

Out of Africa: New Patterns of Settlement for African Immigrants in China

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Abstract

As its economy continues to reach new highs, China becomes more and more attractive to foreigners who look for employment and business opportunities either for short term stay or long term settlement. China is on the way to become a new country of immigrant destination in the 21st century. Chinese government has been adjusting policies and regulations on immigrants and shorter term workers, based on the emerging problems and incidences involving immigrants. In this paper, I focus on a newly established organization in Chinese neighborhood: Foreigner Management and Service Center. It is a new kind of government sponsored institution that is first established in the city of Guangzhou in southern China. In this paper, I examine how immigrant service centers in Guangzhou facilitate Africans immigrants to adapt to the life in Guangzhou. The paper is based on public records as well as fieldwork in Guangzhou in the summer of 2012.

Introduction

Since 19th century, China has been sending migrants to other countries: in the early stage, laborers were sent to US and to Southeast Asia; in more recent stage, mass migrants of various backgrounds were sent to developed countries. However, China didn't receive many international migrants until the last few decades, thus it lacked the experience of administrating foreigners. It was only after Act on Exit & Entry of Aliens being enacted in 1986 that China began to have laws on foreigner management.

According to China's ministry of public security, during the three decades from 1985 to 2004, only 3000 foreigners became permanent residence in China (Sanqin Metropolis Daily, 2004). In 2004, a formal rule on the requirement of applying for permanent residence was enacted. According to this rule, foreigner need to invest 500 thousand US dollar in western China or invest one million US dollar in central China to become investigator immigrant; foreigners can apply for permanent residence as professional or expert, if they own certain occupations in government institutions, large transnational companies or state-owned university (China's Permanent Residence Examination and Approval Rule for Foreigners, 2004). The foreigners who intend to become permanent residents seldom meet these requirements; among the 250 thousand foreigners who have resided in China for over 5 years, only 1 thousand received permanent residence through the 2004 rule (Oriental Outlook, 2011).

In recent decades, the number of international immigrants in China kept growing. Most of these immigrants remain their legal status by renewing visa at the Exit & Entry Department or by applying new visa outside China (foreigners from certain countries can apply new visa in Hong Kong or Macau, while the rest need to apply it in their original country). Visa is usually valid for 3 months to 1 year, but some foreigners can only get visa with valid period of two weeks to one month; this largely depends on the diplomatic relations between China and their origins. The valid period get through renewal can't excess the original valid period.

If a foreigner intends to stay in China for more than 3 days, s/he need to register for temporary staying in the

sub-district office, thus Chinese government can keep a record on where they are staying and who they are staying with.

Foreigners who work in China need to register in Municipal Labor and Social Security Bureau, and pay tax in Tax Bureau.

Thus, immigrants with legal status have to deal with government institutions as long as they stay in China. Some immigrants become illegal residents due to the high cost and inconveniency of renewing visa or applying for new visa. Being afraid of detention and deportation, they would avoid any contact with government institutions.

Few foreigners came to China before 1990s, and they were mostly with visa for public affairs, thus the 1986 act was not very strict on illegally staying; the act mainly relied on self reporting or reports from hotels to discover who's illegally staying. However, since many foreigners now come to China on private affairs, it's much harder for the government to find out who's overstaying only through reports. Policemen would inspect foreigners' passports on the street or search apartments for foreigners without valid visa. This is efficient in revealing overstay foreigners, but it disturbed the life and privacy of many foreigners. On July 16th 2009, a Nigerian jumped out from the window of a building in Guangzhou to avoid police inspection, and was seriously injured; later, three hundred Nigerian immigrants gathered outside Kuangquan police station to protest against the rude visa inspection (Singapore United Morning Post, 2009).

China government has adapted new ways of managing foreigners, which can be more efficient in finding illegal immigrants and less inconvenient for foreigners. One approach is to reduce the agents helping foreigners to enter boarder illegally, stay illegally or work illegally. The recent inspections in Guangzhou are mostly against illegal currency exchange agents. There is a limit on the amount of RMB a foreigner can exchange during one stay, thus without these agents, African merchants may not have enough Chinese currency to do many business deals and are less likely to overstay. In the new version of exit & entry act that will be enacted in 2013, the punishments for illegal agents helping foreigners will be harsher than those for the foreigners.

China's rules on foreigner management have changed several times responding to incidences involving foreigners. According to the 1986 act, county or city level police stations have the power to deal with crimes involving foreigners, but

there are no detailed rules for punishing foreigners who violated the laws. For a long period of time, policemen were reluctant to deal with foreigner crime for they lack the law basis. However, quite a lot stowaways and illegal workers from Vietnam were caught in Guangdong province in 2007 and 2008. For example, in 2007, 761 foreigners were arrested in Guangzhou for participating crimes (Nanfang Daily, 2008). Media like to report foreigner crimes and even rumors about foreigners, which also add pressure to government to enact more strict rules on foreigners. Because of the Beijing Olympic and Global financial crises in 2008, Chinese government urged local governments and police stations to be stricter on foreigners. Thus, the policemen began to inspect foreigners' passport and deport most of the overstaying foreigners they found. Foreigners became afraid of the policeman; Africans with illegal status would run away when they saw a policeman. The Nigerian injured in July 2009 while escaping from a passport inspection and the Nigerian dead in police station in June 2012 both showed that Chinese policemen have been too strict on foreigners. Nigerians' protections after that lead to even stricter rules on foreigners and tightened visa policies.

Chinese government authorized local governments to set up their own rules on foreigner management. Guangdong province has enacted the Temporary Rule on Managing and Serving Foreigners in 2011; most part of the rule is details of the national law on foreigner, but it also emphasized the construction of information network on foreigner, and encouraged foreigners to take part in community management. In Guangzhou city, where lots of foreign merchants and international students resided, Foreigner Management and Service Centers (I will call it service center for short) have been established to collect information of foreigners and to provide service to foreigners.

