

Chinese Migrant Entrepreneurs and the Interpersonal Ethics of Global Inequality in Dar es

Salaam, Tanzania

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of

Philosophy in the Department of Anthropology at Brown University

Providence, Rhode Island

2017

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This dissertation by Derek Sheridan is accepted in its present form by the Department of Anthropology as satisfying dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the product of interactions with hundreds of people over the past few years, all of whom have contributed in direct and indirect ways to its completion. These foremost include all my research interlocutors in Tanzania, whose hospitality, friendliness, patience, and willingness to let me spend time and/or speak with them are the conditions of possibility for this project. In the interest of protecting their confidentiality, however, I chose not to acknowledge them by name here. Instead, I must limit those kind of acknowledgements to my academic interlocutors. The names which appear in the dissertation are all pseudonyms, and some details have been changed to protect identities. The names in this Preface are real. I would like to extend a special thanks to: Mohammad Yunus Rafiq, who introduced me to the topic, and who, along with Hannah Wheatley, hosted me on innumerable occasions; Abdulrahman Salim Ali for hours of research assistance and conversation; Matthew Senga and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Dar es Salaam for their research invitation; Dr. Mashauri and the staff of the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH); my advisor Catherine Lutz for her always enthusiastic support even when I changed topic; my readers Daniel Jordan Smith, Lina Fruzzetti, Katherine Mason, Susan Greenhalgh, and in an earlier iteration, Keith Brown for their unfailing support; the National Science Foundation and the Wenner Gren Foundation for dissertation research funding; the Social Science Research Council for pre-dissertation research funding; the Watson Institute for research and writing funding; the Department of Anthropology and the Graduate School for research funding; Patricia Agupusi, Emily Avera, Gianpaolo Baiocchi, Sarah Besky, Bhawani Buswala, Jovita Byemerwa, Alyce de Carteret, Bianca Dahl, Paula Dias, Paja Faudree, Malay Firoz, Matthew Guttmann, Magnus Pharao Hansen, Patrick Heller, Evelyn Hu-Dehart, Jose Itzigsohn, Alexander Jones, Karen Jorge, Jessica Leinaweaver, Glen Loury, Chelsea Cormier McSwiggin, Rebecca Nedostup, Irene Pang, Yibing Shen, Richard Snyder, Rama Srinivasan, Barbara Stallings, Katherine Marsh Stockland, Kay Warren, and everyone else at Brown who has shaped my thinking through their conversations; Loren Landau, Stephen Lupkemann, and Jørgen Carling for organizing the SSRC-DPDF module on “African Migration”; Jessica Anderson, Peter Kakonde, Stephen Penz, Kathryn Takabvirwa, Elle Wang, and Beth Iams Wellman for advice given while formulating my proposal; Hazel Carby, Solange Chatelard, Eric Siu Cheng, Michael Denning, Nicholas Carby-Denning, Jean Comaroff, Michael Degani, Haoyi Guo, Heidi Haugen, Elisabeth Hsu, Mingwei Huang, Wing Lok Hung, Melissa Lefkowitz, Dongxiu Liu, Tiffany Liu, Elizabeth Mahenge, Nandera Mhando, Jamie Monson, William Monteith, Gregory Duff Morton, Winslow Robertson, Zander Rounds, Rashid Salum, Yoon Jung Park, Bruce Whitehouse, Allen Xiao, Zhenchao Xu, Hairong Yan, all of whom have supported me in ways both direct and indirect; Steven Bloomfield and Thomas A. Lewis; Jeffrey Mantz, Mary Beth Moss, Matilde Andrade, Katherine Grimaldi, Mariesa Fischer; my parents, Richard and Lynne Sheridan, without whom I would not have been able to exist in the first place, my uncles, Larry Kenter and Ron Sheridan, without whom I might never have pursued higher education, and most importantly, my wife Silja Wang, without whom I would never have made it as far as I have..

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INTRODUCTION

The first time I met Neema, a Tanzanian wholesaler who purchased solar panels and solar powered lamps from Chinese suppliers, he asked me whether my research concerned the “Chinese invasion.” I had not said anything about my research, so I asked him what he meant.

“I mean the Chinese invasion of the marketplace.”

Standing between us in the shop was Mr. Ren, the Chinese supplier who had introduced us. Mr. Ren worked for a Chinese wholesaler who specialized in solar panels and solar-powered lamps. Neema, he had told me, was one of his best customers.

“Why are there Chinese selling things on the street like the machinga?” Neema asked Mr. Ren, “Why would they come here to do something like that?”

A Chinese competitor of Mr. Ren had been visiting shops, a young man with a backpack of samples he presented to skeptical Tanzanian shopkeepers. He may not have been a machinga, or a petty trader, but Neema still wondered why Chinese “did the kinds of jobs Tanzanians could do!”

“Tanzanians also benefit,” Mr. Ren responded, pointing out how the goods were cheap.

“No,” Neema responded, “it is for China’s own interest, they are the ones who benefit, while it is ordinary people who suffer.”

He added that the opposition candidate for the upcoming Presidential election had promised a policy to force foreign investors to give more shares to locals.

He started to tease Mr. Ren: “We are going to kick you out! If the government doesn’t do anything, the people will resolve the situation themselves.”

“We are going to slaughter you,” said Neema’s friend, laughing nearby.

“The economy would collapse if the Chinese left!” Mr. Ren responded, “And what about the Indians?”

“They are already part of us,” Neema responded.

Are Chinese migrants welcome in Africa? Are they building an “empire,” as some critics suggest, or are they extending longstanding Afro-Asian connections? During the 1960s era of decolonization, the Chinese and Tanzanian governments framed the close relationship between them in the relational language of “friendship” and “cooperation”; concepts intended to portend an interconnected world without imperialism. Following several decades of dramatic economic growth in China, however, the expansion of Chinese investment, trade, and migration in Tanzania has been haunted by the specter of older North-South dependencies being reproduced in new South-South connections. While Chinese and Tanzanian elites combine narratives of anti-imperialist friendship with the promise of “win-win” economic development, Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians themselves contend with these emerging mutualities and inequalities through how they negotiate the interpersonal ethics of social interactions. In this dissertation, I provide an ethnographic account of how Chinese expatriates and their Tanzanian interlocutors in Dar es Salaam negotiate their comparative privileges, vulnerabilities, and moral agency. It is based on seventeen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Dar es Salaam, particularly among Chinese and Tanzanian wholesale and retail traders in the Kariakoo marketplace responsible for the importation of Chinese commodities and their labor of distribution within Tanzania and East Africa. The trade in Chinese commodities occupies an ambivalent position for Tanzanians, between the promise of industrialized Tanzanian futures and the repetition of neo-colonial dependencies on foreign manufacturing. Chinese wholesalers themselves occupy an ambivalent position within Tanzanian social imaginaries as figurative *wamachinga* (i.e. petty traders), and within Chinese social imaginaries as lower-class emigrants who pursue careers in Africa because of both limited opportunities in China and/or limited opportunities for emigration to the West.

These positions complicate state-promoted models of Sino-Tanzanian relationalities. Ordinary Tanzanians question the proper Chinese role in a local division of labor, and the responsibility of the state for governing foreign capital. Chinese elites hold such figures to damage the reputation of Chinese in Tanzania as a whole because they are accused of engaging in morally problematic behavior due to their competitive ethics and social background. Chinese expatriates themselves debate the privileges and vulnerabilities of global Chinese citizenship, debating the weakness/strength of an ascendant Chinese state, the “ingratitude” of ordinary Tanzanians for Chinese aid and investment, and the moral/legal responsibilities of Chinese as guests in a foreign country.

My dissertation addresses different sites of tension which are generative of debates among Chinese and Tanzanians alike about the comparative privileges, vulnerabilities, and moral agency that Chinese expatriates have vis-à-vis ordinary Tanzanians. These tensions include market competition and trading hierarchies between entrepreneurs, mistrust and interdependence between co-workers, the contested terms of material and emotional reciprocity between friends and strangers, and the art/ethics of petty corruption between expatriates and street-level bureaucrats. I examine these tensions through the perspective of their *mutualities*, by which I mean their existential interdependencies and mutual constitution. Chinese and Tanzanians need each other to conduct business and/or realize their livelihoods, but one’s individual agency can be either expanded or constrained in part by the agency of other actors. Such mutualities pose the ordinary ethical question of how such people should relate to each other. I argue that the differing expectations Chinese and Tanzanians bring to these relationships is informed not just by “culture,” but also by the inequalities implicit in them. Expectations about how to act in turn bear on how Chinese and Tanzanian identities are performed, and how they are understood within both national, regional, and global hierarchies of value (Herzfeld 2005).

In this dissertation, my theoretical interpretations of the ethnographic material are in dialogue with two sets of concepts: empire/anti-empire and mutuality. My discussion of empire/anti-empire begins from the perspective of the contending narratives that different actors use to evaluate Sino-Tanzanian relations, and by extension, China-Africa, in global terms. My discussion of mutuality begins from the perspective of interpersonal connections among Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians, and the negotiation of everyday ethics. I bring these discussions together in my ethnography by attending to how the terms of Sino-Tanzanian relations are negotiated in everyday interpersonal interactions, and how the negotiation of interpersonal ethics are used by Chinese and Tanzanian actors to evaluate Sino-Tanzanian relations.

Empire/Anti-Empire

The interconnection between the concepts of empire/anti-empire and mutuality in Sino-Tanzanian relations is demonstrated by how, in the public discourses articulated by Chinese and Tanzanian elites (e.g. officials, intellectuals, investors), they frequently describe these relations in the relational language of “friendship” (sw. urafiki/ch. 友谊) and “cooperation” (sw. ushirikiano/ch. 合作). These terms, deployed across the diplomatic landscape of China-Africa relations, have a particular purchase in Tanzania because of their association with an historical moment where, as embodied in the construction of the 1800km Tanzania-Zambia (TAZARA) railway, friendship provided an alternative to the neo-imperialism of European-American institutions. Chinese and Tanzanian elites have both used the language of friendship and cooperation to support the claim that China-Africa relations are a form of anti-empire (or at least non-empire). The premise of anti-empire invoked by the concepts of friendship and cooperation is the construction of a world interconnected, but without imperialism or hegemony. These are aspirations which have become symbolically associated historically with the “Bandung moment” and associated movements in

the global South to construct an alternative political and economic world order (Lee 2010).

Tanzania and China both played significant roles in that project.

The language of *friendship, cooperation, and anti-empire*, however, sets aside issues of *power* and *inequality* in these relationships. These issues were already relevant during the construction of TAZARA to the extent that China was a major geopolitical power with a population and economy much larger than Tanzania, but the material standards of living among ordinary Tanzanians and Chinese were relatively commensurable at the time, supporting the claim that Sino-Tanzanian cooperation was a case of “the poor helping the poor” (Monson 2009:150). In the present configuration, not only has China’s geopolitical position improved, and not only has its economy grown, but material standards of living among Chinese have also improved rapidly relative to those among ordinary Tanzanians. In both China and Tanzania, economic growth has been accompanied by rising inequality, which of course complicates any attempt to make “average” comparisons, but there is nonetheless an inescapable inequality, or at the very least, an “unevenness” which has developed within the global South. This is evident even in the wholesale trade sector, where young Chinese employees earn about \$10,000US/year compared to about \$1000USD/year for their Tanzanian co-workers. Furthermore, the expansion of trade between China and Tanzania (and Africa at large) has on average followed familiar patterns where Tanzania’s exports are dominated by natural resources, and its imports are dominated by manufactured commodities produced in China.¹

The specter of North-South relations haunts China-Africa relations because these inequalities and dependencies share family resemblances to the economic relationships which have historically persisted between African economies and the industrial economies of the former

¹ These reflect Tanzania’s trading patterns with foreign countries outside of East Africa more generally, and it should be noted that while the importation of Chinese commodities has increased, consumer goods from India, South Africa and the Middle East remain dominant.(World Trade Organization <http://wits.worldbank.org>)

colonial powers. For example, after pointing out to a Tanzanian friend during a social function that the “Made as Nigeria” *kitenge* cloth on a nearby chair was actually produced in a Chinese factory whose boss I had met, my friend responded that, “people say this is globalization, but I also think this is a kind of imperialism. They are different because it's mixed with socialism.” The concept of globalization was insufficient for him to express the degree to which Chinese commodities had come to dominate even “African” products. But he also had to qualify “imperialism” because of China’s distinctive historical identity as an alternative to capitalism and colonialism, particularly in Tanzania. The perspectives of ordinary Tanzanians regarding the Chinese presence are generally more nuanced than the narrative of Chinese “neo-colonialism” that appears in the more generalized discussions of “China-in-Africa” to be found in the West (Mawdsley 2008; French 2014).

Neo-Colonial Echoes

The narrative of Chinese colonialism in Africa which has appeared in the West is based on tropes which predate the contemporary China-Africa moment. During the late 19th and early 20th century, increased levels of migration from East Asia to European settler colonies contributed to the narrative of an impending “Yellow Peril,” which after the victory of Japan over Russia in 1904, became conspiratorially linked to the specter of a resurgent Asian empire threatening Western civilization (Lyman 2000). After 1949, “Red China” replaced Japan as the geopolitical threat, and the tropes of the Yellow Peril became easily mapped onto the imaginaries of anti-Communism. The first claims regarding an emergent “Chinese empire” in Africa began when China started extending assistance to post-colonial states in the 1960s and 1970s (Achberger 2010). In Tanzania, however, as elsewhere in Africa, Chinese assistance was welcomed, and the Chinese revolution and socialist project itself was praised to be a positive model of anti-colonial liberation and development respectively (Lal 2014; Burgess 2010).

The re-emergence of China-Africa as a “hot topic” in the present moment is, as the historian Jamie Monson points out, premised on “the elephant in the room,” which is race. She paraphrases W.E.B DuBois’s observation that “global crossings of the global color line make for anxious investigations”(Monson 2013). The emergence of Chinese actors and capital in Africa had disturbed a racialized global geography. The development (or rather discovery) of (uneven) horizontal relations in the periphery subverts this naturalized order (Coronil 2012; Ong 1999). European presence in Africa or China (and African and Chinese migration back the other direction) is naturalized and unmarked, whereas Chinese in Africa (or Africans in China) are like “matter out of place” (Douglas 1966), extraordinary developments requiring examination.

The sense of surprise is reflected in the language of “encounter” found in ethnographic and documentary treatments of interactions between Chinese and people in Africa (Snow 1988; Bräutigam 2003; Lee 2009; Francis and Francis 2010; Schmitz 2014; Lampert and Mohan 2014). The concept of “encounter” is based on the historically inaccurate assumption that connections between China and Africa are only a new historical development, but the poetics of radical encounter has nonetheless inflected the emergence of Africa in China studies and the emergence of China in African Studies.² In both cases, the trope of a Chinese “arrival” in Africa portends a radical break with the past.

Arguments for Chinese imperialism and Chinese non-imperialism alike reveal the lack of an appropriate vocabulary for understanding contemporary formations of power and capital around the globe. Instead, both critics and defenders of Chinese presence in Africa frequently resort to incommensurate historical analogies. Howard French (2014) has argued that Chinese migrants to Africa are analogous to European settlers whose growing numbers created the conditions of possibility for intervention by their home governments. Chinese Foreign Minister

² In 1937, the English poet W.H. Auden could even pledge fidelity to his lover “till China and Africa meet”(Auden 1996).

Wang Yi has argued that "[China] absolutely will not take the old path of Western colonists" (2015). Both French and Wang interpret colonialism through the lens of European colonialism, and in turn, overlook an interpretation of "neo-colonialism" as dependencies and inequalities which persist after decolonization.³ The critique of "empire" in the study of China-Africa, however, has narrowly focused on the geopolitics of competition between Western *imperial* interests and an emergent China (Simbao 2012). This has been supported by Chinese intellectuals and officials who frequently attribute critical narratives in "Western" media to a conscious "ulterior motive" to sabotage China-Africa relations (cf. Mo 2016). Sympathetic accounts of Chinese presence in Africa regularly identify this fact, but themselves overlook the critical meaning of the term "neo-colonialism" when they emphasize that China literally has no capabilities or desire to colonize. Intellectuals and observers who take an explicitly critical or defensive stance regarding "China" in Africa therefore both downplay the relevance of "dependency" in relations between Africa and foreign capital when they fixate on terms like "colonialism" (Sautman and Yan 2008; Taylor 2014).

The View from Tanzania

During my fieldwork, Tanzanian interlocutors rarely described Chinese presence with the word "colonialism." Instead, the critique of Sino-Tanzanian friendship was premised, as in Neema's comments above, on the identification of self-interest which is to the detriment of the well-being of ordinary Tanzanians. This includes the self-interest of Chinese actors, but more significantly, the self-interest of Tanzanian leaders (*sw. viongozi*) who my Tanzanian interlocutors often argued made deals with foreign actors which allow these leaders and their wealthy supporters to profit at the expense of ordinary Tanzanians. The critique is premised on the identification of continuities between Western and Chinese investment, and skepticism regarding the language of "friendship,"

³ French does begin to make this argument, but its force is arguably limited by his conclusion that the telos of Chinese investment and migration is a singular Chinese imperial formation in Africa.

and it assigns accountability primarily to how Tanzanian leaders govern foreign capital and migration. For example, when Tanzanian shopkeepers in Kariakoo criticized the presence of Chinese shops, the first actors they held responsible were government leaders. They frequently made the comparison by asking me rhetorically whether the Chinese government allowed Americans, or whether they allowed Tanzanians, to open shops in China. China developed, they argued, because of how the state governed the entry of foreign businesses.⁴

These are critiques which don't always make distinctions between Chinese and Western capital. During the election, there was even a rumor that whereas the Americans and the Chinese were supporting CCM, the Germans were supporting the opposition candidate Edward Lowassa in exchange for future resource concessions. True or not, these geopolitical mappings demonstrate how Tanzanian critiques of the government's relationship to foreign actors don't always map onto the simple East-West dichotomies often found in both Western and Chinese narratives of China in Africa.

Nonetheless, one of the reasons CCM was believed to welcome Chinese migrants was due to the historical friendship described above, a friendship which was disavowed by some as something concerning CCM, but not themselves. As one Kariakoo business man described to me, "the Chinese had friendship long ago with Mwalimu (sw. *urafiki zamaini na mwalimu*), but now they are taking advantage of that friendship to exploit (kukamadamiza) Tanzanians. There is no difference now between the Chinese and Tanzanians in doing business." The meaning of exploitation in this case was that Chinese engaged in the same kind of businesses that Tanzanians did. Americans and Europeans, on the other hand, I would be told, only engaged in "big" business as compared to "small" business.⁵

⁴ And it was not just China. Kenya was also identified on occasion as being a country with stricter restrictions on foreign residents operating shops.

⁵ Tanzanian laws, in fact, don't explicitly restrict wholesale or even retail trading by foreign residents, but as some people argued, it was difficult to count shopkeepers as "investors."

The fascinating thing about the claims my Tanzanian interlocutors in Kariakoo made about Chinese doing only “small business” was that the kinds of investment the Chinese and Tanzanian states advertised, and which have received the greatest attention in regional narratives of China-Africa relations, are large-scale infrastructure and construction projects. In Tanzania, large projects have included a natural gas pipeline from Mtwara to Dar es Salaam and a planned port in Bagamoyo (Anthony 2013). In addition, the urban skyline of Dar es Salaam is dominated by an assortment of office complexes being constructed by Chinese state-owned firms. Chinese investments in infrastructure and construction are not, as sometimes claimed by commentators outside of Africa, directly related to the infrastructure needed for resource extraction, but are rather about Chinese firms being subsidized (often by the Chinese government) to seek new markets abroad (Brautigam 2009). This is an important distinction because African commentators have frequently argued that Chinese investments are more diverse (and therefore beneficial) than Western investments concentrated in resources and extractive industries (2009:279). Building roads and infrastructure without the conditionality and bureaucracy associated with the West is often described as laying the kinds of infrastructure which will allow African states to move past the post-colonial dependencies still holding it back. It is on this basis that African intellectuals like Achille Mbembe have sometimes provoked audiences in Europe or the United States by refuting the claim of Chinese colonialism, or arguing that, if it is “colonialism,” it is at least a better one (Mbembe in Ross 2015). A government official, for example, described to me with great confidence that the construction of a port in Bagamoyo, funded by capital from Hong Kong and Oman, and supported by the Chinese government, would transform the region into the next Dubai (or Shanghai, or Guangzhou in news editorials I also read on the project).

The absence of these projects in the narratives of my interlocutors in Kariakoo was often striking. When I brought up Chinese factories I had visited, I would be told they were not really factories, but warehouses for imported goods posing as factories. These claims are significant, however, because they index several important facts. The first is that despite the optimism about

Chinese investment in infrastructure and industry, natural resources continue to dominate exports and industrial products continue to dominate imports. China, like the other “emerging powers” have benefited from globalization, and despite claims that these rising states present an alternative to neoliberalism, what they have presented in practice have actually been “minor adjustments” in global governance to incorporate greater representation of the global South (Taylor 2014). This is distinct from proposals for a “New Economic Order” such as those once proposed by Julius Nyerere (Nyerere 2011). Discourses which distinguish South-South economic transactions from North-South economic transactions overlook the fact that both are driven by similar logics of capital expansion. As Ayers argues, “the ‘new scramble for Africa’ is to be understood more adequately within global politico-economic processes of capitalist accumulation which reproduce ‘Africa’s inveterate and deleterious terms of (mal)integration within the global political economy – terms which continue to be characterised by ‘external dominance and socially-damaging and extraverted forms of accumulation’ (Bracking and Harrison 2003:9; Amin 2002)” (Ayers 2013). Ordinary Tanzanians will speak positively of road construction and infrastructure when asked, but it is the ubiquity of Chinese commodities which is the most immediate experience of Chinese presence. These are more immediate than projects like the Bagamoyo port which, although originally slated for groundbreaking in late 2014, was subsequently delayed, and as of 2017, has yet to begin.

Chinese migrants who engage in wholesale trading fall outside the purview of such projects, although theories sometimes emerge that their presence in Tanzania (and elsewhere in Africa) is part of a deliberate strategy. For example, a North African intellectual described to me over coffee in Kariakoo, for example, that he had written on population transfer as part of larger Chinese project to deal with social tensions in order to implement political reform. Tanzanian shopkeepers also frequently claimed that their Chinese competitors unfairly received subsidies and loans from the Chinese state for their operations. Howard French (2014) suggests there is a

quid pro quo to, if not allow Chinese migration, than be liberal in enforcement. My own fieldwork, however, leads me to greatly doubt these assumptions. The Chinese wholesalers I worked with were self-funded, and often unable and/or unwilling to seek Chinese state funds established for Chinese industrialists. Furthermore, Chinese elites in the community occasionally echoed my Tanzanian interlocutors in arguing that Chinese should not engage in trade.

Empire/Anti-Empire in the Details

My approach in this dissertation is different from the more technocratic “mythbusting” approaches which have emerged as the disciplinary identity of China-Africa studies (Hirono and Suzuki 2014). These are focused primarily on the compilation of “correct” data regarding levels of aid, investment, and migration.⁶ (cf. Brautigam 2009). The benefit of this approach has been to qualify the more hyperbolic data about such things as levels of aid, investment, and migration, which has allowed the Chinese presence to be better contextualized vis a vis other forms of aid, investment, and migration. The problem with this approach is that in identifying “empire” and “colonialism” as insufficiently nuanced categories, many China-Africa scholars instead embrace a hyper-empirical, hyper-positivist stance which depoliticizes aid and investment in terms of policy formulation and implementation. General surveys have consistently treated the Chinese presence in terms of either/or binaries: “harm or help,” “colonialism or cooperation;” and Chinese migrants as “imperialists or agents of change” (Alden, Large, and Soares de Oliveira 2008; Keenan 2009; Kohnert 2010; Marks 2011; Simbao 2012; Mohan et al. 2014). The narratives are premised on the need to categorize the Chinese presence as either contributing to “development,” broadly conceived, or reproducing “imperialism,” usually shorthand for extractive economic relationships which do not contribute to development. The binary framework continues to inform

⁶ The scholarship of Deborah Brautigam is perhaps representative of this paradigm. Through such works as *The Dragon’s Gift* (2009), *Will Africa Feed China* (2015), and her tellingly titled blog, “China in Africa: The Real Story,” she has systematically challenged claims and narratives which circulate in both media scholarship.

most policy-oriented, and political science approaches to the topic. The result has been the production of dozens of similar position papers which posit a both/and approach to China in Africa. The papers provide evidence of areas where China “helps,” then provides evidence of areas where China can harm, and then concludes that the difference in outcomes depends on the “pro-active” policies of African state elites. These studies can be argued to be “de-politicizing” (Ferguson 1990) because they obscure the larger economic interdependencies and the political economy of how the benefits and harms of Chinese investment are distributed. The specter of “empire” haunts the field, as a phantom, an object which is either implied, or repetitively attacked as inadequate. The concept of empire is an absent presence; its erasure always bringing attention to its existence. Because the use of such terms would mark scholars or individuals as “interested” political actors on a geopolitical terrain, there has been a constraint on critical approaches.⁷

In this dissertation, I attempt to avoid the limitations which the either-or language of “empire/anti-empire” poses for the understanding of Chinese-Tanzanian relationships, while at the same time recognizing that “empire/anti-empire” are relevant to the transnational production of knowledge about China-Africa relation as evaluative categories premised on political-moral evaluations regarding dependency and inequality. When Chinese and Tanzanian interlocutors invoke concepts like “colonialism,” these are not analytical conclusions, but rather points of reference for interpreting the terms of transnational relationships. The policies governing the living standards of Chinese engineers during the construction of TAZARA, for example, were explicitly designed to eschew colonialism as privilege (Monson 2009). The privileged lifestyles of some Chinese expatriates today in turn invited comparisons to the privileged lifestyles of European expatriates. The specters of empire emerge in relationships where Chinese investors and employers encounter Tanzanian customers and laborers, everyday practices of segregation

⁷ Both critics and defenders of China have accepted the ideological assumption of “development” as future-oriented transformation and are often more similar than they may first appear.

justified on the basis of racialized concepts of security, and everyday discourses of discontent premised on a set of hierarchical thinking which categorizes locals lower on a civilizational hierarchy. At the same time, the experiences of Chinese expatriates engaging in the wholesale trade and facing frequent inspections by government officials more closely resembles “middlemen minorities” who are characterized by economic without political power (Bonacich 1973). My approach is therefore to look at the empire/anti-empire/non-empire axis “in the details” (Lutz 2006), and the way I do this is by starting with the mutualities of interpersonal interactions.

The Mutualities of Sino-Tanzanian Relationships

My discussion of mutuality begins from the perspective of interpersonal connections among Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians, and the negotiation of everyday ethics. The definition of mutuality that I use in this dissertation are existential interconnections and dependencies between social actors. My use of the qualifier, “existential,” is to convey the idea that the agency of social actors mutually determine each other’s conditions of possibility, and that this is true whether or not these mutualities are recognized as social relationships.

Theories of Mutuality

My use of mutuality draws on its recent usages in anthropology as a challenge to methodological individualism, but I also use it in the more expansive sense of mutual interdependencies. My use of mutuality draws on a longstanding ethnographic insight and trope in anthropological theory that personhood is constituted by one’s social relationships (Strathern 1988). It is a theoretical and methodological stance conventionally understood to be opposed to “methodological individualism,” exemplified by the “economistic” model of the agent making decisions, including decisions about exchanges with other agents. The development of anthropological theory from Chinese and African contexts have lent support to this stance because of the degree to which what Zhao Tingyang (2011) calls “methodological relationalism” is elaborated in Asian and African

conceptions and practices of the social. These have also lent support to the imaginings of alternative economic and political moralities in the context of anti-imperial and South-South movements.

My use of mutuality in this dissertation, however, is a bit more critical. My use of the term, mutuality, is not intended to be a synonym for a moralized relationality as opposed to self-interest, but rather the more expansive concept of mutual constitution and dependency. I draw on some aspects of how other anthropologists have recently used “mutuality,” but I also depart in other aspects. Gudeman defines mutuality as “connection to others, while self-interest means turning inward to personal ends and calculating one's relations. Mutuality is sociability expressed by sharing and is linked to empathy or the ability to see one self in the place of others. The distinction between self-interest and mutuality is typified by the difference between calculated behavior in markets and making material life through social relationships” (2016:12). Gudeman’s definition of mutuality emphasizes connections, sociability, sharing, empathy, and consideration. Gudeman’s definition of self-interest, however, implies that “calculated behavior” reduces connections, sociability and the related features of mutuality when in fact “making material life” this way still requires social relationships. Gudeman contrasts “self-interest” and “mutuality” as the core tension of social economic life everywhere, but I prefer in this dissertation to blur the distinction between observable interconnections and differing moral evaluations of these interconnections. The nineteenth century European sociology of Marx, Simmel, and Durkheim all emphasized the preeminently social features of individualization, self-interest, and calculation. As Marx argued about capitalism, “the seeming mutual independence of the individuals is supplemented by a system of general and mutual dependence...” (1912:121).

The mutual dependencies between Chinese expatriates and Tanzanians are relevant because they are political economic contexts which precede the development of individual relations. Tarde’s concept of “mutual possession” expresses the idea that individuals “possess,” or

belong to each other in ways that may exceed their own knowledge (Candea 2010:125). Chinese expatriates “belong” to Tanzanians in the sense they fill particular roles as investors, suppliers, employers, wealthy friends, or guests who should act particular ways; and ordinary Tanzanians “belong” to Chinese expatriates in the sense of being customers, employees, friends, and hosts who should act a particular way. These “mutual possessions” precede relationships and shape expectations of what these relationships should be.

My use of mutuality is intended to encompass both relationality and these broader interconnections, including competition. Competition is mutual in the sense that the agency of competitors mutually constitutes the conditions of possibility for each other’s accumulation. In Chinese-Tanzanian interactions, these conditions both preclude and necessitate the formation of social relationships. In placing mutuality before relationality, I examine Chinese-Tanzanian relationships from the starting point of their interdependencies rather than from prior individual interests. The benefit of this perspective is to highlight the interdependencies and conditions (such as unequal capital) which precede the agency of individual actors to cultivate relationships. The benefit is also to avoid the dichotomies of conviviality and conflict which often emerge in describing relations between migrants and host societies. As I hope to argue, the relationships which develop from these mutualities follow Mauss’s (1925) insight that exchange relationships are both the basis of social-moral orders, and also sites of calculation and antagonism; a total system of economic, political, social, emotional, and ethical exchanges, and also sites of unevenness and exploitation (Josephides 1985). As Ferguson argues, "mutuality is not simply altruism, cooperation, or generosity-and not just egotistic advantage seeking either. As Mauss repeatedly insisted, mutualities normally involve antagonism and generosity at the same time. And such forms of sociality involve people, inexorably, in moral obligations of care, obligation, generosity, and obligation and various forms of interested exchange" (2015:133).

Mutualities and Sino-Tanzanian Inequality

The study of mutualities in recent ethnographies have focused on what Ferguson describes as the “mutualities of poverty” in the global South. My dissertation extends the insight in that literature that it can be “contingent materiality,” rather than abstract social-moral norms, which afford the emergence of the obligation to assist others. In Tanzania, as in other parts of Africa, contingent materiality turns on the question of who can provide and who needs provision. Englund (2008) calls these “existential obligations” to distinguish them from the idea of “moral obligations” predetermining who is expected to be obligated to whom. For example, mid-twentieth century anthropologists of southern Africa observed in turn that “materiality could make kinship out of virtually any transaction” (2008:43) in the sense that the extension of kin-like relations are affected through transactions themselves. It is from this perspective that I examine interactions among and between Chinese expatriates and Tanzanians from the perspective of their “contingent materialities.” My argument is that if, following the interpersonal analogy, China and Tanzania are “friends,” and then the “contingent materiality” of the relationship is that one of these friends has more cash on hand than the other.

It is from this perspective as well that trade between China and Tanzania can be appreciated as a form of social distribution in addition to its character as an economic activity. This is particularly true in the area of economic activity I pay the closest attention to in the dissertation, the import, wholesaling, and retailing of Chinese commodities. Here, a wide range of actors, “excluded from any significant role in the system of production, may often be found engaged in tasks whose fundamental purpose is not to produce goods at all but to engineer distributions of goods produced elsewhere by accessing or making claims on the resources of others” (Ferguson 2015:90). Tanzanian traders, from wholesalers who travel to Guangzhou, to *Wamachinga* (petty traders) who purchase from Chinese wholesale shops in Kariakoo to sell to passersbys, participate in what Ferguson describes as the “labor of distribution.” Ferguson defines

this social labor in broad terms which include even “begging, theft, [and] seeking help from relatives or lovers.” From this vantage point, the officials who seek “tips” from Chinese importers, or the porters/employees who steal a little of the stock also participate in the social distribution of wealth. Chinese wholesalers have closer relationships than most Tanzanian traders, to the system of production, either because they own factories, or because represent manufacturers, but these are differences of degree, and by opening shops in Tanzania, they compete directly with Tanzanians for a share of the wealth. Competition within the Chinese community for dominance of the market can likewise be understood as a social labor of distribution. Although I may be stretching the definition of distribution, this is warranted by the fact different Chinese and Tanzanian actors make different claims about who is a beneficiary to whom in Chinese-Tanzanian economic relationships. Are Chinese wholesalers benefactors who provide Tanzanian consumers inexpensive goods, or are Tanzanian consumers in fact benefactors who provide Chinese livelihoods they might not otherwise have?

The ethics and politics of Chinese-Tanzanian relationships therefore turn on ethical considerations of how to relate to each other in the context of their particular mutualities. Chinese expatriates and Tanzanians both evaluate these relationships in terms of their respective understandings of relational ethics. Although both Chinese and Tanzanian interlocutors evaluate moral personhood on the basis of how an individual relates to other individuals, they often use different criteria which in turn can lead to frictions which make some Chinese and Tanzanians suspicious that the other lacks the basic capacities for human relationships. These frictions turn most prominently on issues of reciprocity and sympathy. For example, Chinese expatriates frequently claim that Tanzanians lack a sense of gratitude (ch. 感恩) and reciprocity, instead attributing these characteristics to an essential Chinese-ness. Tanzanians who work for Chinese bosses in turn argue the latter lack an understanding of Tanzanian conditions and their own social/economic circumstances, and instead attribute to Tanzanians the virtues of understanding,

sympathy, and patience. These understandings partially turn on different understandings of the social (i.e. the particularity of social ties versus comparatively more generalized obligations), but I argue that cultural difference is insufficient for appreciating the mutualities between Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians as economic actors with often unequal resources in terms of capital and wealth encountering each other in a liminal marketplace situation. This is evident in how the expectations of relational ethics are constantly being betrayed not just between Chinese and Tanzanians, but also within the Chinese community and among ordinary Tanzanians a well.

Competition and inequality are mutualities which contribute to the shaping of relationships. The ethical dilemma these conditions pose concerns who is to be included, and who is to be excluded, from the circulation of material wealth (wages, assistance, credit), emotion (affection, sympathy, greeting, jokes), and discourse (stories). These are questions which concern both Chinese and Tanzanians vis-à-vis each other. In general, ordinary Tanzanians are more actively inclusive of Chinese expatriates, although particular economic actors seek to establish firm boundaries for the kind of economic activities Chinese should be allowed to engage in. Chinese expatriates, on the other hand, more generally seek to maintain boundaries vis-à-vis Tanzanians, although they must pursue relationships in order to establish themselves within the economy. The distinction between “insiders” and “outsiders” are not fixed, but shift according to circumstance, resembling the “trader’s dilemma” where economic actors must integrate just enough to do business, but not enough where rising social obligations would lower their own profits (Evers and Schrader 1994). Discourses and practices of segregation, much of which is racialized, indicate a particular mode of social-economic relationships rather than a cultural failure to “integrate” because these involve not the absence of relationships, but rather a particular mode of governing mutualities. The idea that Chinese and Tanzanians have “economic” but not “social” ties is an imperfect description insofar that, especially in Tanzania, social relationships are needed to facilitate economic exchanges, and in turn, the sharing and exchange of material

resources (“economic”) are a key mode through which social relationships are enacted and morally evaluated.

The Mutualities of Empire/Anti-Empire

It is from this perspective that my dissertation then looks back at the concept of “empire/anti-empire” in terms of how ordinary actors evaluate global mutualities and relationships in ethical terms. The evaluation of interpersonal dynamics between Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians, I argue, is closely linked to the evaluation of the China-Tanzania relationship as an inter-national relationship. The China-Tanzania relationship developed in the 1960s because of the mutuality of their “self-interest” in the context of decolonization. For Tanzania, the government of China provided financial and technical support for constructing TAZARA at the opportune time after the World Bank rejected funding. For China, the construction of TAZARA was part of a broader strategy to cultivate relationships with newly independent African states, whose diplomatic support China needed against both its isolation in the United Nations by the United States, as well as by the Soviet Union. Tanzanian diplomats would in fact go on to play a significant role in helping the People’s Republic of China take the Security Council seat from the Republic of China (Taiwan) in 1971. These mutualities, combined with a shared (although not entirely commensurate) horizon of socialist practice, were the conditions of possibility for a “friendship.”

Chinese and Tanzanian elites describe contemporary Chinese investments in Tanzania in a similar language of “win-win” cooperation. From the perspective of a Chinese relational ethics, these may be imagined to be an instantiation of what the Chinese political philosopher Zhao Tingyang, referring directly to international relations theory, argues to be a non-zero sum logic of relationality, that “X and Y share their fortune to such an extent that X benefits if Y also benefits, and loses if Y loses. X attains fulfillment if Y obtains fulfillment, to such an extent that the promotion of Y’s fulfillment becomes X’s dominating strategy, so as to promote his own

fulfillment” (2009:15). From a broader perspective, however, this logic is little different from the neoliberal discourse of foreign investment as a mutually beneficial relationship. Much Chinese investment in infrastructure, for example, has been funded by Chinese state-owned banks and contracted to state-owned firms, or loans for infrastructure investments in resource development have been repayable in the resources themselves. These practices have in fact replicated the model followed by Japanese investment and aid in China during the 1980s (Brautigam 2009). The model is significant because it is not premised on the concept of the selfless gift in foreign aid; a concept which has itself been critiqued for obscuring the neo-colonial moral hierarchies which it reproduces (Hattori 2003; Kapoor 2008). Nonetheless, as I demonstrate in the chapters which follow, ordinary Chinese frequently see these investments as gifts which China has given to Africa, and which in turn create a particular set of implicit expectations about how they should be treated as benefactors and guests. When their experiences with a diverse set of Tanzanian interlocutors fall short of these expectations, ordinary Chinese discontent is framed in explicitly moral terms of “ingratitude.” Tanzanian petty traders often see Chinese wholesalers as those whose gains in Tanzania have contributed to their own gains while Tanzanian wholesalers, on the other hand, see Chinese competitors as those whose gains equal their own losses. For them, Sino-Tanzanian Friendship is something between “Mwalimu and the Chinese,” between “leaders” and China, but not for them.

