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Vassar College

Shanghai Street Food and the Making of a Global City

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

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Abstract

When we focus on the characteristics that symbolize a global city, we tend to forget what actually enables the city's everyday life. To explore the role of "everyday-ness" in the making of global cities, this thesis examines the role of the informal economy in Shanghai by focusing on how migrants shape the city through their production of street food. I am guided by these questions. To what extent does Shanghai as a globalizing city depend on the informal economy? How do rural-urban migrants shape the city through their production of street food? How can we understand Shanghai by looking at its street food? I argue that while the Chinese elite's visions for the city leave no room for the informal economy, this economy and the migrants who participate in it are integral to the functioning of the global city and the quality of life for its residents. Beneath the global facade, there is an informal migrant economy which shapes the experience of everyday life for ordinary people and continuously transforms Shanghai in unexpected ways. Street food in particular reveals how globalizing Shanghai is actually a city of multi-local connections. In my discussion of Shanghai's informal economy and street food, I hope to show that Shanghai's participation in global modernity depends on the local just as much as the global.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Historical Overview

Shanghai's astonishing rise over the past three decades has been widely covered by scholars. Undergoing speedy growth and transformation everyday, Shanghai might be considered as the most modern city in China, and one the most rapidly globalizing cities in the world (X. Chen 2009). Between 1992 and 2007, Shanghai's GDP grew by 12% each year (Lagerkvist 2010). It is considered to be a global financial center and a major commercial, trade, industrial, and transportation hub in China. Dreyer (2012) sees Shanghai as "the symbolic outlier of China," a place so far ahead of the rest of the country that it "defines itself as 'city' and everywhere else as suburb" (p. 49, 51). With its skyscrapers, transportation hubs, shopping malls, luxury residential complexes, and cultural institutions, Shanghai's spectacular built environment is a reflection of modern China's rise, a symbol of its future (Greenspan 2014; Dreyer 2012).

Scholars note that in the past couple of decades, Shanghai has actively pursued global city status through spatial transformation (Krupar 2007; He 2007; Kong 2007; Ren 2008; Dreyer 2012). Global city building, according to Krupar (2007) is a state-led strategy through which China demonstrates its economic success and announces its emergence as a modern nation. The creation of an spectacular modern urban landscape serves to attract foreign investment, raise property values, create anticipation for the city's future, and communicate the significance of the city to a world audience (Ong 2011:209). Shanghai is particularly important to the CCP's modernization project because of its symbolic role as the "dragonhead" that connects China with the global economy (F. Wu, Xu, and Yeh 2007:215). In the past couple of decades, Shanghai has seen novel changes in the built environment as the local state eagerly pursues its global city ambition. Large tracts of old housing have been demolished, replaced with high-rise apartments.

Brand new shopping malls, cafes, restaurants, office buildings, roads, and subway stations pop up seemingly overnight, contributing to a modern image. Increasingly more global brands, products, cuisines, and peoples can be found, enhancing the cosmopolitan feel of the city. The streets become cleaner. Informal street markets and other “unsightly” activities become fewer.

Shanghai is a globalizing city (F. Wu (2003), X. Chen (2009), Sassen (2009)), but it is also a city of migration, one that has always attracted migrants from all over China, who shape Shanghai through their labor, entrepreneurship, consumption, social networks, and the local cultures that they bring with them (Lu 1999). China is currently experiencing the largest human migration in history; the 2010 Chinese census recorded over 261 million people who had been living outside of their registered hometown for over six months, compared to 117 million in 2000 (Liu, Y.Q. Huang, and W. Zhang 2018). As the financial center of China, Shanghai is particularly attractive to migrants from other parts of China; Shanghai’s migrant population was 9.9 million, making up 41% of the city’s population according to the 2013 Shanghai Statistical Report (Liu et al. 2018). The provinces that send the most migrants to Shanghai are Anhui, Jiangsu, Henan, and Sichuan according to the 2010 Census (World Population Review).

Migrants form the vast majority of the informal economy, which contributes to Shanghai’s economic growth, supports high-speed urbanization, and provides the services that make everyday life possible. As part of the informal economy, street food vending is a source of livelihood for many migrants and forms a part of the city’s culinary culture. Street food vending, at the same time, is seen as uncivilized and backwards by the local government, which seeks to exercise control over urban space in order to promote the image of a modern city. Since migrant street food vendors disrupt the state’s idealized vision of public space, they are often targeted by

exclusionary policies. When local officials strive to “clean up the streets”, they overlook the role of rural-urban migrant workers and the informal economy in making Shanghai a global city. Over the past couple of years, informal markets have been disappearing in Shanghai. Greenspan (2014) cites the fake market on Xiangyang Lu, the flower market on Shanxi Lu, and the famous street food market on Wujiang Lu as examples of popular street markets that have been closed in recent decades (p. 184). According to the website *Culinary Backstreets*, Shanghai’s longest-running wet market at Tangjiawan Lu, which had been operating for 115 years, was closed down in 2017 (Long 2018). For many years, this market had been a source of groceries for local residents and had fostered a sense of community among the people who shopped there (Moveable Feasts). The Tangjiawan Lu market was located in Laoximen, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Shanghai, known for its historic housing, street food stalls, and wet markets (Long 2018; Ngai 2018). Under the government’s effort to conform Shanghai to global standards, the historic structures and informal markets are being erased, along with rich community and cultural life, to make room for high-rises and malls (Long 2018; Ngai 2018).

When we look at global cities of the 21st century, we tend to forget that these cities depend on the resilience, dynamism, and creativity of ordinary individuals, in particular, the migrants who make up the city’s informal economy and shape the everyday experience of urban life. When we focus on the characteristics that symbolize a global city—such as financial institutions, service industries, skyscrapers, famous cultural institutions, and white-collar workers—we tend to forget what actually enables the city’s economy and sustains its everyday life. To explore the role of “everyday-ness,” in the making of global cities, I will focus on the informal economy, specifically the informal economy of street food.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ARGUMENT

In this thesis I will examine the role of the informal economy in Shanghai as a globalizing city, by focusing on how migrants shape the city through their production of street food. I am guided by these questions. To what extent does Shanghai as a globalizing city depend on the informal economy? How do rural-urban migrants shape the city through their production of street food? How can we understand Shanghai by looking at its street food? I argue that while the Chinese elite's visions for the city leave no room for the informal economy, this economy and the migrants who participate in it are integral to the functioning of the global city and its liveability for ordinary residents. Beneath the global facade, there is an informal migrant economy, which shapes the experience of everyday life and continuously transforms Shanghai in unexpected ways. Migrant street food sellers shape Shanghai by enhancing the diversity and excitement of the culinary landscape, providing accessible food for low-income residents, fulfilling the needs and desires of a wide range of consumers, participating in the local economy, fostering community life, and transforming the meaning and experience of public space. Street food reflects how Shanghai is a multi-local city, one that has always been shaped by migration and the merging of cultures from all over China. In my discussion of Shanghai's informal economy and street food, I hope to show that Shanghai's participation in global modernity depends on the local just as much as the global.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In the rest of Chapter 1, I show how Shanghai's symbolic status as the city of the future emerged out of its history as the most modern city in China during the late 19th and 20th century. I show how modern Shanghai was shaped by two forces—the influence of foreign

imperialism which introduced new technologies, economies, and lifestyles as well as the impacts of migrants from all over China, who formed tight-knit communities based on their native origin. I show how Shanghai's cosmopolitanism was reflected in the existence of a diverse foodscape serving the various migrant communities. I emphasize how Shanghai's modernity developed from the vibrant micro-commercial culture created by migrants who lived in the *lilong* and how street food was a part of everyday life in the *lilong*.

In Chapter 2, I introduce the concepts of informal economy, street vending, and street food and situate them in the Chinese context. I explain the role that street vendors play in Chinese cities and how the forces of market reform, urbanization, and rural-urban migration contributed to the growth of the informal economy. I show how the state's restrictive policies towards street vending stems from the perception of street vending as being uncivilized and how these policies fluctuate over time depending on the state's priorities.

In Chapter 3, I dive into the economic and political context behind Shanghai's exclusionary approach to street vending to demonstrate how street vending undermines the state's vision of a modern city. I show how market reforms produced an entrepreneurial state that uses urban redevelopment as a strategy to promote economic growth and attract investors. I show how under neoliberal urbanization, the state intervenes to create an optimal environment for profit-making which leads to the exclusion of certain populations from urban space. Next, I show how Shanghai's pursuit of a modern city image is also driven by political ambitions. I explain how Shanghai strives to become a global city through spatial transformation, highlighting its role as the dragonhead of China. I show how global city building is a strategy in which the state establishes its legitimacy, emphasizing how progress gets performed through urban spectacle.

In Chapter 4, I introduce the concept of the floating population, pointing out that despite providing the labor that is integral to Shanghai's advancement as a global city, they are treated as second class citizens. I introduce the "*hukou*" system, otherwise known as the household registration system, which is an institution of population management and resource allocation under which every Chinese citizen is assigned a status that determines their access to public goods. I examine the role of the *hukou* system in ensuring migrant workers' marginal status and maintaining a two-class society divided between the rural and the urban. I explain how the *hukou* system produces a large pool of cheap labor which is necessary for economic growth and how migrants' marginalization is justified through discursive strategies. Referencing the migrants of the past, I emphasize the role of native-place networks in shaping the lives of today's migrants and the role of migrants in shaping Shanghai through their production of street food.

HISTORY OF MODERN SHANGHAI

Bergère (2009) uses 1842 as a point of departure when examining the history of Shanghai. 1842 was the year in which the Treaty of Nanjing was signed with Britain, thus ending the First Opium War and opening up Shanghai as one of five treaty ports for British trade (p. 11). The Treaty of Nanjing was followed up with additional unequal treaties that granted other foreign nations similar trading rights as the British and also granted other privileges such as the right of residence and extraterritoriality (Y. Huang 2008:76). These treaties allowed the British, French, and Americans to establish settlements in Shanghai, which were governed by their own administrations (p. 89). Shanghai, in the second half of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th century, consisted of the International Settlement, the French Concession, and the Chinese city (p. 89). Originally, Chinese residents were segregated from the foreign settlements (p. 80).

However, the turmoil of the Small Swords Uprising (1853 to 1855) and the larger Taiping Rebellion against the Qing empire caused thousands of Chinese refugees to crowd into the foreign settlements for protection (p. 80-81). The foreigners, wanting to capitalize on this opportunity, built *lilong* style housing which were rented or sold to the refugees, and the settlements became populated by both Chinese and foreign residents (p 81-82). The Chinese population of the foreign settlements proceeded to grow as the Taiping Rebellion continued to send refugees into Shanghai (p. 83).

Bergère (2009) observes that from the end of the Taiping Rebellion (1864) to the 1911 Revolution which overthrew the Qing dynasty, “Shanghai became a modern city, the capital of new economic activities founded on external trade and the importation of foreign technology and capital” (p. 50). The economy of Shanghai during this time was dominated by trade, finance, and property speculation (p. 50). Shanghai became a major port for the importation of various goods, including opium (p. 51). The adoption of modern transportation and communication turned Shanghai into one of the world’s leading ports (p. 52). The opening up to foreign trade stimulated the demand for credit, which led to the opening of several European banks and the flourishing of already existing traditional Chinese banks (p. 54-55). In 1897, Shanghai saw the establishment of the first modern Chinese bank (p. 56). Property speculation took off, as the influx of refugees into the foreign concessions and the expansion of the Shanghai population in the following decades led to an increased demand for housing (p. 58). The *lilong*, built quickly in mass quantities by Western landowners, was the origin of China’s first modern real estate market (Greenspan 2014:118). In China, this was the first time in which housing was mass produced and sold in a commercial real estate market financed by speculative capital (p. 118).

The first major modern industry in Shanghai was mechanical silk weaving, which was followed by cotton weaving (Bergère 2009:59-60). Shanghai had a head start on the adoption of modern public utilities—gas lighting was introduced in 1865, running water in 1882, and electric lighting in 1883 (p. 62). Although the initial phase of industrialization had modest results, industry took off after the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed, which ended the First Sino-Japanese War and granted Japan the same privileges in the Chinese treaty ports that the other nations received (p. 62-63). The treaty allowed the Japanese, and eventually other foreigners, to set up manufacturing industries in the treaty ports, which expanded foreign investment (p. 63). Within two decades, Shanghai became a major industrial center. Its success, Bergère (2009) observes, can be attributed to “the familiarity with technological innovation and capitalist management that many had acquired” (p. 58) as well as “the vigorous entrepreneurial spirit of the local merchants” (p. 62). Shanghai’s modern economy did not develop solely from Western imperialism and contact with foreign markets; it was also stimulated by Shanghai’s connections with the rest of China and by local institutions.