The first service center was set up by Dengfeng sub-district office in 2007. Immigrants mainly from Africa, South Asia and Mid-East gathered in Dengfeng sub-district, which is close to Guangzhou railway station and several trading centers. The officers of the sub-district decided to try out a new kind of institution in urban enclave where many foreigners resided; it not only served as a place to manage foreigners living around, but also provide certain services to foreigners and help them to adapt into China. This attempt has been proved to be very effective, since the service centers provided more valid and

timely information of foreigners and made Temporary Accommodation Registration more convenient for foreigners. The Guangdong province governor Huang urged other sub-district to set up service center for foreigners; during a meeting, officials decided that every community with over 200 foreigners should set up a service center (Guangzhou Daily, 2008). Later, other cities where many foreigners resided, like Beijing, Shanghai and Yiwu, also established service centers.

In 2007, about 18,000 foreigners have resided in Guangzhou for over 1 year, and each year around 500,000 foreigners would stay in Guangzhou for short term (Xin Kuai Bao, 2007). Many foreigners are attracted to Guangzhou by annual Canton Fairs and by massive factories in Guangdong province. They boosted the prosperity of Guangzhou, but also brought some problems to this over crowded city. Vietnamese illegal workers may account for large part of the lawsuits involving foreigners, but Chinese media and Guangzhou residents paid much more attention to foreigners from African. Because of China's investments in African, many Africans expected Chinese to be friendly hosts; the number of Africans resided in Guangzhou increased every year until 2010, when the Asian Games was hosted by Guangzhou. Africans inhabited rather close to each other, and they are often considered to be of the same origin, thus they soon formed ethnic enclaves recognizable for local people and for local government.

In this study, I would focus more on Africans in Guangzhou, and try to find out how foreigner management and service centers would affect their lives and how they would response to the service centers. I would like to evaluate how well this new form of institution fulfils its goal of managing and serving Africans. I would compare the service centers with other institutions influencing foreigners to find out its unique effects on Africans settlement.

Literature Review

The three kinds of institutions which might have largest influence on immigrants are religious institutions, migrant organizations and government institutions. The former two often consist of many immigrants. Through participating in activities of religious institutions or migrant organizations, immigrants form new social network and adjust their values, thus

they may become more adapted to immigrant receiving countries, or become more segregated from main stream society.

According to immigrants' purposes when joining these institutions, migrant organizations can be viewed as instrumental institutions, while most religious institutions are non-instrumental institution. Immigrants join migrant organizations to fulfill their aim of enlarging social network and searching for social capital through ethnic groups; immigrants who take part in religious activities usually just want to maintain their religious beliefs, other benefits are not their main purpose (Nie, 2012: p21-22). Government agencies established by immigrant sending countries or receiving countries would function to meet the need of their own countries; they would attract migrants who would contribute to the development of their country, and may try to drive away migrants not wanted their countries. Unlike religious institutions or migrant organizations, government agencies seldom recruit immigrants; they affect immigrants through activities, policies or direct management.

In China, these three kinds of institutions all played important roles in foreigner's adaption. There are many merchant guilds of foreigners; in Guangzhou, Africans from the same country or from the same tribe often forms merchant guilds to exchange information and to protect their profits (Li, et.al. 2009; Xu, 2009). Some foreigners formed loose organization and meet regularly in foreigner bars. China has strict laws on religion, so it's rather impossible for foreigners to establish their own church or temple; but foreigners can take part in religious activities offered by local religious institutions. Several city governments have forced close churches without registration; In Guangzhou, Korean immigrants' religious ceremony had been interrupted by police because too many people gathered for a religious meeting in places that has not been registered for ritual use (Xu, 2009). Thus, international immigrants must follow the rules when organizing or participating religious activities. In Guangzhou, Catholic Africans would choose to participate in religious activities in Shishi Sacred Heart Cathedral, and Islam Africans can practice religious ceremonies in Huaisheng Temple. Since Chinese government has enacted strict rules on foreigners, the institutions that have most prolonged and significant influence on foreigners are most likely to be the government agencies.

Zhou mentioned that Africans generally considered Guangzhou as a nice place for them to live, but they are

uncomfortable with two things, one is that policemen can check their passport at any place any time, the other is that taxis drivers may refuse to serve them (Zhou, 2012). The latter one showed the discrimination of taxis drivers towards Africans; some taxis drivers complained that Africans often refuse to pay the amount of money showed on the meter, and the perfumes used by Africans would remain in their cars for long time. The former one reflected the attitude of local government; when policemen deal with foreigners, they would follow the rules, so they don't take the responsibility if any accident happens, thus the harsh way in which policemen inspected passport is due to the strict rules of Guangzhou government. In a newspaper story, Ali, an African merchant who owned a company in Guangzhou, complained that policemen would inspect his company unexpectedly to check his employees' passports (Nanfang People Weekly 2009). For the policemen, it might be just a regular inspection required by the rules; but Africans would feel that Chinese officials are hostile and suspicious towards them. These negative images of China brought to foreigners by government agencies would have great impact on their attitude toward China.

I would first review some articles on the impact of the three types of institutions on immigrants. Then I would briefly go over the history of how African communities formed and located in Guangzhou. All these would be essential for my latter analysis of how well Foreigner Management and Service Center fits the special requirements of China's foreigner management and meets the demand of Africans in Guangzhou. They would also help me to develop a discussion on whether it is just a substitute of other institutions or it plays a unique role in the adaption of Africans in China.