My dissertation works between the concepts of empire/anti-empire and mutuality in order to bring together two forms of scale-shifting in ethnography. The first is the study of general in the particular (empire/anti-empire in the details), and the second is the study of the particular in the general (the extension of interpersonal moral vocabularies to the interpretation of the global). The ethnography bridges the fields of “political anthropology” and “moral anthropology” by

considering them both as questions of how to relate, at multiple scales.⁸ The chapters below consider situations which are generative of debates among Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians alike about the comparative privileges, vulnerabilities, obligations, agency, and accountabilities that Chinese migrants have vis-à-vis ordinary Tanzanians. The privileges and vulnerabilities I refer to include both political rights (i.e. citizenship/subjectivity vis-à-vis the state) and economic circumstances (access to capital and the potential for transnational mobility). The obligations I refer to concern moral expectations regarding the self and other (i.e. reciprocity, assistance, gratitude, and understanding). The meaning of agency in these discussions draw on the premise that given the mutuality of Chinese and Tanzanian actors and the broader China-Tanzania relationship, determining the relative degrees of agency (and therefore responsibility) different actors have for determining beneficial and harmful outcomes for others is itself the work of politics and ethical reflection. The stories I provide involve situations which reveal the interdependence of actors; how their position in the world, their trajectories, projects, and aspirations are shaped in part by the agency of others. Beginning with the premise of mutuality, my dissertation avoids positing a dichotomy of incidents of inter-cultural conflict alongside incidents of inter-cultural cooperation/solidarity. Instead, I begin with the fact Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians need each other in order to conduct business.

A relational perspective in turn also allows for a more nuanced discussion of agency in Africa-China relations. The various frictions and tensions of China-African interconnections often circle on varying attributions of responsibility, ethical responsibility, which depend in turn on particular assumptions about agency, not simply *who* has agency, but rather which forms of

⁸ My project might be taken as an ethnographic case of what Zhao Tingyang calls “Ethical-Political Transposition” According to Zhao, the principle is based on the extension of the ethical principles assumed to adhere within the human family upwards to the state, and the extension of the principles of state governance downwards to the family (2009). The Tanzanian ideology of *ujamaa* likewise connected the discourse of politics to the discourse of ethics (Scotton 1965). My intention, however, is a bit more critical, in that I neither intend to replace politics with ethics nor to reduce politics to “governance,” but to instead use the principle of transposition to bring questions of power and inequality back into dialogue with the anthropology of ordinary ethics.

individual agency are responsible for the production of particular outcomes. In a recent piece, Kockelman and Enfield (2017) describe the concept of “distributed agency,” in which particular actions are the product of multiple actors. These become interesting questions in a context of *structural* inequalities.

The Whiteness of Fieldwork and the Politics of Ethnographic Knowledge Production

A dissertation about China-Africa is itself part of the phenomenon that it describes. This is because the concept of “China-Africa” is one which exceeds the sum of its individual parts. Navigating the emerging academic field of China-Africa relations, which has involved attending conferences and workshops, and following online discussions, has itself been instructive in revealing of the kinds of politics and obligations involved. In my dissertation, I consider the sites of academic discourse in dialogical relation to discourse encountered during my ethnographic fieldwork.

The politics and ethics of knowledge production is an additional theme which is explored across the dissertation. This is necessary because of the degree to which the topic of “China-Africa” itself is contingent on a particular historical moment, having mobilized research communities with increasingly self-referential identities and agendas not well captured in terms of “Development studies,” “Migration studies,” “African studies,” or “Chinese studies.” Knowledge production in this dissertation refers to both the everyday production of knowledge about “China-Africa” among ordinary Chinese and Tanzanians, and the academic production of knowledge among academic practitioners. By the everyday production of knowledge, I mean the relationship between everyday social experiences and relationships, and the generation and circulation of discourses about these experiences and relationships. As described above, these involve how Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians interpret and negotiate privileges, vulnerabilities, obligations, agency, and accountability in their mutualities and relationships. These everyday forms of knowledge production include conversations with visitors doing

research. In addition to my own experiences as an ethnographer, I frequently encountered other people conducting research while in the field. These included Chinese anthropologists, sociologists, economists, and documentary film makers whose research topics superficially resembled my own. Other Chinese expatriates also occasionally informed me of having been interviewed by other researchers from Europe or North America, and some of them were familiar with the academic literature on the topic. Others had watched Western documentaries about Chinese in Africa with alarmist titles and themes like the BBC's *The Chinese Are Coming* (2011), and I was sometimes warned to be more "objective" than these documentaries. These interconnections make it difficult to distinguish whom I should consider as "research subjects" and whom I should consider as "research colleagues," and to determine where the "field" ends. My use of the now conventional appellation, interlocutor, to describe the Chinese and Tanzanians with whom I have spent much time, should be taken in its literal definition as discourse interlocutor because so much of the material that I present here is the product of the conversational (stories, questions, rumors, discontents) "surface of things" (Keane 2010) in Chinese-Tanzanian interactions. I consider my "fieldwork" to have started not just in Dar es Salaam, but also in Uganda (which I first visited before Tanzania), and also in conference meetings and on research listservs where I first became acquainted with the sometime fraught politics of knowledge production among academics from China, Africa, Europe, and North America.

My fieldwork in Tanzania, for example, began with the kind of hyperbole which is common in narratives of China-Africa relations. I had been planning a dissertation project in Taiwan when Mohammad Yunus Rafiq, then also a student in my department at Brown began telling me stories about the Chinese in Tanzania. I had known the stories of the TAZARA railway, but what Yunus Rafiq was telling me was different. "Chinese have become part of Tanzanian ways of being," he argued, citing older Tanzanian men he would see on the street

practicing martial arts.⁹ When Yunus was younger, he and his friends collected glossy magazines distributed by the Chinese embassy. His grandfather had once visited Beijing on an international delegation and exchanged words with Mao Zedong on the value of religion. Nowadays, Yunus added, the Chinese in Tanzania were doing everything, and there were even stories (rumors as I would come to suspect) of Chinese selling peanuts, and cassava.

My interest in Tanzania, and my initial contacts when doing research there thus began with such stories. In addition to stories, there was enthusiasm. The faculty in my department working on Africa greeted my research with enthusiasm, but from one adviser, I would also hear a caution, being neither China nor Africa, how would I fit into the hiring slots of universities. I identify these professional considerations, often hidden in even the “reflective” sections of ethnographies, because they demonstrate something important about China-Africa studies; the novelty of the topic which generates stories, hyperbole, and enthusiasm on the one hand; and on the other, the trouble with placing such a field-site into traditional categories. National and area studies continue to define the sociology and organization of anthropology despite several decades of entreaties to think beyond regional divisions. I mention this in order to illustrate a tendency which works at multiple levels in my experience, from the political economy of the academic job market to the everyday practices of Chinese and Tanzanians: segregation in interconnection.

While in Tanzania, I had to navigate such segregation because I was a double outsider. I could claim neither Chinese-ness nor African-ness in establishing rapport, but I was also a white male researcher with an American passport, which helped me established rapport in other ways. This revealed another dimension of the China-Africa relationship which often goes unremarked upon in much scholarship, the absent presence of an unmarked “white” observer.

My beginning actions in fieldwork involved exploring the Kariakoo wholesale market (which I describe in greater detail in Chapter Two) and introducing myself to the Chinese

⁹ The cultural history of the Asian martial arts in Tanzania is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

shopkeepers working there. The experience taught me that there was a significant difference in friction between meeting and talking to Tanzanians than meeting and talking to Chinese. Despite the fact I had studied Chinese for many more years than I had studied Swahili, in the beginning, it was generally easier to start conversations with Tanzanians than it was with Chinese. In moving through urban space, I was greeted by a wide variety of Tanzanian individuals with greetings like “*rafiki*” (sw. friend) and “*mzungu*,” (sw. white foreigner) and in many cases, these were more than greetings, but specific requests for me to stop and chat, such as when individuals would tell me to “*njoo!*” (sw. come here). In Chapter Three, I describe Tanzanian greetings and Chinese responses in greater detail, but the inclusion of a chapter on the topic is not arbitrary, but a product of how I experienced my initial fieldwork.

In contrast, introducing myself to Chinese shopkeepers was more difficult. Even though people would respond, there was often a distinctive guardedness. This varied primarily by age. A few older Chinese would offer only a short responses and continue typing on their smartphones. Younger Chinese in my age vicinity or lower were curious enough about how I learned Chinese to provide an opening for a conversation. Placed against Tanzanians, however, I sometimes did not make it far enough into the shop before I was stopped by the Tanzanians working there and found myself in an extended conversation with them.

The fact that Tanzanians and Chinese engaged in parallel discussions in the same shop demonstrates the way social spaces worked in Kariakoo. The public sphere in Kariakoo centered on the street, but entered into the shops such that in the beginning it was hard to know where shops began and where shops ended, and whether the people sitting in them were, customers, employees, or friends. People regularly moved in and out. The Chinese who work in shops on the other hand, usually stayed behind the counter, communicating with friends and customers on their phones. As time progressed, I found a few shops where it was possible to have a conversation that included Tanzanians and Chinese together, but these generally unfolded in English. In other cases, there were shops where I regularly spoke with Tanzanians, but not with the Chinese, and

other shops where I spoke with the Chinese there, but not with the Tanzanians. With time, however, simply being in a place was enough to eventually invite bystanders to enter into conversations.

In both cases, however, a lubricant which allowed me to open conversations with interlocutors was what I concluded to be white privilege. As an ethnographer with a generally introverted personality, I have long been aware of the extent to which successful conversations have been driven by the enthusiasm of my interlocutors, research or not. In the context of my research, the privilege of identification as American provided me an unearned charisma subsidy. I experienced this most conspicuously among Tanzanian interlocutors. In Chapter Three, I describe how certain categories of foreigners like myself were the object of public greetings, and that these greetings sometimes interpellated foreigners as privileged actors. These were elaborated in conversations I had where people who I had just met stated their interest in becoming my friend because they “liked *wazungu*.” These might be accompanied by extended commentary comparing the United States favorably with Tanzania or Africa, which were then described by new friends as being “poor” or “dirty.”

In those situations where Chinese interlocutors showed enthusiasm in talking with me as well, however, they would say similar things, comparing the United States favorably as a “developed” country compared to Tanzania. Their preferred topics in turn were almost invariably questions about life in the United States, particularly those concerning the cost of living there and the requirements for getting a visa. For some Chinese interlocutors, I was the first “foreigner” (外国人) they had met. When I asked what they meant by “foreigner,” considering they had been living in Tanzania, they clarified that they meant Euro-Americans. One particular interlocutor took great interest in me when I met him, but during a public event we attended, I witnessed him coldly rebuff attempts by a Tanzanian student to befriend him.

These instances are important for several reasons. They not only describe how I was able to get access, but they also cast a spotlight on how Chinese-African interactions cannot be divorced from discussions of white supremacy. Being male provided another identity which allowed for building connections across ethno-racial lines. For example, this was one way that I found my roommate, and also found potential drinking partners. One Chinese investor, for example, wanted to go to the bar with me because he thought I would be more effective at introducing him to Tanzanian women. In this case, my gender overlapped with his own assumptions about race and sexual charisma.

I conducted the majority of my fieldwork in Kariakoo. My style of fieldwork can be best be described as “doing rounds,” visiting friends and acquaintances each day in different shops and spending anywhere from a few hours to the whole day with them until returning to my hotel in the evening, where I might play Mahjong with guests in the front or write fieldnotes in my room. My daily patterns resembled those of my Chinese informants in many ways, particularly those who visited customers around the marketplace day to day. When my visits to shops involved conversations, my interlocutors themselves often drove the topics of these conversations. I rarely conducted formal structured interviews, but regularly kept questions in mind, which I would answer at the appropriate time. When interlocutors were busy, I would sit quietly in the shop and observe interactions.

My visits were not always in shops, but sometimes on street corners. For example, I often spent time on a street corner at the center of Kariakoo where shoe shops were concentrated. This was an area with the heaviest concentration of Chinese shops, and a regular presence of Tanzanian traders. I was helped by several Tanzanian interlocutors who enjoyed explaining how business worked in Kariakoo in patient detail. Over time, I added other *maskani* (sw. street corners) to my rounds; places where I would drink coffee and listen to people debate politics and help me understand the context.

As my research progressed, I also began to move around elsewhere in city to visit other businesses. These diversions from Kariakoo involved short-term projects such as working in a Chinese supermarket and providing English lessons to Chinese employees working in a different firm. My engagements with people ranged from a few days to more extended cooperation. The people who I accompanied were often engaged in particular projects or trying to face particular challenges.

There were advantages and disadvantages to this scattershot opportunistic approach. The main disadvantage was that in frequently moving around and avoiding intimate embeddedness in any one particular site, I was limited in my ability to follow all aspects of particular stories or to get all sides of any one particular social situation. Full of fragments, there is no way for me to systematically compare them. However, the advantage of this opportunistic approach was that even while focusing primarily on Kariakoo, I got to meet a wide enough variety of people in order to put Kariakoo in context.

Another advantage of moving around was the ability to see how people linked to each other. As I moved through space, I discovered various networks and interconnections. But more significantly for my dissertation, working with a wide variety of actors allowed me to see how discourses and practices linked together. The arguments I make in this dissertation about Chinese or Tanzanian discourses are based on the concordance of ideas and ways of talking between diverse actors. When I moved from Chinese interlocutors in Kariakoo to more formal interviews with elites in the Chinese community, for example, I was surprised by the consistency of their descriptions of the challenges of doing business in Tanzania. My argument is not statistical, however, but rather how different ideas are dialogically related to each other. For example, one particular actor might articulate a concept in a manner no other actor did, but there would be elements of this articulation which intersected with statements made by other interlocutors. This is especially true with regards to issues of race, as I describe in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Intertextuality and dialogism are implicit in ethnography, but obviously constrained by the actual networks an ethnographer develops.

In these interactions, I was particularly struck by the concordance of particular complaints and/or ways of speaking, even between Chinese and Tanzanian interlocutors who did not know each other. These are significant because they contribute to my argument that in many areas, Chinese migrants and Tanzanians interlocutors share a common horizon of challenges and moral evaluation.

An interesting dynamic which emerged in the course of study is the degree to which the “academic field” intersected with the field-site. While anthropologists have already challenged the conceptual divisions between the “fieldsite” and “home,” the nature of China-Africa as a “hot topic” folded the academic field itself back into the physical field. When talking with shopkeepers or the head of associations, I would often be told I was not the first to interview them. During my fieldwork, I also encountered other researchers, including Chinese researchers. During my fieldwork, I also met Chinese individuals who themselves thought about getting degrees in African studies, and to whom I ended up providing career advice regarding graduate school.

The nature of how I conducted fieldwork informs my approach to writing up. The material I present in this dissertation moves rapidly between people and contexts. Part of the reason for this is the way I approach the argument. But another justification is the importance of protecting confidentiality. In the context of the geopolitics of knowledge production, Western writing on Chinese in Africa has often been problematic, prone to narratives of neo-colonialism. Chinese interlocutors are aware of this and in talking to me, some were direct in warning me not to produce materials in the vein of BBC documentaries like *The Chinese are Coming!* (BBC 2011). Chinese interlocutors talked freely about the challenges of doing business in Tanzania, but those with businesses did not want to be identified or quoted. I became experienced with the politics of knowledge when following an interview, I was talking with a mutual acquaintance of

the interviewee about some of the topics of the interview. They were issues everyone spoke about, but it was somehow reported to the man that I had been “going around telling people he was saying bad things about Tanzania.” Everyone might agree with these things, but it was dangerous for him and his name to be associated with this kind of speech. It is because of these politics of speech that I often go to great length to avoid details and elaboration, preferring instead to bring diverse contacts and individuals together as a dialogue. Where I can, I move between this dialogical space and particular contextual situations.

This dissertation not an ethnography of academic knowledge, but an ethnography about Chinese-Tanzanian interactions would not be complete without acknowledging its presence in the field. Throughout my dissertation, I therefore maintain a dialogical relationship to this literature through frequent “sideways glances” to its preoccupations and questions (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). Taken alongside the everyday production of knowledge among Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians, I make the argument that critiques of the Africa-China relationship, including the dichotomous characterizations of these relationships as “empire” or “anti-empire” are fundamentally ethical-political critiques of the proper mode of relations to be pursued between unequally situated people in the global division of labor. My dissertation is therefore not just a critical response to narratives of Chinese empire, and the similarly unsatisfying debunking of “empire” within China-Africa studies, but also a challenge to critical thinking about empire and global relationships more broadly.

Summary of Chapters

Each chapter describes a site of friction which is generative of debate among Chinese and Tanzanians about hierarchies, relationships, and ethical responsibility. In Chapter One, I begin by situating Chinese-Tanzanian relations into a long *durée* history of transregional connections in order to trace the emergence of “Sino-Tanzanian Friendship” as a particular mode for governing transnational mutualities and relations in a post-imperial moment.

In Chapter Two, I describe how Tanzanian and Chinese actors have mutually facilitated the importation and distribution of Chinese commodities in the region, and demonstrate how this transformed trading hierarchies by enabling the socioeconomic mobility of some actors while limiting that of others.

In Chapter Three, through an analysis of public greetings and joking practices, I extend this to how competition and inequality between Chinese entrepreneurs and ordinary Tanzanians pose dilemmas regarding the terms of material and emotional reciprocity.

In Chapter Four, I examine the everyday production of racial discourse among Chinese expatriates about Tanzanians, examining how tropes of “blackness” mediate conceptualizations of trust, ethics, and global hierarchies.

In Chapter Five, I examine how Chinese migrant entrepreneurs manage everyday encounters with street-level bureaucrats which involves requests for “tips.” These encounters problematize Chinese as either/both privileged or vulnerable subjects, and in turn raises ethical discourse about the responsibilities of Chinese citizenship.

Drawing on long *durée* histories of Chinese-Tanzanian connections, the semiotics of social interaction, and the role of ordinary ethical and racial evaluation in everyday discourse, I recast specters and claims about “empire/non-empire” in Africa-China relations through the lens of how ordinary actors negotiate the interpersonal ethics of global inequality. The argument of this dissertation is that critiques of the Africa-China relationship, including the dichotomous characterizations of these relationships as “empire” or “anti-empire” are fundamentally ethical-political critiques of the proper mode of relations to be pursued between unequally situated people in the global division of labor.

CHAPTER 1
PRE-HISTORIES OF SINO-TANZANIA AND THE *LONG DURÉE* OF THE SWAHILI
COAST

In this chapter, I examine how the narrative of “China-Tanzania Friendship” has emerged historically as a model of *anti-imperial* relationality, and how it has been subsequently

transformed by the economic rise of China, and the growth of Chinese investment and migration. I argue that the continuities in this history, continuities which bridge claims of *anti-empire*, and specters of *empire*, are the transnational connections and international mutualities which have connected China and Tanzania in their respective projects of state nationalism. Eschewing state-centric narratives, I instead focus on how the transnational careers of Chinese and Tanzanians have been historically transformed by shifting forms of imperial and national citizenship. This is particularly true in Tanzania, where the emergence of Chinese migration can be mapped onto a *longue durée* history of intermediaries who have risen and fallen in coastal trading hierarchies. Although these relationships have been recently celebrated by Chinese elites and Indian Ocean scholars as historical models of non-hegemonic cosmopolitanism, they also involved a politics of hierarchy and inequality which continue to play out in debates over the presence and privileges of foreign investors versus Tanzanian citizens; the context in which Chinese have entered Tanzania.

The Anthropology of Global Mutualities: Between World Systems and Transnationalism

Critical discussions about global relationships in anthropology may be divided between theories and ideologies of “globalization” centered on the *extension* and circulation of people, commodities, institutions, images, and imaginings on the one hand; and critical theories of these practices in terms of inequality, exploitation, and violence on the other. In the wake of the decolonizing moment of the 1960s, anthropologists became increasingly reflective about the role colonialism had played in both the formation of the discipline and the ethnographic contexts they had encountered (Gough 1968; Asad 1973). Early efforts to incorporate understandings of colonialism and global processes drew heavily on World Systems Theory (Nash 1981; Wolf 1982; Marcus 1995). World Systems theory is an historical perspective on global relationships premised on the idea that the economic, social, and political development of societies have been mutually constituted through trade. The perspective was developed primarily to explain the development of the global capitalist system from the 16th century to the present. A central

exercise of the theory is the division of the world into cores, peripheries, and semi-peripheries. Cores have been regions involved in manufacturing and the provision of high value commodities to the periphery. The periphery are regions which provide raw materials and labor to the core. These relationships have shifted historically within the core (and between the core and semi-periphery) as a succession of different states have grown into hegemons, and then declined, in a pattern beset with regularities (i.e. the Dutch in the 17th century, the British in the 19th century, and the Americans in the 20th century)(Wallerstein 2011). However, no matter how these have shifted, the continued reconstitution of cores and peripheries have sustained global inequalities. The World Systems perspective drew on Dependency Theory, a perspective developed in the 1960s and 1970s to explain neo-colonial relationships and the persistence of global inequalities despite the dismantling of formal colonial empires. Within Anthropology, World Systems Theory was adopted primarily as a tool to interpret ethnohistorical data from the perspective of how colonized peoples became integrated into a global capitalist system, and also more ambitious attempts to do global histories mapping the mutual constitution of distant but interconnected societies and cultural practices (Wolf 1982; Mintz 1985). Others called for “ethnographies of the world system,”(Nash 1981) particularly those institutions and practices understood to be forms of “neo-imperial” practice in the global South, such as development.

These approaches came under challenge in the 1990s from scholars who critiqued World Systems Theory to be a deterministic theory which privileged the Western core states as the primary agents of global history. This critique coincided with the emergence of transnationalism, diaspora, and globalization as topics of academic interest. In Anthropology, this shift in the literature is conventionally marked by Appadurai’s (1990) reimagining of global space in terms of multiple “scapes,” an explicit refutation of the notion of cores and peripheries designed to highlight the world-making agency of people in the so-called peripheries. Diasporas and transnational migration were a privileged site for ethnographers working in this paradigm. There was a celebratory tone in this literature because transnational practices and mobility seemed to

challenge the “sedentary bias” (Malkki 1995) of traditional ethnography, and illustrate how even the most seemingly remote people were “remotely global” (cf. Piot 1999). However, a number of scholars soon raised questions about the equitability of mobility between people along axes of class, race, and gender. During the 1990s vogue for “diaspora,” for example, scholars began to debate whether the descendants of British settlers around the world could be classified as a subclass of “imperial diaspora” (Cohen 1997). In order to account for issues of power and inequality, scholars began to look at “differentiated mobility,” border technologies, and the refinement of the technologies of exclusion, differentiation and hierarchy (Massey and Bird 1993; Ong 1999; 2006; McKeown 2008; and cf. Friedman 2010; Ticktin 2011; Chu 2010). Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994) tried to reconcile theories of transnationalism with a World Systems model of the global division of labor. These approaches helped highlight how transnational migration and practices have been shaped by transformations in global political economy, the governmentality of borders, and the agency of migrants themselves. Chinese and Tanzanian transnational practices have likewise changed with transformations in regional and global economic and political formations.

Chinese Transnationalism between Empire and Anti-Empire

The status of “being Chinese,” particularly among those who have migrated beyond the territory of what is now “China” has been beset by the competing historical legacies of China as an historical empire, and its integration into a global capitalist system. This has been reflected in how Chinese diaspora/transnationalism has been theorized within the broader social sciences and humanities: from being paradigmatic subaltern subjects to being paradigmatic transnational global subjects (McKeown 2000). These shifts have been accompanied by shifting imperial imaginaries: a Chinese diaspora maintaining cultural integrity on the peripheries of an old Chinese empire/civilization (e.g. Pan 1994), subaltern subjects on the peripheries of global (European) capitalism (e.g. McKeown 2008), economically privileged but politically vulnerable ethnic minorities in new nations, an “invisible empire” of overseas Chinese capitalism (Ong and

Nonini 1997), and the vanguard of a Chinese global capitalism and/or empire centered on a transformed and rising China (Nyíri 2006).

The concept of a pre-modern Chinese empire is an amalgamation of concepts which have been translated back and forth between (re-invented) Chinese political theories and European historiographical definitions of empire (Wang and Hutters 2011). The Chinese political philosopher Zhao Tingyang (2009) has argued that the older Chinese concept of 天下 (ch. all under heaven) is best understood as a theory of world order itself. In practice, the imperial system was for centuries posited as a universal sovereignty over “all under heaven” with gradations of administrative autonomy from the center to tributary states on the edge. These principles guided diplomatic exchanges with distant kingdoms during both Zheng He’s 15th century voyages to the East African coast, and in the reception of European missions during the late 18th and early 19th century (Fairbank and Ch'en 1968; Hevia 1995). Comparative studies of Chinese empire vis-à-vis other kinds of empire have characterized it as an “agricultural” and “land-based” empire in distinction to the sea-based trading empires which inaugurated the era of European imperialism Wong (2006). At different times in Chinese history, overseas commerce and migration was a precarious activity associated with piracy and the abandonment of filial obligations, and therefore subject to legal restrictions (Zhang 2001). Mayfair Yang (2013), however, has identified a longstanding historical tension between an agricultural vision of Chinese empire centered in northern China, and a seafaring vision of Chinese culture based in the southern provinces of Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong. The Chinese-descendent populations of Southeast Asia originate from these regions, and in the present, they have also been a major source of migrants to Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa.

In the period before the mid-nineteenth century, foreign traders in China were officially restricted in the scope of their activities. European traders, for example, were restricted to working with officially licensed intermediary companies in Guangzhou, a system known abroad

as the “Canton System.” Beginning with the mid-nineteenth century Opium Wars, European industrial states, particularly the United Kingdom, forced the Qing imperial government to “open” an increasing number of ports along the coast and China’s waterways to foreign trade. These arrangements included the principle of extraterritoriality, wherein the citizens of European states were to be subject to the legal jurisdiction of specially arranged consular courts rather than to the Chinese legal system. Justified on the basis of civilizational claims about the incompatibility of Chinese practices with the Western legal system, extraterritoriality, an ancient practice globally which became increasingly phased out with the emergence of the nation-state, became a potent instantiation and icon of Western privilege in China (Liu 1925).

The privileges of European citizenship in China was sharply distinct to the vulnerabilities of Chinese citizenship in the European colonial world. Chinese migrating abroad faced an international migration regime which facilitated in turns both exploitative contract coolie labor, and exclusionary policies designed to limit free migration and commercial enterprise. As McKeown (2008) documents, the practices, and technologies which comprise the contemporary immigration regime developed historically as means to govern the global circulation of Chinese individuals in the late 19th century. Fitzgerald (2003) argues that the racism faced by overseas Chinese in white settler societies contributed to the development of modern Chinese nationalism, particularly among reformers and revolutionaries who made connections between the diminished status of being Chinese abroad and the diminished capacity of the Manchu government to protect China’s territorial sovereignty. Sun Yat-Sen would call overseas Chinese the “mother” of the 1911 revolution against the Manchus because of the financial support they provided to his movement. The abolition of the extraterritorial system and the restoration of territorial sovereignty therefore become central goals of the project of Chinese nationalism.

The significance of European and Japanese imperialism for Chinese nationalism is not only how it prompted the project of reimagining the Chinese empire as a nation-state, but also how it has allowed the narrative of modern Chinese nationalism to be told as a narrative of anti-

imperialism (Teng 2004) and, especially after the founding of the People's Republic of China, to be aligned with nationalist liberation movements across the global South, particularly in Africa. Karl (2002) argues these alignments predated Mao and the 1960s, and can actually be traced to late Qing reformist discourses which mapped China's own experience with imperialism within a global capitalist context, and drew comparative lessons for China from cases as diverse as Poland, to the Philippines, to the Boer republics.

Africa in the Chinese Nationalist Imagination and China in the African Nationalist Imagination

Black Africans have occupied an ambivalent position in the development of Chinese nationalist narratives, serving at times as either racial foils to nationalist anxieties and ambitions, or racial allies in the struggle against European imperialism and white supremacy. Characterizations of black Africans in the discourse of late Qing reformers were informed primarily by the racial discourses to be found in translated European writings on Africa, combined with a longstanding schema within China which had already made distinctions between a "civilized" center and an uncivilized (un-cooked) periphery (Dikotter 1992; Teng 2004; Brown 2004). Late Qing reformers like Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei, inspired by social Darwinist thought and European racial categories, argued that, unlike the "black" race, the "yellow" race possessed the capacity to adapt and catch up to the "white" race (Cheng 2011; Keevak 2011). It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that the discourse of Chinese nationalism in the mainland shifted to identify a common struggle between Asians and Africans confronting European imperialism, and to explicitly adopt an anti-racist stance which included Africans and the African diaspora.

It is important to recognize that China's status as an *anti-empire* is as much a product of non-Chinese anticolonial and radical imaginaries as it is of Chinese imaginaries. The success of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1949 revolution presaged and inspired anti-colonial and anti-capitalist movements in the colonized world in the 1950s and 1960s which sought to emulate at least its military model (Snow 1988). In this respect, enthusiasm for China during this period by

such figures as W.E.B. DuBois echoed the earlier enthusiasm displayed for Japan after its surprise defeat of Russia in 1904 (but before Japan itself became seen as a practitioner of imperialism) (Du Bois, Mullen, and Watson 2005; Kelley and Esch 1999). China's size in territory, population, and combined wealth, nonetheless, exceeded any individual colonial territory. Nyerere argued China was the only "developing country" that could "challenge imperialism on equal terms" (Lal 2014:102), and he frequently exhorted Tanzanians to follow the model of China in certain aspects in the goal of socialist nation-building.

The Chinese state drew upon and mobilized these expectations in the 1960s in order to cultivate support for its own role in international affairs. The Chinese state provided technical training and assistance to newly independent states, scholarships for students to come to China, military training for anti-colonial fighters, and the translation, dissemination, and reception of *The Quotations of Chairman Mao* (Snow 1988; Achberger 2010; Lal 2014; Cook 2014), China developed such relationships across Africa, but Tanzania was among the most significant because of both its strategic and moral position as the key "frontline state" hosting liberation movements from across southern Africa. China supported Tanzania through its assistance in what has remained China's largest overseas aid project, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (Monson 2009).

The "Empire" of Overseas Chinese Capital

During the Cold War, there was an accelerated process of capital accumulation among ethnic Chinese along China's liminal edges (i.e. Hong Kong and Taiwan) and within the broader Chinese diaspora. Ong and Nonini (1997) have referred to this diaspora as an "ungrounded empire," which they define as "new deterritorialized protean structures of domination that span the Asia-Pacific and within which diaspora Chinese act, that constantly change shape, being constituted by Chinese transnational practices in the either of airspaces, international time zones, migrant labor contracts, mass media images, virtual companies and electronic transactions, and operating across all recognized borderlands" (1997:20). During the 1980s and 1990s, these Chinese were among the first investors to enter mainland China, particularly the coastal regions,

and to make deals with local officials, build factories, employ labor in often highly exploitive conditions, and engage in social practices which marked distinctions between themselves and mainland Chinese (Ong 1999; Shen 2008). This is significant because despite the ideologies of Chinese-ness mobilized to facilitate these transactions, the inequalities of the relationship afforded practices of distinction which contributed to the experience of Overseas Chinese in almost colonial terms. As Oxfeld (2004) as shown, overseas Chinese returning to their native villages are not only seen as benefactors, but are also sometimes colloquially referred to as "guests" (ch. 访客), suggesting a foreignness despite kinship. These visits are marked by ambiguity regarding obligations which are the product of the fact the overseas visitors have historically been wealthier.

Since the beginning of the reform period, migrants from mainland China have rapidly grown to constitute the newest wave of Chinese diaspora. In contrast to the earlier waves, the development of the Chinese economy and the rising profile of the Chinese state as a geopolitical actor has started to transform the perception and status of expatriate Chinese. The important transformation is the ambivalent shift of globally mobile Chinese from being subaltern subjects in a global migration regime built by Western empire to being themselves privileged citizens of an emerging global power (Nyíri 2001). This has not been a complete shift, and the new Chinese migration from the PRC is differentiated sharply by class between, for example, the kind of wealthy students which receive outsized media attention, and those “not authorized by the Chinese state...to chart moral careers as Chinese cosmopolitans” (Chu 2010:10). Even after the abolishment of the extraterritorial regime in 1943, and the revision of immigration laws in such places as the United States in 1965, led to the transformation of the privileges and status of overseas Chinese in Europe and European settler colonies, struggles to navigate global migration regimes have remained prominent themes in the vernacular narratives of Chinese global mobility (c.f. Chu 2010). I was often reminded of this during fieldwork by Chinese interlocutors

commenting on how privileged I was to have an American passport (see Chapter Five). The result is a contradictory assessment of overseas Chinese as both peripheral to the global hierarchy of value, and also the vanguards of an emergent “global China.”

The Chinese Who Go to Africa

Ethnographies of Chinese internal migration and emigration following the Reform period have identified what Gaetano (2004) describes as a “moral geography of development.” This means there is an intimate relationship between migration trajectories and the enactment of individual life projects. Younger Chinese expatriates in Dar es Salaam would describe their decisions to work in Tanzania, and their future plans, in terms of which places were better for one to “develop” (ch. 发展). Rural to urban labor migration in China, as Yan Hairong (2003) has argued, has been seen as not just about earning higher incomes, but of cultural improvement that allows one to “realize their full value as human beings.” These moral geographies, however, turn on global hierarchies of value centered on the West (Herzfeld 2005). As Yan notes, “in eyes of local government, provincials going to the city is similar to Chinese students ‘studying abroad’” (2003:502). Emigration to the West, and to the United States, in particular, have remained aspired destinations for many Chinese even in an era when popular discourses in the United States otherwise fret about the prospects of China surpassing the United States as the center of global hierarchies. There is differentiated mobility, however, among Chinese emigrants.

Chinese migration to Africa often occurs within the same moralized geography of development. Many of my Chinese interlocutors described coming to Africa as a consequence of both limited prospects for “development” in China, and the inability to develop to get visas to the United States. In some cases, migration to Africa was seen as the first step to eventually immigrate to the United States by other means.

These have in turn led to contested claims about the kind of Chinese who migrate to Africa, and their placement in the moralized geography of development vis-à-vis Africans

themselves. In Tanzania, the public discourses of the Chinese Embassy and the Chinese business associations portray Chinese investors as actors who bring capital, experience, knowledge, and skills to ordinary Tanzanians. In this respect, the aspired moral geography is “downwards” rather than “upwards.” Nyiri (2006), for example, describes a discourse within China celebrating Han migrants traveling to regions with ethnic minorities as contributing to the “development” of those regions by means of example (in the same way Western expatriates in China have sometimes been treated as models for “civility”). In Tanzania, similar discourses can be heard among Chinese expatriates who describe themselves as having inspired changes in Tanzanian work ethics. For example, there is the rumor that Tanzanian shops now open on Sundays because of the example set by Chinese shops.

However, Chinese migrants often complicate the image of China presented in these narratives. Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in Tanzania are predominated by people who come from Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, and Northeast China. The migrants from Southern China come from regions which have long histories of both internal migration in China and emigration abroad. However, these histories have sometimes contributed to discontents and anxieties among other Chinese about how they represent China abroad. For example, a Chinese interlocutor in Dar es Salaam who came from urban Shanghai described Chinese wholesalers to be “traditional” (ch. 传统). These were economic activities common several decades earlier in China, and it was “like [these Chinese] came here so they could keep doing the kind of jobs they used to do in China.” The implication was that migration to Africa was essentially a conservative decision which allowed them to avoid the necessity of adapting at home. The counterpart to this assumption was the frequent claim that Tanzania’s level of development in the 2010s resembled China’s level of development in the 1980s, with the implication that there were opportunities for easy wealth which had once been possible in China, but which were no longer available; a second chance at the reform period. These Chinese were therefore in the position of being read by other Chinese as

both anachronistic and unrepresentative of China's level of development in 2015. My Shanghainese interlocutor lamented that Tanzanians were getting the wrong impression of the Chinese. At first, she did not even recognize the Chinese here to be "Chinese." Before coming to Tanzania, her understanding of Chinese-ness was limited to Shanghai.

Chinese migrants themselves describe being on being on their own, without support from the state, and without the kind of privileges enjoyed by Chinese State-Owned firms. This is linked, as it is in China, to a self-presentation of being independent and entrepreneurial. For example, among migrants from Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, there is the adage that "wherever there are markets, there are Wenzhou people" (Zhang 2001:39). Zhang describes Wenzhou entrepreneurs as seeing themselves as willing to eat bitterness versus "spoiled and lazy" northern Chinese. Wenzhou people were involved in wholesale trading in China long before they became involved in wholesale trading in Africa. Migration in this context is a "family strategy for economic diversification" (2001:54). Similar stories can be told about migrants from Fujian. As one of my interlocutors from there explained, a person seeking funds from family or friends for business ventures in his hometown would only be successful in soliciting these funds if their business plans involved emigration. "Northerners," in contrast, were considered to be less willing to leave China or to take risks.

The place of Africa in these global geographies compound these contradictions even further so-far that Chinese are either represented as vanguards of Chinese empire or capitalism, or "transnational middlemen" (Nyíri 2011). The ambiguous relation between Chinese migration in Africa, and the larger phenomenon of Chinese capital and state actors in Africa has contributed to a trend in the scholarship where ethnographers have often taken the stance of defending Chinese migrants from their negative association with the specter of colonialism. They have done this through emphasizing their subjectivities as *migrants*, and their subaltern positionalities within both China and within the global division of labor (cf. Sautman and Yan 2016). Analytics based on neo-colonialism and empire are problematized and often stridently disavowed in these

accounts because there is a longer history of conspiratorial “yellow peril” tropes which have historically been mobilized against Chinese migrant communities. French’s (2014) argument that Chinese migrants are “building a new empire” is more nuanced than the title of his book would suggest, but his insistence on interpreting Chinese migration through the lens of European settler colonialism overlooks the fact these migrants can also be interpreted through the lens of being “middleman minorities.” Neither a “minority middleman” or “settler” perspective is itself sufficient, however, because the Chinese presence in Tanzania is a multiplex phenomenon.

