such as *Xinghai* Odeum, top-class restaurants and bars, has recently been built into a high-class community of mainly villas, featured by advanced cottage reclamation. Accordingly, senior managers of transnational companies move into the island in the last decade, making a phenomenal enlargement of the population of international elites. In fact, along the riverside of the Pearl River, thousands of high-rise apartments of high quality have been constructed during last decade. Because of the high rent or housing prices of these housing, only the new rich, such as enterprise bosses, Hongkongese, or transnational migrants from overseas can afford. Accordingly, it is by no means unusual to have neighbourhoods of Whites or Blacks within these communities. To the north of *Ersha* Island, Pearl River New Town, for instance, has witnessed the rising of senior business managers advancing for its exquisite commodity housing estates, such as the so-called 'Edinburgh International Apartment'.

The fifth site is '*Dashi*', which situates in the north *Panyu* District, sitting to the south of Guangzhou. After Guangzhou enlarged its administrative boundaries in 2001, the amount of large-scale commodity housing estates, like *Qifu* New Village, *Bigui* Garden, *Huanan* New City and *Lijiang* Garden, began to mount up in the south suburbs of Guangzhou. Equipped with humanistic facilities, schools, and hospitals, each of these large-scale estates can accommodate residents of above 10,000. Through arresting white-collar, communities in *Dashi* turn the site into an international habitat for people coming from Middle-east and West Asia countries. For instance, *Lijiang* Garden accommodates around 300 migrants of Middle-east countries. In the early November, 2007, the authority of *Lijiang* Garden even proposed to set up a specific region only accommodates foreigners.

In addition, housing or firms run by transnational migrants distribute sparsely in selected sites of the city, i.e. *Fuli* Peninsula, *Taojin* Garden on *Taojin* Road, American Bank Centre on *Renminzhong* Road, *Lujingya* Garden on *Lujing* Road, as well as in the office buildings or residential communities in *Yaotai*, *Tongdewei*, *Lizhiwan* Square, *Yian* Square, *Yifu* Road, *Zhanqian* Road and *Dongfeng* West Road. Nevertheless, the five sites mentioned above represent the most remarkable zones of transnational migrants in Guangzhou. Not only high-class elites such as managers or embassy officials, but also general Blacks, transnational migrants move into these sites, accumulately or sporadically, initiating marked restructuring of the local community. Along with different skin-colours, they also added Guangzhou different languages, foods, dresses, lifestyles and cultures. Under globalisation, the sociospatial structure of post-reform Guangzhou is further diversified (Feng and Zhou 2003).

Nevertheless, the process of the transformation does not promise the appearance of transnational ethnic enclaves. Among these five sites, only *Huanshidong* can be labelled as ethnic enclaves as it is only there that African traders typically reside and

work, and only this site is well-known to be taken as Black enclaves by most Blacks, Guangzhouese, researchers, officials or medias. More than often Black traders rent high-rise apartments while running business at the same place, so as to avoid tax charge, registration or other governmental administrations. Nonetheless, few are known about these people, let alone the knowledge of their transnational behaviours, social networks or ethnic institutions. Alike other cases of 'globalisation from below', however, the development of transnational social space in China indicates the colourful dynamics of globalisation, and so that a case study of transnational Blacks in Guangzhou will further expand our knowledge not only upon urban China, but also upon globalisation per se. As such, the following study will try to excavate knowledge of this transnational ethnic enclave through taking in-depth fieldwork surveys in *Huanshidong*, and to understand its sociospatial mechanisms through look closely at both the 'African Tribe' and local people.