Shanghai was a city built on migration. Shanghai’s population grew from a humble 540,000 in the mid-19th century to 5.45 million a century later (Lu 1999:26-27), with most of the growth stemming from internal migration (Feng, Zuo, and Ruan 2002). The majority of inhabitants did not come from Shanghai, but rather elsewhere, whether it be other provinces or foreign countries. During the late imperial period, Shanghai was home to many migrants, from places such as Fujian, Shanxi, Zhejiang, Chaozhou, and Huizhou (Swislocki 2008:23). By the second half of the 19th century, Shanghai had become the most diverse city in China with migrants outnumbering locals (p. 23). Migrants were flowing in from Guangdong, Jiangsu,

Zhejiang, other countries, and other parts of China (p. 23). Migrants formed about 80 to 85 percent of the city's population from the late 19th century to the mid-20th century (Lu 1999:28). Bergère (2009) uses the metaphor of a kaleidoscope to illustrate the population of Shanghai at the start of the 20th century, which was diverse yet fragmented since the different groups had little interaction with each other. Although foreigners certainly played an important role in the city, Lu (1999) argues that modern Shanghai grew because it attracted migrants from all over China (p. 43). According to a Chinese expression, "modern Shanghainese came from the 'five lakes and four seas,' (*wuhu sihai*), that is, everywhere in the nation" (Lu 1999:43), making Shanghai an unusually diverse city (Wasserstrom 2007:211). Despite being a part of Shanghai, the migrants strongly identified with their native place and formed distinct communities based on where they came from (Bergère 2009). Migrants from the same province liked to form enclaves in particular areas of the city and each group was distinguished from other groups by dialect, cuisine, spiritual practices, and professional activities (p. 99). People who spoke different dialects rarely communicated with each other since they had no common language, which contributed to the segregation of Shanghai society (p. 84).

Besides native dialect, regional cuisine was an important part of migrants' identity, as most people preferred to eat the cuisine of their home province (Goodman 1995:22-23). Migrants' demand for their native foods led to the formation of a diverse foodscape (Swislocki 2008), with "restaurants catering to the tastes of migrants from a wide variety of regions" (Wasserstrom 2007:211). The location of restaurants often correlated with the location of migrant populations; for example, Cantonese restaurants were usually located in areas with a

large Cantonese population (Swislocki 2008:23). Restaurants fostered migrant community building and provided migrants with a sense of cultural continuity (p. 76).

Since imperial times, the various migrant communities have maintained native-place associations (*huiguan*), which were run by elites and provided services to members of the community (Bergère 2009:101). Originally, *huiguan* performed tasks with a religious nature; for example, they helped send the coffins of people who died back to their hometown (since it was a common desire to be buried in one's hometown), organized festivals, and built temples (p. 101). Later, they opened schools, helped community members find employment (Bergère 2009:101), mediated disputes, and even played an increasingly important role in urban management and taxation due to the weakness of the municipal government (Goodman 1995). Trade organizations were formed according to merchants' native-place and certain industries were dominated by certain groups; for example, trading in tobacco and opium belonged to the domain of Cantonese merchants (Lu 1999:51-52). It was a standard practice for business owners to recruit employees from their home provinces (p. 52). Native-place ties in business, according to Lu (1999), "reflected the dual identity of the people of Shanghai, who, while they happily saw themselves as Shanghainese, also liked to maintain every possible tie with their native place" (p. 53).

The 1911 Revolution marked the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republican era. The golden age of Shanghai capitalism began after the Revolution lasted until 1937, when the Sino-Japanese war broke out (Bergère 2009:147). Shanghai's modern economy grew rapidly during and immediately after World War I partly because many foreign companies closed down during the war, leading to a decrease in imports and foreign competition, which boosted the Chinese market (p. 147). From 1920-1930, 40-50 percent of China's external trade

passed through Shanghai (p. 148). The 1920s also saw expansion of Chinese-owned industries; cotton and flour milling were two important industries that flourished during the war (p. 148-149). The modern Chinese banking sector grew as a result of the decline of foreign banks during the war (p. 150). Many were hopeful that the economic miracle of the 1920s would be sustained into the future, but this hope was inhibited by the underdevelopment of the national economy and the return of imperialism (p. 151-152). The economic development of the 1920s was supported by initiatives taken by a new group of entrepreneurs who formed a “new bourgeoisie” (p. 154). These businessmen eagerly adopted technological innovations and management practices from the West, but modified them to fit the local environment (p. 158).

During the 1920s and 1930s, Shanghai was known as the “Paris of the Orient,” a nickname embodied by the iconic Bund and Nanjing Road. *Haipai* or “Shanghai style” is a term used to describe the unique culture, modes of expression, and daily life practices of Shanghai (Bergère 2009: 242). Bergère writes that *Haipai* “was the very expression of the commercial and cosmopolitan culture of modern China” (p. 242). Although the term, coined in the 1920s, was initially used to describe the style of opera in Shanghai, it eventually encompassed all aspects of modern Shanghai culture and lifestyle (Greenspan 2014:114-115). Confucian scholar elites regarded *Haipai* as a morally corrupt culture “contaminated by foreign influences and subordinated to commercial interests,” but proponents of *Haipai* saw it as a rejection of *Jingpai* or Beijing style, which symbolized orthodoxy (Bergère 2009:242). *Haipai* speaks to Shanghai’s openness to outsiders and the role of migration in producing the cosmopolitan culture (Greenspan 2014:115). Bergère (2009) argues that *Haipai* was not simply an imitation of Western lifestyles; rather, foreign influences were adapted into the culture of everyday urban life

(p. 242-243). Shanghai was known for its foreign influences, but it was also strongly shaped by “rural and extra-local forms of culture and communication” (Swislocki 2008:21). Ordinary people were living in China’s most modern city, but their lifestyles looked more like the traditional lifestyles of the countryside and their identities were still deeply rooted in their hometowns (p. 21).

The emergence of *Haipai* can be attributed to changes in the built environment that were turning Shanghai into a modern metropolis (Bergère 2009:243). No longer divided into separate administrations, the city was physically unified and contained sections for different economic activities (p. 243). The importation of new construction techniques allowed for the construction of modern buildings (p. 245). Stylish hotels, department stores, banks, and offices all sprang up. A new consumer culture arose, bringing about new ways of shopping (p. 252). Advertisements were broadcasted, generating a fascination for material goods in the popular imagination (p. 254). New spaces for recreation were opened such as cinemas, dance halls, bars, public parks, cafes, and horse-racing venues (p. 266-268). Cinema was a particularly popular form of entertainment, one that introduced new mindsets to the moviegoers (p. 259-260). Although the majority of Shanghai residents did not have access to luxury, Bergère argues that the “pressure [of modernity] affected the whole of society: it was what kept the melting pot of Shanghai going. The rapid rhythm of Shanghai life—high heels tripping along the sidewalks, cars whizzing down the wide avenues, elevators shooting down the skyscrapers in twenty or so seconds—testified to the way that social time had changed” (p. 261).

Haipai also speaks to the commercial culture of Shanghainese people, which gave them the reputation, from the perspective of other Chinese people, of being the most modern people in

China (Lu 1999:15). “The essence of being Shanghainese derived from commerce” writes Lu (p. 16). Lu argues that although commerce dates far back and existed throughout China, Shanghai in the early 20th century “possessed a more densely clotted and highly localized commercial culture than the nation had ever seen before” (p. 16). Shanghai’s commercial culture was certainly reflected in its “department stores, entertainment centers, theaters, hotels, restaurants, and ever-changing neon lights,” but what mattered most for average Shanghainese people was the everyday commerce conducted in the alleys where they lived (p. 16). Most Shanghai residents in the 20th century lived in alleyway houses known as *lilong*, which were a hybrid of Western and Chinese features and were constructed from the early 1870s to the late 1940s (p. 112). The most common type of *lilong* was *shikumun* (translated as stone portal), a name which referred to its stone door frame (p. 112). Since *lilong* houses were commodity housing, their rents were extremely high; in order to survive, residents had to use their homes for commercial activities (Liang 2008:494). The vibrant commercial culture that defined modern Shanghai grew out of the mixture of residence and commerce created by the *lilong* and the inhabitants, who were mostly migrants from other parts of China (Lu 1999:16-17). Various kinds of enterprises could be found in the *lilong*, including rice stores, coal stores, tailor shops, bookstores, tobacco stores, restaurants, bathhouses, and opium dens (Lu 1999). In addition to fixed establishments, there were hawkers selling all sorts of products and services (Lu 1999). Products sold by peddlers included newspapers, flowers, fresh vegetables, rice, salt, towels, soap, and cigarettes; services included barber services, blacksmithing, dentistry, fortune-telling, locksmithing, and seamstress services (Lu 1999).

One of the most common alleyway businesses was selling street food or *xiao chi* (small eats) (Lu 1999). Food hawkers were a ubiquitous presence in the *lilongs* (Lu 1999). Everyday, they wandered through the alleyways carrying their portable kitchens and the sound of them yelling out their offerings was a part of the rhythm of daily life for *lilong* residents (p. 199). An American journalist observed that “Besides breakfast and lunch and dinner...you can have your elevenses at any hour of the morning: boiled or fried noodles with ham or tiny shrimps or shreds of chicken. Or you can eat sweet almond broth. For afternoon snacks there are endless sorts of sweet or salty cakes stuffed with ground beans or minced pork or chopped greens” (Hahn 1994:9, quoted in Lu 1999:199). Some of the regular foods sold by peddlers included “sweet scented osmanthus, red bean soup, fried bean curd, fermented glutinous rice, breads, and sesame cakes” (Lu 1999:205). There were also seasonal foods such as sour plums, whose appearance in late spring or early summer signified the arrival of the rainy season (p. 202). Popular snacks sold at night included *zhou*, a porridge made of glutinous rice and lotus seeds; *zongzhi*, a dumpling made with glutinous rice and wrapped in bamboo leaves; *tangyuan*, balls of glutinous rice flour stuffed with filling and served in broth; and wonton soup (p. 206). The regularity of the street food transaction allowed for a trusting relationship to form between the vendor and customer. Lu (1999) writes: “Upon hearing the sound, *pu pu pu* or *dou dou dou*, depending on the type of bamboo clappers the peddler used, regular customers put a container and money in front of the door or hung a container with money from a window. In a few minutes, the peddler collected the money and filled the container with steaming hot wonton soup” (p. 207). “With the *li longs*”, Greenspan writes, “street food was embedded into the very fabric of Shanghai’s built environment” (2019:329).

Liang (2010) argues that “modernity first arrived in China via a revolutionary concept of space rather than time” (p. 1). The new spatial order produced by migrants was a major contribution to Shanghai’s modernity. The *lilong*, Liang (2008) argues, involved “a radical reconfiguration of traditional residential and commercial spaces in which visibility and openness replaced walls and containment [and] the traditional spatial order and hierarchy were subverted” (p. 482). Traditionally in China, residences were contained in walled complexes, separated from the street where commercial activities took place (Liang 2008). Urban space was marked by a hierarchy: the courtyard of the home represented privacy and elite order while the street represented danger and moral inferiority (p. 481). The *lilong*, according to Liang, deconstructed this hierarchy as the courtyard had to open itself up to the street out of economic necessity, blurring the boundary between domestic life and commercial life (p. 491). Because *lilong* inhabitants saw themselves as sojourners, they had to adopt a new concept of home—one that was temporary and could be capitalized on (p. 494).

The Sino-Japanese war broke out in July 1937, merging with World War II two years later. The Japanese occupation of Shanghai brought about the city’s “descent into hell,” as Shanghai suffered from poverty and the loss of international status (Bergère 2009:288). The end of World War II was soon followed by the recommencement of the Chinese Civil War in 1946, which ended in 1949 with the victory of the Communists and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. As Shanghai fell under Communist rule, it was punished for its capitalist, colonialist past (Bergère 2009:367). The city was a reminder of China’s humiliation by Western imperial power and a symbol of extravagant, sinful lifestyles (Y. Huang 2008:192). The CCP, under Mao, closed the former treaty ports and initiated an attack on private property and

capitalism (p. 190). In order to abolish the inequality between the urban and the countryside, the CCP adopted an anti-urban policy that transformed cities from being consumption units to production units (p. 195). Under the First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957), factories and skilled labor were transferred from the coastal cities to the inland regions (p. 196). The subsequent Great Leap Forward (1958-1961) aimed to industrialize the countryside and shift “the political as well as the social-economic center of gravity from the cities to the new rural communes” (Meisner 1982:67, quoted in Y. Huang 2008:196). Previously an autonomous city for the most part, Shanghai was now under the bureaucratic control of the Beijing administration (Bergère 2009:367). With the introduction of a centrally planned economy, Shanghai was no longer a financial and commercial center (Y. Huang 2008:197). Shanghai served as an important industrial center and was required to give up a significant portion of its revenue to the central government (p. 198). Between 1950 and 1976, the amount of revenue that Shanghai contributed to the central budget was 13 times greater than what it received (Bergère 2009:370). Very little investment was provided for improving urban infrastructure and housing, both of which were badly deteriorating (p. 371). In 1950, migrants made up 85 percent of Shanghai’s population (Feng et al. 2002:523). However, beginning in the 1960s, migration into Shanghai was tightly restricted, all the way until the early 1980s (p. 523).

When Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978, he ushered in a new national policy of “Reform and Open Door” (*gaige kaifang*), which set China on a path towards modernization and economic reform (Y. Huang 2008:199). Deng’s notion of reform was to transition from the centrally planned economy to a market economy in order to achieve economic growth and improve the population’s standard of living. He declared this new Party line to be “Socialism

with Chinese characteristics” (Y. Huang 2008:200). Reforms included rural decollectivization, the marketization of state owned enterprises, and an “Open Door” policy that opened up coastal cities to foreign capital. In 1979, four coastal cities in South China, including Shenzhen, were designated as Special Economic Zones (SEZs), which were designed to attract foreign investment and technology (Y. Huang 2008:202). The SEZs were granted more liberal economic policies that other cities did not have. For 10 years, the central government refused to grant SEZ status to Shanghai, causing the city to fall behind the cities of the Pearl Delta region (Y. Huang 2008:206). With restrictions on mobility loosened, Shanghai’s migrant population grew from only 0.26 million in 1981 to over 2.6 million by the 1990s (Feng et al. 2002:523).

In 1990, the central government finally announced that the Shanghai Pudong New Area would be opened up as an SEZ. Shanghai’s economy recovered and by 1992, its growth had caught up with the southern cities. Jiang Zemin declared that “Shanghai Pudong must be the principal economic ‘dragon head’” of the Yangzi River Delta (quoted in Y. Huang 2008:215), reflecting Shanghai’s new role in leading the region towards economic growth and bringing China into the global economy. Originally envisioned as the “Manhattan of the East,” Pudong was meant to serve as a laboratory for testing out economic reforms and as a site through which China could integrate into the global market economy (Greenspan 2014:46). During this period, Shanghai saw an influx of foreign investment, the return of foreign banks, and the establishment of the Shanghai Stock Exchange (Bergère 2009:415). In just 10 years, a new city had appeared. Construction of modern buildings and infrastructure entailed the destruction of old structures—in particular the *lilong* neighborhoods where generations of petty urbanites had lived. Referencing Shanghai’s colonial legacy, Deng declared that “Shanghai must resume its role as a financial

center. China has to rely on Shanghai to attain an international seat in finance” (quoted in Y. Huang 2008:216). Pudong was thus constructed as part of nationalist agenda to signal China’s re-emergence in the global economy. Bergère (2009) argues that while “traces of old Shanghai are fast vanishing,” the past “is constantly evoked and mythologized so as to legitimate the role that the present Chinese leadership has chosen to attribute to the city—that of a great economic and financial metropolis of the twenty-first century” (p. 432).

I am interested in this history because it informs Shanghai’s current development path towards becoming the global city of the future. From the perspective of state officials, real estate developers, and planners, this aspiration is at odds with the seemingly chaotic, informal culture of the street, despite the fact that the modern day informal economy is both a consequence of the reforms that opened China’s economy and a contributor to China’s rapid urbanization and economic growth. Shanghai in the early 20th century rose to become a cosmopolitan city ahead of its time not only because it was a hub of Western cultural and economic influences, but also because it attracted internal migrants from all over China who transformed the life of the city through the informal commercial culture that they forged inside the *lilong*.

Chapter 2: Street Food and the Informal Economy

OVERVIEW OF INFORMAL ECONOMY

In developing countries, many of the urban poor survive by engaging in economic activities that fall outside of formal economic arrangements. These activities comprise what is known as the informal economy, which was first conceptualized in the early 1970s by anthropologist Keith Hart (Bhowmik 2009:2). Most jobs in the informal economy are labor intensive, do not require tremendous capital to start up, and do not require specialized skills, making them relatively easy for newcomers to enter (p. 3). The workers employed in these jobs are low-paid and are mostly migrants, not local residents (p. 3). Scholars in the past believed that the informal economy was a temporary phase, one that would disappear as developing countries became developed, an approach known as the dualist approach (p. 3). Considering that the informal economy has grown tremendously in the 21st century all over the world, even in developed countries, the dualist theory is seen as outdated (p. 4). Evidence from the organization, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) predicts that the informal economy is “likely to remain the main source of employment for most workers in developing countries for the foreseeable future” (M. Chen et al. 2015:2, cited in Dai, Zhong, and Scott 2019:4). In countries with fast-growing economies, such as China, the informal economy plays an important role in economic development (Dai et al. 2019:4). Although the precise number of informal workers in China is unknown, this population is estimated to have grown from 30 million in 1990 to 226 million in 2011 (J. Wang, Cooke, and Lin 2016:296). The legalist theory, developed by economist Hernando de Soto, argues that people engage in informal enterprises because they find that gaining access to the formal economy requires paying a high

cost and navigating complicated, bureaucratic rules (Greenspan 2014:191). Xue and G. Huang (2015) argue that the legalist theory treats the state as a “pre-given factor” in its analysis of informality and that it overlooks the state’s role as an actor that produces informality (p. 157). Xue and G. Huang (2015) regard informality as something that is produced by the state. Rather than there being a fixed boundary between the formal and informal economy, what activities are counted as formal and informal and how these activities should be dealt with are decisions made and remade by the state depending on its political agenda (p. 156-157).

Street Vending

Street vending is one of the most visible parts of the urban informal economy. Bhowmik (2009) defines a street vendor as “a person who offers goods for sale to the public at large without having a permanent built up structure from which to sell” (p. 21). Street vendors conduct their business in public spaces but are not legally entitled to that space, which sets them apart from shopkeepers and formal business owners who operate from a more permanent space that they have legal claims to (p. 6). The majority of street vendors are migrants from rural areas who face structural barriers to obtaining formal employment (p. 8). Street vending is important globally because in addition to serving as a viable source of livelihood for the lower classes, it provides convenience to the general public by fulfilling demand for cheap goods and services (Roever and Skinner 2016), offers alternative consumption choices (Flock and Breitung 2016), and generates demand for services provided by other informal workers and those in formal sectors (Roever and Skinner 2016). Street vendors rely on transportation workers, suppliers, and recyclers, for example (Roever and Skinner 2016:361). Despite its contributions, government

attitudes towards street vending usually range from unsupportive to downright hostile (p. 362). Most governments have enacted policies that target street vending in exclusionary ways.

STREET FOOD AND STREET VENDING IN CHINA

Since the adoption of market reforms, street vendors have been a ubiquitous presence in Chinese cities. The informal economy supports China's high speed urbanization by absorbing surplus rural labor and alleviating urban unemployment (Xue and G. Huang 2015). By producing and distributing low-cost goods and services, the informal economy enables the modern economy to function (Dai et al. 2019). The rise of street vending in Chinese cities after 1978 is a direct consequence of economic reforms that untied rural labor from the countryside and that enabled self-employed economies to exist (Xue and G. Huang 2015). While most street vendors in China are migrants, many are also laid off workers from state-owned enterprises (SOEs) (Solinger 2013) and landless farmers (Dai et al. 2019). The forces behind the growth in the informal economy include, but are not limited to, rural-urban migration and urbanization, an increased demand for services, and the disestablishment of state and collective enterprises (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014).

China's post reform-era has seen large-scale rural to urban migration, which has been the main force behind China's rapid urban growth (Fan 2008). Under the Mao era, migration was strictly controlled by the *hukou* (household registration) system. In the post-reform era, *hukou* reforms have loosened these controls, allowing peasants to move to urban areas (Swider 2015a:23). The passage of the Household Contract Responsibility system restructured agricultural production and allowed peasants to produce for the market, thus creating a surplus of rural labor (p. 23). These changes, along with other factors, produced a growing population of

migrant workers, who are institutionally marginalized by the *hukou* system. Due to their lack of urban *hukou*, these migrants are often denied access to formal sector employment and thus tend to participate in the informal economy, for example, by working as laborers, as employees of small enterprises, or as small entrepreneurs, which includes street vendors (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014). Flock and Breitung (2016) notes that besides facing barriers to formal employment, migrants also turn to street vending for other reasons: to gain entrepreneurial skills, to have more freedom and a flexible working schedule, and to avoid the more exploitative working environments of other jobs available to them (p. 161). Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris (2014) note that since the adoption of market reforms, Chinese cities have transformed from productive units to consumption units (p. 226). This economic restructuring has created an “excess demand for small service business and retailing [which] generates profitable employment opportunities in the informal sector” (p. 226).

Rural migrants are not the only people working as street vendors in China. Dai et al. (2019) notes that urbanization has produced a subgroup of street vendors who are relocated landless farmers. Unlike rural migrants who deliberately moved to cities, landless farmers had to give up their land to local governments and relocate to resettlement housing in cities—they were thus converted to urban residents against their will (p. 11). After becoming displaced, many landless farmers faced the challenge of having “no land, no job, and low social security” (p. 12). Landless farmers are not always given the same welfare benefits as native-born city residents and do not always receive adequate compensation from the government for their land (p. 13-14). Many engage in urban farming and street vending to make additional income (p. 14). Besides rural migrants and landless farmers, another subgroup of street vendors consists of laid-off

workers from SOEs (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014; Solinger 2013). The adoption of market reforms led to many state and collective enterprises being downsized or dissolved in the mid-1990s, which resulted in millions of workers becoming unemployed (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014; Solinger 2013). Since many laid-off workers were older and lacked the necessary qualifications to be hired in the private formal sector, they turned to street vending to make a living (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014; Solinger 2013).

Importance of Street Food in Chinese Cities

Street food, which refers to *xiao chi* (small eats), are an important part of the informal economy of Chinese cities, including Shanghai. With low start-up costs, street food production allows marginalized groups, such as rural migrants to survive and improve their standard of living (Cardoso, Companion, Marras 2014; Xue and G. Huang 2015). Greenspan refers to street food as an “alternative culinary infrastructure,” in which migrants participate as both producers and consumers (2019:326). With its low prices, street food is accessible to a wide range of consumers, particularly low income consumers (Dai et al. 2019). Street food plays a role in the local food chain, sustainability, and food security; and is a part of cultural heritage that is cherished by many (Cardoso et al. 2014:2). Street food is convenient, inexpensive, and usually quite delicious, which makes it appealing to a wide range of consumers, such as workers looking for a meal on a tight schedule and budget, young people looking for a snack during their late nights out, and tourists seeking to experience “authentic” local culture (p. 2). Street food vendors offer alternative consumption choices and fill supply gaps in places that lack restaurants or convenience stores (Flock and Breitung 2016:161). Street food is usually made with locally sourced ingredients, thereby supporting the local economy and sustainable food chain (Cardoso

et al. 2014:2). The literature tends to focus more on street food that is sold by street vendors, referring to people who do not have a permanent structure to sell their goods from and do not have legal claims to the spaces that they sell from (Bhowmik 2009). However, I want to emphasize that street food can also be sold by people who operate their business from a more permanent structure, such as a rented store space. These people, who aren't working out in the streets, would not be considered street vendors according to a strict definition of the term, yet the food they sell would still be considered "street food" by the public.

Governance of Street Vending

Despite its benefits, street vending and street food are seen as uncivilized and backwards by the local government, who seeks to exercise control over urban space in order to promote the image of a clean, orderly city. Street vending is portrayed in the dominant discourse as dirty, disorderly, unhealthy, and morally perilous (Flock and Breitung 2016:160). Street vendors are criticized by the government and media for selling adulterated foods, cheating customers, polluting public spaces, and causing traffic issues (Hanser 2016:367). Street food in particular is seen as unhygienic. This negative view is reflected in regulatory policies that attempt to restrict street vending. Street vending policies are created by municipal governments and enforced by *chengguan*, who are municipal inspectors responsible for maintaining public order and enforcing non-criminal regulations (Dai et al. 2019; Greenspan 2014). The first *chengguan* unit was created in Beijing in 1997 to control street vending and street markets; deemed a success, *chengguan* units were adopted in hundreds of cities across the country (Hanser 2016). *Chengguan* are not actual police officers, so they do not have the authority to make arrests; however, they are allowed to confiscate street vendors' goods and issue warnings and fines (Dai

et al. 2019; Greenspan 2014; Hanser 2016). *Chengguan*'s duties are broad and legally vague, which many argue leads to abuses of power (Dai et al. 2019; Hanser 2016). Violent clashes between *chengguan* and street vendors have earned the municipal officers a reputation for using arbitrary, excessive force and have led to public outrage (Dai et al. 2019). Hanser (2016) argues that the challenges faced by street vendors embody the contention between the government's vision of an ideal, modern cityscape and the actual way that urban space is used as part of everyday life for city residents (p. 364).