In the next section, I situate them in the context of transnational migration in East Africa

Sub-Empires, Middlemen, and East African Agency

The narrative of Tanzanian nationalism, like the narrative of Chinese nationalism, is premised on being an anti-imperial project. Like the global discourse of anti-colonial nationalism, it was a discourse of agency and self-making. The premise of Fanon’s theory, for example, was that anti-colonial violence was premised on the recovery of self-making and agency from colonial powers who froze and ossified the indigenous development of colonized subjects (1963). In Tanzania, Nyerere’s writings and speeches during the late 1960s repeatedly emphasize that Africans themselves will be the authors of their future development, and “free to make their own mistakes” (2011). Nyerere did not conceptualize the assistance of the Chinese government in such projects as the Tanzania-Zambia railroad as a contradiction to autonomy, but rather as a form of “poor helping the poor” develop the capacity to increase their own agency (Monson 2009). Even in the context of contemporary Chinese investment, Tanzanian elites continue to argue that that the sovereignty of Tanzania to develop relationships with China, over the objections of the West, is itself an exercise of post-colonial agency (Mpaka 2014).

The “agency” of African actors repeatedly comes up in academic discussions of the relationship between Africa and transnational actors, including empire. In response to a narrative of Chinese imperialism which casts the Chinese as agents acting upon a passive African populace which stands either to be “helped” or “harmed,” counter-narratives have emphasized the agency

of African actors not only in shaping Chinese-African relationships, but also-with reference to African states in particular- in determining the benefits or harms of the relationship. This has led Western scholars of Africa-China relations to publish books with odd titles which “reinsert” or “uncover” African agency (Mohan and Lampert 2013; Brown and Harman 2013; Corkin 2013).¹⁰ Bodomo (2012) argues that tropes of African passivity are evident in the very use of “China-Africa” rather than “Africa-China” in discussions on the topic.

However, the argument often ends up going that Africans have *agency* over Chinese capital, because unlike Europeans during the period of high imperialism, the Chinese are unable to unilaterally dictate the terms of their investment (Corkin 2013). The terms of investment are ultimately the product of policies developed and enforced by African states. Mainstream China-Africa analysts often use the concept of agency to hold African state policymakers themselves responsible for the benefits or harms derived from Chinese investment.¹¹ We must therefore ask the kind of work that the concept of “agency” does in different contexts.

The discussion of agency among certain Africanists, however, has shifted from the concept of anti-colonial self-making to a redefinition of both agency and “empire.” Bayart and Ellis (2000), for example, offered an alternative model of political economy which paints Africa as a kind of mirror empire, defined by a “strategy of extraversion” wherein “dependency” is conceptualized affirmatively as a form of political agency rather than as *lack* as implied in the trope of a passive Africa invaded on the initiative of foreign agency. African polities of this type are not formations with hegemonic centers that extract resources from peripheries culturally subordinates to the center. Instead, Bayart and Ellis argue, a strategy of extraversion is based on the “creation and the capture of a rent generated by dependency and which functions as a

¹⁰ See Mbembe (2001) for an extensive discussion of Western tropes of African passivity.

¹¹ I would be tempted to highlight this as a distinctively global North discourse if not for the fact my Tanzanian interlocutors provided me a similar critique (See Chapter Five).

historical matrix of inequality, political centralization and social struggle" (2000:222).¹² By inverting the conceptual geographies, Bayart and Ellis suggest Africa should not be imagined on the peripheries of empire, but itself centered as a matrix of agency and action. Historical work in East Africa since the 1990s on pre-colonial histories (Glassman 1995; Prestholdt 2008) have made similar suggestions. In this section, I describe how their approaches offer alternative means for conceptualizing Tanzania's relationships with China, but I also offer a critical appraisal of the shifting relationships between forms of agency, accountability, and the politics of transnationalism, empire, and anti-imperialism.

Imperialism or Extraversion?

Early critical studies of imperialism in East Africa primarily emphasized German and British colonialism and the integration of the region into a global capitalist system. Among the primarily East African scholars who led these studies, the primary cleavage was between Marxist historians who emphasized the determinative power of foreign imperialism and capital in shaping the region's history (Iliffe 1979; Sheriff 1987) and the work of the "Dar es-Salaam School" which focused on histories of proto-nationalist resistance to European colonialism (Ranger 1968; Kimambo and Temu 1969).¹³ Hyden (1980) generated controversy in challenging the premises of both Marxist and nationalist histories by arguing that the Tanzanian peasantry has historically remained "uncaptured" by both global capitalism and the state.¹⁴ Although this came under fierce criticism from prominent Marxist scholars (Mamdani 1985) who challenged Hyden's narrow

¹² This is not to neglect there have been African empires recognized as "empires" in historical studies.

¹³ This perspective eventually came under critique (even from Ranger himself), however, for eliding internal differences in within pre-colonial society (Ranger 1977).

¹⁴ Hyden (1980) argues this was due to the autonomy provided by the "peasant mode of production." Hyden traces a recurrent theme of failed German, British and socialist efforts to implement high-productivity mass-agriculture; accompanied by complaints from the Germans to President Nyerere that peasants were unwilling to contribute to colonial/national projects

criteria for “capture,”¹⁵ both Hyden and his Marxist critics shared an implicit map that placed Africa on the periphery of global capitalism, a periphery where local forms of agency contended with the agency attributed to global capitalism.

Imperial formations, however, existed on the coast prior to German colonization. Although the Portuguese had established settlements on the coast in the 17th century, Arabs remained dominant prior to the late 19th century. In 1841, the Busaid sultanate in Oman moved their capital to Zanzibar to be closer to the profitable caravan trade. The caravan trade involved a diversity of actors from the coast into the interior who engaged in extractive economies involving ivory and the capture of people as slaves, in exchange for commodities, textiles, and beads from India, and later, England and the United States. In the 19th century, Arab planters put slaves to work in the production of cloves in Zanzibar for the international market. The abolition of slavery would in fact serve as the public justification strategically employed by the Germans in their colonization of the region. Scholarship in both Tanzania and abroad has subsequently described these pre-German imperial formations as either “satellites” of Western imperialism (Ilfie 1979) or “secondary empires” (Curtin 1984). Sheriff (1987) argues that the caravan trade in ivory and slaves were forms of mercantile capitalism ultimately subordinate to the productive capitalism of Western economies.¹⁶

The Omanis themselves, however, were only the latest in a series of actors who dominated trade on the East African coast. These actors, furthermore, don’t divide as neatly between Africans and non-Africans as earlier European colonial scholarship assumed. Instead, the middleman position on the East African coast has continually shifted from group to group

¹⁵ The key point of contention for Mamdani (1985) was that “capture” entailed much more than simply agricultural wage labor. Hyden has since revised his definition of “uncaptured” to mean lack of integration within formalized Weberian institutions in either rural or urban contexts (2008). According to this definition, it would seem that even the informal traders selling Chinese goods or used clothing in Dar would be “uncaptured.”

¹⁶ The analysis extended to a critique of the post-colonial state as a “bureaucratic bourgeoisie” aligned with neo-imperial global capitalism (Shivji 1976).

with the historical transformations of regional and global imperial formations. An analytic lens based on the experience of a *long durée* of East African history provides an alternative way to examine the entrance of Chinese migrants in terms other than European colonialism; as intermediaries.

The Interstitial Identity of the Swahili

The coast's interstitial position is both inscribed and embodied in the cultural category of Swahili. The term Swahili is derived from the Arabic term for a boundary region, and has been applied to both the language and people of the East African coast. Swahili's interstitial position, however, has contributed to controversies about exactly *who* the Swahili are.¹⁷ On the Tanzanian coast, the Shirazi (a sub-grouping of the Swahili) claim to be descendants of non-African lineages whose men came to Africa from Persia, and married African women. In Zanzibar, the Swahili were the non-Arab descendants of slaves brought to the island. European colonial administrators and scholars considered the Swahili people to be a "detrribalized" product of Arab colonialism (Arens

¹⁷ Despite the interstitial features of Swahili, early colonial historiographies tended to sharply divide those cultural elements that were considered "foreign," such as "Arab," from those considered "African" or native. Horton and Middleton (2000) are skeptical of the Shirazi origin story, however, and suggest that they were originally Muslims who identified themselves with Persia when they moved from Lamu a thousand years ago (2000:61). There has in fact been a bitter debate over the "Arabness" versus "African-ness" of the Waswahili. Mazrui and Shariff (1994), for example, have challenged the manner in which European scholarship emphasized the Arabness of Swahili culture. According to Arens (1975), Anthropologists had assumed Waswahili referred to people on the coast with an Afro-Arabic culture, Islamic orientation and claims to Arabic genealogy, but that was complicated by people using that term farther inland, and of people on the coast who would not define themselves as Waswahili due to negative connotations of the term as associated with slaves. Arens also argues the term is used to describe a diverse range of people. In inland areas, the term was generally used to lump together foreigners. Although there has been a Swahili language since the 10th century, it is really in the 19th century that classifications hardened as a result of colonialism. In late 19th and early 20th century Zanzibar, self-identification in the census as Waswahili dropped and instead people identified themselves as Arab, Shirazi and Wahadimu. Arens speculated that the use of such people as go-betweens for German colonists may have reinforced the negative connotation of Waswahili. And yet, important support for the nationalist movement came from among "detrribalized" strangers on the coast. Mid-century, there was a nationalist reevaluation of them as being beyond tribe. Glassman (1995) also provides the case of Bwana Heri bin Jumba, one of the most famous "trading warlords." There are conflicting historical memories of whether he was "African" or "White". He was born in interior and spoke Swahili and Zigua, but wore Arab turbans and carried Arab swords and lived in a stone house. This may explain why some contemporary informants told Glassman he was "white as anything" (1995:66-7). Genealogical debates like these might contextualize the recent story of people in Lamu who claim to be descendants of the Chinese who came with Zheng He in the 15th century, and who have attracted occasional media attention in the context of the growing presence of China.

1975). After decolonization, nationalist scholars deemphasized Arab influences in the pursuit of ostensibly more authentic forms of African culture (Askew 2002), even though the Swahili language itself became a preferred language of Pan-Africanists, and outside of East Africa, an icon of African authenticity. More recently, however, the Swahili have been reimagined as a “tribe” (Caplan 2007), accompanied by the argument that the Swahili should be considered a long standing “African people” rather than a derivative foreign identity (Middleton and Horton 2000). The syntax, grammatical rules and much of the vocabulary of contemporary dialects of Kiswahili do indicate that it is a Bantu language, but a substantial portion of the vocabulary derives from other sources. Arabic words are prominent, but there are also words borrowed from Gujarati, Persian, Portuguese, and English. The tableau of vocabulary, which as Mugane illustrates, is exemplified in the diversity of names to be found for the goods sold in the *duka* (sw. shops) of East Africa, indexes the multiple waves of foreign influences. Mugane (2015) takes this a step further by disconnecting the category from contemporary classifications of race and arguing for extension of the boundaries of the Swahili world across the Indian Ocean. The significance of Swahili identity is its inclusiveness, and the willingness to which some contemporary intellectuals are willing to expand the ancestry of the Swahili to even include new groups like the Chinese. The significance is also more subtly expressed in everyday practices in Dar es Salaam which emphasize the welcoming of strangers (see Chapter Three).

The Romance of Reciprocity

The interstitial position of the Swahili Coast, however, has involved a politics of different actors and groups rising and falling in trading hierarchies. These include a distinct ambiguity as to whether such intermediaries can be classified as “middlemen” or as “empires.” Neither can be considered independently of the broader patterns of regional and global exchange which sustained them. *Agency* in this context has meant the degree to which one is able to occupy an advantageous position along the routes of trade and distribution, for the purpose of extracting rents or shares. This involves the efforts of both traders who earn profits from the difference in

price to be found between the origin and destination, and also the efforts of state formations which have extracted shares in the form of taxation.

During the Caravan trade, both individual actors and larger political formations rose and fell within hierarchies of power and prestige on the basis of their control over the out-movement of people and ivory, and the in-movement of foreign commodities. Glassman (1995) documents how “access to credit and foreign markets became the key mechanism by which particularly shrewd and well-placed men acquired wealth to attract large followings of clients and the firearms to protect and empower them” (1995:47). These created complex chains of patron-clientage reaching from Zanzibar to upcountry (1995:60). For example, the Chagga chief Orombo built what Sally Falk Moore (1977) scare quotes as an “empire” through control of the ivory trade from his region to the coast before the establishment of the Omani Sultanate in Zanzibar in 1841. The fact Moore qualifies Orombo’s “empire” to be part of the “African middleman” phase of the ivory trade suggests in fact that the conceptual distinction between “economic” intermediaries and “political” formations may not be very helpful for conceptualizing the *long durée* of political-economic relationships on the East African coast. It may be better to speak of a cascading chain of “middlemen” and “empires” built along the routes of trade, rather than a singular “sub-empire” between indigenous people and global capitalism. This of course has implications for how we understand the emergence of the nation-state and transnationalism as opposed categories in the present.

Starting with the Portuguese in the 16th century, European imperialism in East Africa developed on the basis of longstanding trading relationships between the African continent and the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese were different from earlier intermediaries, however, in being an “armed trading diaspora” who seized ports and demanded exclusive control over trade, until they were eventually expelled in the mid-17th century (Curtin 1984). It would not be until the late 19th century that the Germans and British, armed now with industrial weapons, would establish colonial administrations. The historian Philip Curtin romantically describes this period and what

followed as the "twilight of the trading diasporas," when the *dhow*s, the monsoon sailing wooden boats which served as trading vessels in the Indian ocean for centuries were steadily replaced by steamships owned by colonial firms (Sheriff 2010). But as even Abdul Sheriff, in his quasi-romantic Braudelian account, is forced to admit, itinerant traders, and even dhows, never completely disappeared, but continue to operate in the margins in the global economy. The (re)-discovery of these trading networks, particularly in the global South, has spawned terms like "transnational informal economy" (Portes 1997), "low-end globalization," (Mathews 2011), or even the "new silk roads" (Yang and Altman 2011). The paradigmatic figure is the so-called "suitcase trader," ferrying goods in suitcases on airplanes from wholesale shops in China to retail shops in marketplaces around the global South. The compound terminology used to describe these traders evince disagreement over whether these are "premodern" survivals, or in fact, paradigmatic features of globalization.

The claim that the Indian Ocean trade was never based on empire until the arrival of Europeans has lent support to romantic imaginaries of the Indian Ocean as a non-imperial space. Scholars of the Indian Ocean have effectively described a cosmopolitan milieu preceding European hegemony; linked by the monsoon winds, seafaring technologies like the dhow, a network of interconnected entrepôts connected by trade and kinship, and a shared religio-cultural idiom of Islam ritually linked and reproduced by the annual haji (Bose 2009; Sheriff 2010; Alpers 2014). This in turn has lent support to the development of concepts like the "New Maritime Silk Road," a Chinese-state promoted framework for legitimizing Chinese presence and investment in the Indian Ocean region. In this case, the assumption that the Indian Ocean has long been a non-imperial space aligns with the Chinese state's efforts to portray its contemporary rise as non-hegemonic in character. Like arguments about imperialism, however, these historical analogies elide a more nuanced understanding.

The End of Imperial Citizenship

The limits of cosmopolitan Indian Ocean and Swahili coast imaginaries became evident, however, when the modern history of the Indian diaspora in East Africa is taken into consideration. This history has a direct relevance to understanding the Chinese presence in the late 20th and early 21st century because the economic spaces Chinese migrants have entered (particularly wholesale trading, but also construction) are those which have historically been the monopoly of people in the Indian community. The Indians, the majority of which are Tanzanian citizens with roots going back more than several generations, remain the largest “Asian” presence, and the most immediate reference point for comparing the Chinese. Indian migrants have had a presence on the Swahili coast for centuries, but in the twentieth century, they emerged as a significant “other” in the formation of African nationalism in East Africa (Brennan 2012). This process not only illustrates the limits of an imagined Swahili ethics of inclusiveness, but also helps illustrate the tension between the cosmopolitanism possibilities of transnational intermediary economies and the specters of colonialism in hierarchical trading relationships. Inequalities and hierarchies have long characterized transnational linkages on the coast, but they took on new meanings with the development of colonialism and the nation-state as political formations which reworked ideas about citizenship and race. In the mid-twentieth century, these had the effect of excluding Indians at the same time as welcoming the Chinese.

Indian migrants have had a presence on the Swahili Coast for centuries, but it was the establishment of the Zanzibar sultanate, and later German and British colonialism, which precipitated the largest wave of migration. The sultan of Zanzibar invited Indians as financiers for the caravan trade, but many came on their own. The relationship between this diaspora and the colonial project has been hotly contested. Brennan (2012) argues that in Tanganyika, where the population of Europeans was much smaller than in neighboring Kenya, the experience of colonialism was mediated primarily through the everyday relationships between ordinary Africans and Indian shopkeepers. Popular anti-colonial mobilization in Dar es Salaam, Brennan

argues, was directed less at the British and more so at the Indians because of unequal credit relationships in retail stores, access to affordable housing, and British colonial policies which used racial categories to unequally proportion public assistance.

The middleman economy, as described above, always had sub-imperial potentialities, but when combined with European colonial racism, these became literalized in new ways. In the 1880s, a letter to the *Empire Review* from Sir Harry Johnston proposed a plan for Britain to make East Africa an “America for the Hindu”(Desai 2013:59). This almost became actualized after Tanganyika’s transfer from German to British rule, when a group of Indians and some British officials petitioned to make the territory a sub-colony of India. This was averted, however, by African civil servants who made an argument that they would prefer British colonialism to a potential Asian colonialism (Burton 2013:14). The Chinese themselves also first appeared as a sub-imperial potentiality in the European colonial imagination long before there was even Chinese migration. Francis Galton, a key figure in the development of scientific racism and eugenics, wrote a letter to the *Times* in 1873 advocating “Africa for the Chinese,” where he proposed “to make the encouragement of the Chinese settlements at one or more suitable places on the East Coast of Africa a part of our national policy, in the belief that the Chinese immigrants would not only maintain their position, but that they would multiply and their descendants supplant the inferior Negro race.”¹⁸ Although neither of these European imperial plans came to fruition, they demonstrate how the contemporary racialized logics accompanying the Western discourse on the rise of China (and the BRICS) in Africa were already established at an early date.

The Indian diaspora in East Africa, however, was never merely a subsidiary of European imperialism, but itself a victim of both colonialism and subsequent post-colonial populism. These have contributed to counter-imaginaries of Asian capitalism as itself anti-imperial. Gregory

¹⁸ *The Times* June 5, 1873.

(1993), for example, celebrates the free market potential of the Asians in contrast in opposition to the “interventionism” and patronizing protectionism of British colonialism. Such ideologies have had a long genealogy among Asian entrepreneurs in East Africa (Desai 2013). For example, in the writings of Nanji Mehta, an early twentieth century Asian-Ugandan capitalist, he describes a Kantian vision of a world state, contrasting Indians to how European colonizers behave in Africa. He writes that “the Indian merchants have never dreamt of establishing their power anywhere; they rather chose to mix freely with the sons of the soil, sat and talked with them on the same carpet, carried on their trade and remained for years to earn their livelihood” (129).¹⁹ The cultural scholar Gurav Desai argues Mehta’s vision is an example of what Pratt (1992) describes as a “non-conquest narrative” wherein “expansionist commercial aspirations idealize themselves into a drama of reciprocity” (in Desai 2013:127). The romance of commercial reciprocity is ostensibly anti-imperial because it is based on economic mutualities rather than colonial political formations, but it was precisely the inequalities of these economic mutualities which became the primary target of anti-colonial nationalism.

Indians across East Africa opened shops (sw. *duka*) which occupied a critical nexus between regional/global economic circulations and the everyday lives of ordinary Africans. Indian shops sold imported commodities, often on credit, and Indian middlemen in turn were often those who purchased agricultural goods in bulk. The consequence of this is that Indians

¹⁹ The “romance of reciprocity” described here resonates very strongly with contemporary diplomatic talk about China-Africa, India-Africa, and other forms of “south-south cooperation,” all of which resolutely positions itself as *not* imperial. By the same token, however, the emergence of what Kelly and Kaplan (2004) call the “UN world” was also framed in terms of equality as sovereign states. This is not to mean that they are same, but to point out how much empire/not-empire function as stories people tell themselves about themselves. It is telling how work on both Indian and Chinese diaspora starting in the 1990s tended towards celebrations of cosmopolitan prowess. There was certainly a compelling logic for doing so; challenging the exclusionary imaginings of nationalism that brought suffering to Asian communities in the 1970s, most notably in Uganda.(Burton 2013). As Brennan (2012) cautions however, it is important also not to forget the sub-imperial dimensions of these histories. As he and McCann (2013) both points out, many members of the Asian diaspora in East Africa were either politically apathetic or conservative about the preservation of British Empire.

occupied the primary point of social tension defining the colonial experience. The German and British presence, on the other hand, was never as intimately experienced.

Anti-colonial nationalism in Tanzania, as articulated by Nyerere and TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) elites, was explicitly non-racialist and inclusive of Indians. However, among grassroots party members and popular supporters, anti-colonialism and socialism meant opposition to Indian dominance in the economy. At the time of independence, 77% of capital in Tanganyika was owned by the British, but most industry was owned by Asians. In public discourse during the first decade of independence, Indian loyalty to the new Tanzanian nation was often questioned (Brennan 2012). In 1968, the Arusha Declaration inaugurated a transition to socialism which included the nationalization of property. The policy was officially non-racialist, and Nyerere himself frequently denounced anti-Asian populism among his supporters, but popular understandings of socialism were racialized in terms of removing the dominance of Asian “bloodsuckers.”(Aminzade 2013b; Burton 2013).²⁰

Decolonization, and the movements for socialism and autonomy which followed, problematized what had been up to that point longstanding transnational connections. The politics of inequality in these connections were reframed in terms of the politics of citizenship. Aminzade (2013b) argues that debates in post-colonial Tanzania about citizenship, especially the citizenship rights of Asians, are essentially debates about Tanzania’s relationship with the global economy. Nationalists demanded that middleman populations either show signs of commitment to the interests of the nation, or, if they preferred to commit to the interests of foreign imperialism, they were to be denied the privileges of citizenship. Under British imperialism, both Tanganyikans and

²⁰ Nonetheless, the Arusha Declaration and the transition to socialism were widely interpreted in racialized idioms. Nyerere’s injunction to “cut the straws” of foreign capitalist exploitation were interpreted in popular discourse to refer to Asian “bloodsuckers” (Brennan 2012).” The nationalization of urban real estate in 1971 primarily affected Asians, and led to a voluntary exodus of 40,000 Asians (Brennan 2012) (for comparison, 80,000 were forcibly expelled from Uganda).

Indians were under the domain of the British Empire, albeit with different citizenship categories. In post-colonial Tanzania, Asian connections to India and the Britain; including their holding of British passports, were treated as signs of disloyalty.²¹

The problems faced by the Indian diaspora in East Africa resembled the problems faced by the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia, which had occupied a similar “middleman” position in the colonial economy. In both cases, the post-independence/post-revolutionary states of India and China disavowed claims or responsibilities over these populations. The reason is that these states were committed to the global shift from imperial to national forms of belonging. Even before the independence of East African states in the 1960s, the Indian government under Jawaharlal Nehru publically encouraged the Asian diaspora in East Africa to align itself with African movements for self-determination. This marked a shift because Indian populations in East Africa had in fact been active in the Indian nationalist movement. McCann (2013) describes “the broad transition from those transnational linkages within the ‘diasporic nationalist milieu’, which had impacted early African political protest, to more avowedly internationalist foundations as Nehruvian visions of Afro-Asian order soared onto the global stage” (2013:279). Nehru emphasized that the Asians in East Africa could not seek special rights or protections with the backing of India. When tens of thousands of Asians eventually left East Africa, whether through expulsion (in Uganda), or nationalization of their real estate (in Tanzania), many followed the lines of flight offered by earlier imperial citizenship and went to Britain or Canada.

During the Bandung Conference of 1955, Chinese premier Zhou Enlai followed a similar path by publically renouncing claims on the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. China and India’s renunciation of claims on expatriate populations were in effect a renunciation of extraterritoriality in the interest of cultivating beneficial *government to government* relationships.

²¹ As Bang (in Burton 2013:20) notes, “contrary to the Empire [...] the nation state demand[s] full identification.”

The construction of a post-colonial international order emphasized notions of *sovereignty* and *self-determination* at the level of the nation-state.

The Transnational Constitution of Post-Colonial State

At the same time, anti-colonial leaders also advocated forms of mutual cooperation between the newly independent states which would help avoid dependence on either the former colonial powers or the Soviet bloc. Nyerere's writings and speeches on independence and south-south cooperation address these dual and sometimes contradictory imperatives (2011). Nyerere's orientation towards south-south cooperation is important for understanding how China figured into the post-colonial framework. *Self-determination* meant the authorship of alternative futures, both in the framework of the nation-state, and the framework of the international system. The Tanzanian nation-building project was not imagined to be isolated, but entangled within multiple world-making projects occurring at multiple scales: pan-Africanism, Southern African liberation movements, the construction of a non-aligned bloc, and the advocacy of a "non-imperial" world order.

For example, the independent state of Tanganyika was not envisioned by Nyerere as a goal in of itself, but rather as a short-term arrangement to be eventually superseded by, first, an East African Community, and in the end, the creation of pan-African polity. By the 1990s, this project had faded, and his goals shifted to both the exchange of ideas, and the coordination of negotiating strategies within what was now called the global South, to press for better terms in economic negotiations with the global North (Nyerere 2011). The continuity in thought nonetheless involved a combination of an ethics of both community autonomy and mutual assistance. Rejecting the paternalist conceit of colonialism, Nyerere wrote that the decolonized must be free to "make their own mistakes" (2011). In addition, he argued that the decolonized could not expect their former colonizers to come to their assistance because it was not in their interests. If the new nation-states were to develop economically, they needed to develop their own programs, but in cooperation. In his 1970 speech to a meeting of the Non-Aligned movement,

Nyerere advocated mutual “self-reliance” between the members. In order to reduce dependencies upon the economies of the global North, he advocated for the formation of regional trading blocs. If a poor country did not produce a needed industrial product, for example, and if they did not yet possess the industrial capacity, the country should attempt to source it first from another poor country which did produce the product, rather than going first to the countries of the global North. As an example, Nyerere pointed to China as a potential supplier of industrial goods. “What does she produce?” He asked. The imported goods might be more expensive or of lower quality, he added, but that was a short term sacrifice in exchange for mutually supported long-term economic growth (2011). At this time, Tanzania had already placed this proposal into action, purchasing and importing Chinese commodities to help offset China’s expenses constructing TAZARA (Monson 2009).

The relationship between the Chinese state and the Tanzanian government first began through the revolution in Zanzibar, which was itself violently anti-Arab and anti-Indian in its expression. Some revolutionaries were inspired by Maoism, and through their personal contacts with the Chinese government, were responsible for introducing an initially skeptical Nyerere (Jin 2008). The visit of Zhou Enlai in 1965, and Nyerere’s subsequent visit to Beijing unfolded at the same time of heightened liberation movements around the continent.

During the 1960s, Maoist idioms and imagery were popular among many progressive Tanzanians. The Arusha Declaration was followed by a walking tour by Nyerere that was dubbed in the press as the “Long March,” and *ujamaa* village collectivization is considered by some to have been inspired by the Chinese model (Lal 2014).

The centerpiece of the Chinese-Tanzanian relationship, however, was the TAZARA railway built with Chinese funds and labor from Zambia to Dar es Salaam between 1968 and 1975. Monson (2009) contextualizes this transformative project within the geopolitics of counter-empire; particularly the struggle against the settler colonies of Southern Africa. The rail project itself furthermore followed a logic of national development modeled on earlier colonial projects.

Monson argues that Tanzanian labor participation in the construction of the rail project was “very much like what an earlier generation of African railway workers had experienced in the colonial period: entry into a modern, masculine adulthood through wage labor and a disciplined work regime”(2009:8). Echoing discourses of “agents of development” already discussed above, Monson (2013b) explains that planners imagined that Chinese workers would provide Tanzanians the model of the frugal, hard-working, disciplined “new man” necessary for post-colonial development. Unlike Western experts, however, they would not teach, but provide a model for emulation. Burgess (2010:198) writes that China provided nationalists in Zanzibar (and Tanzania) with a “usable future.” It was not only a model of “a nonwhite nation with solid anticolonial credentials, or an impoverished people that in a very short period of time appeared to have achieved miracles of nation building [but also] a society consisting of millions of individuals fully mobilized for nationalist goals.” Leaders repeatedly emphasized Chinese *discipline* as a model for African socialism and development, replicating the “colonial civilizing mission” in terms of the “same linear teleologies.” After Nyerere’s 1965 visit to China, he publically criticized what he considered to be an African mentality which refused to recognize what Mbembe (2001) might call “the challenge of productivity.” The Chinese, unlike Tanzanians, he argued, accepted that they were “poor,” and behaved accordingly, through hard work and limited consumption (Lal 2014). The implication is that Tanzanians were unwilling to recognize their own poverty. The critique closely mirrors the longstanding colonialist trope that Africans did not produce surpluses. In accepting and inviting Chinese aid, local elites sought to discipline a new citizenry through demonstration of the Chinese work ethic. The editors of Dar es Salaam’s *Sunday News* wrote at the start of rail construction in 1970 that “Tanzania can take some pride in having ... reintroduced the Chinese to Africa. Some Western countries accuse Tanzania of being a bridgehead [of Chinese influence in Africa]. We reply that we would be proud, if by this is meant that the ideas of discipline, frugality, and self-reliance, of hostility to racism and imperialism, that have

characterized the Chinese government since the revolution, were to spread through Tanzania into the rest of the great continent of Africa" (Burgess 2010).

The Chinese assistance in the construction of TAZARA, however, was not the only instance of foreign expertise being used for the development projects of Tanzanian socialism. During the same period in which TAZARA was constructed, an American contractor constructed a road parallel to the same route. In addition, the American consulting firm McKinsey was hired to help design the new nationalized wholesale distribution network. Finally, foreign aid during this period came primarily from the West (albeit from social democratic Northern European states)(Aminzade 2013a). Nonetheless, as Monson (2009) argues, in the context of the decolonizing moment, the symbolism of a Chinese project, even if smaller than European projects, was a potent expression that new forms of international cooperation had arrived.

The Tanzanian project of national self-sufficiency, in other words, was a product of transnational linkages which defied Cold War binaries. Nonetheless, it is the Chinese presence which is remembered because of the explicit anti-imperial orientations of the projects. In addition, the Chinese were unlike other foreign experts because they forewent the privileges of high salaries and neo-colonial accommodations. The Chinese were poor themselves, and unlike even Soviet advisers, the tens of thousands of Chinese workers who came to Tanzania lived in humble conditions (Monson 2009; Burgess 2010). Monson also notes, however, that "while Chinese rhetoric put forward an image of egalitarian brotherhood, in reality most relationships between Chinese and African workers were hierarchical and highly regulated" (2009:7). The distinctive position of China during this period had a profound effect on Tanzanian officials and elites who came of age during this period, contributing to an often vigorous defense of the contemporary Chinese in present-day Tanzania. Aminzade writes that the anti-foreign movements which developed in Tanzania with neoliberalism largely ignored the Chinese because there was not the same troubled historical relationship with the Chinese that there was with South Africans, (South) Asians, Arabs, or Europeans (Aminzade 2013a:319).

The ambivalences between middlemen and sub-empire have important implications for both the constitution of post-colonial states and for broader projects of anti-imperialism. This is but another way to restate the initial problem of the ambivalence between transnational relationships and imperial formations. Mid-Twentieth Century decolonization and the development of the nation-state system did not resolve these ambiguities, but instead made the *state* and the inclusiveness of the *nation* central sites of political contestation. In an interconnected global system, the post-colonial state emerged as the primary arena for mediating the contradictory logics of inclusion and exclusion, a “middleman” itself between the structural demands of global capital and the legitimacy conferred by a community of citizens. Aminzade (2013b) describes post-colonial Tanzania as an exemplary case of a dialectical tension of the nation-state: 1) in order to accumulate capital; one needed open borders, foreign expertise and capital, but 2) in order to be a legitimate representative of the nation, the rights of citizens would have to exclude the rights of non-citizens. Tanzanian policymakers have struggled between these dual imperatives since independence.

Conclusion

The historical narrative that I have synthesized in this chapter is not a story of a singular African historicity defined by an alternative concept of agency, but rather a story of “Africa-China” as a transregional formation embedded in multiple intersecting genealogies. In this story, “middlemen,” whether African” or “Asian, emerge as central characters in a drama of transregional trade and distribution. The Chinese presence in Tanzania, if properly contextualized within a long and ongoing history of successive (and co-existing) forms and degrees of “foreign” presence and business, appears less to be a new imperial formation analogous only to European colonialism, but rather an assemblage of processes and practices which are analogous to many things.

The ambivalences of middlemen and sub-empire have implications for both projects of anti-imperialism and the constitution of post-colonial states. This is another way to restate the problem of the ambivalence between transnational relationships and imperial formations. Anti-imperialism itself involved transnational connections and dependencies which were themselves always potentially “imperial,” especially given imbalances of power and wealth within the anti-imperial world. These potentialities, outside Cold War conspiracy theories, were muted in the context of a socialist project, but in the context of a capitalist project, their latent potentialities have been revealed. As I explain in the next chapter, however, these have not happened in any straightforward way.

CHAPTER 2 KARIAKOO AND THE “IMPERIALISM” OF CHINESE TRADE

The Chinese presence in Tanzania, “at first sight presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities” (Marx 1912).

“Every day,” an exasperated Tanzanian trader told me, new containers of Chinese manufactured goods are unloaded at the port of Dar es Salaam. In the past, goods were scarce, there were many people and few commodities. Now, there were too many commodities and too few people to consume them.

The goods are in constant motion, passing through the hands of many intermediaries from the factories of southern China to the consumers of rural Tanzania. From the port to the storehouse, customs officials always move slower than wholesalers can accept, goods and rental fees accumulate in warehouses until the importer gets the stamped document which allows the goods to be cleared. Wholesalers make anxious phone calls to Customs Clearance agents, complain to their employees, and bemoan that nothing can be done without tips.

The goods are cleared. In the evening, Semi-trucks deliver them from port to market. A dozen young hired men hang precariously from the back of the semi-truck as it moves down the streets. The truck arrives, the door opens, and the men remove their shirts. They carry box after box on their sweating backs up flights and flights of stairs. The man with the clipboard outside the truck, the uniformed police officer with his flashlight shining on the men scrambling for boxes in the truck bed, the wholesaler shouting, “angalia! angalia! (sw, look! look!),” directing the flashlight at suspicious bulges in the men’s pants. A porter who successfully snatches a pair of shoes could re-sell them the next day to purchase tea or even lunch.

Shoes like these have multiple final destinations. The cheap ones soon end up as informal retail on the streets of Kariakoo. The wholesale shops open along Narun’gombe Street at 8 AM. People are already gathered here beforehand, some have slept here. They talk politics and sports, drinking coffee and ginger tea, eating chapatti and porridge. The shopkeepers arrive one by one with their keys, instructing their waiting employees to unlock the metal doors and open the shops.

In no two shops are the shoes displayed exactly the same, but all the shops draw on the same patterns. Shoes are neatly displayed in rows on double-layered wooden counters; shoes are displayed against the wall, hanging on thin nails resting in the crevices of display boards; shoes are stacked on stacks of shoe boxes; shoes are scattered across the counter. The names of the heels and sandals, many varieties of Romanized Chinese, but occasionally Swahili or English names. Brands like Nike also appear, but these are “fake,” Tanzanians tell me. “Everything is fake,” I am told, including the shoes which seem to me to have original names.

The Chinese sit behind the counter, eyes looking down at their phones. Others sit next to their Tanzanian employees, sometimes rubbing their shoulders. The shoes are purchased by different kinds of customers and travel different distances. A crowd of young men gather around two shops known for selling the cheapest shoes. Each man gets a sample shoe from the shop and stand on the steps, waving the shoe, looking for partners with whom he can partner to purchase a carton of a dozen pairs. “Bado kumi! (sw. ten left!),” “Bado tano! (sw. five left!). Cash is exchanged, receipts are given, cartons delivered and opened on the street, shoes exchanged, varieties arranged and placed in containers sold by passing vendors.

Some informal retailers arrange the shoes right there on the steps, dust them off with a brush, and begin hawking them to retail customers. Others leave for other markets around the city.

I should not conclude from the ubiquity of these cheap shoes, I am warned by a Chinese trader named Mr. Shen, that they were the best-selling brands. The most profitable brands were hidden because they were purchased by large customers from both Tanzania and neighboring countries, and shipped off by truck to Morogoro, Dodoma, or Mwanza, and even to Zambia, Congo, and southern Africa.

The main street is lined with Chinese shops alongside Tanzanian shops, but in the thin hallways leading out of the sunlight and into the dark, they are hardly even shops, but a metal grid hung on the wall, shoes stacked in neat rows across them. The other frames are curtained by

hanging chains of shoes. The manager sits behind them, and behind him or her are stacks of even more shoes hung against the wall. These are Tanzanian shopkeepers who can't afford the rent for the shops on the street.

I am sitting in Mr. Shen's shop. The two young Chinese employees lean over the counter with boredom. Two short Tanzanian men are falling asleep against the edge of the floor. The customer negotiates sometimes with the Tanzanian staff, sometimes with the Chinese. The order is concluded, and the men behind the counter take out a booklet and a receipt book. The name, color, and quantity of shoes are duly recorded. A receipt is provided to the customer, and a duplicate is provided to the two short Tanzanian men who have worked in the shop for the last two years.

"Let's go," the young Chinese man says to the Tanzanian employees. The men lift the dolly up from the sewage drain in front of the shop. The three of them depart. The two men never go to the store alone, and they are never given the key. A Chinese employee always accompanies them, and he always holds the key. This is a matter of course, every Chinese person explains, otherwise, people might steal. Sometimes, a Chinese employee stays the entire time in the store, receiving orders from both the Tanzanian staff and from the boss through WeChat. Some shops still use walkie talkies.

Eventually, the three men return. The two Tanzanian men pushing the dolly, and their Chinese co-worker walking behind, wearing a hat and sweating. The dolly reaches the sewage drain and they tilt it forward. The boxes crash onto the step in front of the counter. Not every shop has a dolly. More often, men transport the boxes in stacks of five on their heads before tilting them over and dropping them on the street. Another employee comes out to help stack them. The customer is either waiting, or has returned, the receipt stub in their hands. They inspect the boxes, opening them, counting, re-packing, and asking the shop to reseal.