Religious Institutions

Religious institutions, especially migrants' religious institutions, often have profound influence on migrants. Religious institutions would provide migrants with certain formal or informal social services, like language classes or repent services (Chen 2002). Besides sharing of belief and friendship, some churches also provide material assistance (Ebaugh & Chafetz 2000). On one hand the services and goods provided by religious institutions can help migrants to go through real hard times;

on the other hand, religious institution might become the shelter for migrants, which separate them from the hardship as well as the contacts from the mainstream society. Religious institutions often organize activities which migrants can take part in; however, some of them are multiethnic activities that encourage cross ethnic interactions, others are mono-ethnic activities that may strengthen ethnic identity, and this depends largely on the doctrine of the religion and the aim of the church (Chen 2002). Religious institutions can also provide values and morality standards which help migrants to keep their children in the right track (Chen 2006). As Yang and Ebaugh concluded, the major functions of religious institutions on migrants are: they can be the social place to express ethnic distinctions; they may maintain the ethnic culture or acculturate migrants to mainstream society; they can assist migrants on adapting to mainstream society (Yang & Ebaugh 2001(1)).

Migrants can choose whether to believe a religion and which religion to convert to; described in Chen's article, a migrant woman abandoned Buddhist and converted to a mainstream religion in USA, the evangelical Christianity (Chen 2006). In some migrant churches, migrants can participate in the management of the institutions, and adjust it to fit the need of migrant group (Ebaugh & Chafetz 2000). Thus, migrants can do much more than passively accepting the influence of religious institutions.

Ebaugh and Chafetz have done some studies on the structural change of migrant religious institutions which occurs when they moved from original countries to the US. She pointed out that migrant religious institutions are often congregational structure, even though such structure is never observed in some of their origin countries (Ebaugh & Chafetz 2000). In an article by Ebaugh and Yang, they pointed out that migrant religious institutions in US have been adopting congregational structure and rituals, moving back to the fundamental doctrine, and move above traditional boundaries, just in order to include other people (Yang & Ebaugh 2001(2)). Smith compared two major structures of religious institution, the Episcopal structure and the congregational structure, and pointed out that Episcopal institutions place sacredness on offices, structure and rituals, while congregational institutions only view these things as instruments or means, thus they are allowed to be modified; in Episcopal structure, the movement of a clergyman from one parish to another must be approved by the

bishop, the clergyman, and the vestrymen of both parishes, while the Congregational structure gives the parish full control over hiring and firing (Smith 1953). Ebaugh has listed Warner's arguments on why migrant religious institutions tend to be congregational in structure, of which an important one is that migrants gain more ownership of the church when it is congregational structure; in fact, most migrant churches in America is established or owned by migrants (Ebaugh & Chafetz 2000). Migrants in US not only participate in the religious activities, but also organize these activities and manage the religious institutions; they have the power to modify the church to provide better services for migrants.

Chen pointed out that most theories on congregational typologies are built on cases of Anglo-Saxon Christians, thus they are not adequate to explain the post-1965 migrant religious institutions; she further argued that studies done before 1965 have a consensus that migrant religious institutions provide migrants with shelters detached from the mainstream society, but due to the variation among post-1965 migrant religious institutions, it's rather impossible to provide a unified description for all migrant religious institutions (Chen 2002). According to Weber's classical theory, religions can be divided into inner-worldly and other-worldly; inner-worldly religions like Christianity are part of the European mainstream Society, while other-worldly religions like Buddhism would face trouble when trying to be accepted by the mainstream. Chen compared two Taiwanese religious institutions in suburban Southern California, one is a Buddhism temple, and the other is an evangelical church; she discovered that the "other-worldly" Buddhism temple invited local elites of various religion and of different occupation to join their ceremonies, while the "inner-worldly" evangelical church is rather mono-ethnic (Chen 2002). Chen pointed out that this is partly due to the different religious ideals of the two institutions; Buddhism temple tend to include as many people as possible into its activities, while the evangelical church usually accept only those people recommended by one or more members. But a more important reason for the reversed roles of the two institutions is that Buddhists, as believers of other-worldly religion, have a much stronger temptation to be approved by the mainstream society, while the inner-worldly evangelical Christians don't feel the urgency to do so.

Yang and Ebaugh's comparative study on two Chinese religious institutions in Houston had similar founding (Yang &

Ebaugh 2001(1)). Because the majority of the believers in the Christian Church converted to Christian during their adulthood, the church highly valued Chineseness. The church uses Chinese in activities, celebrate Chinese festivals, and promote Chinese culture and values. Thus lots of Chinese migrants were attracted to this church, but the church failed to include multi-ethnic believers into its activities. The Buddhism temple consists of mainly ethnic Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, but it also attracted many non-Chinese believers, especially American white people. The temple adopted congregational structure and rituals, provided services that were more spiritual and less religious, and set up a branch in a local university. Yang and Ebaugh's explanation is that religious institutions are the main force forming migrants' ethno-religious identity, but they may differ in the way to emphasize and integrate ethnic and religious identity (Yang & Ebaugh 2001(1)).

In Chen's 2006 article, she analyzed the effect of religious institution from a migrant's perspective (Chen 2006). She agreed with some scholars' notion that migrants in US used religion as a method to ease intergenerational tension and to discipline their Americanized children. However, she didn't agree that migrant religious institutions only reproduce ethnic tradition and culture; she argued that migrant religious institutions challenges and modifies the ethnic culture through the process of delivering mainstream parenting methods and moral models to migrant parents.

Xu estimated that most Africans in Guangzhou believe in religion; among the Africans, 60 percents are Protestant or Catholic, 35 percents are Muslim, and 5 percent believe in African Indigenous religions (Xu, 2009). Kusow believed that Africans in Guangzhou formed different communities based on their religion (Kusow 2012). Many African Christians participated in the Shishi Sacred Heart Cathedral's special section on Sunday 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm. African Muslims would prefer to reside in Dengfeng village, an urban village where lots of Muslims from Xinjiang province settled; it's really convenient for Africans to access to Muslim food and other special service for Muslim. Xu discovered that many illegal migrants from African participate in the Mass in Shishi on Sunday; even though Chinese policemen knew there are illegal migrants in the church, they won't inspect the church for them (Xu, 2010:116-118). Thus the church is an important place for

illegal migrants from African, where they can meet friends, get spiritual comfort, and don't need to worry about passport inspection.