“The ‘everyday’ drama of *chengguan*-vendor interactions, most often involving vendor retreat, is part of quotidian urban street life,” writes Hanser (2016:373). The interactions between *chengguan* and street vendors often resemble a “cat-and-mouse game” (Flock and Breitung 2016:162). Unlicensed, mobile street vendors have adopted various tactics to evade *chengguan* control. When they see *chengguan* approaching, they quickly escape and wait for the officers to leave before resuming their business (Flock and Breitung 2016:162). Street vendors’ tactic of using small carts and only displaying a few goods allows them to pack up and leave quickly (p. 162). When street vendors see their colleagues packing up, they know they should do the same (p. 162). Some rely on their family members or fellow vendors from the same hometown to alert them of threats (p. 162).

In most cases, there is a discrepancy between what the law says and how it is actually implemented. Municipal governments have experimented with different strategies of governing street vending which have fluctuated over time. Swider (2015b) discusses a common approach characterized by spatial differentiation, in which vending is tolerated in certain spaces (“let-it-be” spaces) while being strictly banned in other spaces (off-limit spaces) (p. 707).

Examples of off-limit spaces include upscale shopping areas such as Nanjing Road and Huaihai Road in Shanghai (p. 707). Examples of “let-it-be” spaces include alleyways, areas outside transportation stations, certain parks, and city outskirts (p. 707). There are also contested “in-between” spaces (p. 707). In their study of Guangzhou street vendors and *chengguan*, Flock and Breitung (2016) found that *chengguan* use a soft approach to enforcement that is characterized by a “logic of temporal differentiation” (p. 164). Under this approach, control is stricter during certain periods of times of day and during holidays and special events (p. 164). Periods of strict control are complemented by periods of leniency (p. 164). Flock and Breitung (2016) observes that the Guangzhou government’s soft approach came out of its recognition that the promotion of an orderly city needs to be balanced with the promotion of social harmony and the reputation of a fair state (p. 166). G. Huang, Xue, and Z. Li (2014) describe Guangzhou’s approach as “ambivalent.” Street vendors are authorized to conduct business in certain areas, typically peripheral spaces, but are banned from areas that are important to the city image, such as the central business district (p. 183-184). This strategy allows the local government to maintain social harmony while creating an attractive city image (p. 183). Dai et al. (2019) proposes the term “compensatory governance” to describe the dynamic between *chengguan* and street vendors who are landless farmers. Street vending activity conducted by landless farmers is treated with leniency by *chengguan* as compensation for the injustice they suffered under urbanization, i.e. their loss of land and rural lifestyle (p. 15).

China’s policy towards street vending has gone through various changes throughout history. Solinger (2013) observes that the CCP has had an antagonistic view of people engaged in street commerce since it came to power in 1949, but the reasons have fluctuated in

contradictory ways over time. Under the Mao era, the CCP's agenda was to eliminate capitalist activities and to establish control over all aspects of the economy (Xue and G. Huang 2015:159). Private economic activity was deemed illegal (p. 159). For several years after Mao's death, private commercial activities were still treated with suspicion and were banned except for a few short periods (Solinger 2013:3). In the 1980s, street commerce was tolerated again because it was seen as a contributor to economic development and a source of employment for the millions of youths who were now returning to cities after having been "sent down" to the countryside (p. 8). Outdoor markets proliferated during this time, but vendors who lacked a license were frequently harassed by the police (Solinger 2013). After millions of workers were laid off from SOEs, the government gave these people special permission to engage in street vending, to prevent large-scale unemployment and protests (p. 3).

The announcement of the open-door policy in 1978 marked the beginning of the transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. As a result of power decentralization, street vending policy came under the jurisdiction of the local state instead of the central government (G. Huang et al. 2014:174). Economic growth became the prevailing goal for cities, as a result of the new fiscal policy which allowed the local state to keep a greater percentage of its revenue (He 2007:176). Municipal governments, which have taken on an entrepreneurial role, are engaged in fierce competition for local and global investment (p. 176). Particularly since the 1990s, municipal governments have increasingly used the strategy of enhancing the city image to create an environment attractive to capital (G. Huang et al. 2014:175). Street vending, according to Hanser (2016), "represents a blemish on the 'face' of the modern city" (p. 368). Current exclusionary policies towards street vending stem from this

context of post-reform urban transformation. Despite the overall restrictive approach, street vending policies have increasingly taken into consideration the need to maintain social harmony and protect the state's reputation (Xue and G. Huang 2015). Xue and G. Huang emphasize that these policies are not fixed but constantly adapted to the shifting objectives of the local state.

Chapter 3: Informal Economy and the Global City

In this chapter I will analyze the forces behind the marginalization of informal economic activities in Shanghai. I emphasize that although informal workers, particularly street vendors, are targeted by the regulatory powers of a local state, they are essential to the formation of a global city. Hanser (2016) argues that the struggles faced by street vendors in China represents a conflict between the state's vision of a clean, modern city and the way people use the space in their everyday lives (p. 364). Streets in particular are highly visible spaces that shape the city's image and are thus subject to the regulatory powers of the state (p. 364). Public space serves the economic functions of generating profits and revenue, attracting investors, and promoting economic growth (He 2007; F. Wu 2016; He and F. Wu 2005; Shen and F. Wu 2012). Public space also serves the political purposes of displaying progress, enhancing the city's status domestically and internationally, showcasing the legitimacy of the CCP, and advancing city leaders' careers (Ong 2011; Krupar 2007; Dreyer 2012; F. Wu et al. 2007). These economic and political ambitions are intertwined with each other and both depend on the performance of modernity. Public spaces are also lived-in spaces that ordinary city inhabitants occupy and reshape to meet their own needs (Hanser 2016; Flock and Breitung 2016). Because the vision of a modern, civilized city is articulated through urban space, segments of the population who are thought of as tarnishing the space are subject to the disciplinary power of the state.

ECONOMIC FACTORS BEHIND EXCLUSION OF INFORMAL ECONOMY

In order to understand the exclusionary practices towards street vending, it is important to situate it in the context of market transition, entrepreneurial governance, and neoliberal urbanization. The economic miracle of China is strongly tied to its urbanization, as cities are the

main driving force behind economic growth in the post-reform era (Ren 2013:xv). Ren notes that the economic importance of cities stems from the central government's decision in the 1990s to implement a city-centered approach to development by "selectively allocating resources and favorable policies to these localities, often at the expense of smaller places and the countryside" (p. xv). Ren also notes that China's urbanization is connected to the global economy, as "Chinese cities are remade by transnational flows of capital, information, and expertise" (p. xv).

Entrepreneurial Government

The city's role as a site of wealth accumulation was facilitated by a restructuring of the relationship between the central and local governments (He 2007). In order to increase efficiency and production at the local level and to transfer the development pressure faced by the central state to the local state, a policy of fiscal and administrative decentralization was initiated in the 1990s (He and F. Wu 2009:285). This policy provided the local state with greater autonomy in shaping local development (He 2007). The new fiscal regime adopted in 1994 allowed localities to keep a greater percentage of their revenue, thus incentivizing the local state to promote economic growth as its main priority and creating fierce competition between cities for local and global investment (p. 176). The intensity of inter-urban competition has transformed the local state into an entrepreneurial state, one that behaves in the manner of an enterprise in order to maintain its status in regional hierarchies and remain attractive to business (He 2007; F. Wu et al. 2007). Jessop and Sum (2000) provides three characteristics that define an entrepreneurial city. First, it must "[pursue] innovative strategies intended to maintain or enhance its economic competitiveness;" second, the strategies are pursued in an "entrepreneurial fashion;" and third, the city must be marketed as entrepreneurial (p. 2289). Since the 1990s, the entrepreneurial local

state has enthusiastically adopted the strategy of place promotion in Shanghai, which includes a wide range of policies aiming to create an environment favorable for business and investment. In addition to the designation of development zones and preferential treatment for investors (F. Wu 2003), a particularly notable place promotion strategy has been physically altering the built environment through urban redevelopment, since “a better business environment often means a better looking city with good infrastructure” (F. Wu et al. 2007:205).

Urban Redevelopment

Urban redevelopment has produced novel changes in the built environment of Shanghai over the past few decades. In the 1990s, the municipal government initiated urban redevelopment for the purpose of renovating dilapidated housing (F. Wu 2016:636). The 365 Plan, announced in 1992, set the goal of demolishing 365 hectares of dilapidated housing (Ren 2008). “Changes Every Year, Transformations Every Three Years” was the slogan of the local government during this time (p. 28). By the end of the decade, 27 million square meters of old housing had been demolished and 640,000 households had been relocated, according to official statistics (p. 29). Starting in the 2000s, the local state adopted a market-oriented approach to urban development which brought in the involvement of property developers (F. Wu 2016:636). The agenda behind this approach, referred to as “property-led redevelopment,” was to generate capital from property development (p. 636). Under property-led redevelopment, the local state, working with private developers, has demolished large tracts of old housing in inner city neighborhoods and relocated the original residents, a process marked with contestation (Ren 2008). Property-led redevelopment was enabled by land and housing reform (He and F. Wu 2005). The adoption of the land leasing system allowed the local state to sell the right to use urban land to private

developers while maintaining ownership of the land, marking the beginning of the commodification of urban space (p. 5). Ever since the first piece of Shanghai land was leased in 1988 (F. Wu 2003), land-leasing fees have been a major source of revenue for municipal governments and the profitability of developing urban land into high-profile projects has attracted large amounts of investment (He and F. Wu 2005). The housing reform adopted in 1998 ended the system of state allocation of housing through work units and established a commodity housing market (Shen and F. Wu 2012, He and F. Wu 2005).

He (2007) identifies Shanghai's large-scale housing redevelopment as a process of state-sponsored gentrification. Under this process, old, dilapidated neighborhoods are transformed into high-end commodity housing; the original residents of the redeveloped neighborhoods are displaced and cannot afford the new high-value properties which are marketed towards the elite classes who replace them (He 2007). He notes that the entrepreneurial local state actively initiates gentrification and provides assistance to developers for the goal of economic growth and generating revenue (p. 175). F. Wu (2016) observes that beginning in 2008, a new round of urban redevelopment has been carried out for the purpose of promoting economic restructuring, which involves reducing manufacturing industries and promoting services and high value economies (p. 637). Through urban redevelopment, the local state strives to transform informal neighborhoods into "new productive spaces for its revenue maximization," (p. 631) to "support its transition toward a postindustrial globalizing metropolis" (p. 654). An example of this is Gaojiabang, a dilapidated but thriving neighborhood in Xuhui District that was home to a large migrant population and was demolished in 2013 (p. 653). The demolition of this neighborhood, F. Wu argues, is indicative of the state's attempt to remove informality (p. 651).

This form of urban transformation goes beyond gentrification since the redeveloped land was not intended for residential use and there were no middle-class newcomers (p. 652).

Commodification and Aestheticization of Urban Space

The exclusion of vendors from the streets of Shanghai occurs under the context of the commodification of urban space and the rise of novel urban landscapes in post-reform Chinese cities. The establishment of a land and housing market has turned urban space into commodities, meaning that its exchange value can be enhanced through the creation of attractive images (Shen and F. Wu 2012). Shen and F. Wu note that place marketing, which includes “the construction of image and the manipulation of distinctive landscapes” (p. 258), has become a strategy used by various agents to enhance the exchange value of property (p. 256). According to the growth machine theory proposed by Logan and Molotch (1987), places as commodities have both a use value and an exchange value (Shen and F. Wu 2012:258). The price of real estate is “determined largely by expectations of a future higher price” and depends on the aesthetic of the urban environment (p. 258). Local property interests hire elite international architects to infuse their properties with symbolic capital which is transformed into economic capital (Ren 2007).

In addition to creating an investor-friendly environment and enhancing property values, the creation of an aesthetic built environment also fulfills the consumption demands of the growing new rich (Shen and F. Wu 2012:258). The post-reform era has seen an increase in wealth, improvement in living standards, and growth of consumerism (p. 259). Market reform has produced a class of newly rich people, for whom consumption is a way to signify their social status (p. 259). In order to attract upper and middle class consumers, property interests have created spaces and houses embedded with cultural and aesthetic elements to produce an image of

“the good life” (p. 272). For the new rich, purchasing a home is seen as a way to achieve a better life and to indicate their distinctive lifestyle (p. 260).