Everyday, cartons arrive, cartons are transported, boxes are carried, boxes are accumulated, boxes are stacked on trucks, and the trucks depart Kariakoo for the countryside.

The vignette I have provided begins with the most concrete manifestation of Chinese presence in contemporary Tanzania, an “immense accumulation” of commodities, and provides the reader a glimpse of just how much the distribution of this accumulation is dependent on a multitude of agents. From the factories, the goods pass through the hands of wholesalers, shipping companies, customs officials, customs clearance agents, porters, wholesalers, retailers, and finally, consumer. Each time the goods change hands, actors make both licit *and* illicit claims to their “rightful share” (Ferguson 2015) in the form of fees, unofficial tips, value-added taxes, wages, stolen merchandise, mark-ups, and profits. These distributions create interdependencies and mutualities between actors necessary for the goods to move, but also create risk, uncertainties, and distrust. To make a livelihood with these movements is to occupy advantageous positions at critical points along them, but access to these positions are not equally distributed due to inequalities in economic and social resources. The entire arrangement exposes a fundamental mutuality and inequality between Tanzania and China, one which is classically “colonial,” underdeveloped industrial production in Tanzania and overdeveloped industrial production in China.

The concept of “Chinese colonialism,” however, obscures how the importation and distribution of Chinese goods has been co-facilitated by a diverse set of both Tanzanian and Chinese actors. Tanzanian and Chinese actors have both followed similar economic logics in engineering these distributions. In the previous chapter, I re-casted categories of empire from the perspective of the changing relationship between political formations and transnational circulations of people and commodities. In this chapter, I continue the story by examining the entry of Chinese migrant entrepreneurs into Tanzania from the perspective of Kariakoo, Dar es Salaam’s wholesale district. Kariakoo is important not just as a key entrepôt, but also as a “Chinese place,” the growth of Chinese businesses there in the mid-2000s inaugurated the current wave of investment, and the place remains an iconic figure of Chinese presence even if not

representative of full spectrum of investment. Kariakoo nonetheless reflects the lowest common entry point of private Chinese investment, the importation, and sale of consumer goods. My approach is informed by the critique of a longstanding “productionist bias” in political-economy which downplays the significance of traders and distributors as mere auxiliaries to industrial production in global capitalism (Evers and Schrader 1994:3; Ferguson 2015).

In this chapter, I draw on and extend Ferguson’s concept of the “labor of distribution.” In Dar es Salaam, as in southern Africa, a large number of people “excluded from any significant role in the system of production, may often be found engaged in tasks whose fundamental purpose is not to produce goods at all but to engineer distributions of goods produced elsewhere by accessing or making claims on the resources of others” (2015:90). These include “contingent livelihoods through a combination of petty trade, hustling, casual labor, smuggling, prostitution, begging, theft, seeking help from relatives or lovers.” In Kariakoo, the representative figure are the *wamamachinga*, young men, mostly rural-to-urban migrants, who engage in a wide range of petty trades, and, in the vernacular terminology, “fighting life.” For many, the purchase and resale of Chinese imports, particularly shoes, provides just enough to purchase tea and a meal for the day. For others, they promise possibilities for accumulation and new life projects. Ferguson questions whether such forms of petty trade count as “entrepreneurship” given that “such trade is itself a form of distributive labor, insofar as it provides a means of engineering tiny diversions of value from those with at least some resources to those who lack them” (2015:110). In this chapter, however, rather than maintaining a conceptual distinction between entrepreneurship and distribution, I prefer to instead stretch the distributional perspective back to the Chinese themselves, and to blur the divide between “tiny diversions of value” and “marginal gains” (Guyer 2004) and profits. The reason for this is that many of my Tanzanian interlocutors were not content with distribution, but rather mapped accumulative strategies which extended from petty

trade in Kariakoo to the commissioning of production in China. For some, the Chinese presence enabled accumulative strategies, but for others, the Chinese presence blocked them.

As I will demonstrate, the position these actors occupy within the distribution chain is more than the product of market logics, but also a site of contestation where one's place in the trade order turns on moral orders of race, nation, class, and gender. These play out visually in the wholesale market of Kariakoo, the primary node for the importation and distribution of Chinese goods arriving in Tanzania. It is not the Chinese presence in Tanzania in an abstract sense which is controversial, but rather the position Chinese migrants occupy within the larger trade order.

Kariakoo and the Politics of Imports

The transformations of the Kariakoo district in the long 20th century bear witness to the shifting politics of trade formations in East Africa. A consistent theme of these politics have been efforts to construct a trade order wherein African producers, traders, and consumers would be empowered. The meaning of these politics have shifted from the colonial to socialist to neoliberal eras. The transformation of Kariakoo district has reflected these shifts. The name itself is associated with colonialism, a derivation of the British "Carrier Corps," which had been stationed in the area (Brennan and Burton 2007). Kariakoo was initially designated as a "native quarter" by the Germans, but that designation obscures Kariakoo as a cosmopolitan space shaped by multiple migrations from both overseas and from the interior. The earlier recorded inhabitants of the region which includes were the Wazaramo and Washomvi. The Shomvi, like other Swahili groups, claimed ancestry from earlier Arab and Persian traders who visited the coast, whereas the Zaramo traced descent inland.²² During the period of both the Caravan trade and colonialism, the

²²Under colonialism, however, the two groups were lumped together as Zaramo (Brennan 2012:58–70).

region was settled by additional groups, particularly the Wayao and the Wamanyema from Congo by way of Kigoma.²³

German and British colonial administrators, in an attempt to establish rigid boundaries and hierarchies within Dar es Salaam on the basis of race, designated Kariakoo as a “Native” district, and divided it with a *cordon sanitaire* from Kisutu, the Asian district, and Posta, the European district. Colonial administrators justified this segregation within the paternalistic logic of “protecting” Africans from Asian exploitation. The British, per their League of Nations mandate, were unable to implement explicitly racial segregation, but nonetheless enforced *de facto* segregation through housing regulations which barred Africans from selling land to Indians (Brennan 2012).²⁴

The regulation of business in Kariakoo and Tanzania more broadly has historically aimed to create “non-exploitive” trading relationships, at first according to a colonial racialist paternalism, and later according to the goal of building African socialism. Kariakoo market began as a wholesale market for the distribution of agricultural goods from the countryside to the city. The Germans built a market complex in 1914 in order to regulate market transactions according to the concept of *Markthallenzwang* (gm. obligation to trade at market halls), in order to “prevent African farmers and traders from entering credit relationships with Asian shop owners, which

²³ There was even a small group of Chinese from Guangzhou who settled in the neighborhoods around Kariakoo during the colonial period. Evidence of their presence is found in a small Chinese Cemetery enclosed within a larger Wamanyema cemetery located just outside of Kariakoo. The cemetery was granted to the community to administer by colonial administrators as the only freehold cemetery in Dar es Salaam (Leslie 1963). The Wamanyema were Muslim, and they opened the cemetery not only to other Muslim urban migrants, but also to the Chinese community. Several of these Chinese operated farms close to Kariakoo selling raising vegetables. Despite this, few contemporary residents remember the community, but the traces of their presence and the details of their burial indicates the longstanding cosmopolitanism and inclusiveness of the region.

²⁴ Indians nevertheless moved into Kariakoo, and in a process which prefigured the early 21st century arrival of the Chinese, raised rent prices, and actually made some local African landlords, particularly Manyema women, wealthier. Kariakoo therefore developed into one of the key places in the colonial era where Indians and African lived in close proximity (Brennan 2012).

colonial officials considered morally questionable and exploitative” (Brühwiler 2014:31). In 1975, the market was replaced by a modernist structure designed by the architect B.J. Amuli, with the upper levels housing shops operated by nationalized companies and socialist cooperatives. As Brühwiler writes, “the new Kariakoo market was not only a symbol of modern consumer culture but also a model for socialist wholesale and retail trade in urban Tanzania. In Nyerere’s view, the new market building symbolized socialist modernity and encapsulated an economic system free of exploitation and inequality” (Brühwiler 2014:30). Accordingly, the importation of a variety of consumer goods like milk and sugar, cement and textiles were restricted to state-owned trading companies and state-owned manufacturers (Ndulu and Semboja 1994:541).²⁵

The private companies licensed to import during this period were primarily run by Indians and located in Kisutu. In order to import manufactured goods from abroad, one needed to obtain import licenses from the government, and before 1984, foreign exchange licensing (Dean, Desai, and Riedel 1994:48). These necessitated relationships between Indian importers and government officials, and the payment of tips. The limited number of importers meant both high profits, but also risks.²⁶

In the late 1980s, under the aegis of the Economic Recovery Program, the government began exempting goods from confinement, opening the market for imported goods (Ndulu and Semboja 1994:542). By 1989, the state monopoly of wholesale trading was “essentially dismantled” (Dean, Desai, and Riedel 1994:48), opening distribution to new sets of actors.

²⁵ In many cases, state-owned manufacturers were given monopolies over the importation of the same goods. The importation of footwear, for example, which the Chinese would later dominate, became a monopoly of the Tanzania Shoe Company in the late 1960s (Ndulu and Semboja 1994:542).

²⁶ Mr. Patel, a sixty year old Indian man described to me how in the early 1980s, he went into business with a partner to import auto parts from Indian and the United Kingdom. There were only six companies at the time importing, and they were able to sell the parts in Tanzania for eight times the price they had paid for them. In 1984, however, his partner was placed in jail for several months because there was a government crackdown on “rich people, which meant Indians. If you were rich, you had to go to jail.”

Kariakoo emerged in this period to replace Kisutu as the key entrepôt for wholesaling and retailing imported goods. The marketplace rapidly expanded from confines of the Kariakoo complex to encompass the entire district.²⁷ During this period, Indians came to Kariakoo in greater numbers and came to dominate the retail shop business. They were joined by a new wave of migrants from northern and southern Tanzania. The northern migrants, particularly those from the Chagga ethnic group, succeeded in accumulating a dominant economic position which challenged the dominance of the Indians. The southern migrants, however, came from some of the poorest regions of the country, and they have remained predominantly associated with petty trade. The name for these men, *wamachinga*, originally referred to a *kabilia* (sw. ethnic group, or “tribe”) named *Mchinga* near Lindi. Because many of the poor traders who came to Dar were from this region, the name came to apply to them all (Liviga and Mekacha 1998; cited in Ogawa 2006:34).²⁸ The term *wamachinga* has since become generalized to refer to anyone engaged in small trade.²⁹

Mitumba (sw. second hand clothes) would play an important role in the development of Kariakoo as the new trading *entrepôt*, prefiguring the importation of Chinese commodities. Second-hand clothes have sustained trading economies throughout Africa (Adebayo 2015; Hansen 2000; Ogawa 2006). In Tanzania, clothes have been imported by container by Indian wholesalers, and their contents are subsequently auctioned off in portions to other wholesalers and retailers down to petty traders who retail directly to consumers (Ogawa 2006).

²⁷ The original complex remains at the center as an agricultural depot, the upper levels of the complex specializing selling pesticides and farming equipment.

²⁸ Although an alternative folk explanation is that the term derives from the English term *marching guys* (May 1996).

²⁹ For example, the young men who sell coffee are associated with a district called Waha in Kigoma. The young men who sell peanuts are associated with Dodoma. The people who sell tea and ginger tea are associated with the *Wasambaa* from the Usambara Mountains. The *Wachagga* are associated with shoes, and the *Wakinga* are associated with clothes. A limited number of these traders began traveling to Dubai or China.

The transformation of Kariakoo was directly related to both the liberalization of the Tanzanian economy *and also* shifts in the global economy. Kariakoo, and the distribution of goods which occurs there, provides an alternative vantage point for witnessing the transformations of Tanzania and the global economy over the *long durée*. State control over the importation and distribution of foreign manufactured commodities was a critical nexus for pursuing the goals of *ujamaa* and the construction of an alternative network of global exchange among the poor. The importation of Chinese goods during the construction of TAZARA was a deliberate project, but the limits of these policies became increasingly evident through increased smuggling which finally led to lifting of restrictions during the period of liberalization. The return of Chinese goods in this period corresponded less to a deliberate project of south-south cooperation, but rather to broader shifts in the global division of labor which led to China becoming a site of manufacture for goods destined for locations in the global north as well. The new inequalities engendered by these shifts, limitations for some actors and new possibilities for others, again called the Tanzanian role in the global division of labor into question at the same time the Chinese state itself sought to build on earlier projects of socialist solidarity to argue that an emergent Chinese presence was distinctively non-exploitative. As I describe next, the shifting of global production to China transformed the geography of where commodities were sourced and coincided with shifting hierarchies of trade within Tanzania. The entry of Chinese goods, and later, Chinese traders themselves, would have wide ranging effects, but they were also an acceleration of processes that had already begun.

The Mutual Constitution of Chinese Trade in Kariakoo

The opening of the Tanzanian market to increased volumes of foreign imports developed in tandem with increased rural-to-urban migration, and both have developed in tandem with the development of China as a center of manufacturing and capitalist accumulation. The classical theory of imperialism, as developed by Hobson (1968) and Lenin (1999), was that the capitalist

acceleration of industrial production leads inevitably to over-accumulation crises, falling profits, and slowed economic growth. In order to sustain economic growth, the bourgeois class is compelled to seek new sites for divesting the surplus, including what Harvey calls a “spatial fix” (2001): the opening of new consumer markets for industrial goods, foreign investment opportunities for finance capital, and, especially in the case for China, new construction projects. The emergence of the global Chinese economy following the reforms of the 1980s has followed a similar trajectory of capitalist expansion. The development of Chinese industry was in conjunction with neoliberalism and the shifting of industrial production to the peripheries of global capitalism. By the early 2010s, however, Chinese industrial capacity had exceeded global demand. Faced with rising wages, falling profits and an overcapacity of Chinese infrastructure, the Chinese state has begun to consider its efforts to encourage companies to “go out,” already a policy for several decades, to be critical to future Chinese growth.

The concept of the New Maritime Silk Road is premised on large-scale infrastructure projects, but there is perhaps an irony in that across the Indian Ocean region, small-scale itinerant traders have remained important in the distribution of inexpensive Chinese-manufactured goods, what Matthews calls “low-end globalization” (2011). The expansion of global China as an assemblage of inexpensive commodities has been conducted largely through these networks. The concept of capital is by itself an abstraction, but it can be illustrated by attending to the decisions of capitalists. If one does this, the understanding of the expansion of Chinese capital cannot be through the agency of a singular Chinese state alone, but the decisions and individual life strategies undertaken by a wide variety of both Chinese and African individuals. The New Maritime Silk Road, in other words, was a project of distributed agency before it was a geostrategic project.

What I mean by *distributed agency* is that the expansion of Chinese goods into African markets has been mutually constituted by African and Chinese actors who have *both* operated under the framework that industrial production is located in China and consumers are located in

Africa. These have in practice involved the migration of Africans to China and the migration of Chinese to Africa in order to do the same business: sell Chinese commodities to African distributors and customers. The connections formed by these activities have themselves facilitated Chinese migration to places like Tanzania. There are a multitude of routes through which Chinese are introduced to Tanzania. Among the earliest were those who first visited as staff on state-sponsored projects, and then later returned as private investors. Others learned about the Tanzanian market from African traders themselves who came to China or to Dubai.

African traders would travel to Dubai in order to purchase Chinese-manufactured goods from Chinese traders who had rented wholesale shops there. Chinese traders learned about Tanzania and other markets through these encounters. Some of them expanded their businesses by opening additional stores in Africa, and hiring other Chinese to run them, while other bosses moved themselves to Africa. Tanzanians too began traveling directly to Guangzhou or Yiwu to search for suppliers. Chinese had also learned about Tanzania through coming to the country previously as employees for Chinese companies, or from Tanzanians in China. After a while, many of the Chinese who came to Tanzania had learned from other Chinese already there. While Dubai's significance has diminished, there are Tanzanian traders who still purchase there because the Chinese-manufactured products to be found there, destined for the Middle Eastern or European market, are of higher quality than the inexpensive versions marketed in Africa. The replacement of Dubai by direct trade conducted by East Africans going to China and Chinese going to East Africa is an example of a common phenomenon where traders seek to go around the "middlemen." In the case of Chinese going to Tanzania, it meant the successive replacement of different stages of the African middlemen who had previously controlled the trade.

The Development of Wholesale Trading between China and Tanzania

Many Chinese wholesalers in Kariakoo originate from the southern provinces of Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong. These are provinces which have historically been the source of successive transnational movements of Chinese. The reasons for this have been a regional geography

oriented to the ocean, proximity to ports of trade with Southeast Asia, and later Europeans, and political marginalization *vis-à-vis* the centering of political power in the north (Zhang 2001; Chu 2010; Yang 1994). For some Chinese traders originating from these regions, wholesaling in Tanzania is an extension of the kind of work they had previously done in China. There are many wholesalers, for example, from the prefectural city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province. During the 1980s and 1990s, people from Wenzhou, not unlike the Chagga in Tanzania, migrated throughout China, and through the opening of retail shops, facilitated the distribution of consumer products from the industrial regions of south China to the rest of the country. The role of these middlemen have gradually declined, however, with changes in distribution, particularly the rise of online shopping.

The cities of Yiwu in Zhejiang, and Guangzhou in Guangdong, themselves developed into *entrepôts* of export trading, attracting foreign traders from across the world, including Africa. Many Tanzanian shopkeepers I met in Kariakoo either themselves (or a close relative) travel to “Guangzhu” (the Kiswahili pronunciation of Guangzhou) to procure goods. Likewise, many of the Chinese shopkeepers I met had previously worked in the wholesale markets of either Guangzhou or Yiwu, and it was there they first met some of their Tanzanian customers.

The earliest Chinese wholesalers who came to Tanzania in the late 1990s and early 2000s did not rent shops in Kariakoo. Instead, they rented warehouses near the airport.³⁰ The Chinese who came to sell in Kariakoo would do so out of the backs of trucks they would park on the street, displaying samples of their goods: artificial flowers and plates. As one older Chinese shopkeeper remembered, it was a method of marketing “well-adapted” to the style of Tanzanian business, resembling the *wamachinga* who also did not rent shops and sold their wares on the street. It was visually striking for Tanzanians. As one Tanzanian man told me, people at the time

³⁰ As of 2015, Chinese wholesalers who provide Chinese-produced *kitenge* cloth have restricted themselves to that area.

“had never seen non-Africans doing this kind of business.”³¹ The image has left a lasting impression. Although by 2014, there were around 300 Chinese shops, and they no longer sold from the back of trucks, Tanzanians continued to describe Chinese business in Kariakoo as doing the work of *machinga*.

Nonetheless, before Chinese began opening shops in Kariakoo, there was still a degree of separation between the Chinese and Tanzanian positions in the distribution network. Chinese suppliers sold products like electronics and auto parts to Indian-owned and Chagga-owned shops, which in turn sold to customers and wholesalers, who in turn sold upcountry. When they began opening their own shops, they began to compete against their own customers by selling to the latter’s customers directly.

The Chinese offered lower prices than the middlemen, and were therefore able to attract a large pool of customers, and rapidly earn large profits. This was especially true in the shoe trade. Chinese traders reminisced that when they first arrived in the mid-2000s, there would be lines outside their shops. The contents of a shipping container arriving one day would be sold off within a single day. The profitability of shoes attracted other Chinese traders, and they soon came to dominate the sale of shoes on Narun’gombe St in the center of Kariakoo.

The Organization of Chinese Shops

The Chinese wholesalers who come to Tanzania (and elsewhere) might have different relationships to the factories where the goods are produced. There are some wholesalers who are the direct representatives of factories. These factories, many of them family-owned, have come to depend on the African market following the falling profitability of the Chinese market.

Mr. Chen, for example, managed a business in Kariakoo wholesaling athletic clothing on behalf of his relative. The family owned a clothing factory in Guangxi province (next to Guangdong). In the past, they produced for the Chinese market, but they now produce primarily

³¹ It was visually striking, however, in a manner which aligned with broader changes in Tanzania. A *Daily News* photo of a truck-side Chinese trader the mid-2000s includes the headline “Faces of Liberalization.”

for the African and Latin American markets. The Latin American business was developed by Latin American traders who travel to China, but the African business was developed by Mr. Chen's relative, who has opened wholesale shops in cities across the continent and hired other Chinese to operate them. He became introduced to the African market after having first come to Tanzania to work for another Chinese clothing wholesaler. He eventually left that shop, and used the network of Tanzanian customers he had met to begin selling clothes from his family's factory.

Mr. Shen, who was from Northeast China, followed a similar trajectory, but one that was more localized to East Africa. He had owned an electronics factory in Harbin which gradually became less profitable. In the early 2000s, he by chance visited Uganda at the invitation of a friend, a comedian who was part of a Chinese cultural delegation. He discovered there was a market for shoes, so he started a factory in Guangzhou, and opened a wholesale shop in Kampala. Later, he opened another shop in Kariakoo.

There are other wholesalers who operate as agents for factories, or set up independent trading firms that act as exclusive agents for several producers. There are motorcycle companies, for example, which grant individual business people exclusive rights to sell their bikes in a country. There are other companies which have set themselves up as general import-export firms. There is one company from Yiwu which has exclusive rights to sell a line of lightbulbs. Except for those operating factories, wholesalers are not committed to selling a single line of products, but are flexible depending on what they discover to be in demand in the market, and also on the basis of their own personal connections. There was a small team of three young Chinese men who sold socks, but because their boss back in China had a friend who owned a toilet paper factory, they also began selling toilet paper. Chinese interlocutors frequently explain this behavior in terms of rational economic behavior. "If people buy, we will sell."

There are also many Chinese wholesalers in Kariakoo who were involved in neither trade nor production before coming to Tanzania. I met several migrant entrepreneurs, for example, who had been school teachers in China, but wanted to make more money than their current salary had

provided. Import trading is an attractive entry-level enterprise because one does not need to invest as much in fixed capital.³² At minimum, all one needs to do is rent storage, and in the event something goes wrong, it is relatively easy to clear the inventory and exit. In the other event, import trading is the basis upon which other enterprises can be pursued. Among shoe importers, there were a number of shops which had already established factories in Tanzania for the manufacture of rubber shoes, although most shops with local factories also continued to import other varieties from China. Wholesaling also provides a period in which shopkeepers learn the market, develop customers and relationships, and explore other opportunities. Not every wholesaler does this, but many of the long-term Chinese residents I met who had been successful in starting factories and engaging in other businesses began their careers in Kariakoo.³³

Chinese working and living in Tanzania distinguish between those who come to “do business” (ch. 做生意), and those who come to “work” (ch. 打工) for others. The Chinese wholesale shops I visited employed, on average, three or four Chinese, and an equal number of Tanzanians. Prior relationships between these employees varied by shop. Some of the shops were run as family enterprises, and the Chinese who worked in the shop were all related either through affinal or consanguine ties. There is one family from Fujian, for example, which owns multiple shoe shops in Kariakoo. In most cases, the boss would first come to Tanzania to explore the market, rent storage and maybe a shop frame, and register the business. They would then hire family or other employees to manage the shop while they returned to China, or while they went to manage business in other countries.

³² I did not conduct a survey of what the start-up costs for a wholesale shop were, but one trader described \$45,000 USD as an average initial investment.

³³ For example, I visited the factory of a man who had worked as a schoolteacher in Northeastern China before coming to Tanzania to sell shoes in the mid-2000s. He subsequently raised enough money to start a factory. He soon earned enough to send his children to school in England, purchase a vineyard in New Zealand, transfer management of the factory to a relative, and retire himself to New Zealand.

The employees hired are usually young men just out of college, and to a lesser extent, younger women. Many of them have personal connections to the boss, being either relatives, or the children of the boss's friends and hometown neighbors. I also found many of them were previously strangers whom the bosses hired through online employment portals. The young Chinese people who work in these shops usually sign two-year contracts, with the possibility of renewal. Salaries were sometimes paid in full to accounts in China, whereby everyday living expenses in Tanzania were jointly handled by the employees who lived together in rented apartments around Kariakoo or further afield. Employees maintain a rotating system which insures there is always a Chinese employee present to look after the business whenever the other returns home to China. This means that employees will return home for Chinese New Year on some years, but remain in Tanzania on others. Most of the employees I spoke with did not have long-term plans to "develop" in Tanzania, but to simply earn enough to return to China, purchase a home, and marry. The few who did have plans would do so by eventually leaving their job and starting their own businesses.

The stated motivations to seek employment in Tanzania included obtaining both business and life experience which would be helpful to future careers either in Africa or back in China. These stated motivations are often accompanied by assessments of the difficulties of establishing a career in contemporary China. "There are eight million college graduates per year," explained one young man who had dropped out of college to work in Tanzania, "eight million!" And there were not enough desirable jobs to absorb them. In addition, young Chinese men in particular face pressures to purchase a home, a prerequisite to finding a marriage partner. Salaries in the trade business for employees averaged about \$10,000USD/per year, sometimes twice that they could find in China, still slightly above the national average of \$4500USD/per year for new graduates. These economic factors led many of the employees I spoke with to describe their decision to

migrate as a necessity rather than an affirmative interest in developing long term in Tanzania.³⁴

In contrast, they were surprised to learn that an American graduate student such as myself received a fellowship stipend twice the amount they earned in a year. There were no opportunities like that for Chinese students. Some told me they envied my position, wishing they could do travel and do research instead of working. Other asked why an American who could go anywhere in the world go *here*? “Americans go to China, but Chinese go to Africa because they are poor,” explained one of my interlocutors. Others indicated they would rather travel to Europe or the United States, but as Chinese citizens, they were unable to get a visa.

It is important to highlight these statements because dominant narratives of China-Africa relations, whether of “empire” or “cooperation,” routinely neglect how these migration trajectories and economic choices continue to unfold within a global hierarchy of value wherein “the West,” and even the United States, remain destinations. Chinese migrants often look at African countries through the lens of what they are not: “developed countries” (ch. 发展国家). Where China sits in this hierarchy depends on who one is talking to, and also on where in China the person comes from. Yuan Jun originated from Chengdu, in Sichuan Province, and had worked as an employee for a factory shop in one of the large wholesale centers for footwear in Guangzhou. A customer of theirs, Mr. Shen, operated a shop in Kariakoo, and was looking for an employee to help manage his shop. He convinced Yuan Jun and his boss that it would be good for Yuan Jun, at his age, to come to Tanzania for a contract period of one to two years, and learn about the African market in person. “Africa is a good place for young people,” the sixty year old

³⁴ Even for those who already had homes and started families, educational expenses and other related aspirations justified employment abroad. Mr. Long had been a high school teacher in Hunan. He already had a house, and was already married with children. As he explained, he could have retired comfortably, but he decided to work in Tanzania to help pay for his children’s education *and* in order provide a lifestyle which was above mere comfort.

Mr. Shen explained, “the local skills are low (ch. 本地的技术很低). What could they do in the US?”³⁵

No matter how such assumptions are articulated, they point to the fact that Chinese migration to Africa is premised on an ideology of comparative advantage and conditions of material inequality between Chinese industrial capital and African consumers. The dynamic of capitalist overproduction which leads capitalists to seek new markets is a process which plays out at many levels, through the decisions and trajectories of many individual people faced with similar pressures. The dynamics might not even express themselves through individual trajectories, but through simply the kinds of constraints and opportunities they open to people in the right or wrong time and place. Therefore, even though southern Chinese from Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong predominate, wholesalers from all parts of China can be found in Kariakoo.

The traders who discovered markets for Chinese factories facilitate the distributed agency of capital. There are a multitude of routes through which Chinese are introduced to Tanzania. I have already discussed Dubai as one node through which the China-Tanzania trade was facilitated. By 2015, with only a couple of exceptions, every Chinese expatriate I spoke with in Tanzania had come to the country on the basis of connections other people had already established. Chinese frequently learned of opportunities in Tanzania through family or friends who already operated businesses there. It was through these links they would either be invited, or learn of what kinds of businesses were profitable. Over the course of several months in 2015, a young man named Mr. Yang attempted to set up a wholesale business in Kariakoo importing farm equipment. He had learned of Tanzania through his father’s friend, who already owned a shop in

³⁵ This is not a logic which is confined to the Chinese, or even to the practice of business. I had a conversation with an American expatriate in the NGO sector who described the appeal of working in Tanzania in terms of seeing how she could have a “greater impact” individually than she would in the United States. In both cases, the logic is the same, expatriate privileges are based on, and even depend on, assumptions about local deficits in skill.

Kariakoo. Affinal ties were particularly important among the Chinese expatriates with whom I was closer. Mr. Wang had come to Tanzania from a coastal region of Fujian in the mid-2000s and engaged in a variety of enterprises. This included the wholesaling of a brand of Chinese motorcycles. After his younger sister married, his brother-in-law left the Chinese state-owned firm he had been working at, and moved to Tanzania, where he also started wholesaling a different brand of Chinese motorcycles. There is a similar story with a factory. The daughter of a relative of the owner's wife, who worked in the factory, married a Chinese investor in Tanzania, who was in fact already well-established, but who also planned to start of factory producing the same product. This same investor has been in the country since 2001, and had ventures of greater or lesser size in textiles, water, construction, banking, and internet (to just name a few). He was also responsible for the development of an entire community of Chinese in Dar es Salaam who all originated from the same time. He proudly (and likely accurately) claimed that he had personally introduced all those Chinese in Tanzania who were from his home province. "I brought them all here!" he said.

Tanzanians themselves have also introduced Tanzania to Chinese migrants. For example, Faraji had lived and studied in Beijing and Nanning for twelve years during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Through a Chinese friend, he began working in their shoe factory in Beijing. The factory wanted him to help make connections with African customers. In 1998, he returned to Tanzania to arrange his marriage, but soon after, his Chinese friends/former employers came to Tanzania and opened one of the first Chinese shops selling shoes in Kariakoo. In 2002, he began working for them, and when they went back to China, he continued to run the shop for them. Later, they returned to partner with Faraji in opening a shoe factory outside of Dar es Salaam. They created a local brand of shoes named after Faraji's grandmother. The important thing to note about cases like this is that whether the initiative comes from Chinese or Tanzanian actors, the business model is similar: industrial production in China and consumers in Tanzania. Faraji and his partners' efforts to develop industrial production in Tanzania indicates a shift from this

pattern, but as he explained to me, and as I will discuss in greater detail later, the bulk of production remains centered in China.

The business model is attractive to a variety of actors, regardless of what kind of work they did before.³⁶ Tumaini is a Tanzanian businessman who had not gone to China himself, but had worked for two different Chinese companies based in Dar. He worked for one Chinese construction company as a supervisor. It was in that company that he met a man named Mr. Peng. Eventually Tumaini decided to leave the company and go into business selling imported PVC pipes. Chinese PVC was cheaper than the PVC produced by Indian-owned factories in Tanzania. Mr. Peng went into business with him, helping arrange contacts with a factory in China. Mr. Peng sent a young Chinese employee, Fred, to help Tumaini. Mr. Peng was planning to open a factory in Tanzania and manufacture the pipes there, but as Tumaini told me, he was not interested in joining that venture. He was just interested in selling the pipes. His relationship with Mr. Peng was that of distributor and supplier.

Chinese trajectories to Tanzania consist of diverse individual and family life projects. Nonetheless, many of these trajectories suggest similar constraints on the possibilities of personal economic development in China, which leads people to seek opportunities abroad. To an extent, these are no different than “migrant” trajectories more generally, but in this case, these are entangled with an assemblage of Chinese practices, and in particular, a critical moment in the development of the Chinese state, which leads them to be haunted by the specter of “colonialism” or “imperialism.”

“Colonization” Reconsidered

The Chinese presence, in terms of both commodities and people, has been facilitated by a variety of agents through a variety of channels, rather than being the product of a singular *Chinese*

³⁶ There are also those Chinese who were introduced to Tanzania through employment in Chinese State Owned Enterprises. The former head of the Kariakoo Chinese Chamber of Commerce had this trajectory. He had first arrived in 1998 with an SOE, and moved to Kariakoo in 2003 to engage in trade.

agency. In responding to accusations that the Chinese who migrate to Africa are “imperialists,” several scholars have sought to argue that the Chinese are “migrants,” who like migrants throughout history, have traveled forth to seek a better future for themselves and the next generation (Chatelard 2013). The pattern of temporary sojourns with the intention to return home not only resonates with earlier waves of Chinese migration, but the same regions of emigration are prominent. The migration also resonates with patterns of global migration more generally dates. The difference is the shifting position of China in the global economic system has changed the kind of work Chinese do abroad, but it has also cast this migration into comparison with other forms of historical analogy. Some have preferred comparisons to “settlers,” which denotes comparisons with European migration, and maybe even Indians or Lebanese (French 2014). The multiplicity of terminological possibility suggests that concepts like colonization, or even mere migration, are insufficient for capturing what is happening.

An emphasis on the universality of the migrant experience humanizes the agents and is ethically affirmative, even progressive, in ways that “settler” is not. In counteracting orientalist stereotypes, it is even necessary. The problem, however, resides in how the conditions of possibility for migration are recognized. Mr. Shen is one example of a migrant who affirms that he belongs to a category that possess not just skills and abilities absent in the local population, but skills and abilities associated with modernity and development. The assumption that one’s success in a place is based on the ability to do things unavailable to the local population is a symptom of the imperial imagination, but it does not require even being the principal imperialist. The Indians who came to East Africa in the 19th century were not colonists, but their imagination of East Africa was inflected by a *terra nullius* logic which is reproduced among Chinese migrants (Desai 2013).

The problem is the leap popular writers like Howard French (2014) make from that to grander narratives of an emergent, singular *Chinese* empire. One reason for this is that the appearance of a centralized political system, reinforced by a Chinese public discourse of unity,

successfully masks the fact that even within the Chinese government, there are disparate centers of power with independent trajectories and competing interests (Brautigam 2009). The assemblage of Chinese agents nonetheless succeed in generating a “China effect,” the impression of singularity although what is actually happening is better described as “distributed agency” (Enfield and Kockelman 2017). In this situation, Chinese practices are assumed to be merely “animators” for a Chinese imperial “principal”(Goffman 1981).³⁷

In this chapter, I emphasize both Chinese *and* African individuals are authors of “Chinese expansion” because the movement of Chinese goods has been facilitated by a diverse range of actors. The “Chinese presence” in Africa has been experienced primarily as a material phenomenon, an effluence of “Made in China” goods rather than direct interaction with Chinese individuals. There has, of course, also been an effluence of “Made in China” goods in the West, but that has not been accompanied by any serious discourse about “Chinese imperialism” in the West.³⁸ The visibility of Chinese goods in Africa, however, is heightened by the fact that, as I will show, so many economic livelihoods are connected to their import and distribution.

As described in the previous chapter, the political economy of the East African coast can be narrated as the historical struggle of different individuals and collectivities to occupy an advantageous position along the distributional channels of trade. Attention to trade hierarchies provide a different perspective on the question of “empire,” shifting the question from political formations, citizenship, and territoriality as primary to a framework which starts with transnational economic networks and routes of distribution. The problematic of local autonomy

³⁷ This can emerge in the process of claims-making about China in Africa. For example, during an interview with a Tanzanian journalist, he talked about three kinds of “Chinese” business in Kariakoo: local businesses backed by Chinese capital, Chinese agents working in joint companies, and representatives of Chinese factories. The implication that the Tanzanian-run shops were backed by Chinese capital, however, could be interpreted as either a claim the shops were owned by the Chinese *or* that Tanzanian traders’ business depended entirely on production originating in China.

³⁸ Although anti-Chinese populism, such as that evidenced in certain aspects of the election campaign of Donald Trump, does occasionally treat Made in China as a Beijing conspiracy rather than a product of neoliberal globalization.

versus foreign intervention can be rethought in terms of the relative autonomy and agency afforded to economic actors, from consumers to traders, based on the position they occupy in trading hierarchies. The history of this trade is important because it complicates the notion of empire. Instead, we see a number of transnational dynamics at work, in which notions of political and economic autonomy are linked in part to the ability one has to consume and also the position one is able to occupy in a trade hierarchy.

In the next section, I demonstrate this through the differentiated effects that the Chinese presence has had on different agents in the hierarchy of trade.

Indian Gods and Chinese Liberators

“When the Chinese first came,” explained Larry, an older Chagga trader, “people thought they were liberators (sw. *wakombozi*).” It was liberation because ordinary Tanzanians could now afford to purchase clothing and everyday commodities formerly inaccessible to them. This is a theme which can be found throughout the African continent (Haugen and Carling 2005; Ndjio 2009). In Tanzania, the “liberation” had distinctive ethnic connotations. Inexpensive commodities meant “liberation” from the control of Indian middlemen. Indians had sold goods at higher prices than the Chinese. Mr. Liang, a Chinese businessman, proudly described to me in his office one afternoon how inexpensive Chinese goods had helped alleviate local poverty. “Goods used to be expensive here because the Arab and Indian traders had a monopoly. People here used to wear poor quality clothing. People used to be able to buy only one kitchen pan every three years, but now they can buy multiple pans.” Similarly, a Tanzanian retailer explained to me that Tanzanians liked the Chinese because they could now change into a different pair of clothes each day. People liked the Chinese because “everyone likes to look good.”

Indians had dominated the wholesale trade throughout the twentieth century. At the time of independence in 1961, only 12% of retail licenses were held by Africans. By 1976, only 30% of registered shops were owned by Africans. Following liberalization, a persistent hierarchy has

been between the position of Asians as wholesalers and Africans as middlemen and retailers (Aminzade 2013b). The Indian dominance of the wholesale and retail trade had already begun to wane with liberalization as new groups like the Chagga began to move in, but accelerated with the development of Sino-Tanzanian trade, and the entrance of Chinese traders themselves. Traders in Kariakoo remembered a time, still relatively recent, when Indians dominated.

“The Indians were like Gods,” Larry explained. “Every shop here was owned by Indians,” said Aarush, an Indian electronics wholesaler who remained in Kariakoo, “There was not a single shop owned by Africans. “ But now, according to Larry, “they fear Africans who are very much on top (sw. *juu sana*).”

The Chinese, Mr. Liang explained, had broken the monopoly of Indians and Arabs, helping consumers, but also opening space for African shopkeepers to enter the market. The Chinese had broken the monopoly because they approached business differently than the Indians and Arabs. Indians, he explained, profited through intra-ethnic collusion to maintain high prices. He shared a story repeated by Tanzanians about how if an African consumer goes searching for a good or service provided by an Indian, the Indian will call all the other Indians providing that good or service and together, and they will set the price. The Chinese, on the other hand, profited through both inter-ethnic, and even intra-ethnic competition, lowering prices to capture each other’s customers. “A ten thousand shilling item would become five thousand shillings.” Far from sharing information and colluding, the Chinese jealously hid their prices from each other. This had the effect of preventing the emergence of a monopoly and gradually undermining the Chinese traders’ own newfound dominance. The Indians and Arabs, according to Mr. Liang, had originally stood between the Chinese and the Africans, but the Chinese went to Tanzania directly, and opened the market to Africans-the Chagga in particular-who began going to China themselves and were now edging out the Chinese. These processes contributed to the transformation of the position of Indians in the trading hierarchy.