4 An empirical study: *Xiaobei*

4.1 Research design

As a road situates in *Hongqiao* Street, *Yuexiu* District, *Xiaobei* is surrounded by plentiful high-rise apartments - though the bottom of which normally are shops, such as *Tianxiu* Building, *Xiushan* Building, *Taochi* Building, and *Guolong* Building. *Xiushan* Building, for instance, is an apartment containing about 200 houses, whereas half of them are owned or rent by Blacks or Arabs. In *Xiushan* Building, *Tianxiu* Building and *Guolong* Building, there are over 400 Black residents who come from 52 different countries. For the new comers, *Tianxiu* Building is their first choice. The location of *Xiaobei* is the main factor that moulds the development of the ethnic enclave (Figure 5, Figure 6). First, it is in walking distance to a series of transportations, such as the Airport Express Line, Guangzhou Railway Station, Guangzhou Metro and a couple of coach stations. *Tianxiu* Building, for example, is only 3.5 kilometres away from Guangzhou Railway Station, and less than five kilometres, linear distance, to *Lihua* Fair Centre. Second, *Xiaobei* is approaching pairs of goods distribution centres such as 'Zhanxi Watch Wholesale Market', 'Lihua Cloth Wholesale Market' and 'Baima Cloth Wholesale Market'. In addition, although the rent of *Xiaobei* has rocketed to 6000-7000 RMB yuan per month in 2007, the rent cost of houses of *Xiaobei* is still equal to Guangzhou's average level. All these therefore offer attractive conditions for the Black traders.



Figure 5 Xiaobei and its surroundings



Figure 6 Xiaobei and its landscape

In Jan-May, 2006 and March, 2007, we carried out a series of surveys including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews that target on Black traders, mainly within *Tianxiu* Building and the surrounding areas such as restaurants and bars. From Jan to May, 2006, a preliminary investigation was conducted. Through random sampling, we sent out 80 English questionnaires, reclaimed 52 and qualified 43. The reclaiming rate was low, for the reason that most of the traders run business without any official registration and some even are ‘Three-Illegal-People’ (*sanwu renyuan*) (illegal to disembark, illegal to reside and illegal to run business), so that some people will behave repelling to the investigation. Through preliminary investigation, we found out that a large proportion to the African Black people used French, which elevated the difficulty of the survey. Meanwhile, a total of 40 questionnaires directed at the local residents living in communities of *Xiaobei*, of which 35 are reclaimed as valid. The investigation in this phase was focused on collecting the fundamental information of the migrants, such as nationalities, living conditions and business properties. Besides, three asking questions such as ‘would you like to live with Chinese neighbourhoods’, the relations between local residents and Black migrants were also concerned. In 2007, with the approach of semi-structured interviews on the group from the same locations, we interviewed 46 Black traders and two local businessmen, talking about aspects like economic and housing conditions, social networks, experiences or histories of transnational behaviours, and so on. The aim was to further understand the relation between their social networks, sociospatial rationales, and so on.

4.2 Transnational African Traders of Xiaobei

Most housing of *Xiaobei* is gated communities of high-rise apartments, the same as foreign housing in Beijing though the first two floors are often used for commerce in Guangzhou (Wu and Webber 2004). Before 1997, however, few housing of *Tianxiu* Building could be rented. Since *Xiaobei* was close to the periphery of the city centre, the renting fees here were lower than the city centre. High housing vacancy rate plus low rental lever contribute to the transnational traders’ gathering. The local residents, however, are mainly general Guangzhou residents. The 5th census in 2000, for instance, demonstrates that residents living in *Xiaobei* obtain an average educational attainment of junior high school level (46%). Since 1998, large scale of African businessmen began to rent apartments in *Sanrong* Building, *Qiaofu* Garden, *Xiushan* Building and housing on *Taojin* Road and *Kangyuan* Road. Thereafter, the congregation of African residents in *Tianxiu* Building became conspicuous and an ethnic enclave featured by the accumulation of Black traders within scatter high-rise apartments came into shape.

Tianxiu Building, as a typical case, situates at the crossroad of *Huanshi Zhong* Road (Central Circle Line) and *Xiaobei*. With a short distance to the Guangzhou Railway station, just ten minutes by feet, *Tianxiu* building was built into a high-rise apartment of 36-floors, containing three high-rise apartments (namely A, B, C), in 1995. The

space of the first to the fourth floor is designed as commercial areas, apart from which, 70% of the rest of *Tianxiu* Building-over 600 office compartments - are dominated by Middle Eastern or African traders. The rent of *Tianxiu* Building is around 38-48 RMB yuan per square meter, while the management cost is around 9 RMB yuan for each square meter.