Migrant Organization

The main functions of migrant organization are to sustain migrants' connection to original country, to promote the culture of original country, to form ethnic social network, and to protect the interest of migrants (Song 2011). Migrants often join a migrant organization intentionally to search for ethnic resources and to form new social networks; they can benefit more from migrant organizations than religious institutions in the sense of increasing their social capital (Nie, 2012: p21-22). Migrant organization makes the utilization of resources more efficient among a group of people and protects their common interest, while the migrants support the migrant organization by participating in the activities and by paying membership fee.

According to Minghuan Li's methods of classification, there are local, national, continental and global migrant organizations depending on their size; according to their main function, there are political, economical, educational, association and service migrant organizations; some migrant organizations would mainly reproduce the cultures of their original countries, while others aim to localize (Li, 2002). The structure of a migrant organization is determined by the identity and aims of the establishers and participants, and is affected by the politic and economic environment of receiving country.

The first Chinese migrant organizations established in American were all local organizations based on kinship and/or origins, thus the participants of each organization were closely related to each other; the participants were local skill workers resided in ethnic enclaves, and many of them earned living in laundry or restaurants to avoid direct competition with the white (Li & Zhou, 2010). An important role of these early migrant organizations was to be the agency for migrants to gather the seed money to start their own ethnic business. Most Chinese migrants were poor, and any one of them had to borrow money from many people to start a business; this is really hard to be done without close connection formed through migrant

organization. After Immigration and Nationality Act passed in 1965, mass quantity of new migrants set foot on American. Various kinds of migrant organizations are established in USA: old fashion organizations based on kinship and origins, merchant associations or breeder associations formed by business owners, professional associations for high skill migrants, and Alumni associations for highly educated migrants graduated from same schools.

Unlike in US, where the new migrants from China are mainly educated or high skill immigrants, 85% of the Chinese immigrants in Europe are non-elite (Song 2011). The migrant organizations of the high skill migrants are more likely to be based on graduated school, company, profession and other modern relations; even those based on origins, would emphasize ethnicity more than geographic closeness (Liu 2009). But Liu pointed out that the migrant labors' organizations are still similar to traditional organizations based on kinship, origin, dialect and occupation (Liu 2009). The Chinese migrant organizations in Europe are established to meet the social and political need of Chinese; the organizations maintained migrants' passion towards China, promoted Chinese culture among European, connected migrant networks, and protected the interests of migrants (Song 2011).

Africans in China are mainly merchants; since China has a strict management on foreigners' organization, there are only a few formal African merchant associations in Guangzhou. Nigerians have stronger ethnic links than other Africans; for example, their merchant association "Nigeria Community" not only shares business information and cares about the living condition of Nigerian migrants, but also provides temporary shelter and airline ticket to bankrupt Nigerian merchants; if there were problems the organization can't solve, it would contact Nigerian embassy in Beijing (Li, et. al, 2009; Xu, 2009). Zhigang Li discovered in his 2008 survey that there were formal migrant organizations in Ghanaian, Nigerian, Cameroon and other African communities (Li, et. al, 2008). These organizations have regular gatherings; for example, the Cameroons would have regular meeting each two months. They have organization funding; the Guinea organization has donated 73,000 RMB during Wenchuan earthquake, and the money is from organization funding. These organizations are mainly community organization; the presidents of migrant organizations usually are community leaders.

Government Institution

Some government institutions are established to manage and serve migrants; some government institutions with multiple functions may have to deal with migrant affairs. These government institutions' effects on and attitudes toward migrants are rather determined by migrant policies and related laws or rules. As Massey pointed out, only a few articles have been concerning the influence of policy or government institution on international migration before 1990; but the theory on nation's effect on migration began to accumulate since 1990 (Massey 1999). Massey believes that international migration must be analyzed from four aspects: the structural force of developing countries that promote migration, the structural force of developed countries that attract migrants, actors who respond to these forces, and the social and economic structures that connect area of in and out migration. Massey also mentioned that in some situations, the intentions of migrant sending country and of migrant receiving country are opposite to each other; developed country is more likely to promote policies to constrain the number of migrants, while the developing country would encourage laborers to emigrant.

Freedman's article analyzed how Malaysia government institutions hindered Chinese migrants from acculturation (Freedman 2001). About 30% of Malaysia population is Chinese, who has long been a threat to local Malays. Even though Chinese have migrated in Malaysia since 19c, they still identify themselves as Chinese, and maintained Chinese traditions and culture; this is rather unusual in other South-eastern Asia countries like Thailand or Philippine, where Chinese migrants are highly assimilated (two Thailand presidents, Thaksin Shinawatra and Yingluck Shinawatra, are actually ethnic Chinese). Since 1957, Malaysia government has provided formal definition for Malay: one has to be ethnic Malay, educated in Malay local language, believe in Islam, to be considered as Malay; this identity is connected with certain politic priorities. Most government institutions in Malaysia are taken charge by ethnic Malay; education institutions would provide Malay children with more opportunity and education resources.

Return migration is a significant phenomenon that should not be ignored. Many countries have special institutions to

attract return migrants, who have capitals gained in the foreign country and may have learned some advanced skills. Athukorala's study analyzed one aspect of this important phenomenon: the reintegration of return migrant in Sri Lanka (Athukorala 1990). The emigrants from Sri Lanka are mainly laborers from similar industries; when they spent the best period of physical labor abroad, they usually return with some savings. The unemployment rate of these return migrants is twice as much as the rate before the migration, thus return migrants have become social problems. In 1982, the return migration branch of the Sri Lanka department of labor inaugurated a self-employment program, in the first part of which return migrants are trained for certain business, and in the second part a bank would provide them with loan to start their own business. Since the 4th cycle of the program, the department encouraged return migrants to establish joint venture, which requires lower seed money for every migrant, and the bank can devote more money and time to each company. Many return migrants become business owner through this program.