"We are now the same": The Chagga, Accumulation, and the End of the Asian Monopoly

The dynamics described above have a distinctively East African historicity and intelligibility; the latest chapter in a centuries-long saga of ethnicized trading diasporas rising and falling in the hierarchy of African trade. The erosion of Indian dominance in wholesaling can be attributed to multiple factors. When the *wamamachinga* began coming to Dar es Salaam, they posed a challenge to the Indian retailers, who opposed their presence. In 1993, the Dar municipal government attempted to regulate where informal traders could operate. Police seized merchandise from *wamachinga*, leading to a riot. The petty traders not only attacked police, but also Asian shop owners who they believed paid police to crack down on informal business (May 1996). During the same time, however, a mutually beneficial but tense relationship began to develop when shopkeepers began selling to the *wamachinga*, extending their customer base (May 1996; Lewinson 1998). In some cases, such as *mitumba*, Indian-African axes of wholesaler-retailer hierarchies persisted, but in other cases, these relationships facilitated capital accumulation among the subordinate trading groups.

The Chagga, for example, accumulated capital by purchasing from the Indians and reselling to African consumers around the country. The first Chagga migrants to Kariakoo, according to one Indian shopkeeper set up *banda* (sw. kiosks) selling foodstuffs. "They would buy from us," he continued, "and take it around Tanzania. They would make two hundred to three hundred percent profit. They would buy something for ten thousand and they might sell it for a hundred thousand elsewhere. They used the money to buy property and rent stalls. They thought of a way. Now most of the stores here are all African. We are now the same."

His explanation of how the Chagga were able to compete indicates the salience of racialized identities in the trade order. He attributed the profitability of African business to a lower standard of living. "We Indians are expensive," he said, "we rent expensive housing, we drive brand-name cars, we wear brand-name clothes, and we send our children to English medium schools. Africans don't pay as much for housing, they don't have private transport, they

take public transport, and they send their children to public schools." In business, Africans made less profit on any particular sale, but actually had a higher turnover. He explained that "if Indians purchase something at a wholesale price of \$5000, offer it at \$12000, and if the customer complains, they will sell at \$10,000 and still get 100% profit. African sellers don't do it the same way. If a customer cries, they will sell it at \$7000, or \$6000." In doing business this way, however, the Chagga had developed to a point where "we are now the same," underscoring how they had until recently been different. The trope of "sameness" appears again in this story when Tanzanian traders complain about the presence of the Chinese in the market.

The Chinese contributed to the accumulative trajectories of the Chagga by providing a continuous supply of inexpensive goods. According to some, it was the Tanzanians who began going to China, and according to others, it was the Chinese who first came to Tanzania. The difference is because there was already a small number of Tanzanian traders going to Guangzhou and Yiwu before the Chinese came. The establishment of Chinese importing firms in Dar es Salaam meant that Tanzanians could now purchase directly from Chinese suppliers without the need to travel to China.

The profitability of African business and Chinese goods was also attributed by some to illegality, particularly the evasion of customs duties and sales taxes. Prior to the emergence of Kariakoo as a wholesale market, most private importation was handled by a handful of Indian trading firms in Kisumu. Visiting an Indian wholesaler specializing in the sale of Tanzanian-produced items in Kisumu, he described the "Chinese" as profiting through the evasion of customs duties and sales taxes. The second time I spoke to him, however, he clarified that what he meant were not Chinese traders, but the Tanzanians in Kariakoo who sold Chinese goods. Most of these traders, he emphasized, bribed customs officials so that they did not need to pay import taxes. He also complained that most Tanzanian shops did not issue legally required receipts to customers or the pay the sales tax these receipts were designed to track. Importers like those in Kisumu, the man explained, had no means to compete against the traders in Kariakoo. This was the reason he said

he personally never sold imported goods. He had no means to be profitable legally.³⁹ The “Chinese,” as this example indicates, is a phenomenon which goes beyond Chinese traders themselves, and includes both goods and a broader set of structural transformations.

African-Asian Affinities in Contrast: Chinese vs. Indians

The entrance of the Chinese prompted varied re-conceptualizations of the relationship between Africans and Indians. The appearance of a new “Asian” trading diaspora could not help but be compared to the existing African-Asian axis that defined Tanzanian nationalism for over a century (Brennan 2012). Replacement of the Indians as middlemen could mean the Chinese were “closer” to the Tanzanians than the Indians have been. In terms of business, one Tanzanian wholesaler told me, “The Chinese and Tanzanians are very close, even more than others. The Chinese are easy to handle, their prices are low” unlike the Arabs and Indians who sold at higher prices. A Tanzanian man whose brother frequently traveled to China to do business told me that the Chinese integrated better than the Indians. “They eat the food, they learn the language, and they lend goods on credit (sw. *mali kauli*). They are not ‘proud’ (sw. *kujisikia*) like the Indians.” Favorable views of the Chinese can also be found in other industries that Chinese have invested in. The Tanzanian supervisor for a Chinese factory, unprompted, used the Indians as an example when responding to a question about his relationship to the Chinese. He had worked for an Indian-run factory before, but he did not like their management style. The Chinese taught their employees new skills, he argued, and although the situation varied from factory to factory, there were opportunities for people like him to advance.

The favorability direction of the comparison, I discovered, depended on which point the Chinese entered into their individual narratives of mobility. The Tanzanian traders who, along

³⁹ The refusal to purchase the government-issued tax printers was in fact an ongoing political issue throughout the time I conducted fieldwork, and many Tanzanian traders refused to purchase them, claiming they were too expensive. Most Chinese shops I visited, however, did purchase these machines and issue legal receipts, although they too complained about problems with the network.

with the Indians, dominated the wholesale trade prior to the entry of Chinese traders tended to view the Indians favorably to the Chinese. “The Indians taught us how to do business,” explained Eric, a Chagga shopkeeper whose handbag business had seen a steady decline due to competition from the Chinese over the previous decade. The Chagga, as one man explained, had “given competition to the Indians,” following their model, but they were now both threatened by the Chinese.

The longer-term presence of the Indians has also contributed to how they are evaluated in comparison to the Chinese. A Chagga trader described how the Chinese traders just earn their money and leave. She then asked me rhetorically, “Do you see any Chinese hotels?” The irony was that there was in fact a new Chinese hotel just down the street, but the idea expressed is that Chinese capital is extractive and mobile. Unlike the Indians, who have a longer history in East Africa and who have been there for multiple generations, the Chinese are seen to have only come to Tanzania for the short term with the intention to make a profit, and with no longstanding local attachments. The Chinese themselves might remain physically present, but people would emphasize that it was the *money* that did not stay in Tanzania. Chinese expatriates themselves identified their short-term economic interests in Tanzania, different from the Indians, as a source of vulnerability. Hong Hui, a Kariakoo trader, offered the perspective that the robbery of Chinese could be attributed to resentment of the fact that much of the cash generated by Chinese business never stayed long in Tanzania, but was quickly sent back to China.

In what looks like an historical irony, but is actually quite intelligible given the history of the Swahili coast, the Indians have become indigenized through the presence of a new kind of “Asian” foreigner. This is what Neema meant in the introductory vignette of this dissertation when he told Mr. Ren, “the Indians are part of us.” Mr. Ren had wanted to challenge Neema’s criticism of the Chinese by asking about the Indians, but it was the Chinese presence itself which helped resituate the presence of the Indians. There were still other Tanzanians, however, who

considered the Chinese and Indians to be similar; to be similarly strict bosses, or to be similarly insular.

Chinese understandings of the Indians are largely shaped by their interpretation of European colonialism. A frequent folk explanation among Chinese to explain the presence of the Indians is that they were brought by Western colonists to “manage” the “black people.” A Chinese shopkeeper who told me once that he did not like Indians compared what he considered to be the generosity of Africans with the “selfishness” of Indians.⁴⁰ He attributed this to them having been “managers.” Historically, however, the emergence of an Indian “middleman” class in Tanzania was not entirely the product of British imperial agency. Indians had been on the East African coast for centuries.⁴¹ Indians had been employed in the colonial civil service, but of greater significance was their role as shopkeepers. The Chinese rendering of this process as the British “bringing” the Indians to “manage,” is significant because it reveals what many Chinese think European colonialism *was*, and it also reveals particular assumptions about racial hierarchy.

The first is that it reproduces a popular imaginary of Indians in China as having (and continuing to be) auxiliaries or servants of Western imperialism. India, unlike China, was fully colonized by outsiders. This is an imaginary which has mapped onto contemporary continental geopolitical rivalries. The second is that it reinforces perceptions of African passivity, or even inability. For example, one Chinese interlocutor interpreted the post-liberalization return of Indian investment in governmental terms. He told me a story that, after initially forcing the Indians out, Africans “could not manage affairs,” so they had to invite the Indians back.

⁴⁰ His example was the common Swahili courtesy of offering a portion of one’s own meal to friends or even strangers, a practice that he said would never be found among Indians.

⁴¹ They were invited by the Sultan of Zanzibar in the 19th century to provide financing for caravan expeditions. It was the Germans who sought financing from already present Indians when they were establishing control of Tanganyika. The British did recruit Indian laborers for railway construction in Kenya, but despite invitations by British colonial leaders, migration was largely an Indian-led process (Desai 2013).

Whereas some Chinese sympathize with the Africans vis-à-vis the Indians, such as those who see Chinese business as having helped local consumers, others identify with the Indians vis-à-vis the Africans. One Chinese importer told me he preferred working with Indians to Africans because they were more “reliable” and that his Indian customers felt the same way about Chinese. It should be noted that his customer base was different than the wholesale shops to be found within Kariakoo. His customers included upper middle class households. Without the Indians or Chinese, he added, Tanzania would not be developing the way it was at the moment. In other words, it is a narrative of “Africa rising,” which is premised on the agency of foreigners, a colonialist trope.

Even though some Chinese saw themselves as outcompeting the Indians, there were also concerns that the position of the Chinese in Tanzanian society was not as stable or secure as the Indians. A Chinese manager shared with me his opinion that the negative treatment of the Chinese in the local press was a reflection of the biases and interests of their Indian owners. Another reason was that Indians were seen to be more effective, as a group, at protecting their interests. The Chinese lacked the same degree of “unity” (ch. 团结) competing against each other in the same industries on price, and driving themselves out of the market. As one young Chinese trader explained to me, an Indian family would divide businesses between them so that they did not all compete in the same sector. Chinese, on the other hand, would all rush in to do whatever happened to be profitable at that time. This included competing with members of the same family.

The entrance of the Chinese, and the Chinese style of doing business did not only contribute to the erosion of the Indian monopoly, but also had differential effects on African traders. The Chinese presence eroded the position of large African middlemen, but also opened the market for smaller traders to enter the trade.

Becoming Machinga: The *Faida* and *Hasara* of Chinese Presence

In the previous section, I began describing the meaning of Larry's story that "when the Chinese first came, people thought they were liberators (sw. *wakombozi*).” In this section, I continue that story, but also fill in what Larry said next, that people had started to resent the Chinese. There is a fine line between narratives of “liberation” and narratives of “invasion,” one applicable not only to histories of political-military conquest, but also to how the Chinese dominance of the market has been understood in different parts of the continent (regardless of what “market” we are talking about).⁴² Differential perceptions of the Chinese presence, however, is related to how different individuals and groups have been differentially affected economically

There is a difference between those who engaged in trade before the large-scale entry of Chinese traders and those who began after the Chinese arrived. Wholesalers who began importing from China prior to the mid-2000s tend to have strongly negative views of the Chinese presence. Wholesalers who began their businesses after the mid-2000s tend to have more positive views of the Chinese presence. The difference is that whereas the former group saw their control of the trade undermined by the Chinese coming directly to Africa, the latter group entered the market at a time when they could profit from purchasing directly from Chinese suppliers. In some Tanzanian trader narratives, the entry of the Chinese was the beginning of a loss in profit and position. In other narratives, a trader's story of accumulation began with purchasing and reselling small quantities of goods from the Chinese.

The Chinese affected local trading hierarchies in a variety of ways, including the real estate market.

⁴² For many consumers, this ambivalence between liberation and invasion is related to the quality and status of the goods themselves. As Dobler (2008), writing in a Namibian context, describes it, “being liberated means having the right of access to Western consumer goods – to be on a par with the former colonizers. In a paradoxical move, this makes the presence of South African-owned businesses selling the big international brands a sign of liberation, while Chinese traders appear as colonialists trying to fob off Namibians with cheap trinkets.”

The Chinese and the Kariakoo Real Estate Boom

The Chinese presence has affected Tanzanian shopkeepers in multiple ways. The first effect was to increase the costs of renting a shop frame. For example, a Tanzanian shopkeeper warned me about talking with Tanzanian landlords about the Chinese. They would just tell me good things about the Chinese, he said, because they had made a lot of money from the increased rent the Chinese paid. Tanzanian traders blamed the Chinese for increasing the rates for renting shop frames. One man explained that monthly rents increased from \$1,000,000 to \$2,500,000 Tsh per month after the Chinese came. “We can’t afford it!” he added.

The amounts varied by section of the marketplace, however. The biggest change in rent was for those shops which lined the street. Along the street where Chinese opened shops selling shoes, traders who could no longer afford the cost of frames along the street were forced to rent more inexpensive, albeit more inaccessible, frames inside the trading complexes. Business was not as good here as it was on the street, but if the rent for a street-side frame was \$1,000,000, then one inside would be \$300,000. Increased rents may have limited the availability of the best locations in the marketplace to the Chinese and wealthier Tanzanians, but it may have also had the unintended benefit of expanding the wholesale and retail trade beyond Kariakoo, promoting the development of marketplaces elsewhere in the city. As my research assistant argued, imported goods used to only be available in Kariakoo. The higher cost now of frames in Kariakoo, in addition to the availability of inexpensive Chinese goods, forced retailers to move out of Kariakoo and to open shops in other parts of the city, lowering the overall dependence on Kariakoo.

The increase of rent prices in the marketplace because of the entry of Chinese tenants willing to pay more may seem like a straightforward economic story, but the different narrative retellings of *how* it unfolded reveals divergent subjectivities of agency. A member of the Kariakoo Chinese Chamber of Commerce described Chinese traders themselves as the recipients of economic decisions made by landlords. The *landlords* charge *them*. He explained that local

Tanzanians were more competitive because they paid less for rent. To explain this, he then added that I might have noticed that for people of different skin color, there are different prices. He then added that it was like that in China too, with a “white price” being more expensive than the “Chinese price.” “It is like that anywhere in the world, but it is even more so here.”

The story Tanzanian tenants told, however, accused Chinese traders of deliberately offering massive amounts of cash to landlords in a concerted effort to replace the existing tenants. The transformation unfolded differently with different landlords, however, and in some places, social obligations between Tanzanian landlords and lessees prevailed over the economic benefits of renting directly to the Chinese.⁴³ In those cases where it did not, the Chinese were said to have paid rent months in advance. One of the effects attributed to this was that it provided a windfall for landlords who subsequently reinvested that money in real estate development around Kariakoo.⁴⁴ Real estate investors would approach the landlords of the remaining single-story complexes around Kariakoo and offer to develop the property into a multi-story trade and/or apartment complex. The contract allowed the original owner to remain living in the property for up to ten years. At the end of the ten years, the property fully transfers to the investor.

⁴³ The edges of the DDC, a large single-story complex originally built by the government during the socialist period as a social club, transformed into a marketplace in the mid-2000s when an investor named Omari Babu was given a contract to develop the exterior of the building with shop frames. The first people to rent frames were Tanzanians. According to a person familiar with the building, when the Chinese went to Omari, they offered him a high rent, but he told them he already had contracts with the original tenants which he could not break. The Chinese therefore went to the tenants as subletters, paying 800,000 per month. The tenants would then give 200,000 to Omari Babu. The contracts themselves were for at least six months to a year, but the Chinese did not know that, so the Tanzanian tenants renewed the leases. When I posed the counterfactual question why Omari simply did not rent directly to the Chinese, I was told that Omari already had a good relationship with the tenants, and as one person interpreted it, he could trust “the Swahili” better than the Chinese because he had already known them for a few years. This shows that there are limits to the idea that market incentives have overridden social relationships in Kariakoo. As of 2015, there were about ten Chinese wholesaler shops on the side of this complex facing the street. I was told by one of the complex’s administrators that Omari Babu’s contract was ending shortly, and that there were now plans to demolish the entire complex and construct a twenty-story building.

⁴⁴ The construction boom was attributed by some to the Chinese, but it was also funded on the profits of increased trade and bank loans. There was also a rumor that Somali pirate money was being laundered.

The effects on the local real estate market attributed to the Chinese resonates with patterns during the colonial period when the entrance of Indian tenants had provided windfalls to female Manyema landlords (Brennan 2012). The comparison is important because it demonstrates how Chinese presence is intelligible in ways that do not depend on the model of European settler colonialism. Instead, they resemble a powerful middleman minority challenging previous middlemen.

“They Don’t Want Us to Grow”: Falling Down the Trade Hierarchy

The second effect of the Chinese entry into Kariakoo was to diminish the role Tanzanians themselves had as middlemen. For Tanzanian wholesalers, it was not necessarily the presence of Chinese wholesalers in Tanzania which was controversial, but rather their presence *alongside* Tanzanians in Kariakoo. In moving from storehouses outside of Kariakoo into frames along the market streets, the Chinese breached the veil of limited visibility which allowed Tanzanian wholesalers to profit as middlemen. “The Chinese brought losses (sw. *wanaleta hasara*),” explained one older Tanzanian wholesaler. “At first, they brought profits, but later there were losses.” When the Chinese started renting frames in addition to stores, the “storage price” became the “frame price.” Their wholesale customers were no longer able to sell at a mark-up. This took customers away from their customers, but according to Tanzanian traders, the suppliers were unconcerned because they knew their wholesale customers could not go to China. They still had to buy from them. The advantage of being a wholesaler, as one man explained, is that you can “control the market.”

In Kariakoo, aspirations for socio-economic mobility entailed moving closer to the point of production. Petty traders aimed to be shopkeepers, retailers aimed to be wholesalers, wholesalers who purchased in Kariakoo aimed to purchase in China. The presence of Chinese goods *and* Chinese wholesalers enabled opportunities of mobility for some people, but limited mobility for others. In moving closer to the customers, Chinese wholesalers effectively blocked

the accumulative strategies of local traders. They limited mobility by occupying positions within the trade hierarchy that Tanzanian wholesalers had already occupied.

As Larry argued, “Tanzanians cannot rise with the Chinese. They block (sw. *wanaziba*) the opportunities of Tanzanians to develop their businesses (sw. *kukua kibiashara*). It keeps the Tanzanians as *wamachinga*. The Chinese come, they look around, and then they bring their family. They don't go to developed countries. When Tanzanians want to find a good life, they go to Europe or the United States. When Chinese want a good life, they go to Africa.” He continued that if there were to be xenophobic riots in Tanzania like there were in South Africa at the time, it would be “ten times as bad (sw. *mara kumi zaidi*). Tanzanians are tired (sw. *Watanzania wanachoka*). The only way for Tanzanians to have a good life was for the Chinese to go. “

In Larry's formulation, Chinese traders disrupted expected trajectories of global mobility (Europe or the United States), and instead came to Africa with the effect of blocking Tanzanians' own trajectories of mobility. “The Chinese don't want us to grow,” explained Njogwa. Njogwa's relatives had owned their shoe shop for ten years. They used to purchase the shoes from Dubai, but they now purchase all of them from Chinese wholesalers in Kariakoo.

“If your capital is low,” Njogwa explained, one could do good business with the Chinese. If your capital was high, however, it was difficult to compete with them. The constant pressure from price competition kept the Tanzanian wholesalers in a static position. The Chinese, according to Njogwa, did not want the Tanzanians to go to China. They wanted them to stay in Tanzania and buy from them in Tanzania. The price for Tanzanians in China was higher than for Tanzanians who bought here in Kariakoo. This was because the Chinese were able to get a better price from the factories. This enabled the Chinese wholesalers to dominate the local market. The wholesalers would then lend shoes on credit so that everyone was in debt to them. The man from whom Njogwa purchased shoes regularly walked around the market, visiting shops like his, checking the prices so that he could find a way to sell the same shoes cheaper.

As Njogwa was telling us this, the man he had been speaking of entered the shop, looking at the stack of yellow shoe boxes on the wall. “See?” Njogwa commented.

The reduction in business for Tanzanian middlemen was also related more broadly to the introduction of “fake” Chinese commodities rather than simply who was involved in the trade, but when complaining about the Chinese, this was a feature which was closely entangled for Tanzanian traders. The presence of the Chinese in the marketplace was seen to facilitate copying, and the destructive lowering of prices. The Chinese had been able to conquer the market, I was told, by “destroying originals.” Njogwa explained that people had used to buy originals, but now that everything is a copy, there is no longer any market for more expensive original shoes. Multiple shops illustrated this by showing me two versions of the shoes, original and fake. The majority of shoes are copies of other foreign designs, but Chinese manufacturers have also copied the designs of Chagga-designed shoes, and as of 2015, were also selling shoes in the style of the Masaai. One small retailer described himself as having bought shoes from both the Chinese and a Chagga designer, but recently, a Chinese company had begun copying the Chagga designer’s design. One trader told me he avoided Chinese friends because he did not want them looking around his store and copying the designs in Chinese factories (a concern shared among Chinese towards each other as well).⁴⁵

In response to the falling price of shoes, some wholesalers have positioned themselves as providers of higher-quality shoes. David had been in business since around 2003. He also purchased Chinese shoes, but purchases them from Dubai where the quality was higher. When I asked if falling prices here would ever lead him to sell more inexpensive shoes, he responded “I would go upmarket before I went down market.”

⁴⁵ During a conversation with a Chinese shoe wholesaler, the manager asked to see a woven pot holder I had purchased earlier and was carrying. He asked about the price, and inspected the materials with curiosity.

A loss of business was not just a loss of profit, but a loss of the possibility of growth, and also, I argue, a loss in social status. Therefore, even traders whose material conditions were relatively secure resented the loss in status. In previous sections, I have quoted from Larry, a wholesale trader who used to dominate the importation of shoes in Kariakoo. In 2015, he was the landlord for a Chinese business partner, Mr. Bo, who he first met in Dubai. Prior to speaking with him, I had assumed he might consider himself a beneficiary of trade with the Chinese. Other Tanzanian traders, however, told me that he was one of the earliest people to import shoes from China, but had subsequently lost business to the Chinese, and for that reason, according to one trader, was now bitter. Although I could never directly evaluate the quality of his friendship with his Chinese tenant, in conversation at least, he had a lot of critical things to say about Chinese business in general. Larry was a Chagga from Kilimanjaro who, according to other traders in Kariakoo, had started his career as *machinga*. Talking to him, however, I learned he had started out from a relatively advantaged position. His father had owned a *hoteli* in Arusha. Larry nonetheless began his own career in retail selling necklaces and other jewelry in Arusha. He subsequently became involved in the *mitumba* trade, purchasing clothing from wholesale markets in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. After Larry had raised some capital, he began traveling to Dubai and purchasing shoes from the Chinese there, before going to China directly. It was in Dubai that he met Mr. Bo. His business gradually faced increased competition from Chinese wholesalers who began to open shops in the middle of Kariakoo. At one time, others said, “everybody bought from him,” but his business has since declined. Larry’s discontent with the Chinese may be related to his own career trajectory, but like the trader who said “he would move upmarket before moving down market,” there was also a loss of status entailed.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Larry’s fate was structurally similar to Moyo, who had formerly been a trader in Guangzhou, but after the Chinese came to Dar es Salaam, the competition forced him out of trade, and he returned to Tanzania. He found work in Kariakoo as an agent for Airtel money on the corner in the center of the shoe market of Kariakoo. Competition among agents in this industry as well forced him out of business, and he left Kariakoo to begin working as a rice distributor. Moyo started from a lower position and suffered a more

The loss of position echoes the manner in which earlier waves of traders have lost their control of the trade. During the nineteenth century, for example, the Nyamwezi were reduced from traders to porters. Members of ethnic groups did not rise or fall in unison, however. There are different generations. Chagga traders were among the first Tanzanian wholesalers to go to China, but there are also other Chagga traders whose businesses began to grow after the arrival of the Chinese. The Chinese presence contributed to the erosion of the position of a small group of Tanzanian middlemen, but it also opened the market to other Tanzanians.

“They Do Business above Us”: Entering the Trade Hierarchy

The Chinese presence blocked the development of Tanzanian traders with relatively higher amounts of capital, but on the other hand, it opened new opportunities to traders with relatively lower amounts of capital. Tanzanian traders in possession of smaller amounts of capital generally had more favorable opinions about the presence of the Chinese than did wealthier Tanzanian traders. This was evident the very first day I began speaking with Tanzanian traders. Those who rented shops along the street were often critical of the Chinese, but once inside the hallways leading from the street into the crowded trading complexes, I found more people who spoke positively of the Chinese. It was the presence of the Chinese which had afforded them opportunities to open their own small shops.

The Chinese presence in Kariakoo was not problematic to them because they did not occupy a position which they formerly occupied. Instead, the Chinese remained “above,” and allowed them to grow in their own domains. This happened not just through trade, but also through the kinds of products Chinese imported. For example, the importation of inexpensive Chinese motorcycles, popularly called *boda*, had created a new form of employment for young

dramatic loss in position compared to Larry, but he did not seem to harbor any ill-feeling towards the Chinese. Not everyone is unhappy about no longer being able to go to China. An older Indian trader, for example, found it easier and cheaper to buy direct from Chinese here. But for others, losing control of the trade between China and Tanzania was the equivalent of being forced into a subservient position *vis-à-vis* the Chinese.

Tanzanian men, as taxi drivers, even in the most rural areas. The Chinese themselves, my friend Zawadi argued, “are above us,” and did not compete in the retail trade. These were perspectives very much at odds with the other Tanzanian traders I know, traders whose critique of the Chinese was based on precisely the opposite claim, that the business the Chinese did was *too low*.

Nonetheless, these retailers also complained that the presence of Chinese shops in Kariakoo limited their profits. Customers could easily check the wholesale price of the shoe because the wholesaler was located close to the retailer. Retailers could mark-up no more \$500 Tsh per shoe. It was better before, one retailer explained, when the Chinese restricted themselves to storehouses. At that time, they could get a greater mark-up on the shoes. Others were comfortable with the \$500 mark-up.

The Chinese helped young men become retailers, and also helped those who were already retailers rent shops. There were two shops in particular which sold very inexpensive shoes. These two shops provided a ready source of livelihood to many *wamachinga* who would purchase shoes in the morning, sell them throughout the day, spend some of the earnings on basic expenses, and then use whatever was left over to do the same the next day.⁴⁷ The shops did not lend on credit, however, except to those retailers who had earned enough to rent shop frames.

The economic possibilities afforded by inexpensive Chinese imports are structurally similar to the livelihoods enabled by the import of *mitumba*, second-hand clothes from the global North. In some cases, there was a logical progression from the sale of *mitumba* to the sale of new Chinese manufactures. For example, traders from Mbeya who used to sell *mitumba* began switching to selling new clothes from Chinese go-downs. Some of them even raised enough capital to begin traveling to China, where they purchased higher quality clothing to sell.

⁴⁷ Even junk collectors developed beneficial business relationships with Chinese shops. There was one man, who would purchase old or broken power extensions from a Chinese shop selling power chords. There was a whole trade in Kariakoo which involved repairing old electronics and reselling them for very low prices. This particular man would buy them one at a time, sometimes returning multiple times in one day, using part of the profits of reselling the previous one to buy another.

According to one of these traders, people from Mbeya had begun to give competition to the formerly dominant Chagga (just as the Chagga had given competition to the Indians).

Individual Tanzanians also developed relationships with Chinese wholesalers which enabled them to accumulate the capital necessary to begin and/or grow their own businesses. This occurred through working for Chinese as salaried employees, but also more informally as friends/middleman who performed the equivalent of labor.

Salehe, for example, was from Moshi, near Kilimanjaro. He began working in Kariakoo as a *machinga*. He was employed by Mr. Shen for five years. Salehe left and went into business on his own. He owns several shops, each of which are managed by his wife and close relatives. He still purchases from Mr. Shen, but not exclusively. He also still helps Mr. Shen. For example, he helps watch the porters when the containers are delivered, and these containers also include the shoes which he plans to sell. Mr. Shen and his wife have visited Salehe in his home in Kilimanjaro, and they occasionally go to the beach with him on Sunday. Mr. Shen has also paid for Salehe to go with him back to China for business-cum-leisure trips. Salehe has toured the wholesale markets with Mr. Shen, helping him identify which shoes would sell well in the Tanzanian market. Salehe's trajectory is evidence of one type of accumulative strategy. Salehe began as a *machinga*, and Mr. Shen would have been one of his suppliers. Now that Salehe is independent again, Mr. Shen is also one of his suppliers. This demonstrates how employer-employee relationships can develop out of, and into seller-buyer relationships. *Machinga* and wholesalers might have collaborative relationships, including contributions of labor, prior to any "formal" employment.

A good example of a collaborative relationship in the same area of the marketplace is between Rashid and a Chinese trader named Tony. Rashid's father had been a government official. When Rashid went into business, his father provided him some initial capital. He began by importing clothes from Zanzibar. When Rashid decided to get married, his father opposed the union, believing Rashid to still be too young. His father cut off financial support, and Rashid sold

off the rest of the clothes. He only had \$20,000 Tsh with which he purchased his first carton of shoes. He managed to steadily accumulate cartons so that by 2015, he had on average about one hundred cartons. When I first met Rashid, I assumed he was an ordinary *machinga*. Every day, he sat at the corner in the center of the shoe market, on a set of steps next to a jewelry shop. He rented his own storeroom deep inside the adjacent shopping complex. The number of cartons he held were modest in comparison to the shopkeepers, but large in comparison to the other *machinga* who largely lived day to day buying and selling shoes. Rashid measured wealth in terms of cartons, telling me that he wanted to go to China, but in order to be able to afford that, he would need to accumulate one thousand cartons. Like other *machinga*, however, he did not rent a shop, but kept a stack of about a dozen shoe cartons next to him on the street. Having already established a set of wholesale customers, he would sit on the corner each day arranging sales, deliveries, and pick-ups by phone, and monitoring the market. Each evening, Rashid would store the cartons from the street in the shop of his Chinese friend Tony, where he would retrieve them the next morning. Rashid told me he liked this corner because he could watch the customers. Throughout the day, there is an unceasing crowd streaming. Rashid observes the shoes they are wearing, the colors, and the designs. He uses that information not only to guide his future purchases, but also to design his own shoes.

His friend Tony is a Chinese wholesaler from Fujian who first came to Kariakoo around 2007. He and Rashid had become friends when Rashid began purchasing small quantities of shoes on credit from Tony in 2011. Rashid emphasized that he would always pay Tony back the next day. In addition, Rashid would also give Tony and the other Chinese in the shop advice about which shoes were selling well and which shoes were not. "They would said, *oh*," Rashid said, imitating their contemplation and appreciation. Rashid also designed shoes occasionally, and Tony would arrange for them to be produced in factories in China. Like Mr. Shen and Salehe, Tony also invited Rashid to China to explore the market.

Rashid also acted as a mediator between Tony and government officials. Tony sometimes had problems with the Tax Revenue Authority. If officials came to accuse Tony of not paying his sales tax, Rashid would help them negotiate. “The Chinese don’t like to deal with government people,” Rashid explained, “They just like to move between home and store.” Rashid frequently went to the port to assist in customs clearance whenever Tony’s cartons arrived. Rashid’s role as a mediator not only made communication easier, but could also lessen the expenses of paying “tips” to government officials.⁴⁸

Rashid’s relationship with Tony is another example of a collaborative exchange which involves more than simply buying and selling. There are other relationships which blur the boundaries between being an employee and being a customer. Mosi is a young *machinga* close to Rashid, the latter describing the relationship like that between a younger and an older brother. Mosi was also a friend of Ms. Shen, the Chinese shopkeeper whom Tanzanians called “Mama.” Ms. Shen sometimes had a contentious relationship with people because of a short temper, but Mosi said the two of them got along better. He regularly helped her. For example, when cartons were being delivered, he would help Ms. Shen and her employees watch the porters so that shoes were not stolen. He said he was not paid for such work, however. He explained to me he did it because he was her friend, but she did give him a discount when he purchased shoes from her.

These examples demonstrate the collaborative mutualities, relationships, and friendships which develop from the wholesale trade. In the case of Salehe and Rashid, these relationships contributed to accumulative strategies within the trade hierarchy. What is structurally similar, in any case, is the location of production in China. The productive capacity of China promised, to some Tanzanian entrepreneurs, opportunities for developing products of their own design.

⁴⁸ Rashid also regularly accompanies when Tony needs to take money to the bank to be deposited. Rashid compared it to how he became friends with me and how he would help me if I had problems. A few months before, a Chinese friend of mine filming a documentary had come to this corner with an expensive camera. She was nervous about the camera potentially being stolen, but he told her she could feel comfortable with him around. Everybody knew him, he said.

Tanzanian shopkeepers would tell me with amazement that “China can produce anything.” Rashid designed shoes on the basis of his observations of the marketplace and provided the designs for his friend Tony to produce in China. A colleague of mine once asked me to help him find factories in China which could produce a product he wanted to design. On another occasion, his driver sought assistance in locating a supplier for solar-powered products in Kariakoo, so that he could open a shop in a town outside of Dar es Salaam.

There are multiple avenues, in other words, through which Tanzanian entrepreneurs might seek to profit from the global division of labor between China and Tanzania.⁴⁹ The availability and affordability of Chinese goods has acted as a resource for people with different amounts of capital to open small businesses. The business aspirations of more than a few Tanzanians whom I knew involved raising enough capital to make a wholesale purchase of goods in order to open either a retail or wholesale business of their own. The amount of capital they had determined *where* they looked. Those with enough resources, or those who anticipated having enough resources, looked to China. Those with less resources looked to Chinese suppliers in Kariakoo. With a good supplier, a person could open a side business or a small shop outside of town.

The Chinese who have come to Tanzania to do wholesaling, therefore, are engaging in a marketplace whose formation has been authored by many agents, and therefore irreducible to a story of *Chinese* individuals bringing *Chinese* goods to Africa as the vanguard of a *Chinese* empire. However, the geographical proximity of these traders to the places where these goods are produced, and the fact that many of the traders themselves are direct representatives of the factories where these goods are produced, has given them an advantageous position in the local marketplace. The Chinese presence in the local trade hierarchy both fit into long established

⁴⁹ The routes into these businesses can be varied and circuitous. For example, I met a Malian trader and his Tanzanian wife who sold imported Chinese goods in Kariakoo. They had met, fallen in love, and married while both of them had been students studying in China.

patterns, but this presence was also problematized. In the next few sections, I explore this ambiguity through both the business mechanisms deployed, and discourses about the legitimate position of different groups within the “trade order.”

Tactics and Mechanisms

In the previous section, I have described how the entry of Chinese traders has limited the economic mobility of some actors, while facilitating the mobility of others. As the examples I provided also demonstrate, these transformations have not just operated indirectly through the mutualities of marketplace competition, but also directly through specific relationships between suppliers and purchasers. The importation and distribution of Chinese commodities depend on a diverse array of actors, all of whom seek to collect their share, whether profits, wages, or rents; whether licit or illicit. This means that at the same time distribution requires such actors to enter into social relationships with each other in order to move stock, it also leads to the perils of interdependence arising from actors making other kinds of claims which range from extractive to exploitive. In this section, I examine how the interdependencies of credit (*sw. mali kauli*) and illicit mark-ups (*sw. ganji*) facilitate both the movement of goods, social relationships, and the “social labor of redistribution.”

Mali Kauli and the Leap of Faith

Chinese wholesalers established a dominant position in the market not just through offering inexpensive goods, but also the use of an informal credit system locally glossed as *mali kauli*. The wholesale trade in Kariakoo had long depended on these transactions even before the Chinese. The term *mali* means “goods” and the term *kauli* refers to a verbal statement or pledge. These transactions generally involve a wholesaler advancing the goods to either wholesalers or retailers, and allowing the recipient to pay them back after they have sold off the goods. The length of repayment can vary based on the quantity of the transaction and the distance in which the goods are to be transported. *Mali kauli* is especially important for smaller traders because a lack of

either liquidity or capital would otherwise make it impossible to begin a business. Traders with whom I spoke offered conflicting accounts of either the decline or growth of *mali kauli* in business. Some said that the use of *mali kauli* had declined because people would steal goods. Others said the use of *mali kauli* declined because there was more cash available in the marketplace. Others said that the use of *mali kauli* had *increased* because there was *less* cash in the market due competition from the Chinese. *Mali kauli* for the Chinese came to fulfill a variety of functions ranging from control of the market to the movement of commodities, but they nonetheless both entailed persistent risks.

Mali kauli is significant not only as an economic device, but also morally as a signifier of trust. Brühwiler (2014), for example, describes resistance among agricultural traders in Kariakoo to the efforts of formal credit providers in the 1990s to reform local notions of credit from “trustworthiness” to “creditworthiness.” The resistance, he found, was linked to the continuing salience of *mali kauli* as forms of morally evaluating “trustworthy traders.” The narrative of a declining use of *mali kauli* is linked by some to a moral transformation from trust-based transactions to cash-based transactions. I heard a Zanzibari version of this narrative which links this moral transformation to the urban migrations from the interior. The Chagga did not give customers *mali kauli* because “*Imani yao kidogo* (sw. they have little faith).” The assumption, particular to the coast, is that the Swahili possessed forms of trustworthiness and moral superiority which has been eroded by people from interior. This perspective is worth noting because Chinese-Tanzanian interactions themselves produce narratives of the respective other side being narrowly concerned about business or material gain over interpersonal relationships (see Chapter Three).

