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**DOI**

[10.1353/anq.2019.0023](https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2019.0023)

**Publication date**

2019

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

Anthropological Quarterly

**License**

Article 25fa Dutch Copyright Act

[Link to publication](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**

Lan, S. (2019). Reconstructing Blackness in Grassroots Interactions Between Chinese and Africans in Guangzhou. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 92(2), 481-508.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2019.0023>

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# Reconstructing Blackness in Grassroots Interactions Between Chinese and Africans in Guangzhou

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## ABSTRACT

*This article examines the racial implications of daily life interactions between African traders and rural-to-urban Chinese migrants in China's southern metropolis Guangzhou, due to a recent wave of African migration to China. Differing from previous generations of Africans in China who were mainly students from elite backgrounds, these new migrants consist of individual traders and small entrepreneurs who purchase cheap consumer goods in China and ship them back to Africa for sale. Despite language barriers and cultural differences, the two migrant groups share similar structural marginalization in urban China due to their non-resident or non-citizenship status. By focusing on these two underprivileged groups in urban China, this research foregrounds a grassroots interpretation of Sino/African trade relations, which is largely absent from official propaganda. I argue that racial learning between non-elite Chinese and Africans is a bi-directional and interactive process, which may involve mutual stereotypes and racialization on both sides. However, Chinese migrants' shared structural marginalization with black Africans may also give rise to alternative constructions of blackness that move beyond the hegemonic black/white binary. Due to the relative absence of whiteness and white privilege in grassroots Chinese/African interactions, the notion of white supremacy*

*can be de-centered and replaced by multiple parameters for evaluating blackness, such as nationality, English proficiency, class and economic status, indigenous aesthetic values, religion, and cultural differences.* [Keywords: Blackness, China, African diaspora, race, mutual racialization, grassroots interactions]

Guangzhou is the African city in China. Of all the places in China, we only feel at home in Guangzhou.

— *Lydia, a 24-year-old undocumented trader from Cameroon*

In Beijing, I used to look at foreigners from afar but never had a chance talking to them. I never imagined that I can be in such close contact with foreigners now in Guangzhou.

— *Tian, a 28-year-old migrant from Henan province*

## **Introduction**

Youssef is a 40-year-old Chinese Muslim from Ningxia province. He and his wife Salimah run an outdoor supply shop in Guangzhou's Xiaobei market, where many Arab and African traders frequent. Youssef can speak Arabic fluently but he speaks little English. Salimah has been attending private English classes, but she can only speak a few short phrases in English. She communicates with African customers by using a calculator, hand gestures, and occasional English words such as "many many, same same, sample, factory, tomorrow, in stock, container, warehouse, carton," and so on. Between April and May 2012, I worked for two weeks as a volunteer English interpreter in Youssef's shop. The couple was aware of my background as a researcher, yet they considered it a win-win situation since they had been looking for an interpreter for quite some time.

I was chatting with Salimah one day when a middle-aged client from Cameroon walked in, followed by his agent, a Cameroonian student from a university in Guangzhou who can speak fluent Chinese. Salimah whispered to me, "This is the guy who stored his goods in our warehouse for nine months and never pick it up." She greeted the client in English, "Long time no see." The man replied, "No visa. Chinese do not give me

visa.” Salimah typed a number into the calculator, “You pay this amount for the goods, and you also need to pay 4,000 yuan for the warehouse.” She spoke in Chinese and I did the interpretation. The man waved his hands fanatically, “I only have money for the goods, no money for the warehouse.” Youssef was getting impatient, he asked me to tell the man, “If you do not pay the money, you can’t get the goods. If you don’t collect your goods, I will call the police.” The client ignored Youssef’s threat and started examining the samples on the shelf. He suddenly discovered something. He talked to Youssef through his agent, “This sample is not the one I wanted. I didn’t ask for gold stars on the epaulette. I asked for silver stars. My government will not accept this color. We have changed government.” Youssef became furious. He yelled to the man in Chinese, “We already confirmed everything with you before asking the factory to mass produce it. Now is too late. You have passed the deadline to collect the goods. Now I ask you to pay a penalty for breaking the contract.”

What followed was a rather difficult situation: both sides were unhappy but refused to give in. Salimah blamed the agent for failing to notice the problem when confirming the order. The agent blamed Salimah for not following the order exactly. He tried in vain to find a picture of the original sample on his cellphone. Since Youssef recently renovated his shop, he could not find the original sample either. The client was complaining, saying that he could not accept the wrong goods. Finally, Youssef exploded and he said to the agent, “Tell him to shut up. I don’t want to speak to him anymore.” The agent refused to translate and he said to Youssef in Chinese, “You shouldn’t talk like this. He is your customer and you should treat him politely.” Being a smart business woman, Salimah gestured her husband to shut up and told the client, “Let’s talk about it. If there is a problem, let’s find the solution together.” It took Salimah and the agent 30 minutes to figure out that there was a miscommunication between them. At that point, Salimah laughed and apologized to the client, “Sorry, I did not totally understand what you meant because my English is limited. My husband is a quick-tempered man, but he is a good person. Hope you will not be offended.” The client also laughed, “No, no, we are still friends. I want to do business with you. It’s just the visa problem.” After another 20 minutes of negotiation, the two sides reached a compromise: the client would pay for half of the warehouse fee and the couple would ask the factory to replace the gold stars with silver ones. Youssef was still unhappy, but he kept silent and allowed his wife to handle the situation. After the two

Africans left, he said to me, “You cannot trust these blacks. They never keep their promises.”<sup>1</sup>

The drama in Youssef’s shop highlights the open-ended and negotiated nature of grassroots encounters between Chinese and Africans, which are largely facilitated by the expansion of Sino/African informal trade relations. Despite the presence of two interpreters, Youssef and his Cameroonian client still experienced a communication breakdown. This demonstrates that in addition to the language barrier, cultural misunderstandings and racialized stereotypes may also play important roles in impacting grassroots Chinese/African business interactions. While Youssef’s rudeness towards the client betrayed his biased view of black Africans as tricky and untrustworthy, Salimah’s exceptional patience and skills in resolving the dispute also showed the couple’s practical concerns to complete the transaction successfully. Furthermore, the Cameroonian client’s complaints about China’s visa policy pointed to important structural constraints mediating issues of credibility and trust among Chinese and African petty traders. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Guangzhou’s Xiaobei and Sanyuanli markets, this article examines the contradictions and nuances in mutual racial learning between African traders and rural-to-urban Chinese migrants in various informal trade spaces in Guangzhou.<sup>2</sup> By focusing on these two marginalized groups in urban China, this research foregrounds a grassroots interpretation of Sino/African relations, which is largely absent from official propaganda. Specifically, I am interested in how non-elite Chinese develop their knowledge about blackness and in what ways such knowledge conforms to, contradicts, or challenges hegemonic discourses such as Sino/African friendship and white supremacy.<sup>3</sup>