After 1979, when the open-door policy was carried out by the Chinese government, many Chinese migrated to developed countries. Chinese government formulated new policies to bring the transnational Chinese migrants back to the fold of the nation-state and to convey and project the nation-state agendas to the overseas Chinese communities (Liu 2005). Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (Qiaoban) played an important role in the revival of overseas Chinese nationalism. In 2001, the top officials of Qiaoban visited over 20 countries to meet the leaders of Chinese communities; they conveyed Chinese policy and culture during the journey, and promoted Chinese language education. In the mid-1990s, government agencies dealing with international migration, including the Qiaoban, changed their official slogan from "return and serve the country" to "serving our country", thus physically return to China is no longer a prerequisite for patriotism. Thus, instead of urging the elites to return to China, these agencies promoted and strengthened the concept of ethnic Chinese among the oversea migrants.

Africans in Guangzhou

Although in many studies, Africans in Guangzhou are studied as one group, it is important to remember that there are great variations among these migrants. According to Li's survey, there were about 15000 to 20000 Africans in Guangzhou in 2008; they speak French, English, Arabic or Portuguese; large proportion of them came from west Africa (Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, etc), while some others were from middle Africa (Congo and Angola) or east Africa (Tanzania and Kenya) (Li, et. al. 2009). There mainly five foreigner enclaves in Guangzhou, which were formed in the 1990s: Sanyuanli sub-district, where some African and Korean merchants gathered; Huanshidong sub-district, which is the first foreigner enclave in Guangzhou, and has the largest population of foreigners, all kinds of foreigners lives here; Tianhebei sub-district, which is the commercial center of Guangzhou, many white collar foreigners work and reside there; Ersha island, which is the rich area in Guangzhou, mainly foreign managers and high-level white collars live here; Panyu district, which is rather a satellite city of Guangzhou, many migrants from West Asia and Middle East gathered there (Li, et. al. 2008). Most African enclaves located in Sanyuanli and Huanshidong: Nigerians formed ethnic enclave in Sanyuanli, where those with less capital work for the merchants; African Muslims mainly live in Dengfeng block, which is a part of Huanshidong and Chinese Muslims have resided there for decades; more successful African merchants gather in Hongqiao block, which is also in Huanshidong, but the real estate price there is rather high.

As Bodomo pointed out, while Africans have always lived in China as students or official representative, the African communities comprising traders begin to form in the 1990s (Bodomo, 2010). Especially after the 1997 financial turmoil, large amount of African merchants moved from Southeast Asia to Guangzhou (Li, et. al. 2008). Li noted that one important aspect that Guangzhou attracts so many African is that Guangzhou has been hosting the Canton fair since 1957; 190,000 foreign merchants from over 200 countries participated in the Canton fair in 2006. Xu believed that Africans are very likely to reside in Guangzhou soon after they entered China, for Guangzhou is the trading center of the Zhujiang Delta region, and most trades can be done in this city (Xu, 2009). Guangzhou is close to Hong Kong and Macau, where Africans can renew their visa much easier; this is becoming more and more important since Chinese government tightened up the visa policies in

recent years.

One important factor that leads to the formation of African ethnic enclaves is that Africans in China are mainly merchants, who are self-employed and quite independent. Li believes that there are two main kinds of African merchants in Guangzhou: the peddlers, who do small business and usually only stay in Guangzhou around the period of Canton Fairs; the tradesmen, who open shop in Guangzhou and make profit from selling low-end and semi-low end products to Africa; the Africans in Xiaobei (a district that includes Huanshidong and part of Sanyuanli) formed their unique social network around these two kinds of merchants (Li, et. al. 2008). As Nie pointed out, there are also African short-term laborers and unemployed Africans in the communities; they came to China for economical success, but due to their low education, illegal status and other limitations, they have to hide in the morning, and load cargos for the peddlers and tradesmen at night (Nie 2012: p15-16). Thus ethnic economic is forming in the African ethnic enclaves.

Another factor accounts for African ethnic enclave is Africans' attitude towards Guangzhou local people. Africans are satisfied with Guangzhou city, but not so satisfied with Guangzhou government and local people; in Li's survey, 97% Africans agree that Guangzhou accepts multicultural people, but only 69% think the Guangzhou government is friendly, and only 58% think local people is friendly (Li, et. al. 2008). Li's paper also showed that even though the main concerns of Africans when choosing dwelling are rental price and distance to working place, 69% respondents don't want to live in the same residential area with local Chinese.

Guangzhou local people's attitude towards Africans is perhaps even more influential. Min Zhou did a study on both the attitudes of Guangzhou residents towards African and Africans towards local Chinese; on all questions like whether you will interact with them if lived in the same building, do you want to learn about their culture, how do you feel about their appearance, how close you would like to be related to them, Chinese respondents are more negative towards African than African towards Chinese (Zhou, 2012). Guangzhou residents are annoyed by four aspects of Africans: Africans are often connected with negative images, like illegal migrant, criminal, liar; Africans value money too much, that they would fiercely

argue with taxi drivers for several RMB; Africans participate in religions activities (which are unfamiliar for Chinese people); Africans wake up at noon and stay awake until late night, and the perfume they use and music they play are annoying (Wen, 2012).

Because of the strict rules of Guangzhou Government on foreigner, the number of Africans in Guangzhou has been decreasing since 2008. As Li pointed out, some Africans moved to Foshan city but still did business in Guangzhou; some moved to Yiwu, a new trading center located in Zhejiang province; some left China and went to Central Asia (Li, 2012). Li argued that the African enclaves in Guangzhou are declining.