On the other hand, the narrative of an increasing use of *mali kauli* is explained to be a rational economic response to a contraction in available cash. In Mwanza, for comparison, a cash-based trade in *mitumba* in the 1990s shifted increasingly into a finance-based *mali kauli* trade after a series of restrictive policies and fees, especially the 1998 20% VAT on imported made

prices more expensive (Ogawa 2006). At the same time, *mali kauli* affords intersubjective moral evaluations of trustworthiness, and they require regular social interaction to facilitate both the extension and repayment of loans. They are *both* economic transactions *and* social relationships. Ogawa (2006) therefore describes *mali kauli* as “traders' attempts to sustain human ties amidst the irreversible deluge of global capitalism – a moral economy which allows us to appreciate the diverse moral sentiments underpinning a rich array of practices, without reducing them within simplifying dichotomies of selfishness and altruism, economic rationality and social norms.”⁵⁰

These coexisting modalities of *mali kauli* have inflected the accommodation of Chinese traders to the practice. As in the case of conflicting narratives about *mali kauli* generally, there are also conflicting narratives about whether Chinese wholesalers *introduced* or *accommodated* to the extension of goods in their respective trades. The Chinese did not extend *mali kauli* at first, some argued, but eventually learned the “Tanzanian way of doing business.” According to other people, however, the Chinese started with *mali kauli* when they first arrived, but then extended *mali kauli* with less frequency over time because customers would not pay them back.

“The Chinese were different because they provided *mali kauli*,” explained one trader. Prior to the Chinese, he explained, Tanzanians who wanted to open a shop needed capital for both a shop frame and for the goods. The Chinese could bring six shipping containers to start a business, but most Tanzanians could only afford one container, and even then, they would need to share the cost with others. But because Chinese wholesalers offered them *mali kauli*, all Tanzanian entrepreneurs needed now to start a business was enough cash to rent a shop frame.

⁵⁰ Ogawa (2006) and Macharia (1997) argue for a preference among traders to extend *mali kauli* to people outside their own ethnic networks because if it was in their own network, it might not be repaid. Looking at the wholesale trade in the 2000s, Ogawa argues “the uncertainty of their business and social existence call for a form of fellowship that transcends kinship and other parochial boundaries. At the same time, they are afraid of developing too strong a relation of dependence on each other.” Van Donge (1992) described traders seeking to increase as much as possible autonomy from the risks and entailments of interpersonal dependencies. Simone (2004) describes such flexible instrumentalism of personal ties as using “people as infrastructure” in contexts where “formal infrastructure” for their livelihoods are lacking.

The different narratives speak to the fact that neither the prevalence nor reasons for *mali kauli* have been consistent between practitioners. There are different reasons why Chinese wholesalers chose to either extend or withhold credit. The first reason is that it provided a mechanism for newly-arrived wholesalers to promote their products, and to develop a network of customers. Wholesalers would either extend the goods in full, or extend them at a discounted price upfront. A motorcycle wholesaler who had been in Tanzania for only two years, for example, had begun by selling bikes with half-payment due at transfer, and another half-payment due later. After several customers defaulted, the wholesalers began asking for a greater percentage at the time of sale, but they would not be able to ask for full payment upfront because they would not be able to sell the bikes otherwise. This was standard in the trade, and this was how their more established Chinese competitors operated.

The second use of *mali kauli* is an exclusive benefit extended to trusted, long-term customers. I found this was the most common form of *mali kauli* among both Chinese and Tanzanian wholesalers. Both would claim that it was a matter of course never to extend credit to new customers who might default. Trustworthiness could be judged through repeated transactions in which the time it took for wholesalers to recover their loan served as a measure. “If you go to their shop with the money,” a Tanzanian shoe retailer explained, “they will trust you. If they have to come find you to get the money, they will trust you less.” If the Chinese wholesalers frequently visited, it meant they did not trust the retailer, but if they were able to recover their initial loans the first few times, they would subsequently advance more shoes.

Mali kauli also provided a mechanism for moving stock during slower periods of business. A Chinese shoe wholesaler, whose customers usually purchased a dozen or more cartons, occasionally sold individual cartons to neighboring shops or nearby *machinga* on credit. These were *machinga* who sold shoes on makeshift stands and mats close to the shop, so the boss could watch them throughout the day, and send someone over to collect the cash when they thought the *machinga* had sold off all the pairs. The cartons might sometimes change multiple

hands. This same boss, for example, sold cartons to a Mandarin-speaking Tanzanian wholesaler across the street on credit, who in turn sold the carton to a *machinga* he knew on credit. Once the *machinga* paid him, he went back over to pay the Chinese boss. A small profit was collected, but there was no interest.

The practice of *mali kauli* favored retailers and smaller Tanzanian wholesalers over the wealthier Tanzanian wholesalers who purchased shoes directly from China. Mary, a Chagga shopkeeper who operated a shop with her brother along the same street as the Chinese, explained that the Tanzanians who went to Guangzhou were unable to get *mali kauli* from the Chinese factories. The Chinese had an advantage, she argued, because they could get goods on credit from the factories. Within Tanzania, however, she said the Chinese “did *mali kauli* too much,” but she then added that she “had to admit, they helped a lot of people, especially those with low capital.” These traders could now rent shop frames of their own.

Mali kauli was available along certain vectors of the China-Tanzania shoe trade, but unavailable along others. The vectors favored Chinese wholesalers, Tanzanian retailers and Tanzanian small-scale wholesalers, but not traditional Tanzanian wholesalers. According to Mary, *mali kauli* inside China operated as a form of exclusionary ethnic capitalism, but in Tanzania, *mali kauli* contributed to the building of inter-ethnic business relations, albeit at the expense of formerly dominant groups. Some wholesalers described these Chinese practices conspiratorially as a Chinese strategy to control the market, turning Tanzanian traders into debtors of the Chinese.

Mali kauli transactions, nonetheless, also posed risks to the Chinese wholesalers. Chinese traders with large amounts of capital were better able to withstand risks associated with advancing their goods to customers on credit, whereas Chinese traders with smaller amounts of capital were at greater risk advancing goods on credit, and in some cases, could face substantial losses. At the center of this practice was a fundamental tension in business imperatives. On the one hand, Chinese wholesalers had an interest in moving stock and maintaining customers, but on

the other hand, they wanted to minimize the risk of default. Customers who had not yet paid the wholesaler for a previous order might return to request an additional order. On one occasion I witnessed, a Tanzanian clothing retailer asked his Chinese supplier to advance him an additional order. The supplier refused at first because the customer had not yet paid for the first order. One of the two Tanzanian employees in the shop, however, eventually convinced the boss to extend the goods.

The practice of *mali kauli* exemplifies what Möllering (2001) calls the “leap of faith” entailed in inter-personal trust. Trust, as Möllering argues, is not the lack of uncertainty, but the willingness to accept risk despite that uncertainty. In Mwanza, for example, middlemen benefited from *mali kauli* in the sense that it facilitated the movement of clothes, but they also were exposed to greater risk, especially if retailers would not pay them back (Ogawa 2006). These middleman would then find themselves not only unable to collect, but also asked to extend even further credit, something nonetheless hard to refuse because of their dependence on retailers. In mediating these relationships, Ogawa finds practices of “pseudo-kinship” wherein middleman attempt to perform friendship whereas retailers see them as wealthy people with obligations to assist them. In Kariakoo, these dependences often play out in every forms of *utani*, joking relationships which are often about, or which often accompany the everyday closing of debts. This is prevalent in a wide variety of transactions throughout the market.

Chinese traders in Kariakoo face the dual imperative of clearing stock, which encourages *mali kauli*, and collecting the debts incurred by extending such credit. In some cases, this leads to a scenario where Chinese businesses are simultaneously chasing after customers to collect cash on old orders *and* to get their customers to purchase new orders or help them clear overstock. Some Chinese and Tanzanian employees alike are tasked with the daily responsibility to visit customers throughout the day at shops all over the marketplace.

Mali kauli contributes to the movement of goods, and also ties together diverse actors into relations of interdependency. These interdependencies place economic actors at the risk of

loss through the extraction of illicit sections. In the next section, I consider how a diversity of actors each attempt to extract a share from that movement.

Ganji and the Social Labor of Distribution

As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the trade in commodities between the factories of China and the consumers of East Africa sustains the livelihoods of multiple individuals. The mechanisms through which the profits of trade are claimed and distributed, however, vary in their degrees of licitness and legality, but they all share a similar logic which allows us to re-conceptualize the meanings of both “trade” and “business.” Ferguson (2015) describes the “social labor of distribution” as an alternative perspective on the nexus of economic and social life. Conventional treatments of economic value, neoclassical or Marxist, privilege productivity: the expansion of capital through the input of labor. That which merely extracts without contributing to economic growth are *rents* which actually limit productivity. From the perspective of distribution, however, the social question is not production, but the sharing of the collective wealth. Ferguson argues that, even in the absence of collective mechanisms, this *labor of distribution* is in fact undertaken, albeit in an uneven fashion.

The primary mechanism for extracting shares from the profits of distribution is to occupy a middleman position, which entails either facilitating transportation or mediating/controlling access to customers. Wholesalers do this by purchasing goods at either their point of production, or at subsequent nodes, transporting them to an additional destination, and selling them at a higher price. In order to protect the long-term viability of their businesses, producers and wholesalers may attempt to restrict, by contractual or verbal means, the prices at which their purchasers re-sell the products. For example, a point of contention for a Chinese motorcycle wholesaler I knew was a customer who, in order to attract customers, was selling their bikes below the market rate. He threatened the customer to no longer do business with him unless he raised the prices.

The transportation of the goods themselves afford opportunities for both legal/licit, and illegal/illicit takings of shares. At the port, importers need to pay a variety of taxes and fees. In addition to an 18% Value Added Tax, different categories of imports are taxed different percentages. Shoes are taxed at 25%. In addition to these are various port and transportation fees. Customs clearance agents describe strategies for lowering the cost of imports by under-reporting items and paying “tips,” to customs officials, a practice so common it is discussed as an almost licit operating cost. These tips are nonetheless necessary for those needing to clear goods faster and/or compensating for the lack of required documents, particularly a stamp of approval from the Tanzania Bureau of Standards. And of course, because only Tanzanian-based Customs Clearance companies are legally authorized to deal with officials, these companies also get paid a fee for their services.

Items can be stolen from the cartons at multiple points along their itinerary. Items might be stolen by people working at the port, and they might be stolen by the people hired to transport the cartons from the port to the store, and from the truck-bed to inside the store, and so forth each time the items were moved.⁵¹ Theft by the porters who transported the goods from the trucks into the stores attracted the greatest concern in terms of the measures taken to prevent it. These laborers were paid very little, and in my experience, some would indeed attempt to take shoes from the boxes they were carrying. When I caught people doing so one evening when I had been asked by a Chinese interlocutor to help his employees watch the delivery, they emphasized that they were just taking some shoes so they could sell them and buy food. Their plans with the shoes were arguably no different than the *machinga*, except they had even less capital, and they were acquiring the shoes by illegal means.

⁵¹ In some cases, if an item was stolen or simply went missing at an earlier stage of the itinerary, responsible parties at the end stage would attract suspicions of responsibility. This had happened even to Issa, a Mandarin-speaking Tanzanian man who had worked for his boss for ten years. When a carton of shoes disappeared, his boss accused him, and Issa in turn argued that someone at the port may have been responsible.

There are also a variety of illicit means through which the employees of Chinese wholesaling firms might extract an additional share of the profit for themselves. A persistent concern for Chinese businesses in Tanzania, and not just in trade, were employees stealing stock and reselling it in small quantities on their own. In some cases, employees might present themselves and the transactions to customers as valid sales, but neither report the sale nor transfer the revenue to their boss. In a few cases, former employees might continue to pose as employees of the company, but this time in order to defraud unsuspecting customers. Factories (and sometimes government offices) therefore occasionally posted advertisements to inform potential customers that the individual no longer worked for them.

In other cases, employees did not “steal” the goods, but charged customers at a higher rate than instructed by their employers, and kept the difference for themselves. In some cases it was Tanzanian employees who did this, and in other cases, it was Chinese who did this. The division of labor between bosses staying in China and employees managing the shops overseas afforded these opportunities. A Chinese clothing wholesaler named Mr. Li related the story to me of his former boss. After Mr. Li left to start his own business in Kariakoo selling clothes from his family’s factory in China, the boss hired a new manager to replace him. The new manager began raising the price of the clothes and pocketing the difference without his boss’s knowledge. For Mr. Li, this had the fortuitous effect of leading his boss’s former customers to start purchasing clothes from Mr. Li. These customers already developed relationships with Mr. Li when he was still employed. In this example, one man’s illicit extraction of additional profit intersected with another man’s accumulated social capital, to affect a redistribution of the benefits of trade from one set of individuals to another.

There is a “culturally intimate” (Herzfeld 2005) term in Kiswahili which might be used to describe this practice: *ganji* (from *ganji kuoana*).⁵² The term expresses both ethical ambiguities

⁵² When I asked Tanzanian interlocutors about this term, they were often surprised, indicating to me that this was a form of “inside” information.

and a form of illicit moral economy. The term *ganji* is a slang (which also appears in Kenya) meaning “money,” which is also used to describe a small profit earned through deception. For example, if an employee in a retail shop, an Indian interlocutor explained, were to earn a little extra money for him or herself by overcharging a customer, the earnings would be called *ganji*.

Ganji kuoana, then, could be translated literally as “(illicit) money that is seen,” which in practice means the recruitment of eyewitnesses into complicity through the sharing of the *ganji*. As one *machinga* explained it, if he were to witness a shopkeeper or trader cheat a customer by charging them an inflated price (sw. *kuiba* lit. “to steal” from the customer), it was possible for him to say something, but if he did not, the seller with the windfall would share a portion with him. It was not necessary for the seller to do that, but this was a “kind of corruption.” *Ganji kuona* was associated by some Tanzanians with *winga*, the informal middlemen who operated through-out the marketplace.

Middlemen were seen to exploit their position, but also to be necessary facilitators. Even shopkeepers acted sometimes as *winga* for other shopkeepers. Issa regularly purchased cartons from Ms. Shen, his Chinese friend who owned a shop across the street, and sold them to other Tanzanian shops on the same street. Confused, I asked Issa why these shops did not go directly to Ms. Shen. “They don’t speak Chinese,” he said, “so they can’t believe her.” Issa’s language skills and his prior relationship with Ms. Shen afforded him opportunities to mediate market relationships and act as a middleman even in situations where the physical space of the middle was very narrow indeed.

In other cases, employees and customers might conspire to help each other at the expense of the boss. This was something Chinese employers were particularly concerned about, suspecting that the shared ethnicity of employees and customers might lead them to team up against them. A Chinese clothing wholesaler suspected that his employee occasionally gave customers extra packages of shirts when packing the bags for wholesale. The employer had no proof other than the way his employee suspiciously seemed to consciously block his view while

standing close to the customer, and how there were occasionally discrepancies in the stock. He imagined the customer whispering to the employee and asking him for a little extra. He might have perhaps asked to “*kuongeza*,” and offered the employee a little extra.

In another case, although in a retail rather than wholesale context, an employee for a Chinese supermarket discreetly sold products at her counter which had been provided by another Chinese business without the knowledge or approval of the supermarket boss. She was fired and sent back to China. Around the same time, the Chinese staff had discovered dozens of bottles of *Konyagi*, a local spirit they carried, had disappeared. Everyone suspected the bottles had been shared among a few of the Tanzanian employees who had smelled suspiciously several times, but there was no proof, so they continued working there.

And finally, petty government officials, such as immigration agents, revenue officials, police officers and traffic cops all make claims on their own small share of the wealth through the “tips” they receive in exchange for forgiving Chinese for various legal infractions real or imagined.

The examples provided here include both Chinese and Tanzanians, showing how there are strategies to obtaining shares all along the distribution routes, despite the frequent Chinese racialization of 黑人 (ch. black people) as particularly disposed to “steal” or extort from the Chinese. The physical theft of a good may seem different than the unauthorized addition to a listing price, but both are practices which deny a profit otherwise due to someone else, or has market effects which reduce future profitability. It is the similarity of effects which makes even “natural” market processes like competition to be experienced as “conquering” the market, “destroying” business, or “stealing” customers. The distinctions, as Smart (1993) reminds, in his discussion of the ontological differences between “gifts” and “bribes,” are fundamentally contextual and semiotic, determined by presentation and style rather than economic fundamentals.

The trade between China and Tanzania is a form of wealth which multiple actors attempt to extract a share from. In the next section, I discuss how *where* different sets of actors attempt to do so is politically contentious.

Trade Order and the Global Hierarchy of Labor

Tanzanian Perceptions of Local Trade Order

To whom does Kariakoo belong? Opposition to the Chinese presence in Kariakoo was frequently expressed *not in absolute terms of ethnic exclusion*, but rather in terms of the kinds of activities that Chinese expatriates pursued. The Chinese were welcomed, but only at particular levels of the trade order. The Tanzanian traders whom I knew frequently complained that rather than building factories and doing “large business” like other foreigners, the Chinese opened *duka* (sw. shops), they did “small business.” “The Chinese say they are investors,” people would say, but then ask what kind of investment this was?

Despite the language of “invasion,” Tanzanian traders rarely criticized the presence of Chinese traders in terms of a “Chinese colonialism.” Instead, the primary target of critique was the Tanzanian state for its failure to enforce restrictions on the kinds of business foreigners could do. In fact, there was no explicit law banning Chinese from doing retail if they wished to do so, and even the Tanzanian Investment Centre counted trade as “investment,” even if popular perception did not consider trade to be a form of investment.

The popular explanation for the lack of either restrictions or enforcement ranged from accusations that Tanzanian leaders were “short-sighted” to claims “the Chinese” had bribed leaders to allow Chinese migration in exchange for economic assistance. Tanzanians I spoke with understood these claims in the same terms as how they understood Tanzanian governance of foreign investment more generally. Deals signed with foreign oil or mining companies from the West, for example, were often criticized as being short-term rents for officials at the expense of long-term returns to Tanzanians as a whole. Tanzanians were less concerned, in other words, as

both Western and Chinese observers are, about comparative (non-) imperialisms than they were concerned with a broader problematic of how the Tanzanian state interacted with foreign capital.

In the case of trade, the implicit claim on Tanzanian citizenship is that it entailed the protection of its members to earn a livelihood or grow within a section of the global division of labor. This is why opposition to the presence of the Chinese was delimited rather than absolute. Tanzanian wholesalers broadly welcomed Chinese investment in factories, but opposed Chinese involvement in trading. Interestingly, the delimitations varied by circumstance. In Uganda, by way of comparison, the involvement of Chinese traders in retailing caused controversy, leading leaders in the Kampala retail community to approach the Chinese associations for assistance in enforcing what one man called a “trade order” wherein the Chinese restricted themselves to wholesaling, and left retailing to the Ugandans. In Tanzania, although there is, legally speaking, no restrictions on foreigners operating retail businesses, the Chinese wholesalers voluntarily restricted themselves to wholesale because it was more profitable for them. The controversy in Kariakoo concerned not the segregation between wholesalers and retailers, but between the role of suppliers and shopkeepers.

The Imagined Kariakoo

Opposition to the presence of the Chinese in Kariakoo among Tanzanian shopkeepers paralleled in some respects their opposition to the presence of the *wamachinga*. In both cases, these groups were considered to pose unfair competition to shopkeepers. From the perspective of retailers, the *wamachinga* sell the same products, but pay neither the rent nor taxes that the shopkeepers pay. In addition, they contributed to traffic congestion and made Kariakoo “very dirty.” There have been repeated periodic actions by the municipal government to remove petty traders from Kariakoo. In 2008, the city of Dar es Salaam constructed a retail plaza next to the graveyard about a fifteen minutes’ walk outside of Kariakoo. The retail plaza, popularly called the Machinga Complex, was intended to be a space for petty traders to rent stalls at low rents. The

inconvenience of the location, the fact customers continued to go to Kariakoo, and the lack of input during planning all contributed to the Machinga Complex being unused and generally abandoned. By late 2015, I had even heard rumors that the city had finally sold the complex to a “Chinese” real estate developer.

For Tanzanian wholesalers, the desired trade order in Kariakoo would involve the clear segregation between suppliers, wholesalers, and retailers. The wholesalers would be protected in Kariakoo as middlemen between the Chinese on the one hand, and the *wamachinga* on the other. The Chinese would operate on the edge of the city, preferably operating factories that offered employment to Tanzanians, or at the very least, restrict storehouses for imported goods to outside of Kariakoo. They would not open shops in Kariakoo. Instead, Tanzanian wholesalers who owned shops would handle the distribution between Chinese suppliers and Tanzanian customers. The *wamachinga* would not be allowed to conduct their business in Kariakoo. Retail would be restricted to licensed businesses which owned shops. Instead, the *wamachinga* would conduct their business in areas or complexes designated for their use by the local government. These Tanzanian wholesalers don’t challenge the rights of either the Chinese or the *wamachinga* to conduct business, but oppose both Chinese suppliers and *wamachinga* leaving the spaces designated for them in the distribution network and conducting business alongside the middlemen in Kariakoo.

Chinese Perceptions of Local Trade Order

Opposition to the presence of Chinese traders in Kariakoo also originated *from other Chinese expatriates*. Opposition was particularly pronounced among elite members of the Chinese community (who themselves were involved in manufacturing or construction) because it represented a form of economic relations where Chinese competed directly against local traders rather than investing in areas lacking indigenous investment. Xiao Deming, for example, a Chinese factory owner confided during an interview that the Chinese should not be involved in trade because that was something local people could do.

Reflecting alternative visions of where Chinese belonged in the local economy, Chao Pengfei, the manager of a construction project for a Chinese state-owned enterprise, decried trading to be a “stage one” economic activity which should/would be increasingly replaced by manufacturing and investment.

Discourses about trade hierarchies entail not just a neutral interpretation of the patterns engendered by the market logics of international trade, but they also entail a moral mapping of the economy wherein particular trades are considered the rightful property of particular individuals and groups, “to each according to ability, to each according to need” (Marx 2008). In the imagination of some Chinese traders, the distinction between wholesaling and retailing is considered to be a matter of ethical self-restraint. When asked why traders like him sold only wholesale, Mr. Shen responded that “if the Chinese sold retail, the local people would have nothing to eat!” Rather than abstaining from retail for reasons of profitability or legal regulation, Mr. Shen framed the self-restriction to retail in terms of leaving a space for local people to earn a livelihood. The implication is that the Chinese *could*, if they wanted, sell retail in a manner which would drive locals out of the market. For Tanzanian wholesalers, however, being restricted to the retail market, or in the words of one trader, being turned into *wamachinga*, was precisely the fate they wished to avoid. From their perspective, both retailing *and* wholesaling should belong to the Tanzanians.

These contending evaluations of the proper trade order also indicate how the division of labor is racialized. Mr. Shen’s attitude, for example, is indicative of a common perception among Chinese wholesalers that they possessed unique resources for supplying goods to Tanzania. The Chinese traders in Kariakoo had varied levels of experience with Tanzania, or even with the structure of China-Africa trade. Some traders had accumulated years of prior experience in Guangzhou or Yiwu even if not in Africa, but others had only been in Tanzania for only a couple of months. This meant that I would meet Chinese traders in Kariakoo who demonstrated, on the basis of my own experience and research, a limited awareness of the diverse positions Tanzanians

occupied in the division of labor, either the roles Tanzanians played in inter-national trade between China and Africa, or the roles in Kariakoo. A young man, for example, told me once that “black people don’t know how to import,” and that is why Chinese like him were involved in the trade. Another young man, who had also been in Kariakoo for a month, described the kind of work done by the “black people” in Kariakoo to primarily be “coolie” labor. There were indeed many young men who carried boxes, but there were also thousands of Tanzanian-owned shops and to call the *wamachinga* “coolies” would be to stretch the definition of that term. There were other Chinese, however, who recognized the challenge Tanzanian traders posed to the Chinese in terms of competition. A representative for a Chinese company on a short term visit to Tanzania, for example, described African traders in Guangzhou as being better than other Chinese at finding good prices with factories for the export of manufactured goods. Nonetheless, racialization provided some Chinese traders’ justification for the social legitimacy of their presence.

The presence of Chinese traders in Kariakoo was controversial nonetheless for Chinese elites because it represented a form of economic relations where Chinese competed directly against local traders rather than investing in areas lacking indigenous investment, and therefore challenging the projected narrative of Chinese investment as contributing to local development.

“The Challenge of Productivity”

One of the reasons elites in the Chinese community looked unfavorably on wholesale trading was that they believed it reflected “short-term” interests on the part of the Chinese, and was therefore unlikely to have a positive impact on Tanzania in terms of either local economic growth or the image of the Chinese community as a whole. They did not mention the effect it had on petty traders. In the context of a general accumulation of commodities and falling profits in a shared global economy, debates about the rights of Tanzanians versus Chinese in the Tanzanian market can be understood as debates about the proper part each defined group should play in the global

division of labor.⁵³ These are both imbued with morally inflected evaluation and subject to a variety of economic constraints.

Migrant traders whom I met who were newly arrived in Tanzania often considered manufacturing to be their eventual goal. Sometimes these goals were vague and open-ended, but in other cases, they had timelines. One investor who imported air conditioners speculated that he would consider local manufacturing after eight years. Importing was a safe entry into the market which allowed migrants to establish themselves, familiarize themselves with the market, and obtain customers.

There are limitations, however, in the aspired scale of industrial investment. For example, a number of Chinese shoe wholesalers in Kariakoo have in fact established factories outside of Dar es Salaam. The kinds of shoes produced in Tanzania, however, are often made of a rubber material, produced from either a single molding, or at most two moldings connected together. The factories did not produce more complex shoes. Even one line of shoes marked “Made in Tanzania,” were not all produced in the country, but split in production between Tanzania and China. Another wholesaler argued that the difference in where they produced their shoes was based on the quality of the shoe. The cheaper shoes were produced in Tanzania because of what they argued was lower productivity and labor skills.

Chinese wholesalers who did not plan to open factories would describe multiple factors which prevented them from considering opening a factory in Tanzania. The most frequently cited barrier is the unreliability of electrical supplies. The second barrier is the fact that in order to produce in Tanzania, the factories still need to source materials from China. For example, although it is cheap to produce PVC pipes and moldings, a factory still needs to obtain the PVC material. A company leaving China to invest in manufacturing elsewhere is therefore attracted

⁵³ Even though the absolute quantity of available slots may be decreasing in the long-run due to both automation and ecological constraints.

first to Southeast Asia, because the labor costs are lower, but the countries are still close to component suppliers in China.⁵⁴

There has nonetheless been an increasing number of Chinese who have in fact set up their factories in Tanzania for the purpose of selling to the domestic Tanzanian market. One manufacturer was going to avoid Kariakoo altogether because he said it was already “occupied.” Instead, he marketed directly to retailers outside of Dar es Salaam. The former head of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Tanzania insisted that most private Chinese investment and migration as of 2015 was for manufacturing. He took me one afternoon on a tour of a district outside of Dar es Salaam, where there were several dozen light manufacturing factories either completed or under-construction. To the extent these investments will transform supply chains in Tanzania is still too early to be seen, but the anticipation of their arrival, or the critique of their continued absence, continues to inform the imagination of the contemporary moment.

Tanzanian traders with whom I spoke in Kariakoo, for example, were often insistent that the Chinese did not do manufacturing, and would readily point to all the Chinese shops around them. In one conversation where I explained that I had visited a factory, my interlocutor dismissed it and said that Chinese say they are opening factories but actually use the spaces to do trading. Their suspicions were not put to rest by reports of a planned Chinese Logistics Center at the port of Dar es Salaam. It reinforced concerns of an emphasis on trading at the expense of industrialization. In response to the planned center, Tanzanian business people interviewed for a news article (Mirondo 2015) argued that the plan would limit Tanzania’s already limited industrialization and also limit the Tanzanians who already travel to China. The officials interviewed, however, argued that the place would be a site for quality goods, and would help make Dar similar to Dubai. The article revealed, however, that there had been limited communication between the government and the business community. The argument for the

⁵⁴ Investments in shoe production in Ethiopia are a counter-case.

center was that goods would be stored here rather than in China, bringing the supply chain even closer to Tanzania, but without manufacturing.

Aspirations for industrialization continue to exist in tension with the comparative profitability of import trade. For elite Chinese, the desire for industrialization, however, was related to not just potential profits, the benefit to the local economy, or the image of China, but also to particular ideas about the relationship between the mode of Chinese investment and the *quality* of China-Tanzania relations.

Trade Order and the “Quality” of Sino-Tanzanian Relations

The support for industrialization among both Tanzanians and Chinese, together with opposition to the presence of Chinese traders in Kariakoo, is based not just on economic considerations, but also moral concerns about the *quality* and *mode* of Chinese-Tanzanian relations.

During an interview, a Chinese investor spoke at length about the positive effects of Chinese investments in factories and other kinds of “large companies” compared to engagement in trade. He first argued that Chinese traders could only employ a limited number of people. Larger companies, on the other hand, would employ lots of people. He had a friend whose factory employed five hundred people. “Imagine any shop in Kariakoo that could employ 500 people!” Factories also provided better opportunities for locals to learn technical skills.

His third point concerned the “quality” of individual Chinese-Tanzanian interactions, and was framed in terms of social class. Chinese and Tanzanians, he argued, would have more positive interactions in larger companies than they did in the trading sector because the “quality” (ch. 素质) of the people would be different. This reflected on both the Chinese and Tanzanians who interacted in Kariakoo. The Chinese traders were often looked down upon by Chinese professionals to be people with limited education and international experience who were interacting with informal Tanzanian traders and laborers, and this was assumed to contribute to inter-ethnic tensions.

Chinese expatriates, not unlike many middle class Tanzanians themselves, saw Kariakoo to be a “chaotic” place where Chinese expatriates risked being lost in a potentially dangerous crowd. Like Tanzanian critics as well, there were Chinese expatriates who confided in interviews that Chinese did not belong in Kariakoo, but this was in turn combined with judgements of them being ethically problematic Chinese subjects. I was talking one afternoon with a Chinese importer whose customers were elite Tanzanians and construction companies. He had been speculating how local people see the Chinese, concluding that negative opinions might be more common among ordinary people than the government. He then added “there are also some Chinese who are bad,” and the first example he provided were Chinese traders in Kariakoo who sold retail. “They should sell wholesale and let locals sell retail, but they sell retail for a cheaper price because they want to make money, and don't let locals eat.” Tensions like these were seen to contribute to negative impressions of the Chinese among Tanzanians, but also negative impressions of Africa among Chinese.

In larger companies, however, like Huawei (cf. Chang 2013), Chinese professionals interacted with Tanzanian professionals, people with college-level education. One Chinese woman I knew who worked in the corporate office of a private Chinese conglomerate described how much she enjoyed her work interacting with clients because the kind of people she dealt with were what she described as “high quality” : Tanzanian officials and elites, some of them top government officials. These were the kind of people, she said, who would pay no attention to her if she was in China. Coming to Tanzania had made her feel like a “star” (ch. 明星), and led her to describe an enthusiasm for life in Tanzania quite different from that which I usually heard from other Chinese, especially those who worked in Kariakoo.

Compare that to a young Chinese man I knew who sold garlic to agricultural traders in Kariakoo. He too used concepts of social class to understand why his experience in Tanzania was so unenjoyable. He emphasized to me that the kind of people he interacted with in the market

were unlike the wealthier wholesale traders his friend interacted with. Prior to coming to Tanzania, he had in fact followed the blog of a Chinese expatriate, and become enamored of the images of Indian Ocean beach resorts and luxury safaris. Upon arriving in Tanzania, however, he had realized the blogger's experience was for "rich people" unlike himself.

The implicit thinking here is that class hierarchies within the Chinese presence interact with class hierarchies in Tanzania in ways that produce different qualities of experience, and therefore different *kinds* of Sino-Tanzania. As my earlier examples, indicate, however, interactions in Kariakoo could in fact be quite intimate, unlike interactions in larger companies, where there was greater segregation between Chinese and ordinary Tanzanians. Nonetheless, these perceptions are significant.

Trade Order and Empire

The presence of Chinese traders in Kariakoo complicates the dominant aspirational narrative of Chinese investment as a transformational catalyst which disrupts the conventional relationship in which African economies export natural resources and import industrial goods. The presence of Chinese traders also complicates the narrative of Sino-Tanzanian cooperation and friendship. The economic mode of relations can be more significant than narrow definitions of *imperial* or *non-imperial* relationships.

My conversations with Issa, a Mandarin-speaking Tanzanian man who ran a shop for his Chinese boss often captured the difficulty with these terms. In terms of *politics*, the Chinese are viewed favorably over the Americans because they engage in business rather than engage in warfare. During the same period the US has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq, bombed Libya and contributed, directly or indirectly to the collapse of Syria, the Chinese have built roads, bridges, factories, and sold inexpensive commodities. On the other hand, Americans and Europeans only did "large" business in Tanzania, like mining, whereas the Chinese "opened shops." In other words, the axis of comparison between the US and China as alternative geopolitical centers varied according to circumstance, and were not a simple comparison of "empire/non-empire."

The contributions of Chinese investment to the development of infrastructure and industry in Africa cannot be understated, but the view from Kariakoo suggests persistent skepticism towards whether Africa's position in the global division of labor can transform. The promise of productivity is what leads scholars like Mbembe to challenge the standard Western narrative of Chinese imperialism, but the eventual outcomes of these transformations remain uncertain. Chinese wholesalers have themselves had differentiated effects on local Tanzanians: helping some groups while harming other groups. The presence of these wholesalers, however, itself expresses contradictions and inequalities within the Chinese economy, which has created pressures for these business people and their employees to seek opportunities abroad.

Chinese wholesalers for their own part, do not consider their place in the trade hierarchy to translate into any imperial privilege. Instead, they consider themselves vulnerable to both the extractive practices of street level bureaucrats, and even more significantly, to value of the US dollar. In the summer of 2013, the exchange rate from Tanzanian shillings to the US dollar was between 1600 and 1700. When I began fieldwork in October 2014, it was in the 1800s. Over the following months, the number steadily rose, peaking at almost 2400, to the anxiety and concern of Tanzanians and Chinese expatriates alike. There was little need in everyday practice to specify that the exchange rate was the *US dollar* exchange rate. It was unmarked. Most Chinese expatriates, at any rate, would unlikely be able to state the exchange rate to Chinese RMB without first calculating from the US dollar exchange rate. In the context of narratives about ascendant Chinese empire in Africa, the centrality of the value of US currency to everyday economic life among both Tanzanians *and* Chinese testifies to the fact that Chinese-African business interactions have unfolded within the hegemony of American currency. The value of the American dollar is an *ur-variable* which affects the profitability of Chinese importers. Everyday transactions are conducted in Tanzanian shillings, but these must be converted into US dollars before those in turn can be converted into Chinese yuan. Although there were a limited and slowly growing number of banks and exchanges which offered direct conversion to Chinese

currency, the costs of these transactions were higher than those of purchasing dollars. In addition to Chinese importers, Chinese factories and construction firms which depended on imported materials were affected. Those which did not depend as much on imports were less affected by the increase in the value of the dollar. However, the dependence of Tanzania on imports more generally meant that fluctuations in the exchange rate affected the economy as a whole, which in turn affected demand for Chinese products. During the time of my fieldwork, the exchange rate of the American dollar to the Tanzanian shilling increased dramatically, leading importers to speculate that they would inevitably need to abandon their businesses.

This has consequences for how Chinese expatriates perceive their own position abroad, and contributes to the unintelligibility of “Chinese empire” as a framework for understanding their experiences.

“The US is good!” a Fujianese trader told me when I first met him, “It is very rich. Everybody here is working for (ch. 打工) the US. If the US needs money, it can print money.”

I responded that China was also becoming rich, but he said that he was not talking about economic development, he was talking about control over money.

Another trader also used the term 打工 to describe how Chinese traders needed to use US dollars to conduct business. Recalling the recent visits of Xi Jinping and Barack Obama to Tanzania within a few months of each other, she said that it was really the US which was the “big boss.” The Chinese, she said, were just “working for the United States” because they had to use dollars. “Big boss” and 打工 are not arbitrary terms here. As explained above, those who come to work in Africa are either those who “do business” (ch. 做生意), or those who “work for” (ch. 打工) others. The language of “big boss” as well echoes the everyday joking between traders in the marketplace, where traders routinely build up each other while diminishing their own wealth. There was undoubtedly some of this cordial joking in this interaction, but concerns about the hegemony of the US dollar and its control over the profitability of Chinese is real. Another

Chinese trader complained to me that the US was pushing them out of business because of its monetary policy. “The United States doesn’t want us to work here,” he complained. He then started explaining how the rates had changed, and said the US was responsible. “Let others eat!” he exclaimed.

“Tell Obama to print more dollars!” exclaimed another Chinese wholesaler to me when I visited him one afternoon. The high exchange rate had been affecting his business.

Economists have identified multiple factors which have contributed to the rise of the dollar against the shilling (Prosper Ngowi. Personal Communication), but in conversation, Chinese interlocutors frequently connected the exchange rate to American political agency. That is, it was decisions in the United States which affected the rate of the dollar, and in turn, the profitability of Chinese businesses, and the prosperity of individual Chinese. In some cases, Chinese interpretations of US monetary policy could be quite elaborate conspiracy theories. A Chinese trader explained to me, for example, that the refugee crisis in Europe was a consequence of an American plot to weaken the Euro. The US destabilized the Middle East so that refugees would go to Europe and weaken the economic bloc. Ideas like this have been reinforced by popular books in China like *Currency Wars* (Song 2007), which makes an argument about the linkage between control of currency and global power. In Chapter Five, I discuss how perceptions of US power relative to China more broadly affect expatriate Chinese perceptions of their vulnerability to both extortion and personal danger.

Trade hierarchies between China and Tanzania are nested within broader global economic processes in which particular “centers” of imperial power, particularly the US dollar, and its dependency on the policies of the American government. These entanglements and their local cultural interpretation complicate any singular mapping of empire, but they do afford multiple attempts by agents to find their share within the global division of labor.

Twilight of the Chinese Traders?

The Chinese presence in Kariakoo has been neither the beginning nor will it be the ending of the *long durée* narrative I have described over these two chapters.⁵⁵

The profitability and dominance of the Chinese began to decline around 2012 and 2013 because of several factors. The first was increased competition, between Chinese themselves and with Tanzanian traders as well. The second was a worsening exchange rate occasioned by the falling value of the Tanzanian shilling vis-à-vis the US dollar.

Although this might seem to point to an expectation that the number of Chinese working in Kariakoo may decrease, there is actually greater ambiguity on the ground. Among Chinese and Tanzanians alike, there are different generalizations to be found about whether the Chinese population in Kariakoo is growing, decreasing, or remaining steady. The generalizations appear to be closely related to individual perspectives on which trajectories are problematic and which trajectories are desired. Tanzanians I spoke to who emphasized that the Chinese population continues to grow did so to emphasize Chinese economic strength and, sometimes, the ineffectiveness of the government at controlling immigration. There are also other Tanzanians, but many Chinese, who claim that the Chinese population in Kariakoo is decreasing because the profitability of doing business has rapidly declined. “The big thing now is manufacturing,” argued the former head of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Others argue the numbers have remained steady because whoever leaves is soon replaced.