## **Guangzhou as a Contact Zone**

The presence of African traders in Guangzhou can be traced back to the 1990s. Some scholars note that the earliest African traders arrived from Hong Kong (Bork-Hüffer et al. 2014). Others mentioned the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis as a major factor for pushing Africans to explore the China market (Bodomo 2012). Differing from previous generations of African migrants who were mainly students from elite backgrounds, this recent wave represents what scholars call “globalization from below” (Mathews and Vega 2012). The majority of them are individual traders and small entrepreneurs who purchase cheap consumer goods in China and ship them back

to Africa for sale. As the capital of Guangdong Province, Guangzhou has a rich history of foreign trade and exchange. Since its inauguration in 1957, the Canton Fair (renamed the Annual China Import and Export Fair in 2007) has attracted merchants from all over the world. Guangzhou became a popular destination for Africans because of its warm weather, religious diversity, and relatively tolerant political and economic settings. There are no available government statistics on the exact number of Africans in Guangzhou. According to some scholarly estimates, the number is probably around 20,000 (Li, Ma, and Xue 2009; Haugen 2012). The African population in Guangzhou is extremely diverse and almost every country in Africa is represented, with a majority consisting of male traders from West Africa (Bodomo 2012, Huynh 2016). Africans can be commonly found in two major areas in the city: Xiaobei, where most of the French speaking Muslims gather, and Sanyuanli, where most of the English speaking Christians frequent. The division between the two is not clear cut. In reality, there is a constant flow of people and goods from one area to another.

As one of the first cities to benefit from China's open-door policy, Guangzhou is not only a popular destination for international migrants, but for internal migrants from rural China. Taking advantage of the city's thriving export-oriented market economy, Chinese migrant workers and petty entrepreneurs tend to congregate in Guangzhou's several big wholesale markets, providing various trade or trade-related services to international traders. Despite language barriers and cultural differences, the two groups share similar structural marginalization in urban China due to their non-*hukou* or non-citizenship status.<sup>4</sup> Not only are they cut off from the state support system due to their outsiders' status, they are also subjected to various state rules and regulations due to their concentration in the informal economy for job or business opportunities. Recent scholarship in migration studies challenges the division between internal and international migration as two separate fields of study (Hickey and Yeoh 2016, King and Skeldon 2010). This research proposes to treat Guangzhou as a contact zone where China's internal migration intersects with international migration. The notion of contact zone attends to the dynamic and fluid nature of the Chinese and African communities and highlights the production of new geographical and social spaces for cross-cultural business interactions at the grassroots level.

Existing literature on African diaspora usually focuses on black experiences in Europe and North America, due to the historical legacy of the

transatlantic slave trade (Gilroy 1992). However, recent scholarship begins to challenge this homogenization of the African diaspora by drawing attention to comparative studies of black diaspora experiences in different parts of the world (Patterson and Kelley 2000, Zeleza 2005). China offers a compelling case study for the African diaspora in East Asia because of its unique position as a historical ally of many African countries in their anti-colonial, anti-racist struggles, and its recent transformation into a world economic power. As an example of South-South migration, the African diaspora in China is mediated by changing political and economic relations between China and many African countries. From Mao's political agenda of Third World Alliance in the 1950s to the tremendous growth of Sino/African trade in recent years, the discourse of Sino/African friendship has dominated official Chinese propaganda and has rendered African migration to China a politically sensitive issue (Strauss 2009). However, with the spread of Western racial ideology in China and the increasing diversification of the immigrant population in the country, the official rhetoric of Sino/African friendship can no longer reflect the complexities in the current African diaspora experiences in South China.

### **Blackness and Multiple Chinese Gazes**

Existing literature on race in China is generally divided into two camps. The first holds that the discourse of race and racism has a long history in Chinese culture (Dikötter 1992, Jacques 2009, Johnson 2007), while the second emphasizes distinctions between traditional Chinese ways of constructing difference and the Western pseudo-scientific notion of race (Ho 1985, Jenner 2001, Stafford 1993). This division reflects both the pluralization of racial meanings in different cultural contexts and the danger of reifying a Western-centered notion of race and racism in a non-Western society. Taking into account the transnational flow of racial knowledge, Stam and Shohat note that in comparative studies of racism in different cultural contexts, the "which is worse?" question is the wrong question. They argue, "the globalized era of asymmetrical interdependencies requires a heightened sense of the (partially regulated) flow of ideas, of crisscrossing messages and multidirectional but still power-inflected channels of exchange, where nations and states are not necessarily co-terminous" (2012:295). Various scholars have noted that international migration involves not only the movement of people across borders, but

the accumulation and circulation of racial knowledge in different cultural contexts (De Genova 2005, Guridy 2010, Kim 2008). The convergence of internal and international migration in Guangzhou provides an ideal milieu to study the intersection of the global and the local in terms of racial knowledge production.

In his study of the construction of Afro-Jamaican blackness in Japan, Sterling notes Asia's "disconnection from discussions about blackness in the modern world" due to the absence of large numbers of people of African descent within its borders and "its location outside the primary circuits of the Atlantic and Arab slave trades" (2010:37, 41). However, the situation has changed now with the phenomenal increase in China/Africa trade relations and extensive media reports of recent African migration to South China. To a certain extent, the new African diaspora in China, together with China's expanding influence in Africa, has repositioned Asia as an emerging site in the global debate about blackness. Echoing scholars who note the fluid and malleable representations of blackness in different geographical, historical, and social contexts (Rhodes 2007, Sterling 2010, Frazier 2014), this research suggests that the construction of blackness in contemporary China is a transnational and interactive process, which involves the circulation, re-articulation, and contestation of global racial ideologies in local contexts. Authors like Du Bois (1965) and Fanon (1967) have noted the importance of the white gaze in creating a double consciousness among blacks in the historical context of slavery, colonialism, and white domination. In the China context, it is the co-existence of the Chinese and white gazes, which helps define blackness as a racialized identity.