The Foreigner Management and Service Centers

To study the functioning of Foreigner Management and Service Centers, I have visited the service center in Dengfeng sub-district, where Africans most intensely gathered, and interviewed the officials several times. I also collected information through city government and sub-district office. In order to find out how Africans are affected by the service center, I stayed in the Dengfeng service center for a week and interviewed some of the Africans who came to the service center for services or for registration. According to a report on June 13th, 2012, there are 1475 foreigners (75 residents of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan are included) registered in Dengfeng sub-district, who are from 72 countries and regions; 73% of them are males, 27% are females; 778 are temporarily staying, while 697 are residing for long term; 529 of them came for business. The five origin countries with most migrants in Dengfeng are Mali (294 people), India (148 people), Guinea (111 people), Nepal (99 people), Congo DRC (98 people), Niger (66 people). 989 out of the 1475 foreigners are from African, which stands for 67 percents. Only three Nigerians registered in Dengfeng, because they mainly gather in Sanyuanli sub-district.

The Establish of Service Centers

The Dengfeng service center was set up in October 2007 by the Dengfeng sub-district office in order to reinforce the

management of foreigners. In 2007, police arrested 7940 foreigners for illegally crossing boarder, illegally staying or illegally working in Guangdong province (Nanfang Daily, 2008). Most of them were Vietnamese, who are used as cheap labor in some factories opened by local Chinese; but many Africans illegally stayed in China and gathered in Guangzhou, and they are more visible than Vietnamese. Dengfeng sub-district is close to railway station and many trade building located there, thus African merchants were attracted to this area. The Dengfeng sub-district office established the first service center at the entrance of African ethnic enclave and used it as a place to do Temporary Accommodation Registration for foreigners.

Temporary Accommodation Registration is required by the Division of Exit & Entry Administration Department of Public Security of Guangdong Province. According to its rules, foreigners who would like to stay in China need to register in local police station within 24 hours of their arrival at a city. Foreigner's passport and the ID card of the person who provides dwelling to the foreigner are needed for the registration. Through the registration, the police station can collect information on the valid period of a foreigner's visa, where s/he will stay, who s/he will be staying with and how long s/he may stay there, thus it would be easier to administrate the foreigners. A problem is that foreigners may not be willing to process the registration, probably because of the trouble of registration or because their visa is no longer valid, thus the police system won't have documents for them.

A traditional way of finding out undocumented foreigners is inspections. Policemen would do regular or surprise inspections in the buildings where many foreigners lived, and check their visa and Temporary Accommodation Registration receipt. But on one hand, policemen need to spend lots of time and effort on this kind of inspections; on the other hand, this is extremely annoying to foreigners residing in Guangzhou. The service centers developed a new way of locating foreigners who haven't registered. The service centers not only keep records of foreigners, but reserved the information of apartments which were register as foreigners place to stay. Each time when a foreigner comes for registration, the officials in service centers would ask about the information of his/her roommates; they also contact the landlords of the recorded apartments to make sure everyone resided there has registered.

The service centers all located close to where foreigners gathered and are convenient for foreigners to do the registration; they have more efficient way of managing foreigners. Because of their advantages, soon service centers were established across Guangzhou and in other cities. In the end of 2007, a decision was made during a work conference on foreigner management in Guangzhou, that all sub-districts where over 200 foreigners resided must establish service centers (Guangzhou Daily, 2008). In January 2008, the first service center that deal with a single residential community has been established in Panyu Lijiang Garden. Unlike the Dengfeng service center that serves a whole sub-district, the community service centers know the residents better and can manage or serve them more effectively.

The service center is an important part of the foreigner information network. Guangzhou established the platform of foreigner information sharing network among 16 government institutions before the 2010 Asian Games. Through this network, information collected by service centers, state-owned banks or traffic systems can be accessed by police officials. Service center is also included to be part of Guangdong's "mega foreigner management" mode, which was first implemented in 2003; now it includes 37 government institutions, 81 foreigner management and service centers, and 119 "Harmonious City" community offices (Guangzhou Daily, 2012).

The Function of Service Centers

The main function of service center is to provide Temporary Accommodation Registration for foreigners residing in the local sub-district. Most African merchants won't remain in China for more than three month in a single stay, due to the valid period of their visa; they may travel back to Africa to manage the cargos they send back from China; and then they apply for a new visa and come back to China to purchase more goods. Each time they enter China, they will need to do the registration. Before 2007, foreigners had to register in the police stations, which are always full of people; it took hours to wait in line for one's turn to register, and if some material is lack, perhaps a photograph or a copy of visa, all the time is wasted. One African merchant I interviewed commented, "We came to China to do business and our time is precious; I don't

like to spend it waiting in a line.”

Because of the dozens of service centers spread around Guangzhou, the registration process became much faster for foreigners. In Dengfeng service center, there would be 20 to 30 foreigners each day in average. Every foreigner who comes in just needs to wait for 10 minutes for service, if s/he is not served immediately. All Africans who stayed in Guangzhou for over five year and experienced registration in police station told me that the service centers were really convenient for them.

Any apartment that has been rented by foreigner for at least once would be recorded by the service center. Service center would renew the information of residents of an apartment based on the registration of new resident and on the volunteer report of landlord. However, since the foreigners are not required by any law or rule to report their departure to the service center, and landlords are not always willing to assist, the information on apartment residents really lag behind. One day when an African lady came to register in the service center, her address was already registered by six other foreigners; according to her report, all those foreigners had moved out, thus an official modify the record for that apartment based on this. On another day, the address an African provided had already been registered by 15 foreigners; the official contacted the landlord to verify the information, but the landlord refused to do so and required the official to finish the registration for new resident; the official can do nothing but register another foreigner on that address.