The comparative advantage that enabled Chinese dominance of the market, the ability to copy existing goods and produce or sell them at lower prices, is the same factor that subsequently undermined that dominance. In addition, the sheer volume of Chinese commodities also contributed to falling profits. Tanzanian wholesalers liked to say that the Chinese “destroy

⁵⁵There are traders from Turkey who have appeared in Kariakoo. One of the ways they position their goods is that they are of higher quality than goods from China. China is neither the beginning nor end of an ongoing story.

business” (sw. *wanaharibu biashara*). And they seemed to be doing so not just for Tanzanians, but also for themselves. Chinese faced competition not just from other Chinese, but also from Tanzanians. This is particularly important because it neatly reverses the experiences of older Tanzanian traders who initially faced competition from the Chinese. The vectors of transition in the trade hierarchy are perceived very differently by different traders. In some narratives of Chinese trade in Kariakoo, it is the Chinese who learned from the Tanzanian traders that there is a market here. From another perspective, it is the Tanzanians who learn from the Chinese. According to one Chinese business leader, Tanzanian traders from inland cities like Mwanza were already going directly to China, lessening their dependence on the Chinese. Triangulating between these claims, there is truth to both perspectives. The earliest traders were the few Tanzanians who had enough capital to go to China, and then many Chinese came, and now these Chinese are out-competed by other Tanzanian who now have the capital to go China. These economic dynamics are sometimes interpreted by Chinese in developmentalist terms, the idea that the Tanzanians who engage in wholesale trading learned an entire set of skills from the Chinese. From Mr. Shen’s perspective, it was the Tanzanians who studied the Chinese. This may have been due to his own experience with his employee Salehe. Salehe started as a *machinga*, worked for them as an employee, and now runs several shops purchasing from Mr. Shen, but also from other suppliers. This same story, however, would not apply to Larry, who for his part, sees the Chinese taking over an area of business previously controlled by Tanzanians.

The reasons Chinese attribute to Tanzanian competitiveness are similar to those I heard from Indians, and both reinforce ideas about the ethnic affinities of trade hierarchies. The first is that whatever advantage there may be to being a wholesaler, African sellers have better social connections to potential customers. These connections are assumed to be devoid of the insecurities and anxieties of “outsiders.” For example, as one Chinese trader explained, Tanzanians can do things, like ride local public transportation, which Chinese cannot do because of “fear.” This allows Tanzanians to save money on transportation. This is similar to the

statement I had heard from an Indian shopkeeper that Chagga traders had been able to take business away from the Indians because the “Indians were expensive,” meaning they spent more for everyday living expenses. Africans, on the other hand, did not pay as much for rent and did not send their children to nice schools. African *poverty* was, in other words, spoken of as a competitive disadvantage for “expensive Indians” with expensive tastes and standards.⁵⁶

Chinese wholesalers face limited options; they can begin exporting, they can move out of trade into manufacturing, they can move to other African markets, or leave Africa altogether. Chinese expatriates outside of Kariakoo considered these pressures to be positive developments for the reasons discussed above. I was even more surprised to hear such sentiments from a man within the leadership of the Chinese Kariakoo Chamber of Commerce. I asked him whom his organization would represent if all the Chinese eventually left Kariakoo.

“It will die,” he responded, “it will become part of history.”

Conclusion

The rise and (projected) fall of the Chinese presence in Kariakoo, and the effects it had on transforming trading hierarchies, demonstrate how the Chinese fit into the *long durée* histories I described in Chapter One. In situating the Chinese presence within this context, I have complicated the narrative of Chinese empire by offering an alternative perspective on how the Chinese presence has been constituted by an assemblage of Tanzanian and Chinese actors. A Chinese imperial project is not a necessity in order to intelligibly talk about the expansion of global capital through the distributed agency of multiple agents. The politics of these processes are best revealed in the way Tanzanian and Chinese actors themselves describe these transformations and their own aspirations. In this chapter, I have described contestations over

⁵⁶ A competitive advantage for Chinese expatriates *vis-à-vis* Euro-American expatriates has in fact been lower salaries and lower standards of living. This is not true across the board, however, as those Chinese who have become successful, and those employed as managers for large companies or SOEs appear to spend much more on leisure activities, rent etc. than Chinese who work in Kariakoo.

trade hierarchies wherein what makes the Chinese presence controversial is not so much their presence, but their position and visibility within sections of the trade hierarchy claimed by Tanzanians. The Chinese presence has helped some Tanzanian traders improve their position in these distribution chains while limiting the trajectories of others. The facilitation of the movement of Chinese commodities, furthermore, creates numerous opportunities for licit and illicit takings of shares by Tanzanian and Chinese actors alike. I have adopted Ferguson's (2015) ideas about the "labor of distribution" to help make sense of the ethical claims involved in these politics. The idea that the Chinese "should let Tanzanians eat" by not engaging in particular forms of trade, or that Americans "should let the Chinese eat" by being mindful of its monetary policy suggest how notions of equitability inflect market processes. In the next chapter, I examine the implications of such co-dependence through economic relationships as they are revealed in the everyday politics of greeting.

CHAPTER 3

“IF YOU GREET THEM ON THE STREET, THEY IGNORE YOU”: (REFUSED) GREETINGS, JOKES, AND THE INTERPERSONAL ETHICS OF GLOBAL INEQUALITY

When Ms. Wang first came to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to work in her older brother and sister-in-law's tire shop, she walked with them through the crowded wholesale market of Kariakoo. On street after street, inexpensive shoes, clothing, diapers, plumbing supplies, and auto parts, most of them Chinese-produced imports, circulate between wholesalers, retailers, petty traders, middlemen, and customers. Sprinkled amidst the crowd were Chinese men and women moving about. Ms. Wang found most of them ignore her, but up and down the street, Tanzanian petty traders called out “*Mchina!*” (sw. Chinese!), “*Mambo!*” (sw. Hello!), and even *nǐ hǎo* (ch. hello).

“Tanzanians are very friendly (ch. 热情!)” Ms. Wang would recount to me in an interview, reminding her, she said, of people in Chinese rural villages. During one of these early walks, however, her sister-in-law turned to her, and warned her not to respond. Those greetings may seem friendly, she explained, but they have bad intentions. Although there was undeniably a gendered dimension to this warning- the greeters were predominantly men- the greetings extended just as frequently to men, and Chinese men as well would express suspicion towards greetings extended by strangers.

In the past several years, there has been a burgeoning literature on the micro-politics of business interactions between Africans and Chinese in both Africa and China. These ethnographies have focused prominently on the limits of trust and the prospects of emergent Chinese-African solidarities or convivialities, using cultural differences and working misunderstandings to explain frictions and conflicts (Brautigam 2003; Mathews 2011; Bodomo 2012; Chang 2013; Mohan et al. 2014; Giese and Thiel 2014). The literature is implicitly an assessment of the aspirational promise found in the China-Africa state-diplomatic discourse of

“friendship” as either an alternative to, or repetition of, the inequities of post-colonial Euro-African relationships. As scholars since at least Simmel (1950) have noted, however, there is a structural affinity between “traders” and “strangers.” The study of Chinese migrants has likewise suggested that they, like trading diasporas more generally, seek a modicum of local relationships to facilitate business, but also studiously limit relationships which might entangle them in the complexities of local politics or moral economies (cf. Curtin 1984; Evers and Schrader 1994). The Chinese presence as “middlemen” in Africa, however, is but only one part of an assemblage of “Chinese” practices whose *definition* (“south-south cooperation,” “neo-empire,” “friendship,” or “trade diaspora”), as I have described in the previous two chapters, is *itself* an object of geopolitical and academic contestation. The experience of Chinese traders can, and should, be understood in terms of broader histories of trading diasporas, but they cannot be disentangled from the contested geopolitical narratives produced around China-Africa. The state-diplomatic narrative of “Sino-Tanzanian friendship,” for example, influences how different actors interpret the quality of interpersonal relationships. Divergent greeting practices in Dar es Salaam, as I will demonstrate, are understandable not only as differing cultural practices, but also as indices of global material inequalities between China and Africa which both precede and shape the experience of interpersonal encounters.

I became sensitized to the importance of greetings early in my fieldwork. Greetings have long been important sources of ethnographic data for anthropologists because of “the frequency with which the ethnographer encounters greeting situations and the importance of learning to greet appropriately” (Hillewaert 2016). As I described in the Introduction, I encountered an early imbalance between Tanzanians and Chinese when trying to meet interlocutors and to make friends. In Kariakoo, I was the recipient of frequent greetings from Tanzanian strangers, mainly petty traders and employees working for wholesale shops, some of whom would not only greet but directly announce an interest in becoming my friend. This was different from my initial experience talking to Chinese traders. Although some, particularly younger men, were surprised

enough to begin a conversation, there were others who were less willing to speak. I also became sensitized to greetings by spending many days at one of the busiest intersections in Kariakoo, watching hours of casual social interactions, and hundreds of casual greetings, primarily between Tanzanians, but also including Chinese. I witnessed both Chinese who joked around and participated in physical banter with Tanzanians whom they knew, and those who moved silently, ignoring with determination both strangers and even acquaintances trying to greet them. The image of the Chinese in the marketplace, therefore, empirically includes both refused greetings *and* joking around, but it is the former which stands out and attracts local cultural commentary.

In what follows, I explore the claim that “Chinese don’t greet,” either Tanzanians or each other, through an analysis of both Tanzanian and Chinese greeting practices, and the ways in which the experience of (refused) greetings are mobilized by actors to make claims about the moral character of individuals, racial categories, and the broader terms of Sino-African relationships. First, I review the literature on greetings in anthropology in the context of my use of “mutuality” as a heuristic to understand relationships in terms of existential material inequalities. Second, I compare Tanzanian and Chinese practices and ideologies of greeting, particularly the moral interpretations of the claim that Chinese don’t greet strangers. Third, I analyze how perspectives on greeting are informed by the potential economic relationships between actors, rather than merely cultural difference. As I will argue, existential conditions of material inequality and market competition afford social relationships which complicate the aspirational politics of “Sino-African friendship.” Finally, returning to the seemingly countervailing joking-around mentioned above, I demonstrate how agonistic tensions are being registered in ambiguously amiable “joking relationships” (sw. *utani*) between Chinese and Tanzanians which ironically announce the integration of the Chinese into local social practices.

Greetings, Friendship, and Mutuality

Greetings have been studied in anthropology as part of a broader system of social, emotional, and material exchanges. Mauss's work on the gift began, in fact, with an essay concerning the "obligatory expression of feelings" (Garces and Jones 2009). Greetings can be gifts, and gifts can be greeting (Goody 1972). Material exchanges are semiotically linked with emotional exchanges and both are constitutive of social relationships and identities. In encounters between strangers, greetings may mark the beginning of a social relationship whose outcomes are unknown.

Greetings are a "moral practice...an everyday way in which neighbors act or interpret others' actions in a meaningful way" (Morgan 2015:138). Both the form and conduct of the greeting as well as the meta-pragmatic discourse around them allow us to theorize about social relationships "where people seek to reconcile desires for community, privacy, self-preservation, or moral behavior with the particular moment of potential sociality – to greet or to ignore"(2015:141).

Following Duranti (1997), the propositional content of greetings are not empty, but index social relationships and contexts. In transnational encounters, greetings can "acquire indexical functions independent of their denotational meanings...becoming emblematic of spatial stratification in the political and economic local – global order" (Silverstein 1998; cited in Jaworski and Thurlow 2010:281). In Tanzanian-Chinese interactions, for example, as I will demonstrate, greetings like *rafiki* (sw. friend) can evoke the historical legacies of "Sino-Tanzanian friendship." While the "friendship" metaphor is not uncommon in international relations, its use in Sino-Tanzanian diplomacy is based on a particular historical moment, when thirty thousand Chinese laborers worked alongside Tanzanians to build the Tanzania-Zambia railway between 1970 and 1975 (Monson 2009). The railway was accompanied by a range of other projects and exchanges, whose "friendship" has been memorialized in the imagery and language of greetings. Photographs of Tanzania's founding President Julius Nyerere smiling and shaking hands with Mao Zedong during diplomatic visits to Beijing are prominently displayed at events and ceremonies sponsored by the Chinese Embassy, and can also occasionally be found in

the offices of private Chinese businesses. In China too, memories of this period have been circulated in popular culture. A late 1970s 相声 (ch. crosstalk) skit entitled “Ode to Friendship” (ch. 友谊颂) featured the famous comedian Ma Ji (马季) playing an ordinary Chinese railway worker sharing his Tanzanian experience with a friend back in China. A prominent part of the skit is how Tanzanians greeted the Chinese as *rafiki*, or friend.

Expectations of friendship based on these histories are described by some contemporary Chinese expatriates as the reason they chose Tanzania rather than other African countries.

Greetings are even used by some as a measure of Tanzanian attitudes. Mr. Kuo, a so-called 老坦桑 (ch. Old Tanzanian), argued that changes in how Tanzanians greeted Chinese evinced shifting attitudes. During an interview, he claimed that “rafiki” was a special word Tanzanians used to greet Chinese, but not *wazungu* (sw. white foreigner). In the fifteen years he had lived in Dar, however, he noticed a shift. When Tanzanians see Chinese on the street now, he said, they shake their head with disapproval and say, “*si sawa* (sw. not good).” Mr. Kuo blamed this on the increased number of Chinese migrants who have come to do business in Tanzania over the last decade, and how he claimed they behaved problematically in business and cultural sensitivity.

The language of friendship has of course long concealed the strategic contingency and inequality of geopolitical relationships (Monson 2006:118). Relevant to this discussion, these are tensions present as well in interpersonal relationships, exemplified in the challenge of maintaining friendship between economically unequal partners for whom suspicions of instrumental calculation trouble sentimental ties. These are not necessarily in contradiction. Binary thinking has come under sustained critique from scholars who have demonstrated the complex entanglements of calculation and sentiment (Medick and Sabeen 1984; Yang 1994; Zelizer 2009; Hunter 2010). Anthropologies of African and Chinese social relationships have in fact *both* provided paradigmatic challenges to a Western “separation ideology” that separates

instrumental from affective relationships (Chang 2013), but these literatures have tended to develop in comparison with the “West” rather than with each other. A qualified exception is a 2008 volume on *Contemporary Perspectives on African Moral Economy* co-edited by Tanzanian historians, Japanese anthropologists, and Goran Hyden (Kimambo 2008). Although the essays do not directly address China, there is an effort to systematically compare what Hyden calls the African “economy of affection” with the Southeast Asian “moral economy.” A crucial difference, several contributors conclude, is that while Southeast Asian moral economies emphasize reciprocity, “counter-obligation is not always necessary” in African economies of affection: those *who have* are obligated to share with those *who do not* (Sugimura 2008). Notwithstanding exceptions that could be taken to Sugimura’s social-evolutionary explanations about “African” hunter-gatherer economies versus “Asian” rice cultivation economies, anthropological discussions of contemporary social relationships in China and Africa have in fact had different emphases. Multiple ethnographies of Chinese social relationships rehearse ethical discourses about 人情, referring to emotion, memory and the reciprocity of favors (Yang 1994; Wank 1999; Mason 2016). Contemporary ethnographies of social relationships in urban Africa have tended to focus on such things as the “ideology of assistance,” or “the labor of distribution” (cf. Obrist 2004; Ferguson 2015). The difference in emphasis has been determined in part by the recent economic histories of China and Africa, meaning that, as Meagher argues, whereas social connections in China are celebrated as conditions of possibility for capitalist growth, in Africa, they have been treated obstacles to accumulation (Meagher 2012),⁵⁷ or they have been re-evaluated as forms of distribution and survival (cf. Ferguson 2015).

⁵⁷ Meagher’s argument is based on the enthusiastic use of Chinese social networks to explain the economic dynamism of overseas Chinese in the 1980s and 1990s, in contrast to the literature on social obligations in Africa to be limiting of economic growth. Exceptions may be found in both cases, and in studies of China, social networks have also been identified as obstacles to imagined standards of modern economy. However, when taking Asia and Africa into broad comparison, these contrasts begin to emerge in the literature.

Putting Chinese and Tanzanian social ethics into conversation, therefore, requires attending to the political economic context of actually-existing China-African relations beyond ideologies of reciprocity and distribution. In seeking a more expansive terminology than either “friendship” or “reciprocity,” I prefer the term “mutuality,” which I defined in the Introduction as interconnections between actors which precede either the agency or intention of the actors themselves. Chinese migrants find themselves in mutualities with Tanzanian strangers whether they want to or not, and more to the point, find themselves implicated in inequalities whether they want to or not. These material conditions both constrain and afford particular kinds of relationships. The concept of *mutuality* is preferable to *conviviality*, which implies tolerance and togetherness (if not solidarity) *with*, but not interdependencies *between*. For example, even in market competition, competitors are interdependent because their actions affect each other’s well-being. Greetings are one site through which these mutualities are negotiated.

Greetings as Gifts

Greetings have long been an important feature of social life in Tanzania, as they have been throughout Africa (Hillewaert 2016). Social interactions cannot be initiated without greetings which inquire into the well-being of the interlocutor and his/her family. On the Swahili coast, greetings have been an important mode through which people from diverse African and Indian Ocean origins have interacted. This is particularly true in Kariakoo, where wholesalers, petty traders (sw. *wamachinga*), and customers from all parts of Tanzania, neighboring African countries, and now China interact on a daily basis. Business and social life, inseparably entangled, unfold primarily on the street, sonically coated with verbal exchanges and all the potentiality that comes with greeting. How individual Chinese react to these greetings are a key mode through which Chinese are evaluated as social and moral actors.

While there are conventions regarding *who* should greet, *whom* should be greeted, and *how* they should be greeted, practices are always changing. For example, in addition to the

respectful “*shikamoo*” (sw. lit. “I hold your feet,” i.e. “I am beneath you”) being addressed to older interlocutors, and “mambo” to strangers and acquaintances, there is a constantly shifting catalogue of terms with which people greet each other, including names or statements which index political news or popular sports.⁵⁸

Walking around Kariakoo, I was frequently greeted by a variety of strangers as “Rafiki!”, and even sometimes as “China!” (pronounced as “cheena”). The manner of greetings sometimes indexed global inequalities by interpellating me and my Chinese interlocutors as privileged actors. For example, I was walking one afternoon with a Chinese wholesaler when a motorcycle driver shouted to us, “Chinese and American on top!” (sw. *Mchina Mmarekani uko juu!*). More often, strangers I had just met would “welcome” me to Tanzania and casually state that Tanzania was a “peaceful” (sw. *amani*) country. I heard Chinese interlocutors greeted with “*Mchina! Tanzania nzuri!*” (ch. Chinese (person)! Tanzania is good!). Whenever I followed up with those who said this, they would explain that Tanzania was unlike neighboring countries which they associated with violence, and that foreigners were welcome here. Conversations like these reinforced the manner in which greetings are front-loaded with claims about Tanzania’s identity in the world, and its relationship with privileged categories of foreigners.

In addition to their referential content, greetings are themselves *gifts* embedded in an economy of material, social, and affective exchanges. In Tanzania, one cannot expect information or assistance from strangers without properly greeting them first. Early in my fieldwork, I found that if I failed to greet Tanzanians whom I knew on the busy streets, some would tell me that I had “hurt” them. For example, when I first met Tamu, the man who sold me my first Tanzanian SIM card, I did not recognize him the second time I passed his street corner. The third time, I did recognize him, and he told me I had “hurt his heart” the previous time. I was likewise scolded for

⁵⁸ I conducted my fieldwork during the closely contested 2015 national elections. The name of Edward Lowassa, the opposition candidate, itself became a “greeting” among the Kariakoo traders with whom he was popular, as did the campaign slogan, “People’s Power.”

being too slow to reply to the frequent text messages he would send casually greeting me “good morning.” At one point, I had also introduced him to a Chinese interlocutor with whom he exchanged phone numbers. Later, Tamu told me my friend was “not a good person,” (sw. *sio mtu nzuri*). I did not understand at first, but he explained this was indicated by the fact the man never returned his text messages.

Greetings involve the sharing of human sentiment, but in addition to their role in facilitating social and sentimental transactions, greetings also facilitate everyday forms of material assistance. The close relationship between the emotional and material features of greetings as gifts was best described to me by Salim, a Kariakoo-based taxi driver with whom I frequently conversed:

Greetings are important for building love and peace in society (sw. *kutengeneza upendo na amani wa jamii*). When you say *as-salamu alaykum* (Arb. may peace be upon you), you are asking God to cover the person with peace from their head down to their feet. When they respond *wa-alaikum-us-salaam*, you are saying may peace be upon you too. When you give to people, God will pay you back ten times.

As Salim explains, Swahili greeting practices draw upon Islamic idioms and conceptions of the social. Greetings, in particular the Arabic blessing *as-salamu alaykum*, which is used by Muslim speakers of Swahili, are themselves generative of “love” in society, exchanged not only between individuals, but matched and multiplied by God. The analogy Salim makes with financial assistance is felicitous because, as he continued, “when you greet someone, you can learn whether they are having problems (sw. *shida*). Maybe they are hungry, or maybe they are sick and need money to go to the hospital.”

Greetings facilitate an economy of mutual assistance, but this economy of mutual assistance, he added, has waned. Pointing to a guard sitting nearby, he continued:

This has been lost (sw. *amepotea*). It used to be that if you were walking down the street and felt hungry, if there was somebody sitting nearby eating, you could stop and eat a little, and when you were full, you could continue. But this has been lost. Young people now don’t observe (sw. *angalia*) the situation (sw. *hali*) of other people.

Greetings indicate not only the recognition of others and their situations, but a disposition to assist. Salim then takes up a theme of moral decay common to narratives of liberalization in Tanzania. The changing ways young people greeted was one of the measures used to index social changes. Tanzanian youth who migrated from the villages to Kariakoo, for example, were said to become less respectful in their greeting styles the longer they lived there.

With these features of greeting in mind, it is possible to understand that the competency of Chinese to participate in such interactions functioned as a means for ordinary Tanzanians to evaluate the moral character of Chinese migrants, and their willingness to participate in the social life of Kariakoo, and Tanzania at large.

Refused Greetings and Withheld Friendship

The failure of a number of Chinese to either initiate, acknowledge, or return greetings was considered a social impropriety. The critique, importantly, was made not only by Tanzanians, but also by Chinese themselves. Additionally, my fieldnotes are full of ephemeral moments where I witnessed Chinese wholesalers in Kariakoo walking silently through crowds of petty traders, ignoring their calls of “Mchina!” One image that stands out is passing a restaurant downtown where a couple of Chinese men, likely investors visiting the city for the first time, were hesitantly entering.

“*Karibu!* (sw. welcome),” said a Tanzanian man at the entrance, extending his arm for a handshake. The men either did not see him or ignored the man, who turned to a friend and laughed at the Chinese men’s behavior.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ There is a teasing element to these greetings. Tanzanians in Kariakoo frequently greeted Chinese strangers as “china!” (cheena). They also greeted Chinese with “ni hao!” although often inflected with heavily exaggerated use of tones. The offensiveness can be ambiguous, as in how the invocation of ethnic stereotypes can become integrated into amiable joking relationships among those familiar with each other. I thank an anonymous reviewer for the article version of this chapter for pointing out this connection.

For all these moments, however, there are also those of Chinese traders walking and smiling with their Tanzanian associates, Chinese greeting in Swahili, and deftly engaging in playful verbal and physical banter with Tanzanian employees and customers.⁶⁰ These are not necessarily in contradiction. In order to understand why, it is important to attend to how both Tanzanians and Chinese interpret the implications of non-greeting.

Tanzanians interpret Chinese non-greetings to be unfriendliness based on racism, a deficit in social skills, and/or narrow instrumental motivations. Commenting on both refused handshakes and rebuffed attempts at friendship, multiple Tanzanian interlocutors would judge that “Chinese do not like black skin,” an evaluation that prompted some to make unflattering comparisons with Tanzania’s long resident Indian community.⁶¹ Other interlocutors who worked with Chinese employers and co-workers judged them to lack the social skills necessary for doing business in Tanzania. For example, George managed sales for a Chinese wholesale distributor with a branch in Kariakoo. Prior to working for him, he was a driver for an American. He explained: “Americans pay a lot of attention to what you like, and what you don’t like. Chinese don’t care about you, they only care about making money. They don’t want to be friends. If you greet them on the street, they ignore you, or just acknowledge you and keep going. Americans want to be friends first. You have to be friends first, and then you can do business. Americans will always say good morning, you can’t start work without greeting each other. Chinese don’t do that. They just like to start working”

George accepted these differences as something distinct to the Chinese. He explained how he still managed to become friends with his boss, but warned that such a lack of courtesies contributed to the negative image he believed Chinese to have in African countries. Another

⁶⁰ Some Tanzanians even argue that the Chinese, unlike the Indians, make an effort to joke around.

⁶¹ If in friendship, according to Aristotle, it is “advisable to love, than to be loved” (Derrida 1997), individual Tanzanians sometimes showed a greater interest in befriending Chinese expatriates they met than vice versa. A focused discussion of racialization is described in subsequent chapters, but my aim here is to describe the political-economic relationships on which it turns.

Tanzanian employee described how he taught his boss how to get along with Tanzanian customers.

The lack of courtesies is potentially problematic, as George indicates, because they suggest a narrow instrumentalism on the part of Chinese migrants. In its extreme form, some Tanzanian interlocutors argued that the Chinese had no friendly motivations vis-à-vis Tanzanians. For example, Daudi was a Tanzanian wholesale trader who had spent a decade doing business in Guangzhou. Daudi told me, however, to “remember, [the Chinese] are about profit, not friendship. There is absolutely no friendship with the Chinese. They don’t look for friendship, they become your friend so they can exploit (*sw. mgodi*. literally, to mine or excavate) you.” Daudi had lost his earlier predominance in the wholesale trade to the Chinese traders who came to Kariakoo. His suspicions about Chinese intentions in interpersonal relationships suggests that interpretations of Chinese social courtesies are also informed by political-economic situations.

The meaning of exploitation here is not limited to the material terms of exchange, but also the withholding of human sentiment. There is an irony, however, to Tanzanian claims that the Chinese value instrumental relationships over affective ones. In the global circuits of knowledge production, The Chinese “art of social relationships” has itself become paradigmatic of a “non-Western” entanglement of emotion and business (Chang 2013). Furthermore, Chinese in Tanzania *themselves* critique the behavior of Chinese who do not respond to greetings, but they also provide rationales for avoiding greetings, and limiting social relationships more broadly which echo the judgments of Tanzanians like Daudi. To explain these contradictions, I now turn to Chinese experiences of greetings and social interaction in Tanzania.

(Refused) Greetings as Object of Auto-Critique

The pragmatics of greeting are different in China than they are in Tanzania, but cultural differences cannot entirely explain the manner in which greetings are thematized as objects of ethical evaluation for both Tanzanians *and* Chinese. Looking at Chinese perspectives on greetings

in Tanzania reveals a symmetry to claims that the other places instrumentalism above sentiment in the pursuit of interpersonal relationships.

Greetings (ch. 打招呼) are also important in China, but they are not extended to strangers as freely as they are in Tanzania. Historically, greetings were expected between familiars (ch. 熟人), but not between strangers (ch. 生人)(Ye 2004). It is of course a classical trope in the anthropology of China that people make sharp distinctions between “insiders” and “outsiders” (Fei 1992). While modeled on the division between family and 外人(ch. outsiders), in practice, it is a shifting polarity. The cultivation of relationships outside the family depend on generating bases of familiarity that convert “outsider” to “insiders.” For example, the use of terms like 同学 (ch. classmates), 老乡(ch. same hometown) to talk about people demonstrates the prerequisite of finding common grounds for the development of further relationships (Yang 1994:94). The transformation of 生人 into 熟人 is also a function of time, and of repeated interactions (Ye 2004).

The content of Chinese greetings themselves are generally “context-sensitive,” reflecting the particularity of the relationships in which they are used. Greetings are often in the form of “obvious” questions/comments confirming activities which the addressee is engaged in (ex. “have you eaten?”, “you’ve opened shop early.” etc.)(Erbaugh 2008:626). For example, I was often greeted by Chinese interlocutors in shops by greetings like, “Derek, you have free time today?” Context-sensitive greetings are forms of “positive politeness” which point to both the past and futures of interpersonal relationships. The greetings “reconfirm [an actor's] relationship with the addressee” (Hong 1985:221), and also “attempt to increase social connections”(Erbaugh 2008:626).⁶²

⁶² The art of *guānxì* may facilitate forms of social inclusion, but as Ong and Nonini (1997) argued, distinctions remain between insiders and outsiders. In Kariakoo, for example, there were some Chinese traders who readily greeted and chatted with Tanzanian customers, but rebuffed my own attempts to chat with them.

In comparison, the Swahili greetings of certain foreigners discussed in the previous section are “context-sensitive” insofar that they index global relationships and stereotypes prior to the development of interpersonal relationships. Terms like “朋友” (ch. friend) and “rafiki” are themselves generalized expressions (Ye 2004:225) which suggest social distance. Chinese and Tanzanian business associates would greet each other in more context-sensitive ways. For example, Chinese wholesalers and Tanzanian customers would occasionally greet each other with jokes about how the other was a “big boss.”

Chinese do not stop and greet in the same fashion as Tanzanians. When they did greet people with whom they did not have immediate business to discuss, they preferred only perfunctory greetings. The withholding of courtesies does not necessarily indicate social distance, however. Indeed, as in the case of greetings among family members, the absence of courtesies can indicate social closeness. Elaborate courtesies on the other hand mark social distance. In some Chinese workplaces, this difference confuses local employees. A Tanzanian woman working in the corporate office of a construction company described in an interview how her Chinese co-workers did not greet her when they came into the office in the morning. In this case, non-greetings look superficially similar to the non-greeting of strangers, but they are different. Habits like these may be explainable as cultural misunderstanding, but they nonetheless contribute to Tanzanian interpretations that the Chinese come to Tanzania only for business, and not for friendship.

Conventional Chinese greeting patterns for intimates are more personalized and context-dependent than the generalized greeting formulas found in Swahili. Swahili greetings resemble other “Western” greetings like “hello” in that they are “religious derivations” (Ferguson 1976; cited in Hong 1985:204) from concepts of a generalized moral community under God (Hong 1985:210). From this perspective, generalized greetings like “hello” in China have been

historically considered mechanical and lacking in “human touch” (ch. 人情味) because they are emptied of the particularism of any relationship (Erbaugh 2008:637).

The significance of this distinction is that whereas both Chinese and Swahili link the exchange of greetings with social relationships and human emotion, they do so differently. Chinese greetings are more socially meaningful in their particularity, whereas Tanzanian greetings are often socially meaningful in their generalizability. Tanzanians and Chinese do share the practice of making distinctions between familiars and strangers, and they do share the practice of prioritizing greetings of familiars over greeting strangers, but there are differences in magnitude, emphasis, and elaboration. Tanzanian greeting formulas, for example, are more open to the inclusion of strangers. In the past thirty years, however, a combination of urbanization and state-led “civility” campaigns in China have contributed to the gradual popularization of formulaic “stranger” greetings like “你好” (Erbaugh 2008:647; Yan 2011).

The conventional de-emphasis of stranger greetings has even become scandalized as a symptom of a perceived “moral crisis” in post-reform China over the treatment of strangers (Yan 2009; Lee 2014). Played out in Tanzania, Tanzanians come to embody for Chinese either a form of social ethics China has lost (or has not yet obtained), *or* the extreme example for Chinese of an interpersonal ethics based narrowly on self-interest rather than favors, gratitude, and 人情. Chinese expatriates were just as likely as Tanzanians to consider (refused) greetings evidence of “selfishness” even if they generally greeted less than Tanzanians did. The reticence of many Chinese expatriates in Tanzania to greet Chinese strangers on the street, despite being co-nationals in a foreign country, was considered by Tanzanians to be particularly odd, and Chinese interlocutors sometimes agreed. Chinese understood these refusals to be evidence of low ethnic “unity” (ch. 团结), a problem associated with corrosive competitive ethics. Ms. Ling, a Chinese resident of Kariakoo, complained of the “bad habit” which Chinese had of not greeting each other, which she considered to be “very selfish” (ch. 自私). Nobody talked to each other, she

explained, because the people here were “bad.” If you did, people would think you were “going after secrets” (ch. 解密). This suspicion is understood to be a consequence of the heavy competition between small entrepreneurs for dominance in the market (see also Haugen and Carling 2005). In one part of Kariakoo, for example, several dozen Chinese wholesalers competed in the shoe business, driving down profits for each other just as they had for Tanzanian wholesalers like Daudi. The potentiality of social relationships is constrained by the mutuality of this competition.

When Chinese I interviewed critiqued the lack of “unity” to be found among Chinese abroad, Tanzanian society was sometimes offered as a closer approximation to the 人情社会 (ch. humanistic society) China had lost to a 陌生社会 (ch. stranger society). Ms. Wang’s comparison of Tanzanians with rural Chinese at the beginning of this chapter is an example. In other cases, the suspicions attending stranger social interaction in post-reform China extended to how Chinese migrants interpreted the apparent friendliness of Tanzanians. In an article published in a local Chinese-language newspaper, entitled “How to Get Along with African Black People,” a former Chinese student of Kiswahili writes that “Chinese who come to Africa will hear ‘China, nihao, rafiki,’” but will be suspicious of them because “they assume there is intent.” He encourages Chinese to interpret greetings as friendliness, defining 人情 as a “natural characteristic” of local people, as evidenced by the fact people greet friends and strangers alike.⁶³

⁶³ There are distinctions, however, between Tanzanian traders who owned shops and petty traders who did not. The latter regularly greeted potential customers passing on the street, but they also exchanged greetings and joking banter with each other more often than shopkeepers, although this distinction was one of degree rather than kind. Tanzanians who own shops tend to be less engaged in such verbal practices, occasionally commenting on the “noisiness” (sw. *kelele*) of wamachinga. One former *machinga* (sw. petty trader (sing.)) who sold shoes and had accumulated enough capital to rent a warehouse, described becoming a quieter individual as he grew. As he explained it, the more capital that he accumulated, he said, the more he had to think about. Greetings, he suggests, are linked to class and economic activity.

Chinese attitudes towards greeting Tanzanians, however, cannot be interpreted only in terms of an assumed “cultural ignorance.” They are also informed by experiences with particular modes of interaction with Tanzanians which reveal the vulnerabilities associated with inequality.

Greeting to Beg

The Chinese suspicion that greetings portend instrumental “intent” is supported by the linkage between greetings and assistance acknowledged in Tanzanian contexts. Goody (1972) described a similar relationship between greeting and personal strategies of accumulation in a West African context, as “greeting to beg.” In China as well, the “art of social relationships” entails the delicate pursuit of interpersonal strategies for the improvement of well-being without presenting these strategies as narrowly instrumental (Smart 1993; Yang 1994). Chinese interlocutors were frequently surprised by the apparent *directness* of material requests, casual requests for water (sw. *maji*), cigarettes, or other gifts (sw. *zawadi*) from Tanzanian employees, customers, strangers, and even small shopkeepers from stalls where Chinese customers purchased milk or eggs. Chinese interlocutors with whom I spoke frequently combined these experiences with those of extortion by street level bureaucrats to come to the conclusion that “begging” was a generalized “African” way of being.

“There is one thing you need to understand about black people,” a manager told me after I saw his domestic assistant ask for some change to purchase medicine, “They are always about wanting things.” He put his hand out in an imitative gesture.

In a Chinese context, to *beg* is to transfer the burden of face-work to the potential donor by performing one’s own low social position (Yan 2009:13). Casual Tanzanian “begging” on the other hand is often embedded in joking exchanges through which the “seriousness” of the request is semiotically ambiguous. This is evident in an exchange I witnessed one evening with Mr. Shen, a shoe wholesaler who had just had a new shipment of boxes unloaded into his warehouse. The work was over, and the boxes had already been stacked in the storage room. Mr. Shen was

standing next to the representative from the customs clearance agency, counting out a stack of red ten thousand Tanzanian shilling bills. Silently, he passed the stack over to the man.

The man reached his hand out to take the stack, smiled, and said, “*kuongeza* (sw. increase).”

“What!?” screamed Mr. Shen, pushing the money into the man’s hand and scolding him as he grabbed him by the arms and began to physically push him towards the exit.

“Hahaha! Uncle” the man laughed, putting up mock resistance for a little before bidding Mr. Shen goodnight and leaving the room.

Mr. Shen turned to the remaining people in the room: Hodari and Hussein, his two Tanzanian employees, and Salehe, an old employee and friend of Mr. Shen who now ran his own set of shops but continued to do business with Mr. Shen. He also helped him oversee the unloading of cartons when they arrived. Mr. Shen took out another stack of red bills from his pocket, paid Hodari and Hussein for their evening’s labor, an addition upon their regular salary because this was after hours. Salehe gazed with seriousness and put out his hand towards Mr. Shen.

“What!? You!” screamed Mr. Shen, raising his hand, lunging forward and striking Salehe. Salehe broke his stare and laughed while flinching and taking evasive actions. “Uncle!” he laughed.

I witnessed many workplace exchanges like these between Tanzanians and their Chinese associates. Requests for “*kuongeza*,” increase, or *zawadi*, a gift, are consistent with a broader genre of casual, teasing requests be found across a broad set of marketplace interactions (Pietilä 2007). Because they are delivered in the form of “joking around,” an amiable social relationship can be preserved in the event they are refused. Some Chinese employers respond to such casual teasing requests with exaggerated “violent” reactions, such as (playfully) striking the petitioner, who would then laugh as they flinched away. In many cases, the petitioner seemed to anticipate such refusals and reactions, and to “beg” the Chinese was to anticipate and tease their reactions.

The ambiguity of these exchanges between Chinese and Tanzanians contributed to both the amiability of joking relationships, but also reinforced Chinese stereotypes about a presumed local propensity to make demands. For example, on another occasion, Salehe helped Mr. Shen's wife look after the shop for a day when she had an emergency. The next day, Salehe had asked for payment. Unlike on the occasion mentioned above, I had not been there to witness the tone with which he made the request. Ms. Shen told me later, however, that "Chinese would not do such a thing." If they were asked a favor, they would not (directly) ask for monetary compensation. This did not mean the favor would be devoid of an exchange logic, but rather the memory of such favors would contribute to the long term 人情 of the relationship.