In their study of racialization in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), Kubota and Lin (2006) draw attention to epistemological racism, which attends to the unequal power relations between the West and the Rest in terms of racial knowledge production. Due to the spread of Western racial ideology in China, the white gaze has played an important role in mediating elite Chinese perception of black Africans. This is reflected by the prevalence of the "black threat" narrative in popular Chinese media (Lan 2017). However, the heterogeneity in the Chinese population and their variant levels of contact with black Africans also give rise to multiple Chinese gazes, which may not necessarily conform to the white gaze. Instead of being defined purely in relation to whiteness, blackness may take on multiple meanings through African migrants' encounters

with distinct groups of Chinese. Existing literature on Afro-Asian connections mainly focuses on elite exchanges in the political/ideological realm and fusions in popular culture (Frazier 2014, Mullen 2004, Prashad 2001, Raphael-Hernandez and Steen 2006). This research examines daily life interactions between Africans and Chinese from non-elite backgrounds in various informal trade spaces in Guangzhou. I argue that Afro-Chinese encounters at the grassroots level not only help reveal the negotiated process of mutual racial learning, but promise to subvert hegemonic discourses such as Sino/African friendship and white supremacy in subtle ways.

One important distinction of racial learning among non-elite Chinese is its open-ended nature. Due to their provincial, rural backgrounds and relatively less exposure to cosmopolitan values, Chinese migrants may be prejudiced against black Africans upon initial contact. However, their relative lack of exposure to Western racial ideology also renders them more open and receptive to multiple and shifting constructions of blackness. For example, Chinese migrant workers' fear or fascination with blackness may be attributed to curiosity and lack of contact with blacks, rather than internalization of Western racial ideology (cf. Sterling 2011). Moreover, since grassroots Chinese gaze does not command similar hegemonic power as the white gaze, Africans migrants can resist, negotiate, and return the gaze by strategically engaging with different groups of Chinese in different contexts. One major finding of this research is that racial learning between non-elite Chinese and Africans is a bi-directional and interactive process, which may involve mutual stereotypes and racialization on both sides.

The data for this research was gathered between April 2012 and June 2014 through archival research (government legal documents, Chinese language newspapers and journals) and participant observation in the African markets in Guangzhou. With the support of several Chinese and African research assistants, the author conducted over 50 open-ended interviews with Africans from different countries. The team also interviewed 40 Chinese who had various levels of interaction with Africans. Their backgrounds include real estate agents, small business owners, government officials, migrant workers, and wives of African men. From July to August 2013, the author made a three-week research trip to Lagos, Nigeria to conduct informal interviews with Nigerian traders who had been deported from China and Chinese women who followed their Nigerian husbands to live in Lagos.

## Racialization of Black Africans in the Chinese Media

China's reform and open door policy since the 1980s not only brought in foreign direct investment, but facilitated the spread of Western racial ideology in the country. Since the majority of the foreigners in China in the 1980s and 1990s were white-skinned Westerners who came as investors or top administrative personnel in multinational corporations, these foreigners were generally considered as the embodiment of wealth and prestige in popular Chinese eyes. According to Lufrano (1994), many Chinese intellectuals understood the world according to an international racial hierarchy, with industrial nations at the top, Third World countries at the bottom, and China somewhere in between. Existing literature on Chinese attitudes towards black Africans mainly focus on elite perspectives. Based on Internet debates on Chinese aid to Africa, Cheng (2011) notes the emergence of cyber racism among Chinese with working experiences in Africa. In the web blogs of Liu Zhirong, a French-educated businessman with ten years of experience working in Africa, Africans were constructed as racially inferior to Chinese and unworthy of Chinese aid due to their greedy nature and their discrimination against Chinese in Africa. Based on online data between 2006 and 2008, Shen (2009) identifies a paradox in Chinese perceptions of China's re-entry into Africa. On the one hand, Africans were constructed as inferior Chinese partners and low priority financial recipients. On the other hand, the Chinese state's continuous aid to Africa (on a reduced scale) was considered necessary in order to boost the image of a benevolent China to the world. Both authors rely heavily on elite Chinese perspectives and fail to reflect on the influence of Western racial ideology in shaping elite constructions of African "inferiority" in Chinese cyber space.

Since the recent African migration to South China is a relatively new phenomenon, interactions between Africans and the local Chinese society are largely restricted to various spaces of trade in urban China. The general Chinese public obtains their knowledge about Africans mainly from secondary sources. In a 2006 survey conducted by *China Youth Daily*, the official organ of the Communist Youth League, and Sina.com, the biggest Chinese Internet news portal, 71.7 percent of the 5,119 respondents reported that they knew very little about Africa, while 42.5 percent reported getting their knowledge about Africa from film, TV, newspaper, and the Internet (Li and Rønning 2013). In the Guangzhou context, Africans are identified primarily by their black skin color, not by their country of origin,

language, or religious belief. The Chinese term *heiren* (black person) is often used, in both popular media and daily life settings, as a generic term to refer to Africans from diverse backgrounds. Because of this conflation of black and African identities, popular Chinese perceptions of Africans tend to be rather homogenous, and oftentimes tainted with negative stereotypes. For example, the Cantonese term *hakgwai* (literally meaning black devil or ghost) is sometimes used by local Cantonese and migrant workers from other parts of China, in a derogatory sense to show contempt for African migrants.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars have noted the key role of the local media in constructing a negative image of Africans as guilty of illegal immigration, drug dealing, sex offense, and the spread of AIDS (Li et al. 2009). The media production of the “black threat” was achieved in several ways. First is the exaggeration of the number of undocumented Africans in the city. In 2007, a report in *Guangzhou Daily* claimed that there were 200,000 Africans in the city and only about 20,000 were officially registered with the government (Ke and Du 2007).<sup>6</sup> Since then, the number 200,000 has been frequently quoted by news reporters and individual Chinese as the most popular estimate of the African population in Guangzhou. The “black threat” discourse was also highlighted by the demonization of black masculinity over the Internet. The *Guangzhou Daily* report ended up being reposted on different websites, but with a more sensational title, “There are 200,000 blacks in Guangzhou and rape cases committed by blacks have been rapidly rising.”<sup>7</sup> Racist comments such as the black invasion, the 57th ethnic group in China, and the AIDS threat can be found among Chinese netizens from different parts of China (Cheng 2011).<sup>8</sup> The criminalization of Africans as drug dealers in popular media also played an important role in the racialization of black identity in Guangzhou. Although several groups of foreigners are involved in drug-related crimes in the city—Southeast Asians, Middle-Easterners, and overseas Chinese—Africans are often singled out as the most visible group (Liao and Du 2011, Qiu 2011).