The pedestrian flow of traders in *Tianxiu* Building amounts to 700 people (or times) per day, though during CECF, the number would be much higher. The survey indicates that Black people in *Tianxiu* Building mainly come from Central African and Western African countries, especially the latter (Figure 7), such as Mali, Togo, Gambian, Guinea, Ghana, Senegal and Congo, i.e. the seven golden coastal countries. In fact, these countries have maintained a rich commercial tradition since the 15th century. Like other African countries, these countries accelerate their trade with China in textile and electronic products after 2000. Since these countries enjoyed a flourishing commercial prospect as the centre of trading in Africa, the retail-trade between China and Africa urges businessmen of these countries to Guangzhou.

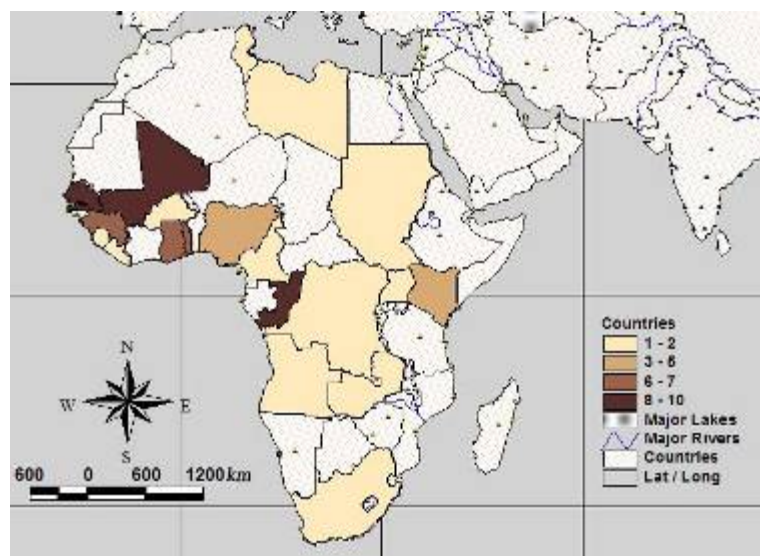


Figure 7 The nationalities of Xiaobei's African traders

Among the interviewees, 70% are male and 30% are female. It is known that African countries hold very different attitudes to the role of women in the economy. On the one hand, countries such as Ghana traditionally take women dominate market trading, so that over 90% of the business trade is run by female. On the other hand, for Moslem countries like Tanzania, women play a subdued economic role. Since the Africans living in *Tianxiu* Building are mainly Muslims from Mali, Nigeria, and Kenya, it is no wonder that there are few females in the sample. In addition, since most Black residents of *Tianxiu* are Muslims, the religious traditions play a important role to build close connections among the traders. During the Ramadan, for example, the Blacks would share spacious office to worship; the number of participants sometimes can even reach above one hundred. In fact, like *Quanzhou* City in Fujian

Province, Guangzhou holds a long history of Islamic culture. For example, Huaisheng Mosque of Guangzhou, a Muslim temple built in the Tang Dynasty, has been a religious centre of both Chinese and international Muslims for hundreds of years. The survey reveals that Black traders of *Xiaobei* has a median age of 32 (SD = 7.09), which means that the main body of these transnational migrants are young adults. At the same time, 33% (16/48) of the interviewees has established families, but very few of them (2/48) bring their spouses and children to Guangzhou. This can be largely attributed to the frequent mobility of these migrants. Like transmigrants in the US, most Black traders of Guangzhou travel across the borders of China and their homelands regularly. Interviewee No.16, a Malian man, for example, visits Guangzhou every two or three months in the last decade. Interviewee No.1, from Uganda, comes and stays ten days in Guangzhou every two months.