Another function of service center is to provide consulting service to foreigners and to the landlords of foreigner. The service centers provide booklets on the laws, rules and precautions for the foreigners; the booklets have four language versions, which are in Chinese, in English, in French and in Arabic. The officials in service center can answer the questions of foreigners in English; if the foreigner doesn't understand English or Chinese, the officials might ask foreigners living around the service center to help out. The police stations have the contact information of some foreign volunteers who can speak multiple languages, but due to their mobility, it's not easy to find them.

The most frequent questions asked by foreigners in the service center are about visa. Some foreigners who report missing passport in service center and ask for help; others may have trouble understanding the rules of the one entrance visa.

If the foreigner's problem can't be solved by service center, the official would tell them where to go. Sometimes the foreigners would like to renew their visa, the official would tell them the way to go to Guangdong Exit & Entry Administration Department and remind them about the material they need. The receipt of Temporary Accommodation Registration is required to renew visa, thus there are some foreigners who came to service center when their visa were about to expire (which means they have stayed in China for a long time without registration); the officials in service center would warn them about this but still do the registration for them. Once an African merchant wanted to register but was refused by the officials, because his visa was to expire on the next day; the officials told him that when they processed the registration to the system, his visa would already be invalid, which can make the registration invalid; they suggested the merchant to stay in a hotel for one night, since the registration in hotel is different from registration in an apartment, and can process faster.

The attitude of the service center officials toward African is much better than the attitude of policemen toward African. Service center officials are more considerate for foreigners, and treat them equally. Policemen, on the other hand, are usually harsher on Africans than on Europeans or Asians; some Africans complained that Guangzhou policemen only check Africans' passport (Nanfang People Weekly, 2009). Service center officials would say hi to foreigners, and may chat with them a little bit about their children or family; but as an official told me, he would never ask a African about his/her business, because Africans consider business information as their top secret. Africans feel much better in the service center than in police station, because they would feel the tension in the police station, while in the service center, "at least they (the officials) smile at us".

I would argue that the difference attitudes between the officials of service center and police station are not due to the difference of the people, but due to the difference of the institutions. The police station serves both local people and foreigners. The police station deals with various affairs of Africans: it registers Africans for temporary staying, it arrests Africans for crimes or for illegal staying, and it sends policemen to inspect the Africans' apartment, shop or office. It's hard for a policeman to treat African friendly when he knows that he has the power to punish or arrest them, and when his officer

keep telling him to be alert of African. The service center has a limited function, to manage foreigner through registration, and to serve foreigner by providing information; in some sense, the service center relies on the foreigners resided in the region. The service center in Xiadu sub-district is nearly cancelled because foreigners living there are mainly high level white collars and college students, who don't need the service provided by service center.

A service center official who is friendly to Africans told me that, "I became familiar with some Africans in the service center, but during the off hours, I won't contact them; I would say hi to familiar faces on the street, but that's all." The friendliness of the service center official might result from the function and structure of the service center; thus, the friendliness should be able to be reproduced in other government institutions dealing with foreigners if they would learn from the service center.

Dengfeng Service Center collects rental tax, which can be paid by either the landlord of the residents of an apartment. The sub-tract office also collects the tax, but it's more convenient for foreigners to pay the tax here, since the service center is close to where they live and they don't need to wait long for service; some foreigners pay the rental tax when they come in for Temporary Accommodation Registration. It seems that as long as the amount of functions is not beyond the capacity of service center, it can provide better service than the government institutions with multiple functions.

The Opinion of Africans

Africans who have come to China before October 2007 have experienced doing Temporary Accommodation Registration in the police station; all of them think service center is much better. First of all, it is more convenient to do registration in the service centers. The service centers not only located closer to where the Africans lives, but also provide services much faster, because they only deal with foreigners' affairs. Secondly, service center officials are much friendlier. A Mali merchant mentioned that policemen were always serious, while official here would smile and chat with them. Thirdly, the service center provides English service, which benefits Africans who learned English but couldn't speak Chinese. Several

African merchants told me that their mother tongues were French, yet it was easy for them to get English training in their country. English is good enough for the merchants to do business in China, since the local merchants would hire translator to do business with foreigner. But not many government institutions provide English services. As a Congo merchant pointed out, everything in the service center is better than the police station.

Africans who came to China more recently think the service center is ok, but they complained about the valid period of visa. A Mali merchant has stayed in Guangzhou for three years, and he's using visa with one month valid period; he said it's convenient for him to register in the service center, but he really spent lots of time and money on his visa. Two Tanzanian merchants, who spent some time trading in Dubai and Hong Kong, arrived at Guangzhou four months ago. They have just return from Hong Kong, where they can renew their visa much easier than in mainland China. One of them complained that the valid period of visa offered by China is too short; visa was not an issue for her in Dubai and in Hong Kong. But these problems are related to China's foreigner policy, and the service centers can do nothing about that.

Conclusion

This study of the Foreigners Service Center focused on its effect on Africans. On one hand, African immigrants are more often being considered as a threat to Guangzhou than any other foreigners, thus it's important to see how this new government institution would affect African. On the other hand, the service centers influence Africans more than any other foreigners. It's easier for people from Europe, America or Asian to get longer-term visa and to renew their visa, so they don't need to travel back and forth between China and their origins for visa issue, and don't need to do Temporary Accommodation registration for so many times. It is also not necessary for the other foreigners to register, since the Guangzhou police seldom inspect foreigners other than African.