The Chinese state’s attitudes towards the recent African migration to China are mixed. On the one hand, official media still upholds the rhetoric of Sino-African friendship and is generally silent on the topic of anti-black racism. On the other hand, the state is also using South China as an experimental field to test new measures of immigration control. At the local state level, the influx of Africans to Guangzhou was first considered a positive stimulus to the city’s economy (Li et al. 2012). However, as media

reports of “black-related crimes” increased, African migrants soon became the target of the local government’s anti-illegal immigrant campaign. In August 2008, the Guangzhou government announced that foreigners would be included in the “floating population” category and were subjected to the rules and regulations for its management (Ju 2008). On May 1, 2011, the *Interim Provisions of Guangdong Province on Administration of and Services to Aliens* came into effect. This was the first piece of local government-level legislation in China concerning the administration of foreigners. Designed to specifically target undocumented migrants in Guangdong province, the law promoted a reward and punishment scheme by encouraging ordinary Chinese to report undocumented foreigners to local authorities. It also expanded the power of the police to stop foreigners for passport and visa verification. Based on my observations, Africans are more likely to be stopped by the police for passport check and they are the most vulnerable group in the local state’s campaign for immigration control (Lan 2015).

### **Grassroots Perceptions of Blackness**

While the Chinese media representation of black Africans is marked by the co-existence of the “black threat” narrative and the Sino-African friendship discourse, two major themes are notably absent. One is the contribution of African migrants to Chinese economy, and the other is daily life interactions between grassroots Chinese and African traders. It must be noted that grassroots perceptions of blackness are not entirely immune to the influence of popular media and Western racial ideology. Negative business encounters with black Africans may end up perpetuating racial stereotypes and anti-black racism at the personal level. However, there are significant distinctions between the “black threat” narrative, which largely reproduces the stigmatization of blackness in Western racial ideology, and the racialization of black Africans as dishonest and untrustworthy clients by Chinese migrants like Youssef. Without romanticizing Sino-African trade relations at the grassroots level, I want to identify two different types of racialization based on their divergent sources of racial learning: presumptive racialization and interactive racialization. The former is mainly based on secondary knowledge, which constitutes a mixture of Western construction of black inferiority and indigenous concepts of color-based prejudice. The latter is based on daily life interactions, which can be at

times highly idiosyncratic and fraught with tensions, yet can also give rise to multiple and shifting constructions of blackness due to the contested and negotiated nature of intergroup relations.

### **Of Skin Color and Body Odor**

In his discussion of literary representation of encounters between Japanese and Jamaicans in Jamaica, Sterling notes that Afro-Jamaican blackness is rendered as “an intensely felt difference that invades Japanese senses and sensibilities” (2011:62). Similar reactions can be observed among some Chinese migrants, who generally had little contact with black Africans before moving to Guangzhou. A female porter in her 40s who is from Henan province told me, “When I first saw a black person in Xiaobei, I was a little scared. How can a person be so black like that? Now I get used to it. Some of the blacks are quite generous. They give me ten yuan for one delivery trip. Some are really stingy. They only gave me five yuan. It depends.” This woman’s testimony shows that fear of blacks often exists at the initial stage of contact, yet it may gradually disappear due to frequent encounters with Africans on a daily basis. For rural migrants who had never been exposed to black Africans before, ignorance usually plays a big role in explaining their curiosity and fascination with blackness. Kevin, a 28-year-old undocumented Nigerian, told me the following story, “Once I went to a warehouse with my friend and his finger got cut. A Chinese working there said, ‘Hey, your blood is the same color as ours. I thought since your skin is black, your blood must be black as well.’ Then I realized how ignorant some Chinese can be.” Due to the influence of traditional Chinese aesthetic values, which favor light skin over dark skin, some Chinese migrants attribute Africans’ black skin color to their lack of good personal hygiene. A few of my African informants even encountered Chinese who tried to rub their skin to see if the black color would come off.

Due to the Chinese obsession with black skin color, most of my African informants experienced a heightened awareness of being black after their arrival in China. Because Kevin’s skin tone is lighter than some of his fellow Nigerians, he often gets questions like, “Is your mama Chinese? Why is your skin color different from others?” Kevin told me that he was very unhappy with such questions. He said, “Chinese care a lot about one’s skin color. They think white people are beautiful and black people are

ugly. Because I have brown skin, they think my mama is Chinese. I usually tell them: do you think you Chinese are the only white people in the world? There are white people in Africa too. There are also white people in Europe. In my country, we have people of different skin tones and we have mixed-blood people as well.”<sup>9</sup> Kevin’s testimony points to the interactive nature of racial learning between non-elite Chinese and Africans. By educating his Chinese interlocutors about the diversity of skin tones in the world, Kevin was contesting the homogenization of black identity in popular Chinese perceptions. Like Kevin, most of my African informants consider Chinese people as white even though none of the Chinese migrants I met identify themselves as white. In parallel to this conflation of “Chinese” and “whites” by African traders, there is also the conflation of “blacks” and “foreigners” by many Chinese migrants. In grassroots Chinese eyes, corporeal blackness is viewed as an otherness not so much because of its racial inferiority, but due to its exotic, foreign, and unknown nature (in the sense that it does not conform to traditional Chinese standards of beauty).

In his study of representation of blacks in Japan, Russell (1991:5) makes a distinction between blackness as an indigenous cultural construct and blackness as a racialized concept derived from Western ethnocentrism and cultural hegemony. In a similar vein, I argue that traditional Chinese aesthetic values which favor light skin color cannot be confused with hegemonic discourses of white supremacy from the West. Some Chinese migrants’ obsessions with black skin color may originate from curiosity, fascination, and ignorance and they do not command similar hegemonic power as the white gaze. Scholars on US immigration history have noted that working class whites tend to exhibit more racist behaviors against African Americans because the symbolic privilege of whiteness functions as a compensation for their structural marginalization (Roediger 1991, Roediger and Barrett 2004). In the Guangzhou case, Chinese migrants’ lack of identification with white privilege and their mutually dependent economic relations with Africans have significantly compromised color-based prejudice. To a certain extent, African migrants’ black skin color, coupled with language barriers and cultural misunderstandings in daily interactions, often serves to reinforce their “foreigner” status, i.e., people who come from a foreign land and who look and behave differently from Chinese. It must be noted that in the Chinese context, the term “foreigner” often indicates wealth and privilege rather than stigmatization or inferiority

(Brady 2000, Petracca 1990). The conflation of “blacks” and “foreigners” in Xiaobei and Sanyuanli also reflects class differences between Chinese migrants and some wealthy African traders, who are often addressed as *laoban* (boss) by Chinese migrant workers. In addition, some Africans’ English language skills enable them to occupy a higher social status than Chinese due to the power of English as a global language (Lan 2016).