A majority of Blacks in *Xiaobei* speak Arabic and French, while only a few can speak English. As for their level of education, 16% of the sample chose ‘less than 6 years’, 43% chose ‘6-9 years’, 23% chose ‘10-12 years’, 18% chose ‘13-16 years’ (Figure 8). It turns out that most of the Black traders have an educational attainment of about junior high school level. As for their occupation, the majority of the sample refers themselves as ‘Businessman’ (Business, exporter, importer, or wholesaler), though a few labelled themselves as liberal professions or housewives.

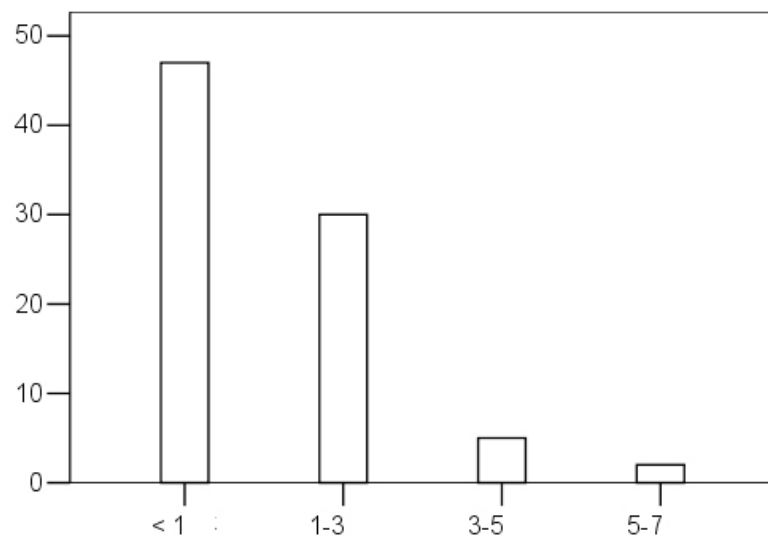


Figure 8 The living time of Xiaobei's African traders

As for the length they reside in China (Figure 8), over 90% of the sample began to live in Guangzhou after 1998; about 56% of the sample has never lived above one year persistently in Guangzhou. As transnational migrants, the majority of blacks enjoy a high frequency of travelling between Guangzhou and Africa. Interviewee No.48, for instance, came to Guangzhou for trade ten years ago, live in *Xiaobei* for around a month each year. Moreover, 34% of the sample has lived in Guangzhou for

1-3 years, 5% for 3-5 years, yet only 2% for more than 5 years. Clearly, it indicates that the surging of transnational migrants in Guangzhou is largely a recent phenomenon, though the transnational trading of these migrants has already lasted for around two decades.

4.2 Ethnic economy of Xiaobei

The goods the interviewees are trading mainly contain three types of products, i.e. textiles, cosmetics and electronic products. Most interviewees mentioned that they buy and sell clothing, shoes, cosmetics and electronic products such as mobile phones, DVD and so on, ‘I sell everything’ (Interview No. 11). Normally, they ship the goods bought in Guangzhou back to their own country or surrounding areas, then sale through the network of local traders. Interviewee No.3, for example, told us that he ‘sell goods to the entire sub-Saharan Africa’. In fact, quite a few of the interviewees claim that their goods are sold in almost all West African countries. Interviewee No.10, however, even sells products to not only Senegal, but also Spain and Italy, the Europe.

Accordingly, the operation of the ethnic economy in *Xiaobei* can be divided into two types: namely salesmen (*Xingshang*) and tradesmen (*Zuogu*). First, the former, salesmen refer to a group of transnational Blacks come to purchase goods frequently, especially during the CECF period, and then go back to the homelands to sell. Normally, they run one or several shops at the homeland that sell middle or low quality products through importing from Guangzhou. The latter, however, refers to the group of Black traders open shops or companies to run business in Guangzhou. Based on these two groups, transnational Blacks of *Xiaobei* establish a special sociospatial network that involves local people, market, society, and governments of Guangzhou (Figure 9).