Neoliberal Urbanization

Some scholars argue that the processes of entrepreneurial governance, housing and land commodification, property-led redevelopment, and place promotion taking place in Chinese cities today can be understood in light of China’s neoliberal urbanization. Some scholars, such as David Harvey argue that the spectacular rise of China is related to the process neoliberal economic restructuring that has occurred around the world beginning in the late 1970s (Ren 2013). According to Harvey (2005), neoliberalism refers to the ideology that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” and that “the role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices” (p. 2). In 1992, Deng Xiaoping announced that “developing a socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics” would become the new priority for the CCP (He and F. Wu 2009:96), a strategy that Harvey describes as “neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics” (2005:120). He and F. Wu (2009) write that “neoliberalism can be viewed as the restructuring of the relationship between capital and the state, which rationalizes and promotes a ‘growth-first’ approach to urban development” (p. 282).

Brenner and Theodore (2002) argue that more attention needs to be paid to neoliberalism as a “historically specific, ongoing, and internally contradictory process of market-driven socio spatial transformation,” rather than neoliberalism as an ideology (p. 353). Brenner and Theodore refer to this process as “actually existing neoliberalism.” In contrast to neoliberal ideology which

assumes that market forces behave the same way no matter where, actually existing neoliberalism emphasizes how neoliberal projects are embedded in local contexts (Brenner and Theodore 2002:351). Cities have become sites in which neoliberal policy experiments such as place-marketing, property redevelopment, and surveillance tactics have been expressed (p. 368). The agenda behind these experiments is to “mobilize city space as an arena both for market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices” (p. 368). While neoliberal ideology wants markets to be free from state interference, neoliberalism in practice requires that the state actively intervene to create the necessary conditions for market operation, which involves the use of disciplinary force and the curtailment of social welfare (p. 352).

He and F. Wu (2009) argue that the decentralization of state power, in particular, the shifting of decision-making responsibilities from the central state to the local state, as well as the commodification of housing and land are all evidence of a neoliberal shift. Under neoliberal urbanization, the local state’s main priority is economic growth, which it pursues by extensively promoting real estate development and assisting private developers (p. 284). Meanwhile, the state is no longer the sole provider of welfare as these functions are partly transferred to the market (p. 300). Neoliberal urbanization, however, does not mean that the state reduces its power; the state, particularly the local state, still plays a leading role in urban redevelopment, for example, by controlling land ownership and providing favorable policies for developers (p. 296).

Exclusion of Marginalized Groups from Public Space

In cities throughout the world, marginalized groups are often excluded from spaces by disciplinary policies (G. Huang et al. 2014). The exclusion of certain sectors of the population, such as street vendors is linked to the pursuit of good city image. Solinger (2013) argues that as

Chinese cities began competing to attract international firms and investors, modernizing and beautifying the city image became a priority for local officials (p. 13). There was an imperative to remove visually unappealing sights—especially people thought of as being “low quality”, such as peddlers, rural migrants, and laid-off workers—from the streets, as they were seen as detrimental to the image of a favorable business climate (p. 14). The “cleaning up” of the streets could be interpreted as representing a neoliberal logic because the state strives to enhance the exchange value of urban space and accommodates the interests of the capitalist class while cutting social expenditures for the poor and using coercive force to exclude them spatially. Pow (2009), in his analysis of gated communities in Shanghai, argues that the aesthetic quality of urban space is “cultivated and maintained through spatial exclusion that acts to protect the pristine and beautiful landscape from the urban poor” (p. 373). Aesthetically appealing landscapes, according to Pow, conceal the exclusionary processes and class inequality that allows them to exist (p. 376). The policing of the poor is justified because their presence is said to threaten the pristine quality of the space.

GLOBAL CITY BUILDING AND POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS

Global City Building Through Spatial Transformation

In addition to economic forces, Shanghai’s tireless pursuit of a hygienic city image and its efforts to control the streets are also driven by political ambitions. Scholars note that in the past couple of decades, Shanghai has actively pursued global city status by transforming its built environment in numerous ways (Krupar 2007; He 2007; Kong 2007; Dreyer 2012). The global city, according to Krupar (2007) is a strategy through which China demonstrates its “arrival on the world stage” and measures up against other cities (p. 5). Asserting control over the urban

environment, according to Dreyer (2012), is one of the most powerful ways that the Chinese state exerts its ambitions (p. 50). Ong (2011) argues that the field of urban studies has been dominated by the Marxist perspective that capitalist hegemony is the main force behind the production of spectacular urban forms and that there needs to be more attention paid to the ways that urban spectacles are used to pursue political ends (p. 206). Connecting urban transformation with the global aspirations of the state, Ong theorizes that hyperbuilding, in the context of Asian cities, is a mechanism by which sovereign power pursues its political ambitions (p. 209). Ong presents the term hyperbuilding as a verb referring to the “infrastructural enrichment of the urban landscape in order to generate speculations on the city’s future” as well as a noun referring to a “mega-state project that transforms a city into a global hyperspace” (p. 224). Spectacular urban projects not only to raise real estate values, attract foreign investment, and generate capital, but also create anticipation for the city’s future and communicate the significance of the city to a world audience (p. 209).

Global City Paradigm and Limitations

When the global city paradigm first appeared in the 1980s, much of the literature was focused on evaluating cities according to a narrowly defined set of quantitative economic parameters and ranking them in a hierarchical and evolutionary way (Krupar 2007; Y. Huang 2008). Saskia Sassen, who was one of the first scholars to theorize on the global city, conceptualizes them as command-and-control centers of global economic activities and as strategic nodal points in a global network of information and capital (Ren 2007; Y. Huang 2008). Ren (2007) summarizes the process of global city formation articulated by Sassen. As transnational corporations try to lower their costs, there is a spatial dispersal of economic

activities around the world (p. 26). These corporations face pressure to coordinate their activities in different locations and to contract out their central control functions to specialized service firms such as accounting, legal, financial and consulting firms to lower costs (p. 26). These service firms tend to congregate together to reap the benefits of agglomeration economies and tend to concentrate in cities that have well established information infrastructure and diverse economic activities, thus giving rise to global cities (p. 26).

The early literature on global cities has its critics. Y. Huang (2008) argues that these theories emphasize the functional role that cities play in the global economy, but overlook “the politics, ideologies, and symbolic struggles that are part of the spatial outcome of the globalizing city” (p. 39). These functionalist theories ignore the role that state intervention plays in the process of global city formation (p. 40). The criteria used to evaluate a city’s “global city-ness” is based on characteristics of Western cities but claim to be universally applicable despite a lack of empirical research (p. 42). Ren (2007) and Kong, Ching, and Chou (2015) argue that the mainstream global city theories ignore the cultural dimension of global cities. Global cities, according to Ren, “are not only command-and-control centers of world economic activities, but also major sites of cultural production and consumption” (2007:44). Kong (2007) argues that economic factors themselves cannot create a global city, as global city status requires cultural capital, particularly in the form of cultural spaces such as theaters, museums, and libraries. Such cultural infrastructure supports global city building because it enhances the city’s visibility to a global audience, supports a culturally vibrant lifestyle, boosts tourism, and attracts white-collar workers (Kong et. al 2015). Kong argues that a city is more likely to be deemed global if it has “striking buildings, often designed by famous international architects, distinctive heritage

structures, world-renowned performances and exhibitions, a lively entertainment scene, a creative buzz in a highly liveable space, populated by a globally oriented population” (2007:386).

The question of whether or not Shanghai is a global city is still a significant part of the literature on modern-day Shanghai. Scholars (F. Wu 2003; Chen 2009; Sassen 2009) theorize Shanghai as a *globalizing* city, a city in the process of becoming a global city. F. Wu summarizes the problem with applying the global city theory to Shanghai: “on the one hand, Shanghai’s renaissance cannot be understood without reference to China’s increasing integration into the global system; on the other hand, measured by indicators used to quantify global city status, such as the number of multinational headquarters and the size of the finance market, Shanghai is far from being a global city” (2009:126). Krupar (2007) suggests that we think in terms of “globalizing cities” as a way to focus attention on the global city as a set of processes, practices, strategies, and discourses instead of deciding whether or not Shanghai has met all the points in a checklist of global city indicators (p. 287).

Peculiarity of Shanghai

Krupar (2007) describes Shanghai as “a global city national project pursued by an active entrepreneurial municipal state” (p. 8). Shanghai is unique among Chinese cities because it serves the symbolic role as the “dragonhead” that connects China’s economy with the world economy, which is why it has received heavy involvement from the central government (Wu et al. 2007:215). Dreyer (2012) argues that because Shanghai symbolizes the future of China, reshaping the space of Shanghai can be seen “as an attempt to reshape the imagined future” of the nation (p. 50). The quest for global city status began in 1990 when the CCP authorized the

development of the Pudong New Area, an area that until then had been farmland (Greenspan 2014:55). Because of its strategic location in the Yangtze River region and its peculiar history as a cosmopolitan financial hub, Shanghai was tasked with becoming an international financial center that would integrate China into the global economy (F. Wu et al. 2007:217). In addition to its economic functions, state authorities and planners also conceived of Pudong as a branding exercise—it was designed to articulate the success of China’s economic reforms and its emergence as a modern nation (Greenspan 2014:55). In their efforts to build the city of the future, state officials are simultaneously referencing the past—their goal is not just to return Shanghai to its golden age, but to transcend beyond it (Greenspan 2014; Dreyer 2012). Remnants of the past that represent memories of Shanghai’s cosmopolitanism are selectively preserved and embedded with new meanings to create anticipation for an even brighter future.

Architecture as Branding

The production of iconic architecture is one of the most visible cultural strategies that the local state uses to brand Shanghai as a global city. The Shanghai skyline is one of the most notable examples of architecture being used as a branding exercise. If you visit the Bund in downtown Puxi and gaze across the Huangpu River at Pudong, you will see a dazzling array of skyscrapers that constitute the skyline of Shanghai. These towering buildings were constructed not out of practical necessity, but for the purpose of creating symbolic capital that anticipates prosperity (Ren 2007; de Kloet and Scheen 2013). Ren (2007) defines symbolic capital in this context as “capital that is derived from signs and symbols” (p. xi). By providing visual evidence of Shanghai’s capabilities, the iconic architecture of the skyline serves to attract international investors, firms, information, and professionals into the city (Ong 2011:211). In fact, the skyline

was built even before a strong economic base even existed (Dreyer 2012; de Kloet and Scheen 2012). De Kloet and Scheen argue that “investors did not come to Shanghai because of its booming economy, but because of the *image* of a booming economy...and it was these very investors that kick-started the economy” (2012:702). As Ren concludes, “projecting an image of being global is just as important as being global (2007:33).

Legitimizing State Power

Scholars argue that if urban space in China reflects the success of the reforms and the nation’s economic rise, it must also reflect the legitimacy of the CCP (Krupar 2007; Flock and Breitung 2016; Ren 2007). Global city building is a strategy in which the state establishes its legitimacy and consolidates its political power (Krupar 2007). The built environment of the city is a way for the state to exhibit modernity (Krupar 2007). By producing spectacular, modern, and hygienic urban spaces, the state takes credit for prosperity (Dreyer 2012:53), announcing itself as the civilizing force needed to carry the nation into the future (Krupar 2007). Ren (2007) notes that in the process of transitioning to a market economy, the CCP “has given up some of its commitment to social welfare issues, and therefore has increasingly faced a legitimacy crisis” (p. 138). The global city, according to Krupar, is a show of “technocratic expertise,” a testament to the power of the CCP to deliver economic growth and improved livelihood (2007:290). The slogan behind the 2010 World Expo, “Better City, Better Life,” states that better lives will come from the infrastructural and economic change enabled by the state, not through political change (Dreyer 2012:54). Opposition is thus dismissed; since the state positions itself as the producer of civilization and change, opposing the state means you are backwards (p. 54).

Career Advancement

In addition to legitimizing the CCP's rule, global city building projects are also a way for local officials to facilitate their career advancement (F. Wu et al. 2007:227). The physical nature of the built environment is more effective at showcasing achievement in office than improvements in intangible factors such as social justice; local officials are thus encouraged to develop spectacular mega projects in order to rise up in the CCP hierarchy (p. 227). Former General Secretary of the CCP, Jiang Zemin, and former Premier, Zhu Rongji, used to hold the roles of Party Secretary of Shanghai and Mayor of Shanghai, respectively, which shows that for those who hold top leadership positions in Shanghai, good performance has powerful ramifications.