Closely related to skin color is the issue of body odor. Many of my African informants reported unpleasant experiences on the bus, when some Chinese covered their noses at the sight of them or avoided sitting beside them. Generally speaking, taxi drivers are the ones who complain the most about the body odor of Africans. One middle-aged taxi driver told me bluntly, “I don’t like black devils. They are stinky and they love using perfumes. You know there is air-conditioning inside the taxi, so the smell is really strong. I usually open the window when I am riding with black devils.”<sup>10</sup> In reality, taxi drivers’ racism/prejudice against Africans cannot be explained by body odor alone. Zhou et al. (2016) find that mutual distrust is a major cause of contentious relations between Chinese taxi drivers and African clients. While Chinese taxi drivers often complain about underpayment problems among Africans, the latter often use underpayment as a strategy to deal with dishonesty in taxi service. Compared to taxi drivers whose contacts with Africans are usually brief, Chinese migrants who have developed long term business relations with Africans generally have a more enlightened understanding of the issue. Lisa, a middle-aged Chinese petty trader explained to me, “Many Chinese think Africans are dirty, but their living habits are actually more sanitary than Chinese. They take at least two showers a day. They wash their hands and feet several times a day because of their religion.”<sup>11</sup> Lisa’s testimony has been echoed by several Chinese wives of African men, who are quite impressed by their partners’ hygiene preferences. Fangfang, a migrant woman from Guangxi province, told me that her Nigerian husband did more cleaning in the house than her and he also took care to clean the shoes of their baby every day.

The open-ended nature of mutual racial learning is manifested by the changing attitudes of Chinese towards Africans over time. One Nigerian trader who traveled frequently between Guangzhou and Lagos told me, “In 2003, there weren’t many blacks in Guangzhou. Some Chinese would cover their nose when they saw a black person on the bus. But in 2007, they stopped doing it. They like to make friends with us and do business

with us. Some of them even take English classes in order to better communicate with us.”<sup>12</sup> As they stay longer in China and travel to different Chinese cities, some Africans begin to develop a better understanding of the heterogeneity in the Chinese population, mainly based on economic status and place of origins. They know that there are both rich and poor people in China. They also know that most of the Chinese they meet in the markets are migrants from less developed regions in China. As their knowledge about the African diaspora community grows, some Chinese migrants begin to make distinctions between different groups of Africans. Tian, a 28-year-old migrant from Henan province who provides transportation and delivery services to Africans with an unlicensed van, explained to me, “Blacks usually bargain a lot and they don’t give tips. But some blacks are generous. They give me tips and even buy me lunch. It depends. Everyone is different.”<sup>13</sup> Tian’s testimony shows an interesting trend across many Chinese migrant narratives: on the one hand, they make generalizations about certain African behavior (i.e., bargaining a lot); on the other hand, they also recognize the heterogeneity in the African community by noting the diversity in individual behaviors.

### **Issues of Credibility and Trust**

The concentration of informal trade activities in Guangzhou has facilitated the development of interpersonal social spaces between ordinary Chinese and Africans. Yet, it also fosters tensions and mutual stereotypes due to the language barrier, cultural misunderstanding, and the structural vulnerability of both Chinese and African petty traders in the global value chain (Lyons et al. 2013). In fact, issues of credibility and trust remain two of the most controversial topics in grassroots Chinese and African business interactions. In the field I heard many complaints such as “Chinese love cheating foreigners,” “Africans have no credibility in China,” “Chinese are impatient and rude people,” and “Africans are miserly and rude clients.” Lisa, the same woman who noted the superior hygiene habits of Africans, also expressed disdain for Nigerians due to their lack of credibility in business practices. She said, “One big lesson I learned from doing business with Nigerians is that you should never give them credit. Do not trust them so easily. If you give them credit, most likely you have to pay for the goods yourself. They do not feel pressured to pay you back. They think it is natural to owe people money.”<sup>14</sup> When I asked Adam, a middle-aged

undocumented Nigerian trader who stayed four years in Guangzhou, what he learned about Chinese culture, he replied promptly, “The only thing I learned is that Chinese cheat. They like cheating foreigners. Their law is to cheat the foreigner, but do not kill him.”<sup>15</sup> To a certain extent, the lack of legal contract in the informal economy and the heterogeneity in both the Chinese and African communities may foster opportunism and self-interested pursuits of economic profits. However, the cheating narrative can also be interpreted as a powerful trope for grassroots Chinese and Africans to voice their frustrations and feelings of vulnerabilities in informal cross-cultural business interactions.

In his study of daily interactions between Chinese traders and their Ghanaian employees, Giese (2013) examines cultural differences and misunderstandings as important mediating factors in grassroots Chinese/African relations. This research finds that multilingualism and divergent cultural norms and expectations also structure Chinese and African trading/social behaviors in Guangzhou. Due to the great varieties of languages spoken in the African markets, Chinglish, or Chinese style English, functions as the major lingua franca for intergroup communication. According to Han (2013:88), Chinglish is characterized by “simple English vocabulary and sentence structures, repetition of key words, the mixing of Mandarin expressions, and clear influence of Chinese syntax.” Bodomo (2010) uses the term “calculator communication” to describe non-verbal interactions between Chinese shopkeepers and African buyers, who depend on body language and a calculator for price inquiry and bargaining. While Chinglish and calculator communication are sufficient in handling basic business interactions, they are not sufficient in solving business disputes. Due to fierce competitions in the domestic market, and their structural marginality in the global value chain, many Africans have to bargain hard with their Chinese suppliers in order to make a profit. Although bargaining is also part of Chinese trading culture, the African bargaining practices are often perceived as offensive and troublesome in Chinese eyes. Due to their limited English proficiency, most Chinese consider it a nuisance trying to reason with African clients. Some became impatient and threatened to call the police in order to get rid of “troublesome” clients. The Chinese term *mafan* (trouble, troublesome) is often the first word African traders learn in China because they hear it so often from Chinese migrants and petty traders.