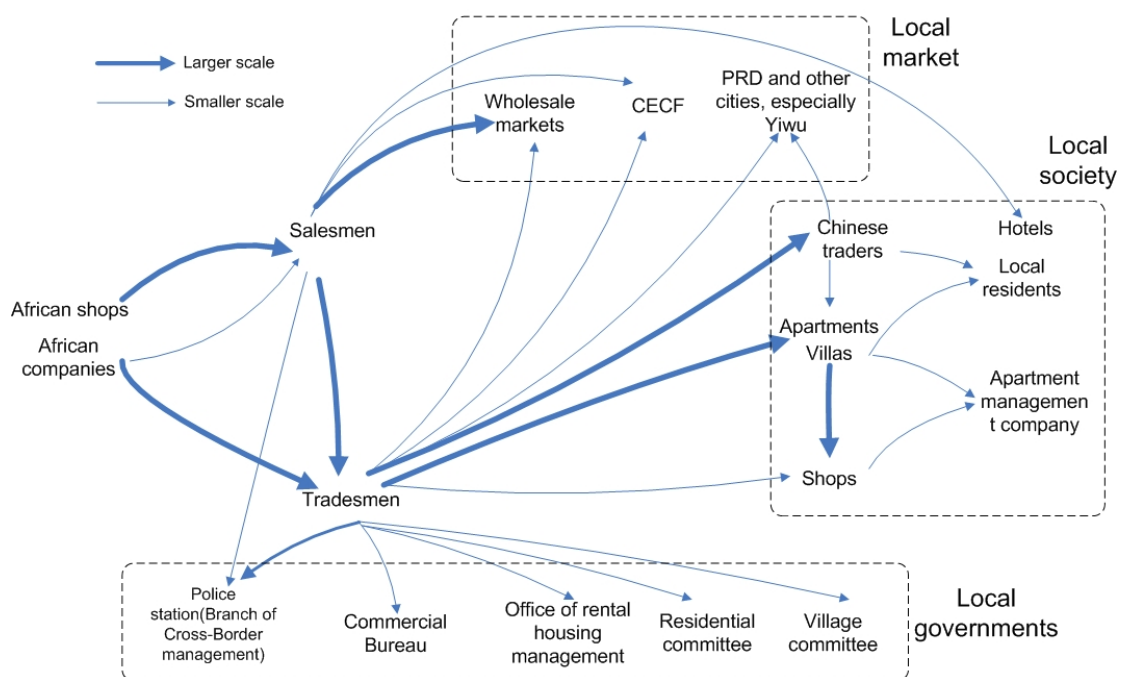


Figure 9 Xiaobei's African traders' social connections

First, salesmen come and live in *Xiaobei* for a shorter period of time, either each year or each month, to import products. Therefore, the purchase of goods is the main engagement of this type of transnational migrants. The daily works of salesmen in Guangzhou is mainly linked to the local wholesale markets. Let's take Interviewee No.20, a Tunisian trader, as an example. He started to do business in Guangzhou since 2003, and visited Guangzhou 4-5 times per year. Each time he stayed about 15 days in the city, focusing on several large-scale footwear wholesale markets. As short-term residents, they would choose to live in hotels, and it is quite common that several traders sharing one room. As for their social networks, 43% of the sample has friends or relatives in Guangzhou, insisting that friends (so-called 'brothers' by Muslims) are of high importance to business, though some of them have Chinese friends. Meanwhile, also some traders completely depend on themselves, digging deep into the wholesale markets and dealing upon personal exploration. Nevertheless, salesmen have few contacts with Chinese. Most of their expenses and trades are within or around the wholesale markets, but they rarely get in contact with local communities. According to local laws and regulations, these transborderers must register in the Immigration Department of Public Security Bureau to have a temporary residence permit. In fact, however, only a few of them will obey the regulations. In fact, some interviewees are even unable to afford the registration fee, a total of 400 RMB yuan.

'...They don't even have 100 dollars in their pockets, and could hardly pay for bills of hotels in the first few days when arrived in Guangzhou...'(Interviewee No. 22).

'...Unlike those who have money for two-weeks in their pocket, we Africans start from nothing...In order to have the money for meals tomorrow, we have to work immediately when we arrived in Guangzhou...'(Interviewee No. 25).