Significance of the Informal Economy in the Global City

As local officials strive to promote sanitized streets and mega-projects, they overlook the role that rural-urban migrant workers and the informal economy play in making Shanghai a global city. Informal migrant workers, such as street vendors, small shop owners, construction workers, nannies, restaurant workers, garbage collectors/recyclers, delivery workers, repairers, etc. provide the necessary labor that allow the modern economy to function (Sun 2019:27). They offer cheap goods and services that meet the consumption demands of other migrants and middle-class residents alike, making the city a more liveable place. Besides contributing low-cost labor, informal migrant workers are consumers themselves, generating demand for food, housing, transportation, entertainment, and other services from both informal and formal sectors (Roever and Skinner 2016). They live, work, consume, and interact in the city, creating new, vibrant, and fluid spaces that subvert top-down planning (Etzold 2016). While the regulatory

power of the state shapes their lives, informal migrant workers, at the same time, shape the city through their everyday practices (Etzold 2016).

Xintiandi: An Example of a Global City Building Project

Xintiandi, a popular tourist site, is a flagship development project that exemplifies how the entrepreneurial local state and property interests used historical preservation and cultural production to promote Shanghai as a global city (He 2007, Shen and F. Wu 2012). The part of Luwan district that Xintiandi is located in, Taipingqiao, used to be a dilapidated neighborhood that was mainly occupied by low-income residents (He 2007:179, Shen and F. Wu 2012:262). The traditional *shikumen* houses that characterized this area were mostly built in the 1920s and 1930s by Western developers for Chinese tenants and remained the dominant form of housing for average Shanghai residents until the 1980s, but had become deteriorated by 1990s (Ren 2008:32-33). In 1996, the Luwan district government and Shui On Group, a Hong Kong real estate developer, launched a joint project to redevelop the Taipingqiao area (He 2007:179). The plan was to build a flagship commercial center in order to raise surrounding property values, attract an elite clientele, and promote Shanghai as a city with high-end globally-oriented consumerist lifestyle (He 2007; Shen and F. Wu 2012).

The flagship project was named Xintiandi, which translates to “new heaven and earth”. It was created by transforming two blocks of a traditional *lilong* neighborhood into a mixed use retail, entertainment, and commercial district, while preserving the *shikumen* houses (He 2007:181). The *shikumen* houses are seen as a cultural symbol of Shanghai and a reminder of Shanghai’s cosmopolitan past (Ren 2008; Wai 2006). The international architecture firm that Shui On Group hired for the project restored the deteriorated *shikumen*, constructed pedestrian

streets, and built a modern shopping complex (Ren 2008:35). An area that was formerly inhabited by working class residents was now filled with stores selling luxury global brands and high-end restaurants (Shen and F. Wu 2012). Since its opening in 2001, Xintiandi has become one of the most popular leisure sites for wealthy Chinese, foreigners, and tourists. The visual cues embedded in the constructed landscape of Xintiandi invoke a carefully crafted image of “Old Shanghai.” By selectively preserving historical architecture and embedding it with meanings associated with the colonial era, the local state and the developer attempt to show that Shanghai was historically a cosmopolitan city, while simultaneously erasing the history of the low-income residents who actually lived in the *shikumen* (Ren 2008:36; Wai 2006:257). The image of “Old Shanghai” conveyed through the symbolic environment encourages conspicuous consumption by wealthy consumers (Wai 2006:256). Meanwhile, low-income people, including those who had been displaced from this area, are excluded by the unaffordable prices (p. 248).

If cities are becoming more homogenous due to globalization, then “local cultural differences,” such as *shikumen* architecture, “become rare commodities sought after by mobile global consumerist elites” writes Ren (2008:36). However, what the elites ignore in their reimagined version of Shanghai history is the fact that *shikumen* architecture was modern not only because it was designed by Westerners, but even more so because of the dense, vibrant micro-commercial culture that emerged from the *shikumen*, produced by ordinary residents who were sojourners. By attempting to erase informal commerce from the streets, the elites are erasing an essential part of what made Shanghai a modern city during the 20th century. Global cities according to Kong et al. (2015) are “sites where transnational flows of various peoples from various cultural backgrounds occur, bringing in creativity that continually renews the city”

(p. 5). However, globalizing Shanghai is continuously transformed, not only by transnational flows of people but also by flows of migrants from all over China. Behind the globalizing city is a rich merging of local cultures, peoples, and economies. Cultural landmarks such as Xintiandi may serve as icons of global Shanghai for the elite, but for ordinary Shanghai residents, these structures are irrelevant to their daily lives (Kong 2007:395)

Chapter 4: Migrants and Street Food

The spectacular economic growth that characterizes globalizing Shanghai would not have been possible without the low-cost labor of millions of rural-urban migrant workers, who transform the city through their everyday practices and cultures. In this chapter I examine the forces behind the marginalization of migrant workers and show that despite being outsiders, they shape Shanghai through their participation in the informal economy, in particular, the informal economy of street food.

CONTRIBUTION AND MARGINALIZATION OF MIGRANTS

In Shanghai, and other large Chinese cities, migrant workers are ubiquitous—they form the vast majority of informal workers, providing the services that make urban life possible (Greenspan 2014; Swider 2015a; Sun 2019). China’s migrant workers, a group of 261 million known as the “floating population,” are the force behind China’s economic miracle. Between 1979-2003, rural-urban migration contributed to 79 percent of China’s urban growth (L. Li, S. Li, and Y. Chen. 2010). Most of the floating population migrate from rural areas to seek employment in urban centers. In 2011, 36 percent of migrant workers worked in manufacturing, followed by 17.7 percent in construction, 12.2 percent in services, 10.1 percent in wholesale and retail, and 5.3 percent in hotels and restaurants (Gao 2017:282). The services and goods provided by the floating population are integral to Shanghai’s advancement as a global city (Wong, Yeow and Zhu 2005). Rural migrant workers contributed to 31 percent of Shanghai’s GDP in 2007 (K. Chan 2009:207). Migrant workers fill in labor shortages in construction, manufacturing, and services and perform jobs that local residents avoid (Wong et al. 2005:37). In 2000, 25.5 percent of Shanghai’s migrants worked in manufacturing, 19.5 percent in construction, 13.9 percent in

the service sector (Wong 2005:37), but these numbers most likely have changed now that Shanghai is trying to reduce manufacturing and promote service industries in order to become a global city (F. Wu 2016). Migrants set up small businesses that offer low-cost necessities, thus reducing urban residents' cost of living (Wong 2005:37). They also work as maids and nannies, cleaning homes and taking care of children, thus enabling increased labor participation by urban residents (p. 37). Every Chinese New Year, the mass movement of these workers back to their hometowns consists of the largest human migration in history (Ren 2013).

Role of Hukou System in the Marginalization of Migrants

Despite providing the labor that allows China to participate in the global economy, migrant workers are treated as second class citizens in the cities they live in, denied the same rights as urban residents, and face great amounts of exploitation and discrimination. The unequal life chances between urban residents and migrants is reinforced by the *hukou* system, also known as the household registration system, which is a apartheid-like institution of population control (Alexander and A. Chan 2004) under which a person's access to public goods is determined by their *hukou*'s place of registration. The *hukou* system requires all Chinese citizens to be registered with the *hukou* authority at birth. Every person is granted a *hukou* status which contains their place of registration. Up until 2014, *hukou* status was also designated as either agricultural or non-agricultural. The place that a person is registered is the only place where they are eligible to receive state-sponsored welfare (L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010). Because the central government allocates better resources to cities, urban *hukous* bestow higher quality benefits than rural *hukous* (Swider 2015a). *Hukou* status is inherited from one's parents, so even if they are born in Shanghai, the children of migrant workers are not granted Shanghai *hukou*.

The *hukou* status that a person is born into profoundly shapes their life chances. In the cities that they live in, *hukou* ensures that rural-urban migrant workers are segregated from urban residents and treated as an underclass. The fact that one's *hukou* is inherited and difficult to change prevents intergenerational social mobility (Li et al. 2010), thus maintaining a stratified two-class society (K. Chan 2009). Solinger 1999 and other scholars have argued that *hukou* serves as a de facto urban citizenship policy (Johnson 2017). Denied the basic needs and rights given to those with urban *hukou*, migrant workers are prevented from settling down and becoming integrated members of the city. Migrants in the city are generally not entitled to receive state-sponsored benefits such as subsidized housing, public health insurance, public education for their children, unemployment insurance, jobs in state enterprises, and state pensions (Swider 2015a; Swider 2015b; Johnson 2017; L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010). Without access to low-cost public housing, most migrant workers live in private rental housing on the urban periphery or in dormitory housing provided by their workplace (Swider 2015b; W. Wu 2008). Although migrants have the option of applying for a residence permit which grants some limited benefits, the bureaucracy and fees associated with this process and the lack of substantial benefits means that many migrants are unregistered. Because they have no right to be in the city, unregistered migrants are vulnerable to police violence (C. Zhang 2018). Unregistered migrants are also unable to enter into formal labor contracts, which restricts them to informal work arrangements and renders them highly vulnerable to labor abuses (Swider 2015b). Registered migrants are allowed to send their children to public school in the city, but must pay higher fees (Swider 2015a). For most migrants regardless of registration status, their only options are

sending their kids to informal migrant schools in the city or leaving their kids behind to attend school near home, both of which segregate migrant children from local children (p. 706).

Historical Context of Hukou

From the Mao era to the current day, the *hukou* system has played a key role in managing migration, allocating resources, and producing (uneven) economic development (F. Wang 2010). Under the socialist planned economy, the CCP's development strategy was based on industrialization which depended on an unequal exchange of resources between the cities and the countryside (K. Chan 2009). During this time, the industrial sector, which was located in cities, received strong support from the state and urban workers were provided with welfare (K. Chan 2009:200). Meanwhile, the agricultural sector was required to provide low-cost food and raw materials for the industrial sector and the rural population was expected to survive on their own without any welfare from the state (p. 200). The uneven development created by this industrialization strategy led to large-scale migrations of peasants into cities in the 1950s, which the government saw as a blind flow (L. Zhang 2001). The *hukou* system was formally established in 1958 to restrict peasant migration and prevent the chaotic overgrowth of cities (L. Zhang 2001). By requiring that every Chinese citizen be registered at birth as either an agricultural or non-agricultural *hukou* holder and allocating different resources and rights based on these two categories, the *hukou* system divided the Chinese population "into two different kinds of subjects with asymmetric power," i.e. the urban and the rural (L. Zhang 2001:25). During the socialist era, the CCP believed that too much urbanization would take away resources for industrialization, since the government would be obligated to provide jobs, housing, and welfare for all those urban residents (L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010). With the implementation of

the *hukou* system, voluntary migration was halted until the late 1970s (L. Zhang 2001). Because the state had a monopoly on resources, such as food, housing, and jobs, and only allocated them to residents with urban *hukou*, peasants had no way of surviving in the city (L. Zhang 2001). The rationale behind restricting peasant mobility was to reduce the cost of urbanization and to ensure that peasants continued to supply cities with low-cost agricultural goods, which would support high-speed industrialization (Solinger 1999). Fixing the rural population in place also ensured that they could be used as a labor reserve (Solinger 1999). The spatial stratification between the countryside and the city and the social stratification between those with urban *hukou* and rural *hukou* remains a salient feature of Chinese society today (K. Chan 2009).

After market reforms were implemented in 1978, millions of peasants migrated to the cities over the following decades (L. Zhang 2001). Agricultural reforms allowed farmers to sell their produce on the market, which drastically increased the efficiency of agriculture and generated millions of surplus rural laborers (L. Zhang 2001). With the emergence of markets for food, rural migrants could finally survive in the cities (Greenspan 2014). The rapid growth in the urban economy, particularly the growth of export-oriented manufacturing in southern coastal cities, demanded large amounts of mobile, cheap labor (L. Zhang 2001; L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010). Gradual loosening of restrictions on mobility enabled rural migrants to live in cities without an urban *hukou* on a temporary basis (L. Zhang 2001; C. Zhang 2018). As a result of these various factors, the migrant population in China expanded from “less than 30 million migrant workers in 1980 to about 80 million in 1990...to more than 120 million in 2004, reaching approximately 262 million workers by 2012” (Swider 2015b:23).

Current Purpose of Hukou

Over the years, the Chinese government's stance towards migration evolved from prohibition to tolerance and even to encouragement (Sun 2019). The *hukou* system produces a large pool of cheap, mobile, and exploitable labor, which is necessary for China to stay competitive in the global economy (Qian and He 2012; Qian and Guo 2019; F. Wang 2010). As entrepreneurial cities pursue economic growth and compete to attract foreign capital, they attempt to reduce the cost of urbanization by curtailing migrants' consumption of public goods while preserving the benefits of migrant labor (Qian and He 2012:2809). By denying them the citizenship rights associated with urban *hukou*, the *hukou system* shifts the cost of migrants' social reproduction onto the countryside and allows cities to extract migrants' labor without providing for their livelihoods (Qian and He 2012; Han 2010). While fiscal decentralization has made local governments more entrepreneurial, it has also passed onto them the responsibility for providing social welfare, which was previously the central state's obligation (L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010:148). Thus, city governments face a conflict between pursuing capital accumulation and needing to provide services for its residents (L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010). While issuing *hukous* can be a fiscal burden because it obliges city governments to provide residents with benefits, it can also be used to attract highly desirable migrants who can contribute to the city's competitiveness (Li et. al 2010:146).