One important source of cultural misunderstanding is Chinese and Africans' different attitudes towards money. Money became a bone of contention in the informal economy due to both groups' earnest desire to make it in Guangzhou. To a certain extent, Chinese migrants' contempt and disdain for black Africans result from the notorious haggling culture (in the Chinese eyes) among Africans and their frequent requests for credit when making a purchase. Many Chinese interpret such behaviors as evidence of Africans' poor financial status and stingy personalities. Ironically, the image of Africa as backward and poverty-ridden has been partly perpetuated by state propaganda since the Mao era, which oftentimes gives excessive publicity to Chinese aid to Africa. For most Africans, the Chinese reluctance to extend credit confirms the stereotype that Chinese care more about money than personal relations. Paul, an undocumented Nigerian trader, told me, "Chinese is good to you only because of money. They love money more than their lives. All they want is to take the money and push you out. We Africans, we believe in God and we do not cheat people."<sup>16</sup> Echoing Paul's comment, many of my Christian African informants display a sense of moral superiority over Chinese, who are considered unscrupulous and greedy due to their lack of fear in God. Kevin made a contrast between the African and Chinese ways of recovering debt. He said, "In African culture, if people cannot get their money back, they would wait and give the debtor more time until he is able to pay. We Africans are patient people, but Chinese are not patient. When the goods were still on the way to Africa, they started calling you and asking for payment."<sup>17</sup>

In addition to cultural differences, mutual stereotypes resulting from disputes over money need to be contextualized by the shared structural vulnerability of both groups in urban China. Since business interactions in the informal economy depend primarily on personal relations and weak ties, both Chinese and African traders reported cases of being betrayed by family, friends, and acquaintances (Granovetter 1973). Youssef confided in me, "There are no human feelings (*renqing*) in the business world, only people's lust for money. When economic interests are involved, good friends turn against each other, Muslims turn against each other, families turn against each other. You cannot trust anyone."<sup>18</sup> Youssef's comment shows that issues of credibility and trust are prevalent not only in intergroup relations but in intragroup contacts. In Youssef's eyes, the cousin who betrayed him by stealing money from his account is probably no less despicable than the African client who failed to pay back a debt. Like some

Chinese migrants, Youssef often uses the term *yeman* (literally meaning uncivilized, barbarous) to describe some Africans. I once asked him to explain the term. Youssef thought for a while and replied, "Positively it means ignorant, simple-minded. Negatively, it means aggressive and difficult to reason with, just like me."<sup>19</sup> Youssef's definition of *yeman* is fascinating because at first glance it seems to reproduce the Western racial discourse of blacks being primitive and uncivilized. However, a closer examination of his reasoning process reveals the absence of a hierarchical ranking of Chinese and Africans. Despite Youssef's negative opinions against some Africans, he actually places them at the same level as himself, i.e., as someone who has an argumentative and confrontational personality.

In their study of racialization of labor in the Chinese/African interface, Sautman and Yan (2016) note the racialization of Africans by various Chinese actors, and the racialization of Chinese by various African actors. The two authors propose a model of South-South racialization that is markedly different from the North-South exemplar. This research suggests that Chinese and African migrants' obsession with monetary issues has played an important role in their mutual racialization. In reality, grassroots Chinese perceptions of blacks as poor and miserly has more to do with Africans' economic status rather than their racial inferiority. According to many of my African informants, blacks from the United States are generally treated much better in Guangzhou than black Africans. Some of my African informants managed to find teaching jobs in China by posing as African Americans. The fact that black Americans receive more respect than black Africans shows that sometimes the color of one's passport is deemed more important in the Chinese eyes than the color of one's skin. Jun, a small factory owner from Shenzhen, explained to me his strategies of building trust with African clients. He said, "I try to do business with big bosses, those who have big money and those who have good reputations. I have one customer who always pays beforehand and we have no problems doing business together. I've been working with him for two or three years. We are very close friends. We often go out to eat and I also invited him to my home for dinner."<sup>20</sup> While wealthy Africans are generally treated with courtesy and respect, undocumented Africans who have little financial resources for business (i.e., Nigeria Igbo) are more likely to be treated with contempt by some Chinese migrants.

## **Contending Structural Marginalization**

Issues of credibility and trust highlight the contentious and idiosyncratic nature of racial learning between non-elite Chinese and Africans, which often involves mutual stereotypes and racialization. However, increased daily life interactions at the grassroots level can also lead to relatively positive intergroup relations and deeper levels of mutual understanding. While recognizing the many problems and challenges in Sino-African informal trade encounters, I want to focus in this section on the potentials of such grassroots encounters in opening up new spaces for contention against hegemonic discourses such as Sino-African friendship and white supremacy.

Differing from the state's categorization of Africans as "legal" and "illegal," Chinese migrants usually make distinctions between "good" and "bad" Africans. While the bad ones are involved in criminal activities, the good ones have a genuine desire to do business in China, regardless of their visa status. As noted by Cvajner and Sciortino, "in economics, an irregular status is nearly always translated into the possibility of charging a higher price for goods and services" (2010:398). Chinese migrants and some local Chinese regard the presence of undocumented Africans in Guangzhou as potential economic opportunities and are generally willing to provide various kinds of trade-related services in exchange for financial gain. Since undocumented Africans cannot open a bank account in China, they have to depend on underground banks operated by Chinese and other Africans in order to handle transnational cash flows. Although the business of foreign currency exchange is illegal, there are plenty of Chinese migrants providing such service to African traders. In Xiaobei, a historically Muslim neighborhood, the majority of the money changers are Muslim migrants from Northwestern China. Every morning they would stand near the market, chatting loudly to each other or bargaining on the phone with customers. An undocumented African only needs to make a phone call to get the service he needs, thus minimizing his chance of being intercepted by the police. In Sanyuanli, undocumented Nigerians often rely on their Chinese friends, spouses, or business partners to rent shop spaces in trade malls, collect market information, travel to other cities to make orders, and to provide other trade-related services.

Despite the instrumental nature of grassroots Chinese and African interactions, such mutually beneficial economic relations often serve as the starting point for the development of more nuanced and intimate

relations at the personal level. Although frustrated by occasional disputes with African clients due to his limited English proficiency, Tian, a migrant worker from Henan province, also empathizes with Africans for the many challenges they have to face in China. He said, "Africans are the same kind of people as us except for skin color. We both left our hometowns and are struggling to make it in Guangzhou."<sup>21</sup> Coco, a middle-aged trader from Sichuan province, told me, "We like African clients because they order in big quantities. If they are certain you are a nice person, they would bring all their friends to buy in your shop. The police should not come to the market from time to time to arrest undocumented Africans because all the bad guys remain safe and those honest business men got caught."<sup>22</sup> Mike, a Chinese trader who stayed for eight years in Lagos before moving to Guangzhou, explained to me, "I like dealing with blacks because they are very direct people. Unlike Chinese who hide everything in their hearts, Africans would tell you what they want and it's easy communicating with them."<sup>23</sup> Youssef, who generally holds less favorable opinions towards Africans, is nevertheless critical about the police's brutal treatment of them. He said, "Sometimes we have arguments with black clients, but we also sympathize with them a lot. The police should not arrest them. They should simply ask those visa overstayers to leave China. Some of them are treated like criminals. This is not the right way of doing things."<sup>24</sup> Youssef's sympathy towards Africans is closely related to his own vulnerable status as a Muslim minority in urban China, who is also subjected to police harassment from time to time.