This therefore indicates that some of the salesmen are very poor people. For example, some of them just came and purchase some second-hand clothes to import to Africa (Survey 2007). In this sense, the African salesmen are a group of people from diversified socio-economic background. Most of them are rich, but some are extremely poor.

Second, the tradesmen refer to agents working in Guangzhou appointed by African companies, or those set up companies directly in Guangzhou. Normally, tradesmen purchase goods from various wholesale markets, shops or factories, and then ship the goods back to their countries or other places. Malians, for instance, have opened nine 'Cargo' in Guangzhou, which were set up in Bangkok before 2000. This type of Cargo normally has five to ten employees, the largest of which even holds 30 Chinese staff. Every month, they ship goods for West African traders, the larger stock of which can have 20-50 containers. A few tradesmen extend their business space to other cities of

the PRD, such as Shenzhen, Dongguan and so on. Moreover, it is found that the tradesmen have a strong link with Yiwu, the Zhejiang town playing an important role as the world factory of petty products such as buttons, knit goods, toys, and so on.

Unlike salesmen, however, these Black traders often rent an apartment in *Tianxiu* Building or the neighbourhood apartments. Certain even purchased and therefore owned the housing (Interviewee No.27, No.40). Around 90% of these traders have African friends or relatives in Guangzhou, and some often hire Chinese agents and translators. Nonetheless, the links between tradesmen and salesmen is quite strong, since salesmen often purchase through tradesmen's business networks. In addition, tradesmen often have contacts with local institutions such as local police stations, the Industrial and Commercial Bureau, the Department of Rental Management, and the local residential committees. A certain number of samples, however, try to avoid the charge of either tax or resident permits. Consequently, during the survey, it is found that the Black traders generally do not enjoy a good reputation among the Chinese government officials, '...some of them are dangerous', 'they are problems...', they said.

4.3 Sociospatial segregation of Xiaobei

During the survey, a number of questions are used to test the feeling of African traders towards to local society. In sum, the traders' comments upon Guangzhou and the local residents are featured by a neutral stance. For instance, the openness of the local culture and society is applauded to have provided them with development opportunities, as most of the transnational traders response positively towards to test comments such as 'The government of Guangzhou treats me friendly' (69%), 'Citizens of Guangzhou are friendly to me' (58%), and 'Guangzhou could accept people of multiple groups' (97%).

'...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. Respect we get here and people treat us just as businessmen, without any prejudice'
(Interviewee No.27).

Nevertheless, as for the relations with local residents, the traders often leave the comments that although they can get along with local people, there is little interactions between them. In fact, most of the sample does not prefer to live with Chinese in the same community (Table 1).

The survey shows that the African Traders mainly consider rent housing (44%), and more than often prefer a location near to the workplaces (51%). But, 82% of the respondents do not satisfy with their current living conditions, so that 44% of the sample mentioned that they would not live in the present house for a long term. Moreover, it is found that 51% of the Africans have housing mobility of once or more times, and one sample even has changed houses for four times. This indicates a high

frequency of African traders to change their homes. Nevertheless, for the shortage of the research design, it remains a question that whether these housing mobility have moved these African traders away from *Xiaobei*. If the answer is yes, it will suggest that *Xiaobei* de facto acts as a ‘bridge’ for new comers to Guangzhou; and it will be interesting to further investigate who leave and who left. If the answer is no, it will confirm that *Xiaobei* has become the magnetic enclaves for African traders. To answer this question will be an important task of studies in the future, since it is linked to the question that whether *Xiaobei*’s status as a transnational ethnic enclave will be waxed or waned.