C. Zhang (2018) argues that the purpose of *hukou* in the post-reform era is not to prevent migration, but to "maintain a differentiated citizenship regime" under which there are different levels of inclusion (p. 856). In 2004, Shanghai became the first city in China to adopt a points system for determining *hukou* eligibility (Johnson 2017; Dong and Goodburn 2020). This system was designed to facilitate *hukou* attainment for migrants "deemed beneficial for [the] pursuit of

producing globally competitive space,” while preventing undesirable migrants from settling down permanently (C. Zhang 2018:873). Under the Shanghai points system, which has some of the strictest criteria among top-tier cities, *hukou* applicants receive a score based on their educational attainment, their employers’ qualifications, and their amount of investment in the city (L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010:149; Johnson 2017:100). These criteria clearly favor highly educated and wealthy migrants. Applicants whose points pass the qualification mark, which is set by the city government, are granted a Shanghai *hukou*, while applicants who don’t meet the qualification mark are only allowed to apply for a residence permit (L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010:149). C. Zhang (2018) argues that the points system produces hierarchies not by excluding migrants, but by producing a range of legal statuses, each granting a different degree of citizenship rights (p. 873). The highly coveted Shanghai *hukou*, with its full range of citizenship rights, becomes a “‘reward’...to be ‘earned’ by ‘deserving’ migrants” (p. 869). Meanwhile, the exploitation of “low-skilled” and uneducated migrants is justified as a market practice when it is actually “enabled by illegality and temporariness produced by law” (p. 864).

Role of Discursive Strategies

In addition to institutional arrangements, the marginalization of migrant workers is also made possible through discursive strategies. Under the discourse of scarcity, the *hukou* system is necessary in order to ensure that enough resources are available for urban residents, who are seen as more deserving (Johnson 2017). Johnson found that Shanghai government officials, local residents, and even migrants believe that if the *hukou* system were eliminated, it would open up the floodgates to mass migration, causing chaos and draining limited resources (p. 96). Associated with the stereotypes of being uncultured, shabby-looking, and unhygienic, migrant

workers are subject to discrimination from Shanghai residents and policing from the state (Han 2010; Qian and Guo 2019). L. Zhang (2001) explains how rural migrant workers were transformed into the socially constructed category of floating population at a specific moment in Chinese history. When peasant workers began migrating to cities in the 1980s, they were seen by urban residents as “temporarily displaced outsiders who would soon return to their rural origins,” and not as a culturally distinct subject (L. Zhang 2001:27). But as more and more peasants arrived in the city, they came to be viewed as a problem (p. 27). Lacking a legible position in the existing social structure, they “became a people of prolonged liminality,” which the state believed needed to be regulated (p. 27). Scholars, such as Michel Foucault, have shown that the process of naming and categorizing things constitutes social reality and shapes power relations between different groups (L. Zhang 2001:24). In their attempt to regulate migrants, the state generated knowledge about this group through official documents, censuses, surveys, and reports, thus constructing the floating population as “a real social entity that is fundamentally different from the urban population and as a social problem to be solved” (p. 27). In the official discourse, peasant migrants were portrayed as an unruly, impoverished, flood-like mass that needed to be controlled. The derogatory meanings attached to migrants during this time in history have continued, to this day, to justify their exploitative treatment.

Informal economic activities that supposedly undermine the modern image of the city are constructed by state discourse as a social problem that needs to be solved, thus legitimizing the use of coercive force. In the discourses produced by the state, media, and scholars, street vending is portrayed as dirty and disorderly, which justifies their regulation (Flock and Breitung 2016:160). Street food vendors are criticized for selling adulterated foods, cheating customers,

polluting public spaces, and causing traffic problems (Hanser 2016:367). In recent years, food safety scandals in China have been a target of public disgust and have led to an erosion of trust in the government (Farrer 2017). People have been particularly fearful of “gutter oil,” which is waste oil that is reprocessed and resold for cooking. Although gutter oil is illegal, the government has not been able to eradicate it and street food is thought to contain it. Urban residents’ disgust towards gutter oil is targeted at migrant street vendors, who are blamed for selling contaminated foods (Farrer 2017:100). When street food is framed as a threat to public health, the state’s regulation of migrant street vending is justified as a rational solution to a social problem, when it is actually an exercise of unequal political power.

Bias Against the Rural

While there is no doubt that migrant workers’ marginal status is profoundly shaped by the *hukou* system, it also stems from China’s deeply ingrained bias against the rural. The rural (*nong*), Lai argues, “does not just literally signify a fixed area of the countryside, but also functions in a strong relational sense” (2016:24). For example, Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province with a population of 6.66 million, is considered rural compared to the largest cities in China (p. 24). From the perspective of Shanghainese people, all *waidiren* (outsiders) are rural people, no matter where they come from (p. 24). In China, one way to insult a person is by calling them *tu* (earthy), which means unsophisticated and country-like (Greenspan 2014:175). To be a *nongmin* (peasant) is to “occupy a lower position along the upward curve of modernization” (Lai 2016:24). The rural is the symbolic opposite of the urban. The difference between them is not only spatial but also temporal—if the urban represents modernity, the rural represents the past that needs to be overcome in order to arrive at modernity (p. 27). Cohen

(1993) has shown how political elites had transformed China's rural population into the socially constructed subject of the "peasant," a culturally inferior, passive, and feudalistic "other" whose liberation depended on the leadership of the new socialist state (cited in Pow 2007:1544-1545). The negative view of the countryside also stems from the development strategies of the socialist state that produced economic disparities between urban centers and the countryside (Pow 2007; Lai 2016). Under the market economy, the gap between the urban and the rural continues to widen (Lai 2016:34). Cities are seen as providing a much higher standard of living, better education, and greater job opportunities (Pow 2007:1545), while the inadequacies of rural life are viewed by urban residents as a reflection of rural people's own shortcomings (Lai 2016:34).

HYBRID IDENTITY AND TRANSLOCAL PRACTICES OF MIGRANTS

Due to the institutional barriers preventing them from obtaining Shanghai *hukou*, migrants occupy a temporary, in-between status—they are away from home but are considered as outsiders in the cities they work in (C. Zhang 2018:865). Because the *hukou* system prevents migrants from settling down in the city, they must maintain connections with their rural hometowns, which results in an urban food culture strongly shaped by regionalism (Greenspan 2019:328). Many migrants keep their rural *hukou* so they can maintain their land in the countryside as a safety net in case they face hardships in the city and as their source of livelihood for when they do return home (L. Zhang and G. Wang 2010; Fan 2008). Migrants practice circular migration, traveling to the city for work and returning home during the Spring Festival or even traveling between different cities for work (Fan 2008). Fan challenges the general assumption in the literature that temporary migrants have a desire to settle down in the city with their families but are prevented from doing so because of the *hukou* system (p. 12). Fan argues

that most migrants choose to practice circular migration so they can enhance their economic well-being—this strategy allows them to earn income in the city where incomes are higher but raise their families in the countryside, where costs are much lower (p. 12).

L. Zhang (2001) observes that many migrants have developed a hybrid identity that is not based on “a single fixed locality” but is rather “oriented toward two or more locales simultaneously” (p. 40). Migrating to the city does not mean that migrants lose their attachment to their hometowns. Throughout the history of Shanghai, migrants of all social classes were eager to embrace their new identity as *Shanghairen*, while retaining strong ties with their native place (Lu 1999:53). Just like the sojourners of the past, today’s migrants are strongly embedded in native-place communities. Migrants’ social networks, which consists of fellow villagers, friends, and relatives, play an important role in shaping their migration process, access to job information, and experience in the city (Fan 2008). Migrants rely on their social networks for information about destination cities. They also tend to migrate with fellow villagers, friends, and relatives, relying on them for support during the journey (p. 73). The fact that certain migration patterns have persisted over time—for example, from Sichuan to Guangdong, Anhui to Shanghai, and Hebei to Beijing—shows that migrants’ choice in destination is influenced by where their social network has previously migrated to (p. 38). Once they arrive in the city, migrants rely on their social network for job information, which leads to labor market segmentation based on native origin (p. 100). Migrants also rely on their network to find housing, which leads to the persistence of migrant enclaves on the urban periphery (W. Wu 2008:118). Living in the same place as others from the same region provides migrants with a sense of familiarity (p. 118). Social networks based on native-place ties allow migrants to enjoy

a community life, to carve a place of belonging in the city (Fan 2008:115). The informal economy is more prevalent in the migrant enclaves on the urban periphery, where it is common to come across streets lined with small shops selling items such as meat, vegetables, and basic household goods (Greenspan 2018:83-84). Knowing that migrants remain culturally attached to their hometowns and that food has served as a source of community belonging for migrants throughout history (Swislocki 2008), one can predict that migrant enclaves would contain restaurants and street food businesses serving regional cuisines for migrant consumers.

Street food, consisting of regional dishes from all over China, is a reflection of migrants' hybrid identity and shows how Shanghai's culture has long been shaped by internal migration. As Greenspan (2019) writes, "Alongside the famous soup dumplings from the Zhejiang region are roast meat sandwiches from Shaanxi, lamb skewers from Xinjiang, egg tarts from Macau, candied hawthorn from the north and breakfast crepes from Shandong" (p. 327). With each wave of migration, new tastes become absorbed into the culinary culture (p. 327). The foods that are now considered as quintessential Shanghainese dishes came from the "original" Shanghainese people who were actually migrants from Zhejiang and Jiangsu (p. 327).

Migrants' Production of Space

Scholars, in the tradition of Lefebvre, argue that cities are socially constructed (Etzold 2016; Flock and Breitung 2016; Bork-Hüffer et al. 2016). Lefebvre theorized that space is socially produced through domination by the elites who project their abstract visions onto the city, as well as appropriation by ordinary residents who use urban space in their everyday lives (Flock and Breitung 2016:158-159). Elite actors exert control over the built environment to serve their political and financial interests. At the same time, ordinary people inhabit urban space,

adapting it for their own needs in ways that may oppose the dominating order imposed by the elites (Etzold 2016). An abundance of research has examined how rural-urban migrants are treated as second class citizens, but less research has focused on how migrants are also agents driving spatial change (Bork-Hüffer et al. 2016). Despite the barriers they face, migrants modify and transform urban space through their labor, services, consumption, interactions, and daily activities (Etzold 2016:175). Even if migrants cannot alter the physical built environment in the same manner as the state, they are still able to influence the quality of spaces (p. 172). Street food vending and other informal economic activities are examples of ways in which migrants participate in the (re)production of urban space (Flock and Breitung 2016:159). Mobile vendors, according to Etzold, “turn streets, footpaths, public parks, and ‘edge spaces’ into vivid marketplaces, sites of consumption and leisure,” and a place to earn a living (2016:172).

Bork-Hüffer et al. (2016) uses the term *transient space* to describe a specific type of fluid space produced by migrants’ everyday practices. Transient spaces are characterized by migrants’ *translocal* connections and are constantly undergoing transformation (Etzold 2016). Transient spaces are translocal because they “connect different, sometimes distant, physical places and social fields through interactions and flows” according to Etzold (p. 171). Migrants are embedded in social networks that extend over multiple places and exchange resources and information across these different places (p. 171). Translocal spaces arise from the relationships and exchanges that migrants maintain across different localities. Within the street food marketplace, people of different socioeconomic status and native-origin interact and consumers are exposed to foods from different regional cultures (Flock and Breitung 2016:166). Transient spaces are also constantly changing because diverse actors, with different powers and interests,

interact in these spaces (Bork-Hüffer et al. 2016). Unlicensed vendors' access to public space is "unsecured, spatially fragmented, and temporarily rhythmic" according to Flock and Breitung (2016:166). Regulations are always changing, requiring shifting strategies from migrants (p. 166). The ways that migrants exert their agency while navigating the state regulatory apparatus contributes to the fluidity of transient urban space (Bork-Hüffer et al. 2016:136).

Local Food in a Globalizing City

Over the decades, Shanghai has seen the development of a globalized culinary landscape with Western fast food chains, coffee shops, bars, and high-end restaurants serving foreign cuisines (Farrer 2019). Western-style food outlets, according to Hsu (2005), are "seen as connected to the global capitalist economy and the world of cosmopolitan consumerism, in contrast to the local, provincial, and backward" (p. 547). Farrer (2017) argues that international culinary migrants, such as managers of multinational food corporations, restaurant owners, and chefs have created a cosmopolitan foodscape in Shanghai, introducing consumers to foreign tastes and new ways of socializing.