Unlike state propaganda which mainly focuses on China's economic aid to Africa, most Chinese migrants and petty traders I met acknowledge Africans' contribution to the Chinese economy. Ming, a petty trader from Sichuan province, told me, "The top city officials do not like blacks, but for us mid- and lower-level Chinese, we welcome blacks because they are contributing a lot to the city's economy. They provide business and job opportunities for Chinese, especially for migrant workers from other parts of China. We do not have any negative feelings towards blacks because we rub shoulders with them every day."<sup>25</sup> Ming's testimony shows the discrepancy between elite and non-elite perspectives towards black Africans in Guangzhou. In reality, grassroots Chinese traders' attitudes towards black Africans are often mediated by a keen awareness of their shared structural marginalization with Africans in the official discourse on Sino/African trade relations. Coco opined, "Even though there are many

talks about China/African cooperation, it is those state-owned enterprises that reaped the benefits. We ordinary Chinese got nothing out of it. How can you talk about friendship with African brothers while refusing to give them visa and keeping them outside your door?"<sup>26</sup> Coco's comment reveals her insight into the asymmetrical nature of Sino/African relations: the official rhetoric of Sino/African friendship is mainly used to guard the benevolent image of China and the economic interests of Chinese investment in Africa, not to protect the grassroots trade activities of Africans in China. Coco's critique is echoed by Mike. He said, "The Chinese government only cares about state-owned enterprises. They do not care about small entrepreneurs. People like me do not exist in the eyes of the Chinese government. We can't influence state policy, but we still hope the government can be more lenient to those itinerant traders."<sup>27</sup> Mike's feeling of disempowerment is shared by several Chinese petty traders, who urged me to convey their opinions to top state officials.

It is important to note that within the African communities in Guangzhou there is a similar critique of China's stringent visa policy. Sempala, a Ugandan trader who had been fighting the uphill battle of renewing his visa through agents in Hong Kong, criticized the Chinese government for the problem of illegal residence: "I think the blame goes to the Chinese government. They are using outdated immigration policies to handle the current problem. How can someone finish ordering, checking, and shipping their goods in one month? It is impossible. The Chinese government should be responsible for the overstaying problem."<sup>28</sup> Sam, a Nigerian trader I met in Lagos, blamed the rising crime rates in Guangzhou on China's arbitrary visa policy. He said, "Nowadays genuine business people are unable to get visas to China. Those bad people would buy visa from agents in order to enter China and overstay there. If the Chinese government relaxes its visa policy, it will help reduce crime. Without visa, people cannot travel freely to do business and they would do anything to survive there."<sup>29</sup> The convergence between grassroots Chinese and African voices in criticizing Chinese state's immigration policy reflects the shared structural marginalization of both groups in official Sino/African trade relations. It also points to an alternative construction of blackness that is different from the homogenization and criminalization of black Africans in popular Chinese media.

## Conclusion

In May 2016, a Chinese commercial for laundry detergent Qiaobi went viral on the Internet. In the advertisement a sexy Chinese woman flirtatiously stuffs a black man into a washing machine and miraculously transforms him into a fair-skinned Chinese guy. The commercial has ignited a heated discussion on racism in China in the English media. While some interpret it as evidence of blatant racism against blacks in Chinese society, others warn against a Western-centric notion of racism by emphasizing the different historical and cultural contexts in China.<sup>30</sup> In my opinion, the Qiaobi controversy has provided an interesting starting point for discussions about the transnational circulation of racial knowledge and the multiple modes of racialization of blackness in a global context. However, little attention has been paid to the existence of multiple Chinese gazes and the gap between popular perceptions of blackness, which is based mainly on presumptive racialization, and grassroots reconstruction of blackness, which is based on interactive racialization. To a certain extent, grassroots interactions between Chinese and African migrants in Guangzhou hold the promise to fill this knowledge gap and contribute to the diversification of racial knowledge about blackness in China.

In his classic work *Black Folk Here and There*, St. Clair Drake (1987) exposes the limitation of the US context in theorizing race and racism by examining the multifaceted nature of blackness in non-Western cultures. Besides emphasizing the different varieties of racism, Drake also makes a distinction between racism and color prejudice. Following Drake's attention to the cultural construction of racial meanings, this research argues that grassroots Chinese representations of blackness need to be differentiated from anti-black racism in Western discourses. While many of my African informants in Guangzhou reported experiencing an othering process due to their black skin color, some of them also emphasize the qualitative difference between the white gaze and the Chinese gaze. A middle-aged engineer from Niger who was on a business trip in Guangzhou told me, "I like China because here you are treated like a human being. People talk to you. In France, when they see you as a black person, they avoid talking to you. They try to keep a distance from you. You can tell the horror on their faces."<sup>31</sup> It is worth noting that there are important moments when the Chinese gaze converges with the white gaze, which is reflected by the dominance of the "black threat" narrative in popular Chinese media. However, the "black threat" discourse is also contested by many

rural-to-urban Chinese migrants, who offer a critique of state immigration control targeting black Africans from the bottom up.

Due to the existence of language barriers and cultural misunderstandings, racial learning between non-elite Chinese and Africans proves to be a contentious process fraught with tensions and stereotypes, which lead to gaps and contradictions in grassroots Chinese constructions of blackness. In his study of a multiethnic neighborhood in London, Baumann (1996) identifies a dual discursive competence among the residents. On the one hand, the Southallians embrace a dominant discourse which builds on reified notions of culture and community; on the other hand, they also adopt a demotic discourse which offers more flexible and contested constructions of ethnic boundaries. This research finds that grassroots Chinese constructions of blackness also oscillate between homogenization and contextualization on a regular basis. Africans are sometimes racialized as “blacks” who are radically different from Chinese in terms of skin color, language, culture, and business etiquette. Meanwhile, Chinese migrants also distinguish different groups of Africans based on their nationality, class status, English proficiency, and religious piety. Due to the relative absence of white privilege in globalization from below, racialization between non-elite Chinese and Africans is marked not only by its bi-directional nature, but by its deviation from the Western model of domination and subordination. Since grassroots interactions between Chinese and Africans is still a new phenomenon, we need to take into account the temporal dimension of this mutual learning process and the increasing exchanges of knowledge, ideas, and personal networks between the two groups.