Table 1: Evaluation of *Xiaobei*’s Blacks towards the local society

<i>Attitudes of local residents to you</i>			<i>Communication with local residents</i>		
	Sample	%		Sample	%
Very good	3	7.00%	Often	1	2.30%
Good	5	11.60%	Sometimes	7	16.30%
OK	28	65.20%	Rarely	29	67.40%
Not good	7	16.20%	Never	6	14.00%
<i>Whether you can stay with local residents harmoniously</i>			<i>Would you like to live with Chinese in the same community</i>		
	Sample	%		Sample	%
Yes	17	39.50%	Yes	13	30.20%
No	16	37.20%	No	30	69.80%
No comment	10	23.30%			

The survey of local residents, however, demonstrates that Chinese hold a negative attitude against the African traders. Among them, 82.9% are not willing to live with the Blacks in the same community. In fact, 54.3% of them argue that if the populations of Blacks in *Xiaobei* keep increasing, they would consider moving away. Local residents comment that Black people have a frightened appearance, coupled with language differences, communication hardships, and so on. Nevertheless, also there are some local residents argue that the arrival of the African traders accelerates the development of the economy of *Xiaobei*, though it also suffered a loss of Chinese businesses and households.

‘...It makes Xiaobei nearly a pure Blacks area...’. The manager of Tianxiu Building said, ‘...for the sake of business interests, we do not mind the Blacks to do business and live here; However, the high mobility of the Blacks, coupled with the language barriers, has created difficulties for our management...especially, some Blacks are often linked to rent evasion...’ (Manager, Tianxiu Building).

‘...The blacks are hard to manage...their hygiene condition is poor...’ (Manager, Yidong Building).

Therefore, the manager of *Yidong* Building believed that it is the arrival of African traders that bring about a gradual relocation of the Chinese businessmen within the building. In response, *Yidong* Building raised the rents as one of their measures to discourage the Blacks to move in. Also the manager of *Guolong* Building also does not want the number of African residents to increase. As a recent trend, local estates management organizations have taken approaches such as raising rents or compulsorily denying Blacks accessibility to curb the growth of Blacks. As such, the sociospatial segregation of *Xiaobei* is taking shape, and the development of this transnational ethnic enclave will suffer more and more intensive responses from local residents and institutions.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

At the turn of the 21st century, the restructuring of the global space economy as 'space of flows' has brought about divergent patterns and processes of population mobility across the world. While the novelty of the evolving patterns and processes of population has been mastered by the prevailing theory of transnationalism, the focus of these studies are mainly targeted on transnational migrants between nations of the core and the margins. The original margins of the world such as China, however, also undertake important roles in the global economy. As the goods of 'Made in China' being sold across the global, Chinese cities began to attract massive numbers of transnational migrants. Nevertheless, relatively little is known about the mechanism of the border crossing of these margin-to-margin migrants. While previous ethnic enclave study has centred on market economies, it is unknown whether the argument can be applied to a non-market or semi-market context.

This article sought to empirically investigate the ethnic enclave arguments by considering transnational African traders in Guangzhou, the third largest metropolis of China. The basic finding is that the transnational migrants in *Xiaobei* are composed of a highly diversified group. Though they mainly come from Middle-West Africa, they hold different socio-economic background, trading different goods, sharing various religions, different culture and languages. Through these transnational migrants, shoes, clothes, cell phones, computers, MP3, and nearly all produces made in the world factories of China are sold to Africa.

Nevertheless, the rising of transnational ethnic enclave can not solely attribute to the impact of so-called 'globalisation'. For instance, why it is only Guangzhou rather than other globalising Chinese cities such as Shanghai and Beijing that Black traders accumulate? Ethnicity, transitional economy and local place-making are interrelated in complex ways, which have to be understood along the uneven development geography in terms of four scales, i.e. global, nation, region, and local. First, the new spatial division of labour across the global provides China opportunities to become the new power house of the world economy, while the nation aptly captured the chance through Deng Xiaoping's market reform and open-door policies after 1978.

The door open of China, however, undertook a gradual strategy, whilst the first step of which was undertaken in the PRD, and then the east coastal regions. Accordingly, selected regions such as PRD and YRD become the most developed areas of China, to the extent that both regions enjoy the new role as world factories. Therefore, as the headquarters of these two regions, both Guangzhou and Shanghai becomes the centre of goods exporting to the world.