In a society that is rather unfriendly towards them, most Africans turn to migrant organizations and to religious institutions for friendship and comfort. Through these institutions, they can gather with people similar to them, and develop a

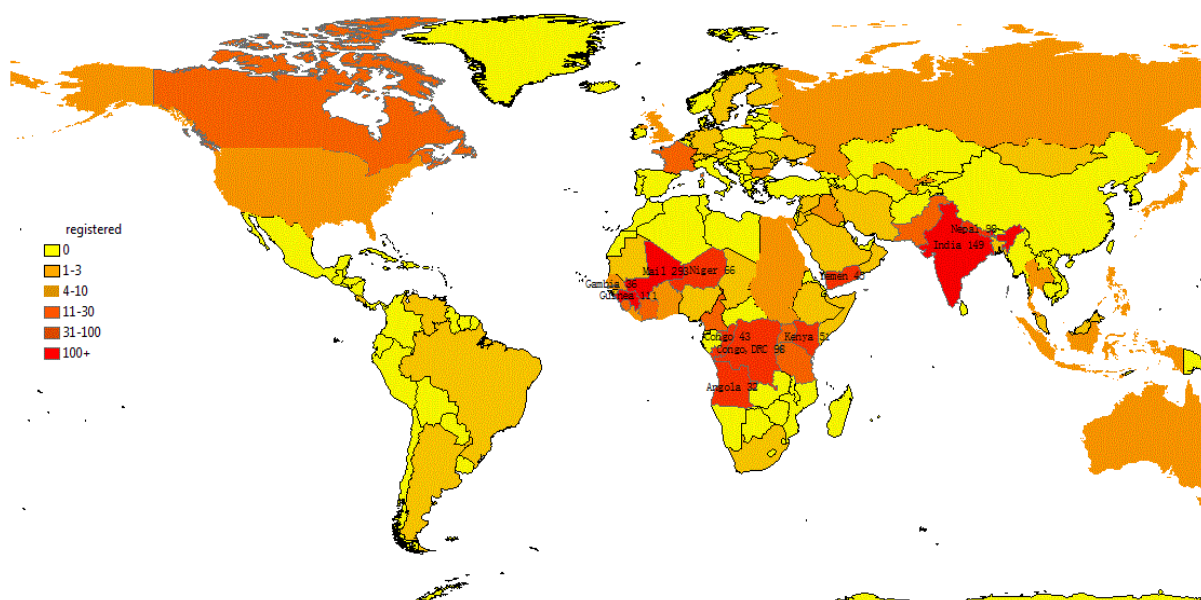
social network that helps them to survive in Guangzhou. However, even though migrant organizations and religious institutions can provide Africans with the support to live and even success on this alien land, they can't provide official identity. Most of the government institutions made them feel that they are unwelcomed foreigners: the Exit & Entry department is so strict on giving them visa or renew their visa; the policemen inspect their passport so often; the officials in sub-district office or tax office always have a serious face. In this context, the smile of the service center officials may stand for more than personal attitude towards African; this institutionalized friendliness might be a sign that Guangzhou government is adjusting its way of treating African immigrants.

For future study, I would need to interview more Africans about how they interact with different types of institutions, and especially how they view the service center. I have requested for files on foreigner management and on Africans distribution in Guangzhou from the city government and city public security bureau; however, such information became rather sensitive and inaccessible after the tragic death of the Nigerian in Guangzhou in June, 2012. I will request for these files and data again when the Guangzhou government makes a conclusion on this incident.

**Table 1. The Number of Foreigners Registered in Dengfeng Service Center
Listed by Nationality and Length of Stay (June 2012)**

ID	Nationality	Temporary Stay	Long Term Reside	Total
1	Angola	29	3	32
2	Argentina	1	0	1
3	Australia	1	5	6
4	Austria	1	0	1
5	Burundi	5	9	14
6	Benin	6	2	8
7	Burkina Faso	8	1	9
8	Bangladesh	0	2	2
9	Bulgaria	1	4	5
10	Brazil	1	0	1
11	Canada	8	5	13
12	Switzerland	1	0	1
13	Ivory Coast	9	10	19
14	Cameroon	18	10	28
15	Congo DRP	50	48	98
16	Congo	24	19	43
17	Colombia	4	3	7
18	Costa Rica	0	1	1
19	German	0	1	1
20	Egypt	5	4	9
21	Ethiopia	2	0	2
22	Finland	1	0	1
23	France	4	10	14
24	England	2	6	8
25	Ghana	2	4	6
26	Guinea	68	43	111
27	Gambia	19	17	36
28	Guinea-Bissau	0	1	1
29	Indonesia	1	3	4
30	India	81	68	149
31	Iran	1	0	1
32	Iraq	3	4	7
33	Ireland	0	1	1
34	Jordan	0	2	2
35	Japan	1	3	4
36	Kenya	46	5	51
37	Liberia	1	3	4
38	Mali	117	176	293

39	Mongolia	2	0	2
40	Maori Tanis	2	0	2
41	Malaysia	1	0	1
42	Niger	41	25	66
43	Nigeria	1	2	3
44	Netherlands	1	2	3
45	Nepal	64	34	98
46	New Zealand	2	1	3
47	Oman	1	0	1
48	Pakistan	3	9	12
49	Philippines	3	5	8
50	Palestine	0	3	3
51	Romania	1	0	1
52	Russia	6	2	8
53	Rwanda	5	2	7
54	Saudi Arabia	1	0	1
55	Sudan	4	5	9
56	Senegal	2	6	8
57	Singapore	0	3	3
58	Sierra Leone	5	8	13
59	Somali	2	1	3
60	Sweden	1	0	1
61	Syria	0	2	2
62	Chad	1	1	2
63	Togo	7	3	10
64	Thailand	4	2	6
65	Tanzania	17	2	19
66	Uganda	28	1	29
67	Ukraine	2	0	2
68	USA	1	5	6
69	Uzbekistan	5	3	8
70	Venezuela	0	1	1
71	Yemen	32	13	45
72	South Africa	0	1	1
Total		766	615	1381



Graph 1. The Origins of the Foreigners Registered in Dengfeng Service Center (June 2012)

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