For my African informants, despite their complaints about China's immigration policy, most traders acknowledge that China has provided an alternative route of success other than Europe and North America. Onyedi, a 30-year-old Nigerian who is married to a Chinese wife, explained to me, “We like Chinese better than Americans. Americans are tricky. They are thieves. Even if America gives me green card, I don't want to go there because there is no job in America. China has business opportunities, so I like staying in China.”<sup>32</sup> Like Onyedi, many African traders constantly compare China and Euro-America in various ways. While they lament over the lack of human rights and democracy in China, they also recognize better economic opportunities and treatments towards blacks in the country. To a certain extent, China represents a space of rupture in the global

circulation of racial knowledge due to its official anti-racist discourse and the limitation of the black/white binary in explaining the Chinese situation. However, China also runs the risk of reproducing the race-blind rhetoric in the West due to its official denial of anti-black racism in the country. To a certain extent, the domination of elite perceptions of blackness in China in both popular media and state immigration policy has effectively muted grassroots perspectives on Sino/African trade relations, which has the potential to offer alternative constructions of blackness. ■

**Acknowledgments:**

This project was funded by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council HKBU 245512. Research assistance from Kelechi Nwadike, Aisha Kamulegeya, Melissa Musonda, Lamin Ceesay, Olivier Pan, and Allen Xiao is highly appreciated. An earlier draft was presented in the Moving Matters Research Seminar at the University of Amsterdam. I thank Willem van Schendel, Barak Kalir, Tina Harris, Gerben Nootboom, and Leo Douw for their insightful comments. Thanks also go to two anonymous reviewers who offered constructive feedback.

**Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup>Field notes, April 11, 2012, Guangzhou.

<sup>2</sup>In this article I am following the popular Chinese understanding of Africans, which mainly refers to sub-Saharan or black Africans. In Guangzhou, Arabic-speaking migrants from North Africa are usually identified by Chinese as Arabs, not as Africans.

<sup>3</sup>Strauss (2009) notes a consistency in China's official discourse on its relationship with Africa from the early 1960s to the 2000s, which hinges on long-lived principles such as non-interference, mutual benefit, friendship, and non-conditional aid.

<sup>4</sup>Hukou means household registration in English. It is one of the major means for the Chinese state to control the movement of people between urban and rural areas.

<sup>5</sup>The naming of foreigners as "barbarians" or "devils" originated from an ethnocentric tradition in ancient Chinese society, when Chinese culture was celebrated as the culmination of human civilization.

<sup>6</sup>*Guangzhou Daily* is the official newspaper of the Guangzhou municipal party committee and one of the highest circulating dailies in China.

<sup>7</sup>Examples of some websites include: [http://www.kaixin001.com/repaste/3732666\\_863144406.html?stat=orrecn\\_out](http://www.kaixin001.com/repaste/3732666_863144406.html?stat=orrecn_out); <http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=33&id=3481225>; <http://tieba.baidu.com/p/2721825547>; <http://bbs.tianya.cn/post-free-1072745-1.shtml>; [http://bbs.tiexue.net/post2\\_2451510\\_1.html](http://bbs.tiexue.net/post2_2451510_1.html). Accessed on June 22, 2016.

<sup>8</sup>Personal conversation, April 19, 2012, Guangzhou.

<sup>9</sup>Personal interview, May 10, 2012, Guangzhou.

<sup>10</sup>Personal conversation, June 7, 2012, Guangzhou.

<sup>11</sup>Personal interview, May 5, 2012, Guangzhou.

<sup>12</sup>Personal interview, July 23, 2013, Lagos.

<sup>13</sup>Personal interview, October 8, 2012, Guangzhou.

<sup>14</sup>Personal interview, May 5, 2012, Guangzhou.

<sup>15</sup>Personal interview, July 25, 2012, Guangzhou.

- <sup>16</sup>Personal interview, June 4, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>17</sup>Informal conversation, July 23, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>18</sup>Personal communication, April 10, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>19</sup>Personal conversation, May 2, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>20</sup>Personal interview, July 26, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>21</sup>Personal interview, October 8, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>22</sup>Personal interview, March 19, 2013, Guangzhou.
- <sup>23</sup>Personal interview, June 15, 2013, Guangzhou.
- <sup>24</sup>Personal conversation, April 10, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>25</sup>Personal interview, April 9, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>26</sup>Personal interview, March 19, 2013, Guangzhou.
- <sup>27</sup>Personal interview, June 15, 2013, Guangzhou.
- <sup>28</sup>Personal interview, August 13, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>29</sup>Personal interview, August 5, 2013, Lagos.
- <sup>30</sup>For a collection of essays on the Qiaobi controversial, see <https://africansinchina.net/compilation-opinion-and-analysis-pieces-about-the-notorious-racistchinesead/>. Last accessed August 23, 2017.
- <sup>31</sup>Personal communication, April 5, 2012, Guangzhou.
- <sup>32</sup>Personal communication, March 10, 2013, Guangzhou.

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**Foreign Language Translations:**

Reconstructing Blackness in Grassroots Interactions Between Chinese and Africans in Guangzhou

[**Keywords:** Blackness, China, African diaspora, race, mutual racialization, grassroots interactions]

Reconstruindo a Negritude em Interações de Base Entre Chineses e Africanos em Cantão

[**Palavras-chave:** Negritude, China, diáspora africana, raça, racialização mútua, interações de base]

黑人身份在广州中非民间交往中的重新建构

[**关键词:** 黑人身份, 中国, 非洲商人, 种族, 相互种族化, 民间交往]

Реконструкция принадлежности к черной расе в интеракциях на низовом уровне между китайцами и африканцами в Гуанчжоу

[**Ключевые слова:** принадлежность к черной расе, Китай, африканская диаспора, раса, взаимная радикализация, интеракции на низовом уровне]

إعادة بناء السواد في التفاعلات الشعبية بين الصينيين والأفارقة في قوانغتشو  
كلمات البحث: السواد، الصين، الشتات الأفريقي، العرق، العنصرية المتبادلة، التفاعلات الشعبية