Both Guangzhou and Shanghai already played the roles as the major port cities of China in history. Nevertheless, Guangzhou differs to Shanghai in that it holds a much longer history of trade through wholesale markets. In *Xiguan* of *Liwan* District, for example, wholesale markets selling specific goods such as shoes, clothes, teas, and medicines have been constructed since the Qing Dynasty. At the end of 2005, a total of 904 wholesale markets were recorded in Guangzhou, which had a yearly trade amount of 98.3 billion RMB yuan. Among them, 70% are markets of consumption products such as garments, shoes, caps, bags, and computers (Bureau 2006). In addition, as a neighbourhood of Macau and Hong Kong, the global city of Asia, Guangzhou shares a very convenient link with the outside world especially Africa.

It is not by chance that *Xiaobei* becomes a transnational ethnic enclave of Africans. Geographically, *Xiaobei* are adjacent to Guangzhou Railway Station, Guangdong Coach Station and Guangzhou Coach Station. Importantly, this enclave sits beside one of the two fair centres of the CECF, the *Lihua* Road Fair Centre, marshalled with several huge wholesale markets, such as *Nanfang* Watch Wholesale Market, *Zhanxi* Watch Wholesale Market, and *Tianma* Cloth Wholesale Market. All of these advantages therefore contribute to the accumulation of transnational Black traders. As early as 1990, African traders began to do business in this area. Two events, the South-eastern Asia financial crisis of 1997 and China became a membership of WTO, brought it a soaring number of Black traders migrated from South-east Asia cities such as Kuala Lumpur or other places in the world.

Moreover, Guangzhou is one of the earliest cities through which Islam get transmitted into China. As early as the Tang and Song Dynasty, so-called *Fanke* (foreign Muslims) and their *Fanfang* (living and business communities) have already appeared in Guangzhou. With this long history of religious, Guangzhou has become the centre of Muslims for centuries. It is estimated that around 15,000 to 30,000 Muslims, including both Chinese and foreigners, now working in Guangzhou, among which there are nationwide translators of Arabic (Ma 2006). As shown by this study, the religious status provides Guangzhou advantage in attracting people from Muslim countries of Africa. Furthermore, Guangzhou's geographical location as well as its climates also contributes to the accumulation of transnational African traders in the city. As a south Asian city, Guangzhou provides the traders comfortable temperature and sunny weathers.

Differ to the theory of transnational migrants such as the segmented labour market in

the US, the rising of transnational ethnic enclave in Guangzhou is largely attributed to the 'world factory' status of the PRD. The newly flourishing of transnational Black enclave in Xiaobei is a combined result of both so-called 'globalisation from below' and the unique locality such as Guangzhou's commercial culture, religion traditions and trading networks. For urban China, the rising of such transnational ethnic enclaves indicates the survival of urbanism: diversity, heterogeneous, and anonymous (Wirth 1938).

Through social networks constructed in *Xiaobei*, African traders acquired needed information as well as transportation to access wholesale markets of Guangzhou and other cities. It is shown that African traders can be categorised into two types: the salesman and the tradesman. As the majority of the transmigrants, salesmen visit Guangzhou regularly to import goods to Africa or other counties. Normally, they live in hotels around *Xiaobei*. The latter, tradesmen, also work to import goods to African, but mainly through opening shops and companies in *Xiaobei*. As such, *Xiaobei* serves as a vital, albeit unorthodox, economic institution for the welfare of transnational African traders. Nevertheless, it is found that some local residents, businessmen and property managers have begun to take measures resist the newly arrival of Blacks. They either remove from *Xiaobei*, or curb the Blacks to move in. It is possible that a segregated ethnic enclave is in the making. Globalization therefore adds a new dimension of sociospatial segregation, i.e. ethnicity, to Chinese cities. The future of *Xiaobei* deserves much scholar attentions. Further researches are needed to better understand the social networks of these transnational migrants, and its interactions with the local society, by paying more attention to some of the pivotal internal dynamics of ethnic communities within urban China's rapidly changing sociospatial landscape.

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