While culinary migrants from abroad have certainly impacted Shanghai's foodscape, the influence of rural-urban migrants, the ones seen as "local, provincial, and backward" (Hsu 2005:547), should not be overlooked. Underneath the world of posh foreign restaurants, there is an even more exciting local foodscape. Shanghai's street food, produced by migrants from across China, is just as much a reflection of the city's cosmopolitanism as the globalized dining scene. While Western influenced high-end consumption spaces may serve as indicators of global city status for the elites, for ordinary residents the local economy is what sustains their everyday

lives. The street food stall that you buy breakfast from every morning before work may not appear on any restaurant guides, but it is what keeps you fed.

CONCLUSION

In order to better understand Shanghai street food, I asked my mother to visit two food markets near our home in Qingpu district and make observations. Qingpu is a suburban district in the western part of Shanghai, which is also home to many migrant workers. The two food markets that she visited were both single buildings that contained a variety of small shops selling *xiao chi* (small eats) from various parts of China, as well as a wet market selling fresh produce, eggs, meat, and seafood. Every shopkeeper and worker was a migrant. Besides the two food markets, my mother also encountered some mobile street food vendors outside the subway station near where we live, when she was coming home from work.

Observations of Street Food Markets

On January 1, 2021, my mother took a trip to the Xujing Market, which is where my family sometimes goes to buy groceries. After my mother does her grocery shopping at the wet market, she usually buys some *bing* from her favorite *bing* seller. *Bing*, in Chinese cuisine, refers to any wheat flour based food that is round shaped and pastry like. But because it was the New Year that day, this *bing* shop was closed. On the first floor of the building, there were several shops selling *xiao chi* on the outer rim of the building, while the middle of the building contained a wet market. Outside the building, there was a parking lot for cars and parking space for e-bikes and bicycles. Most of the food businesses were small shops that only offer grab-and-go items while others were actual restaurants with indoor seating. Almost all of them specialized in a specific regional cuisine and some of them only specialized in a specific handful of food items.

Besides *xiao chi* shops, there was also a bakery, pharmacy, and laundromat in the same building. One *xiao chi* shop that specialized in Xibei noodles and *yang rou chuanr* (lamb skewers) was run by a Muslim couple from Xinjiang. While the couple was managing the shop, their two small children were playing around. My mother also saw shops that sold Shandong *jiaozi* (dumplings), wontons, Chongqing noodles, *bing*, *jianbing guozi*, *baozi* (steamed bun with filling), etc. All of the foods were sold at very low prices. For example, a *jianbing guozi* would set you back 6 RMB which is less than 1 USD. *Jianbing guozi* is a “thin crepe that is cooked on an iron griddle and garnished with fresh herbs, pickles, and dried chili” and “filled with an egg, smeared with various sweet and spicy sauces and wrapped around a flat, crispy fried cracker” (Greenspan 2019:326). It is a popular breakfast snack that was introduced to Shanghai in the 1990s by Shandong migrants and eventually spread to other cities (p. 326). Although most of the shops sold freshly cooked food, there were some that sold foods that were prepared in a factory, such as lamb. While some shops were operated by the actual owners of the business, others were run by workers that the shop owner hired. For example, one shop that sold roasted duck and other meats was owned by a *laoban* (boss) from Anhui who hired Anhui workers to operate the shop. Another shop was a franchise store selling steamed *baozi*, *mantou* (a steamed bun popular in Northern China), and other flour based foods. It was run by a couple from Anhui who had brought their kids with them to Shanghai. Besides shops selling grab-and-go style *xiao chi*, there were actual restaurants where you could sit down for a meal. These restaurants specialized in specific regional dishes and were small in size, with three to five tables. My mother saw restaurants that sold Chongqing noodles, *duo jiao yu tou* (fish head), and *mala xiang guo* (numb and spicy pot). As she walked by the *xiao chi* shops, she could smell the delicious scent of the

various foods being sold. The market was a space densely packed with foods from all over China, reflecting the hybrid culture of Shanghai.

While the focus of her fieldwork was on the *xiao chi* shops, my mother also visited the wet market, which was located in the same building. It contained different sections for vegetables, eggs, meat, seafood, and alcoholic beverages, with each vendor selling their products from a stall. As the workers ran their stalls, their children could be seen playing phone games nearby. The wet market was very clean and organized. There weren't too many people there the day my mother visited, but there was still a lively atmosphere.

On January 3, 2021, my mother visited the Mingzhu Lu Market, which is located near our old home. This market was bigger than the Xujing Market, but had a similar layout with *xiao chi* shops on the outer rim of the building, a wet market at the center, and a parking lot on the outside. My mother saw shops selling items such as roasted duck, *bing*, *mantou*, noodles, and *malatang* (a dish that contains ingredients served in a numb and spicy broth). One shop that sold *bing* was run by an old couple from Anhui who had been in business for many years. At a stall that sold dumplings, my mother saw the worker making dumpling wrappers by using a metal cylinder to cut into thin sheets of dough layered in a stack.

The Xujing Market and Mingzhu Lu Market are both examples of migrants selling street food from a permanent building that they rent space from. However, street food can also be sold by migrant vendors who move from place to place, with no fixed structure to sell from. Oftentimes when my mother commutes home after work, she will see street food vendors selling their goods on the street outside of the Xuying Lu subway station near our home. Most of these vendors sell their food out of a cart that can be driven. Some vendors have no cart and only sell

their goods from a container placed on the ground. The consumers are mainly workers coming home from work, stopping by to grab a quick and easy snack. Since there are no convenient stores or restaurants in the vicinity of the Xuying Lu subway station, these vendors fill in a supply gap. From my mother's observation, these street vendors only come out by the subway station in the evening, when the demand is high, and retreat during the daytime.

Observations of Mobile Street Food Vendors

On January 8, 2021, my mother spotted two street food vendors outside the station after work. One of them was selling pieces of cooked chicken from a cart on wheels. The other vendor that my mother spotted that night was selling *guan dong zhu*, a snack that consists of various ingredients such as fish balls, tofu, seaweed, konjac, and daikon radish stuck on skewers and served in a cup of broth. This *guan dong zhu* vendor also sold their goods on a mobile cart that could be driven. On top of the cart there was a large metal container filled with broth and various ingredients. As my mother walked by, she could see steam rising from the broth, filling the air with a fragrant scent. On January 11 my mother spotted two vendors outside the station, different from the ones that she saw on January 8. This time, there was one vendor selling oranges from a cart while another vendor sold strawberries out of a container on the ground.

How Migrants Shape the City Through Street Food

As shown by my mother's observations, rural-urban migrants contribute to the complexity of Shanghai's culinary culture and shape urban space through their production of street food. Many of them bring food from their native-place cuisine to Shanghai, exposing consumers to flavors and cooking techniques from diverse regions. The migrants that my mother encountered at the two food markets transformed urban space into vibrant environments for

shopping, consumption, and leisure. They enriched the environment with sights, smells, and sounds and fostered interactions between different peoples. The *xiao chi* they sell is cheap and tasty, and thus can be enjoyed by other low-income migrants and middle-class residents alike. The groceries sold at the wet market are fresh, locally sourced, and affordable to low-income people who cannot afford the more expensive items at grocery stores. Although the migrants working at the food markets cannot physically alter the structure of space, they are still able to shape the quality and function of it. The space created by the shop owners and workers can be described as translocal because the food is connected with regions beyond Shanghai, it is produced by migrants whose identities are attached to different places, and it requires the movement of knowledge, skills, and cultures across these different places (Etzold 2016). Zukin et al. (2014:1) describes local shopping streets as “spaces of everyday diversity” that contribute to a safe, walkable, human-scale, city (cited in Greenspan 2019:330).

The mobile street food vendors that my mother encountered outside the subway station also transform the character and function of urban space. Regardless of whether migrant street vendors are selling cooked foods or fruit, operating from a mobile cart or simply laying their goods on the ground, they occupy the street in a way that is not officially sanctioned, transforming a space meant for commuting into a space for buying food. They alter the sensory experience of the environment with sights, smells, and sounds. They provide convenient snacks in a place lacking in restaurants or convenient stores, thus filling in a supply gap. Street food vendors, due to their mobile nature, produce a transient space. While the street outside the subway station is mainly used for walking, biking, and driving during the daytime, at night, it also becomes a place to grab a snack. The space thus becomes fluid and rhythmic, undermining

the functions prescribed by the government. Despite being dismissed as messy, these temporary informal activities, which Hou (2016) describes as “temporary urbanism”, make cities more lively and inclusive, allowing the same space to be used for different purposes throughout the day (p. 211). Everyday informal usages of space by marginalized groups, according to Hou, should be recognized as a form of bottom-up urban planning.

Migrant street food is even more significant when you consider the processes of capital-driven urban restructuring and globalization currently unfolding in Shanghai, which not only affect migrant street vendors’ ability to make a living but also make the foodscape more standardized and less accessible. In the late 1980s and 1990s, American fast food chains and Taiwanese run bakeries and coffee shops were the first to introduce Western food to Shanghai’s growing middle class, along with a more standardized dining experience (Farrer 2019). Farrer (2017) observes that across China, “we see the rise of shopping mall cities, in which foods are purveyed in air conditioned food courts operated exclusively by large food corporations” (p. 105). Besides eating at mall food courts, many middle-class Shanghai residents are also buying groceries from supermarkets owned by multinational corporations instead of shopping at their local wet market. It can be argued that Shanghai’s foodscape has become increasingly standardized, sanitized, and corporatized, making people’s diets less nutritionally diverse (Dai 2019:18). Street food offers an alternative to this capital-driven food model. Dai argues that encouraging street food vending could be a way to “slow down the demise of traditional food and diets and revive rural food cultures” (p. 18). Street food production by migrants has the potential to support a more diverse urban food culture, improve the nutritional quality of people’s diets, and serve as a model for a more localized and socially just food system (p. 18).

Globalizing Shanghai: A Multi-Local City

In this thesis I have examined the role of the informal economy in Shanghai as a globalizing city, by focusing on how migrants shape the city through their production of street food. Shanghai is a globalizing city that rests on tensions. On the one hand there is the entrepreneurial state's desire to enforce their vision of a sanitized, modern city, to control its destiny through top-down planning. This idealized vision is challenged by the unplanned transformations produced by the everyday practices of rural-urban migrants who also make their claims on the city. While spectacular mega-projects, iconic cultural landmarks, high-end consumerism, and the presence of transnational white-collar workers may serve as indicators of global city status for the elites, for ordinary residents the local economy rules their lives. Underneath the spectacular facade, there is an informal migrant economy that shapes Shanghai in an unexpected way. Shanghai is continuously reshaped, not only by transnational forces but also by flows of migrants from all over China. Behind the globalizing city is a rich merging of local cultures, peoples, and economies which is crucial to the future of the global city.

I conclude that migrant street food shop owners and vendors contribute profoundly to the lived experience of globalizing Shanghai. While the elite's visions for the city leave no room for the informal economy, I argue that this economy and the migrants who participate in it are integral to the functioning of the global city and the quality of life for its residents. Street food reflects how Shanghai is a multi-local city, one that has always been shaped by migration and the merging of cultures from all over China. Migrant street food sellers shape Shanghai by enhancing the vibrancy of the culinary landscape, providing accessible food for low-income residents, fulfilling the needs of a wide range of consumers, and enhancing the local economy

through their consumption of services. As state officials and property interests project their global city visions from above, migrants participate in the production of urban space from below by altering the meaning and sensory experience of space. Through the practice of selling street food, migrants transform urban space into vibrant environments for consumption and leisure. By being embedded in social networks that extend over multiple places, migrants produce translocal spaces. Migrant food markets expose consumers to tastes from all over China and foster interactions between people of different class and origin. The space produced by mobile street food vendors in particular is transient, shifting in function throughout the day. As globalization and capital-driven urban restructuring lead to increased standardization and corporatization of the foodscape, migrant street food has the potential to support a more nutritionally diverse, localized, and accessible foodcape.

These migrant street foodscapes that I described will change sooner or later. Shanghai is always changing. New street food shops will open as old ones close. Famous street food markets will flourish for many years before getting shut down. The *jianbing guozi* vendor that my mother saw every morning on her way to work in Lujiazui has closed down recently, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. A new shopping mall is currently under construction steps away from my apartment building which is located on land that was farmland not too long ago. The forces of modernization have certainly affected the survival of street food sellers. Yet, I don't believe that street food will disappear. No matter how globalized Shanghai becomes, the incredibly innovative and adaptable informal economy always finds a way to persist. Underneath the surface, global Shanghai will still be shaped by the local and the complexities and challenges of everyday life.

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