The presence of demands led multiple Chinese interlocutors to uncannily echo Tanzanian perceptions in arguing that Africans did not pursue real friendships. "And if you stop giving them help," one man complained, "they no longer want to be your friend!" Chinese managers complained about unbalanced reciprocity, that the transfer of gifts or financial assistance to employees did not generate the sentiments of gratitude and shame which compelled reciprocal obligations, however conceived, to the employer. Instead, employees "think that if you are rich, you *should* give them money. It is 应该的(ch. something you *should* do)."⁶⁴ In their attempts to understand this in terms of local "culture," interpretations of religious faith seemed to offer an explanation: generosity comes from God, and people express gratitude to God rather than the human gift-giver. The concept is surprising (and even amusing) to Chinese not (just) because it implies a social ethics that is different from the 人情 of particularized relationships in China. It is not dissimilar, however, to the explanation of reciprocity and greetings provided by Salim in the previous section; that social reciprocity is mediated through, and rewarded, by a divine third party. Nonetheless, the tone in which Chinese interlocutors offered these cultural relativistic

⁶⁴ In Tanzanian workplaces, however, lunch and other forms of assistance are provided in addition to the salary. Some Chinese employers, on the other hand, considered such expenses to be subsumed within the salary, but others did adapt to this practice.

explanations were more often than not weighted with implicit ethical judgment regarding which cultural model they found preferable.

The problem with these cultural explanations, however, is that they neglect the political economy of the relationships which shape the expected flow of gifts. Economic life among the urban poor in Dar es Salaam is best characterized in terms of generalized reciprocity and precarity. This means that individuals often find themselves expected to share with and assist others when they are able to, but this also means that they seek assistance where they can when they are in need. Generalized precarity means that who is able to help whom is matter of contingency.⁶⁵ It is for this reason that Ferguson prefers to describe these flows as the “labor of distribution” rather than “reciprocity.” When systemic inequalities are factored into the situation, it is obvious that those who have accumulated greater capital face increased social obligations to assist. Chinese migrants are marginally wealthier outsiders, but the profits and wages they earn are often intended for family obligations in China. Like other trading diasporas, they have an interest in limiting local social relationships precisely to pre-empt other claims (Evers and Schrader 1994). Nonetheless, because they *are* present, they inevitably encounter distributive claims.

Chinese migrants recognize the situation, but with the consequence that their interpretation of social relationships become over-determined by implicit and internalized geographies of inequality. This affects, for example, the reading of “friendly” greetings they encounter. Ms. Wang, with whom I opened this chapter, was warned to ignore greetings from Tanzanians in the marketplace because what seemed like signs of friendship were understood by

⁶⁵ Contingency is understood to be more than blind luck. For example, my interlocutor Tamu described his regular expenses to exceed his income. When I asked how he managed to find the differentials, he simply told me “God helps.”

her sister-in-law to conceal malevolent aims, begging or stealing in particular.⁶⁶ Newcomer Chinese were taught to see themselves through the imagined eyes of locals. “If they see a Chinese person,” multiple interlocutors claimed, “they think they are rich,” even if the person may only be an employee and not the boss. A consequence of this is the imagining of a local moral universe in which Chinese are never friends.

For example, Richard was a Chinese man in his early thirties whom I knew who had pursued a variety of independent businesses throughout Africa for about eight years. In the assessments of “Africans” he gave to me, he tended to generalize on the basis of experiences he had had before, especially in Angola. “Chinese in Africa have been murdered, and the police have shown no 同情感 (ch. sympathy).” A friend of his in Angola had been murdered by robbers working in cooperation with people in the bank where he was depositing his money. The police who came “showed no feeling. They just collected information.” Even worse, “they were laughing while they working!” Richard believed that the police officers thought that because the Chinese came here to make money, “they *should* be robbed!”

Chinese suspicions of local intentions affect understandings of moments as quotidian as greeting, and this is based on the recognition that their own presence in Africa is motivated by business opportunities, and that these comparative advantages are based on material inequalities between China and Africa.

The Mutualities of Friendship

The symmetry of Chinese and Tanzanian claims that the other seeks interpersonal relationships for personal material gain, and lacks the sentiment necessary for human relationships, suggests how relationships narratively glossed in histories of friendship are challenged by a capitalist mode of exchange. The commensurability of moral polarities indicate common tensions, and

⁶⁶ The manner in which Ms. Wang was cautioned by her sister-in-law to be suspicious of strangers is not limited to Tanzania, but resembles experiences of migration within China itself where similar suspicions attend life in urban contexts (cf. Fang 2013).

common moral horizons, which are complicated by conditions of competition and inequality which actors find themselves entangled within regardless of whether they want to or not.

The Tanzanian ideology of assistance is not without its discontents. The ideology of shifting obligations on those who have towards those who do not generally reflects a shared condition of economic precarity, but growing inequality can threaten social ties as inordinate demands are placed on particular individuals. Nonetheless, extracting oneself from such demands requires an evacuation of the emotion central to social life. Tamu, who wanted to accumulate enough capital to rent a store frame, once told me that he “had no friends but God.” But when I met him again a year later, I was surprised that he decided to share his stand with two friends, reducing his revenue-already below that necessary to extract profit- by a third. When I asked him as much, he responded, echoing Salim’s comments that “love” (sw. *upendo*) was important among friends.

Tanzanian modes of sociality, like Chinese modes of sociality, are beset by contradictory tendencies whatever the ideological claims made about them. This is evident even with the pragmatics of Tanzanian greeting. I was advised by Tanzanian interlocutors to greet, but also to be careful. “If you are greeted,” Tamu instructed me with reference to “bad people” he said spent time around the market, “just say *safi* (sw. good), and move on.” Notwithstanding the “obligatory” expression to greet, I was cautioned by Tanzanians to ignore certain kinds of greeting in terms which resonated with Chinese anxieties.

Returning to my conversation with Salim, as fortuitously the sun set and the dusk came in, he reminded me that “not all people who greet are good. Some are bad. You have to look at their face.” Salim imitated the face of a man who was either drunk or mentally ill. “You have to be careful. If someone is really nice, they might be a thief.” Salim pointed down the empty darkened street, away from the crowded corner where we stood. “If you are walking there, you don’t want to stop when you get greeted. Just say you don’t have time, and keep going.”

While mapped onto social distinction in different ways, the responses evince a common ethical dilemma, the need to enter relationships in order to engage in society is also the exposure of the self to material demands and even dangers. These dilemmas are encapsulated in the act of greeting. Rather than viewing African and Chinese interpersonal ethics as incommensurable systems of value, points of convergence indicate common tensions and common moral horizons, albeit worked on from different positions. In interactions between Chinese migrants and ordinary Tanzanians, these tensions are worked out in practice, imprinting themselves on interactional styles which include refused greetings, but also joking.

Joking Inequalities

Refused greetings are only one way in which structural tensions are registered. As my earlier examples of “begging” and joking suggest, agonistic interactions can develop into otherwise amicable exchanges. The Swahili term for joking around has the same root as *utani*, the older institutionalized systems of joking relationships which historically paired not only individuals, but entire ethnic groups throughout the region. As Tsuruta (2006) explains, joking relationships used to be quite elaborate, entailing various forms of mutual responsibilities such as the provision of material aid when a member of a joking partner group passed through one’s territory. In some cases, joking partners could take each other’s possessions without either asking or subsequent censure. Stories about the origins of particular joking relationships are often attributed to relationships with those whom once warred or, tellingly, traded with. Tsuruta links the formation of these relationships with the 19th century caravan trade in slaves, ivory, and manufactured goods between the coast and the African countryside.

Accounts of *utani* suggest a manner in which they existed either between economically equal actors, or served to equalize relationships which would otherwise become unequal. Tsuruta writes that “an *utani* contract was usually made between the two warring ethnic groups, only when the fight was fair. When one group had been defeated by another, *utani* bonds as a set of

mutual obligations may have arisen to replace ‘a potential master-slave situation,’ and this eventually contributed toward ‘dissipating hostility and maintaining harmony between groups’” (107).⁶⁷

An older *mshehe* (sw. sheikh) I once met in Kariakoo described the example of the joking relationship between the Nyamwezi and the Zaramo ethnic groups. The Nyamwezi had historically been the primary middlemen for trade between the coast and the African countryside before they eventually became porters for the coastal Zaramo who came to dominate the caravan trade. This was the basis of a "joking relationship" between them.

In entering Kariakoo, the Chinese came to participate in a much longer history of complicated relationships among trading middlemen on the East African coast. Utani relationships of the recognizably “traditional” sort no longer exist in Kariakoo, but many Tanzanians recognize utani-like relationships in the casual joking around which happens among people in business.

The content of joking between Chinese and Tanzanians, for example, can be an index of ordinary tensions. For example, I once returned with Mr. Chen, a clothes wholesaler, to his apartment complex to find the electricity was out. We would need to climb six flights of stairs. Mr. Chen spoke in his Kiswahili to the older guard sitting on the wooden chair, “The electricity is out! It’s tiring [to climb the stairs]. Buy me a water!” The guard laughed and shook his hand.

Mr. Chen frowned, waving his finger, “Tatizo! Si sawa” (problem! not good!).

Anthropologists have long observed that such ambiguity in intentions is what makes joking work as an amiable index of social tension. The tension here is the expectation of distribution from those who have towards those who do not. The expectation, even if non-serious, that the apartment complex should compensate its guest for a broken elevator might make sense from the perspective of Mr. Chen as guest, but the man from whose pockets such a

⁶⁷ Tsuruta’s last quotation in this passage is drawn from Christensen (1963:1325)

generosity might be expected, the security guard, is much poorer than Mr. Chen. Demands would be expected to flow the other direction. This contradiction is illustrative of the position of the Chinese business community at large. They are both "guests" but also relatively privileged at this point in time in the global distribution of wealth. This contradiction creates conflicting demands and expectations between a variety of Chinese and Tanzanian actors.

Exchanges like these signify how the tensions described here do not signify the absence of intimacies, but rather amiable "agonistic intimacies" (Singh 2011) which ironically announce the integration of the Chinese into a recognizably Tanzanian mode of sociality.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used the pragmatics of interpersonal greeting as a lens to examine the negotiation of interpersonal ethics between Tanzanians and migrant Chinese entrepreneurs in the city of Dar es Salaam, and more broadly, to explore how interpersonal ethics are negotiated in emerging sites of transaction between economically unequal societies of the global South. Competition between Tanzanian and Chinese entrepreneurs on the one hand, and the unequal economic positions of the Chinese and Tanzanians entering into these new relationships on the other, strain ideologies of friendship. In search of a new vocabulary, I have used an expanded sense of "mutuality" to describe Chinese-Tanzanian relations in terms of material inequalities and market competition which precede the development of relationships themselves.

Drawing on an ethnography of the pragmatics of greeting in the wholesale market of Kariakoo, I have set out to demonstrate how shifts in trans-national relationships in the global division of labor can be indexed in the idioms of ordinary interactions between transnational actors. Greetings are a privileged site for negotiating social relationships because in encounters, they hinge on the dilemma-to greet, or not to greet. Drawing on Tanzanian ways of thinking about greeting, I have argued that to greet is to offer a *gift*, an "obligatory expression of emotion" which interpellates actors into exchanges which are both material and emotional. When greetings

are considered between migrant entrepreneurs from a geopolitically ascendant state and their local hosts in the global south, they can be seen to take on rich meanings which make the most quotidian of conversational interactions index the hierarchies and inequalities of the global.

This is expressed most prominently among Tanzanians through the observation that Chinese appear less willing than Tanzanians to respond to greetings given to them by strangers, even if those strangers are also Chinese. For many Tanzanians, to refuse to either give or return greetings is to withdraw oneself from the social contract itself. Greetings are tied into a broader system of reciprocity in which that which is exchanged includes both the material and emotional. Refusals to give or return greetings are seen by some Tanzanians as further evidence that Chinese migrant entrepreneurs enter into interpersonal relationships with Africans only in order to do business, but not for friendship.

There are Chinese who agree critically with this observation, seeing the propensity to refuse greetings even among Chinese to be symptomatic of ethical dilemmas within Chinese society that are magnified abroad. In this context, Tanzanian friendliness either exemplifies the “humanistic society” China lacks, or in fact conceals the behavior of people imagined to think only in terms of material benefit, and without the 人情 believed to be the principle of Chinese social ethics. This becomes a rationale for avoiding greetings, and limiting social relationships more broadly. The paradox is that while it is perceived to be necessary to 低调 (ch. keep a low profile) and limit social relationships, these are also necessary in order to conduct business. In joking exchanges, semiotically linked to the “begging” found in casual greeting, both amiability and tension are registered. Joking expresses the existential interdependence and mutuality between Chinese and Tanzanians in this situation. It is in such spaces of mutual recognition that there can be the development of trust, and of working relationships.

The relationships I have examined are generally antagonistic, competitive business relationships and exchanges between people whose comparative economic capital indexes global

inequalities. Despite the language of friendship in the discourse of Sino-Tanzanian diplomacy, individual Chinese and individual Tanzanians who come together do so from both differing positions of capital accumulation, and differing perceptions of how this should affect their relations with the other. The model of friendship as a model of relation between unequally situated states creates reciprocal expectations and demands which challenge the basis of claimed equality, but also the basis of expectations about how reciprocal demands between friends should work. A question arises: What kind of “friendship” is possible between unequal actors? What is the responsibility of those with capital towards those without? Do material inequalities always lead to moral hierarchies (Hattori 2003)? While refused greetings can be symptomatic of the limits of friendship, joking relationships do not resolve these contradictions as much as register both the emotional interaction and the “agonistic intimacy” (Singh 2011) found throughout social life.

In the next chapter, I expand on the everyday politics of suspicion among expatriate Chinese towards Tanzanians through the lens of everyday discursive processes which racialize them and interpret their behavior in terms of developmental hierarchies.

CHAPTER 4
THE EVERYDAY LANGUAGE OF (CHINESE) RACIALIZATION

“How do you feel about racial discrimination?”

My ears perked up. I had only met Mr. Cai a few hours earlier when I visited the factory compound where he and his wife had recently started employment several months earlier. Mr. Cai had volunteered to drive me home after I visited the factory on the invitation of the manager to teach English to interested employees, and I was alone with him in the car. The racialization of Chinese-Tanzanian relationships was among the more difficult issues that I faced during my fieldwork; difficult in the sense that I could neither ignore the salience of race in everyday practices and language among Chinese, but also did not wish to eventually engage in the almost pornographic accounting of unequivocally racist comments that has constituted much of the research on “Chinese racism.”

I was therefore surprised when this person whom I had recently met brought up the topic. But it was unclear to whom he was referring. I asked him what he meant.

He asked me if I felt comfortable talking with, eating with, or spending time with 黑人, but then continued by telling me that before coming to Tanzania, he thought everybody was equal, and that “there should be no racial discrimination.” After being here for several months, however, he said that it was “very obvious” the Chinese and Tanzanians were “separated.” How were they separated? I thought. Could it be the fact that in his factory, Chinese and Tanzanian employees wore uniforms which were the same except for different bands of color? I had been told before this was done in order to separate the clothes when they were washed, because the Chinese employees did not like the “body odor” of their African co-workers. Could it be because the Chinese and Tanzanian workers ate separately on account of the fact that Chinese and

Tanzanian food habits (ingredients, flavor, preparation, and eating style) were believed to necessitate it? Could it be because limited fluency in Chinese, Swahili, and/or English limited communication? When I asked Mr. Cai what he had meant, he responded that his “thinking” is that everyone is equal, but he did not feel “comfortable” interacting with Tanzanians. It was “just a feeling” (ch. 感觉). In order to understand this “feeling,” he had begun reading a translated copy of conservative African-American scholar Thomas Sewell’s *Ethnic America* (1981). He continued that when he had told friends and family in China that he was planning to come to Africa, he was warned by people about war, poverty, and a lack of food. Knowing that I regularly used *daladalas*, the converted Japanese shuttle buses used as public transportation in Dar es Salaam, Mr. Cai told me he had thought they were very dangerous. He had been told by other Chinese here that they were dangerous “because there were lots of black people.” Who told him this? His manager was always “warning us about this, warning us about that.” She told him and his wife to never go outside alone at night, but to instead stay safely within the locked gates. The manager made Tanzania seem like “a terrible place.” The manager was exaggerating the scale of crime in Dar es Salaam, I offered, pointing out that I felt safer here than I did in American cities. The manager had her own particular anxieties, Mr. Cai reminded me. She told them the story of a wealthy Chinese investor whose ex-wife had been fatally shot several years before by robbers while she was transporting cash to the bank. The robbers had learned her itinerary from the victim’s security guard. The manager’s daughter herself had been injured in a recent drive-by purse snatching incident.

Mr. Cai struggled to make sense of a “feeling” he seemed to be embarrassed about. He in turns deconstructed the influence of Chinese prejudices about Africa as a land of “poverty” and “war” where he would not be able to find food, an image Chinese expatriates often found to be far off the mark when coming to live in a major city like Dar es Salaam; he placed some distance between himself and other assessments of Tanzania by identifying the role his manager played;

but he also struggled with what he identified to be “feelings” of racial prejudice within himself. His comments partly reflected a kind of “wounded humanism” (Herzfeld 2007) I sometimes encountered among expatriate Chinese, a narrative of principled anti-racism and beliefs in human equality confounded by the frictions and discomforts of making lives in Tanzania. In order to make sense of these feelings in Tanzania, he reached for a popular Chinese translation of a conservative African-American book on ethnicity and race in the United States whose central arguments turn on opposition to affirmative action.

The significance of this short vignette about Mr. Cai is to demonstrate how the complex web of associations at work here complicate the delineation of a singular “Chinese” discourse of race in Africa. The web of associations in this example include popular Chinese prejudices and images of “black Africa” (cf. Hood 2011); institutionalized segregation in a factory workplace justified in terms of sensory contact, food cultures, and security; affects; personal histories of fatal betrayal; the authority possessed by a translated African-American conservative scholar; and of course, myself as a white American anthropologist whom Mr. Cai said he felt more comfortable talking with because, like him, I had a college degree. Demonstrating the salience of the class distinctions discussed in the previous chapter, he described to me that he did not talk to his Chinese co-workers because they did not have college educations and “only cared about money.”

The complex web of associations revealed by the case of Mr. Cai alone shows how an ethnographic discussion of the racialization of Chinese-Tanzanian interactions is beset by the challenge of brevity. This is because it is impossible to accurately represent the issue without keeping a number of processes in consideration in relation to each other throughout: a web of discourses through which racial distinctions are produced within the Chinese community, and an assemblage of ordinary practices which articulate with these discourses. Despite considering all of this, this chapter remains partial, limited to Chinese discourses of race. The reason for this is the degree to which the discussion of Chinese racial discourse is over determined by the geopolitics of comparison (see Introduction). My chapter is intended primarily as both an

ethnographically and theoretically grounded intervention in the problematic scholarship which results from this. In doing so, this chapter also provides a summative elaboration of the approach I take in other chapters, to connect the everyday frictions of Chinese-Tanzanian interactions with the everyday production of knowledge, but with a greater emphasis here on the latter part.

The Anthropology of “Other People’s” Racism⁶⁸

The literature on race and racism in China, and in China-Africa relations in particular, is limited, and the research that does exist is extremely fraught. The academic study of anti-black racism in China has centered largely on: 1) making the argument that a discourse of race and racism “exists” in China and 2) tracing its historical genealogy. The immediate impetus for this scholarship in English was the Nanjing student riots and protests against African students in 1988. Dikotter’s (1992) *Discourse of Race in Modern China* was the first major treatment of the subject. The book is largely constructed as a single argument that there is a Chinese discourse of biological race with a long historical genealogy. He supports his argument primarily by listing several thousand years of textual commentary. Dan Wyatt’s *Blacks of Premodern China* argues that Chinese views of Africans were formed as early as the Tang Dynasty through interactions between Chinese and the African slaves of Arab traders resident in trading ports (2009). The historical conjuncture, Wyatt argues, created a semiotic linkage between blackness and slavery long before the encounter with Western colonialism. Barry Sautman (1994) discusses anti-black racism in the context of the encounter between China and Western imperialism. His exploration of the relationship between racial discourses and the nation-building project (discussed also by Dikotter) has influenced more recent interpretations of the “cyber-racism” directed toward “blacks” on the Chinese internet (Cheng 2011).

⁶⁸ My title is inspired by Robert Oppenheim’s article on the “Anthropology of Other People’s Colonialism” (2007)

The argument for the *modernity* of Chinese anti-black racism is that it is closely linked to nationalist anxieties about the place of China and Chinese in the global hierarchy of value. There is a long genealogy to this going back to the encounter between the Chinese empire and Western imperialism in the 19th century. There were prominent Chinese reformers who adopted the racial and Social Darwinist perspectives of such Europeans as Francis Galton to critically analyze the place of the “yellow” in the global racial hierarchy. As Keevak (2011) argues, the Chinese were initially “white” in the European imagination, but became reimagined in the 19th century as “yellow,” placing them between Europeans and Africans. Chinese nationalist reformers, adopting the language of Social Darwinism, sought recognition as equals within the framework of global white supremacy, which entailed the corollary distinction with “blacks.” The famous Chinese reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao wrote on the global hierarchy of race in ways that often embraced Western “scientific racism” and even eugenics. Kang Youwei in *大同書* writes that “the difference between white people and yellow people is not that great, China can still vigorously catch up, but the blacks are already too inferior” (1935).

There is a subtext to debates in the literature as to whether Chinese anti-black racism is the product of modern nationalism or is the product of longstanding “cultural” prejudices. The subtext is less about Chinese relationships with Africa, but rather Chinese relationships with the “West” and its systems of thought. The identification of a singular Chinese discourse of race is done for the purpose of making broad claims and comparisons. The problem with this is how it flattens the possibilities of what a *Chinese* discourse of race might be. The construction of a textual cannon linking the writings of Kang Youwei to the language of 1980s student protestors, for example, excludes alternative voices and singularizes the Chinese discourse of race to a master melody against which individual perspectives are either in or out of tune. The approach of scholars like Dikotter (1992), Wyatt (2009), Shen (2009), and Cheng (2011) has been to present extended series of examples, a kind of gallery of shocking statements, primarily to prove that

racism exists in China. Cheng (2011) and Shen (2009) both emphasize how thoroughly racism “permeates” Chinese society. Shen goes further to make claims about how “the Chinese” think and feel. The construction of a *singular* Chinese discourse of race has the double-effect of both *singularizing* stereotypes of “blacks” through the eyes of Chinese, *and also singularizing the Chinese* as a category of people who possess such perspectives.

In moving out from scholarship to broader treatments of Chinese racism in the Western public sphere, these critiques are problematic not just because the critique is formulated through the lens of white racism, but also because the discourse of Chinese (and Asian) racism itself often betrays a white gaze. This is either in the form of an imagined Western liberal anti-racist civility which sees in Chinese racism another example of the various ways the Chinese are seen to fall behind in global standards (along with authoritarianism, environmental consciousness, etc.), or it is in the form of a reactionary Western racism which points to Chinese racial discourses as a legitimating example that “they do it too,” and that racism is therefore not based on white supremacy.

The mapping or interpretation of Chinese racial discourses is not an easy or even coherent intellectual enterprise because there is no space in which such a thing can be understood outside of the context of white supremacy and the history of European imperial expansion. Even scholarship which attempts to reconstruct pre-modern Chinese discourses about “blacks” are ultimately unhelpful because the line of inquiry is itself over determined by contemporary categories and circumstances. One of the implications of this, as Sautman and Yan (2016) point out, is that researchers may misidentify particular Chinese attitudes and expressions as racist on the basis of family resemblances to Western racial stereotypes. For example, they argue that Chinese discourses of African “laziness” have in fact been over-exaggerated in Western accounts, suggesting that such scholars might project ways of thinking onto their interlocutors which reflect Western racial stereotypes. Western scholars who hear Chinese interlocutors articulating “racist”

opinions about Africans may in fact be hearing a “ventriloquation” of their own (disavowed) racial biases.

This has led to a situation where public intellectuals routinely attempt to “explain” Chinese racism by contextualizing it and arguing in turn that it is not really “racism.” In popular discussions, the first set of explanations argue that what looks like “racism” is better understood as “colorism,” an aesthetic preference for fair skin originating in the association between darker skin and working under the sun, and therefore, a form of “classism.” Closely related is the existence of historical prejudices towards darker skinned southerners. These prejudices are not racial to the extent that they are based on a culturalist framework wherein the distinction between being Han and being “barbarian” is one of cultivation, meaning that people in the periphery can gain social mobility through emulating the center. The corollary to this explanation is that contemporary Chinese prejudice towards black foreigners in China is based on benign ethnocentric “ignorance” informed by “local” aesthetic standards.

The second set of explanations attribute anti-black racism to the Chinese consumption of Euro-American cultural products with anti-black elements. “Hollywood” is frequently invoked metonymically as a source of representations of “black people” (the term 黑人 is applied equally to African-Americans) as violent criminals. The corollary of these explanations is also that anti-black prejudice is a product of “ignorance,” in this case the consumption of cultural representations rather than direct experience. In both cases, individual Chinese themselves are victims of either Chinese or Western cultural schema, but not actually “racist.”

The aim of these arguments are to rescue the reputation of the “Chinese” in a global liberal public sphere where to be “racist” means to be ignorant, unethical, or backward. In response, public intellectuals have advanced a narrative of progress where Chinese are assumed to have been insufficiently cosmopolitan due to being “closed.” Now that China is open to the world and growing in importance, the logic goes, Chinese are unlearning old prejudices and

moving past racial attitudes through direct interactions and experiences. Li Anshan (2016) argues that “ignorance” should not be mistaken for racism, and, in a response which demonstrates the geopolitical context of these critiques and counter-critiques, argues that Chinese ignorance is different from Western racism, which mobilized such prejudices in the pursuit of slavery and colonialism. In other words, they are incommensurable because Chinese actors have never operationalized them. Sautman and Yan (2016), in a deliberate effort to counter generalizations about Chinese racism, highlight those moments where people show more nuanced perspectives. They also, like Li, argue that Chinese can’t impose a hegemonic discourse. They also use surveys to show changing attitudes. To an extent, these intellectuals have highlighted an important point: not just that Chinese attitudes are far more diverse than they might appear, but also that, in comparison with Western racial discourses, there is less resistance to acknowledging and combating them. Black expatriates in China, for example, have commented to Roberto Castillo (2016) on the comparative lack of structural racism (compared to Europe), and the relative willingness of interlocutors to admit ignorance and biases.

However, the counter-critique is ultimately problematic because it ends up positing a highly limited definition of racism which associates it primarily with “attitudes” or “ignorance,” or even, in Castillo’s case, with “structural racism” alone. Furthermore, contextualization of Chinese attitudes and practices can border on apologism because, while the same types of contextualization could be made regarding American and European attitudes, critical scholars of race have demonstrated how one does not have to “intend” racism to be racist. Indeed, the thesis of structural racism is based on this perspective. Sautman and Yan (2016) narrowly define racism in terms of hereditarianism, and instead identify Chinese perspectives on how people are shaped by circumstance, and how people can change. But those ideas also appear in the Western canon, and that does not mean they are non-racial, as indeed the use and abuse of the culture concept has shown (more on that later).

The counter-critique is problematic because it associates racism with attitudes and ignorance. Setting the definition of racism as something possessed by individuals ignores the *dialogical* properties of discourse; the articulation of individual attitudes do not exist in isolation from each other, people express views on race with reference, implicitly or explicitly, to other views in circulation. Second, the treatment of racism as “ignorance” ignores how racism is produced through experiences and interactions. While Chinese experiences do lead Chinese expatriates to unlearn some stereotypes, the circumstances of their presence, and also the dialogical environment in which they move creates other stereotypes. In other words, one moves neither from ignorance to knowledge, or from knowledge to ignorance, but rather from one combination of the two to another combination of the two.

My approach in this chapter is to examine how race, racism, and racialization is produced in interactions and experiences.

The Semiotic Lives of 黑人

Everyday discourse among Chinese-speakers about Tanzanians is racialized through the use of the term 黑人 (ch. Black person). At the outset, there are two important qualifications I need to make here for clarification, and in order to explain the goal of this chapter. There is a distinction between an argument about racist *attitudes*, and the argument of this section about racialized *discourse*. There is an intimate relationship between the two that I explain in the chapter, but the casual use of 黑人 by Chinese speakers does not, in of itself, mark those speakers as “racist.” I insist on this distinction for reasons which will become clear in the following discussion, but I must also make it for the reasons discussed above, the existence of a geopolitics of knowledge production about China and Africa which leads scholars to be sorted into either “China apologist” or “anti-China” positions. My discussion aims to overcome these limitations by emphasizing racialization as a process of becoming rather than a pre-ordained conclusion. Before I can address specific ethnographic situations, however, it is necessary for me to first introduce some general

features about how the word 黑人 works in discourse. I need to provide a sufficient level of detail in order to contextualize the discussion which follows.

Translated into English, 黑人 means either “black person” or “black people,” and is employed in a wide range of contexts ranging from a pronoun to describe a single dark-skinned African-descendent individual in lieu of their name, to “blacks” as a singularized racial category. Needless to say, the term erases distinctions in regional, national, and ethnic identities within and outside of Africa, and in use, speakers rarely make a distinction between “blacks” in Africa, and “blacks” in the diaspora. The breadth of whom the term references marks them into a racial category, and the breadth of contexts in which the term is used aggregates connotations and removes distinctions between people and contexts. The use of 黑人 in everyday discursive interaction reproduces “black people” as a racial aggregate onto which varied traits, ways of thinking, experiences, practices, and norms of conduct are *routinely and repetitively* applied. The construction of knowledge about 黑人 resembles Kockelman’s (2016) description of Pierce’s “dynamic object,” an entity hidden by the fog whose traits are inferred by the tossing of metaphorical “balls” into the fog; experiences which allow the ball-tossers to make inferences about the shape of the dynamic object. 黑人 is a selectively sticky kind of dynamic object against which a multitude of discontents and prejudices from a diverse set of individuals easily attach. This often occurred in conversations I witnessed among expatriate Chinese where my interlocutors would, in Kockelman’s terminology, thematize (i.e identify 黑人 as an object to discuss), characterize (i.e identify stereotypes about this object), and rationalize (i.e. make conclusions about the implications of this for their own conduct, and for their understandings of the world)(2007). The participants in these conversations may be engaged in different activities in Tanzania, may have different backgrounds, and may even have different attitudes towards Tanzanians or different perspectives on the origins and meanings of human difference and/or the validity of racial categories, Regardless, discourse is collaborative and dialogical, and an

interlocutor does not need to be self-consciously “racist” in order to contribute to the reproduction of race and racism. Whether 黑人 is used to make racist statements, or used as an ostensibly neutral reference to “black people,” the term can only reinforce the category. The racial category of *heiren* is the collaborative product of an assemblage of everyday judgements, experiences, and discursive practices. The “racism” which is produced is neither the exclusive property of particular individuals nor the cultural property of “the Chinese.” Even if distinctions are to be made between the persons with nuanced/un-nuanced views of difference, or between people who actively seek positive relationships with Tanzanians and those who try to minimize social contact beyond what is economically necessary, there is still a shared set of understandings about the difficulties of living and working in Tanzania (or Africa more generally) which are routinely described in terms of *heiren*.

The term itself has remained consistent in comparison, for example, with shifts in the United States from “Negro” to “Black” and/or “African-American,” reflecting different social circumstances and political contexts. Because these terms have all been translated as 黑人 in Chinese texts, the nuances which are used to index pre and post-civil rights racial discourse in the United States are lost when translated into Chinese, and become hyper-racialized when translated back into English. These differences have lent themselves to a counter-argument that when Chinese speakers use the term 黑人, the connotations are different than in English. A representative example of this argument is found in retired diplomat’s Jin Bo-Xiong’s memoir, where he argues that the use of the term 黑人 is merely a matter of convention rather than an indication of racist attitudes in Chinese culture (2008).⁶⁹ To an extent, the claim is accurate insofar as the use of the term does not indicate racist intent on the part of the speaker. In ordinary discourse, the use of 黑人 is similar to how “white” foreigners are referred to as 老外 (ch. old

⁶⁹ It is worth noting that the book is written for a Chinese rather than foreign audience.

foreigner, *laowai*), or 外国人 (ch. foreigner, *waiguoren*), or the way Americans may be referred to as 美国人. The term can be used as both a reference to a collectivity, or to a specific individual. As a descriptor, *heiren* is subject to the same kind of modifications applied to “foreigner” or “American” to indicate either aspired or actual personal intimacy. For example, to call an African person a 老黑 (ch. old black, *laohei*) has the same connotation of respect as to call a (white) American a 老美 (ch. old American, *laomei*). While ethno-racial connotations are indeed present, I would argue that it is not racially marked within a Chinese context in the same way that it sounds racially marked when translated back into English.⁷⁰

There are several reasons, however, why the argument for 黑人 being a neutral term is also problematic. The first is that, in any discussion of racial speech, intent on the part of the speaker is partly separate from the histories and associations of the word itself. The second is that 黑人 has in fact had a history in China. There is good reason to question the claim, moreover, that 黑 is devoid of negative attitudes. Hood (2011) extensively documents, through a review of AIDS discourses in China, the manner in which 黑 functions in both discourse about China, and discourse about Africa. When referring to things Chinese, 黑 refers to illegal and/or illicit activities and human failings, and when referring to things African, 黑 refers to the outer extremes of human suffering and misery (Hood 2011). The extent to which popular representations of Africa and Africans have been negative means that for Chinese who come to Tanzania, the term 黑 is already capable of expressing negative connotations.

There is a problem however with this argument: claims of Chinese anti-black racism which establish connections from the negative connotations of 黑 to how African interlocutors

⁷⁰ My argument is that in English, especially American English, the presence of a meta-discourse about what counts as “racist” speech means that particular words become identified at different times with having racialized connotations. A comparative meta-discourse does not exist in the Chinese context, and the use of 黑 is not problematized. This does not mean it is not racialized, but that its use does not index its speakers as “racist” except in the context of translation.

are described carries a risk. The risk is explaining anti-black racism primarily in terms of “culture” or “ignorance.” In this chapter, I primarily analyze how 黑人 is used in the course of actually unfolding interactions and interpretations of everyday life in Tanzania. The racialized connotation of 黑人 is a distinct question from whether the term is used to express positive or negative attitudes. The use of ethno-national terms in Chinese itself indicates the salience of ethno-racial identity as a construct, and within that context, 黑人 is racially marked because of the precedence skin color takes over regional and national identifiers. The term 白人 (*bairén*) is used to describe “white people,” but more often, either national terms are used (like “American,” or “Indo-Pakistani”), regional terms (“Euro-American”), or the general term, “foreigner.” In talking about African-descendent people, it is the *color* of the skin which is the marked category. Furthermore, explicit disclaimers made by Chinese speakers that 黑人 does that not have racist connotations is evidence of the recognition that it is potentially problematic. For example, when a group of Chinese friends were discussing the awkward translation of hailing a person as “*heiren*” into English as “hey, you black-skinned person!” one of them hesitated, and stopped to assure me that “this is not discrimination.”

Having said all this, however, there is a limitation in understanding the term 黑人 only in terms of its references, and only in terms of prior Chinese histories. My goal here is to describe how 黑人 is used in actual speech. I argue that, like any term, its meanings are malleable and in the process of becoming. Rather than debating whether it is or is not racial, it is important to look at how it is or is not racialized in use. In ordinary discourse among Chinese expatriates, the term 黑人, which is already racially marked, is racialized further by how it is used in context. This can be demonstrated even if one begins with the assumption that 黑人 is in of itself a “neutral” term. Racial stereotypes and vernacular forms of racial discourse are constantly in a state of becoming, rather than being a set of predetermined “cultural” stereotypes. Chinese migrants, as I described

above, use the term 黑人 to refer to any dark-skinned “African” individual, flattening and singularizing everyone from employees, customers, friends, government officials to thieves within a shared racial category. The kinds of people in Tanzania which Chinese interact with, and the kinds of relationships they have with them, therefore, creates new associations for the term 黑人 which are based in interaction and experience. The closest and most routine interactions Chinese migrants have with Tanzanians, for example, are with people they employ to work for them. Referring to these individuals as 黑人 has the effect of de-individualizing them as abstract labor power. For example, I have recorded the use of sentences like:

“The air conditioner is broken. The manager was supposed to get a *heiren* to fix it.”

“Where should I put my laundry?” “Give it to *heiren*”

“Get a *heiren* to go up into the roof and pull the wire across.”

“I let *heiren* manage that.”

“This is my *heiren*.”⁷¹

To be clear, the term 黑人 does not automatically refer to labor, but in the context of labor relations, it is significant that the racial identification is the primary means for identifying the person, rather than other racially-neutral terms, like “worker.” These are occasionally combined, however, as in the case of 黑工(ch. black worker, *heigong*). In addressing Tanzanian employees directly, Chinese employers usually use first names, but when talking in the third person among Chinese interlocutors, these individuals are more likely to become abstracted and generalized. This serves to reinforce a social distinction between Chinese expatriates and locals.

In addition to the casual use of the term 黑人 in everyday working relationships, the use of the term in conversation to describe Tanzanian interlocutors whom the speaker has interacted

⁷¹ This particular statement was used by an interlocutor in Uganda, rather than Tanzania (although this makes little difference in how Chinese expatriates use the term), in reference to a young man who worked for him. In a subsequent conversation a year later with this young man, he told me that his Chinese employer was “like family.”

with means that the term becomes a repository for the myriad challenges, difficulties, and frictions Chinese encounter while living and working in Tanzania. As described in the next chapter, street-level bureaucrats and “thieves” make expatriates feel the most vulnerable and frustrated, and they are prominently featured in discourses of discontent. The liberal use of 黑人 to describe the responsible actors in these interactions works to package the term with criticisms, devalued qualities, and even pejorative judgments in a routine and repetitive fashion. The consequence is that, because in each case (whether extortion, labor problems, or crime), the person in question is referred to as a “black person,” individual experiences are routinely scaled up to characterizations of an entire racial category. The use of *heiren* encourages a manner of evaluating people in terms of collectivities and generalizations rather than individuals and contexts. This is done explicitly in a sentence I regularly heard: “黑人是这样的” (ch. black people are like this, *heiren shi zheyang de*). The phrase would often appear right after a complaint about the behavior of an individual Tanzanian.

For example, I was waiting for lunch one day at a Chinese hotel. The manager apologized to me that the food was not as varied today. The cook had been paid yesterday, and had taken an unauthorized vacation today. “Black people are like this,” she added.

Immigration officials raided the hotel and solicited a bribe from a guest. “Black people are like this,” said the secretary.

The driver had not yet shown up. “Black people are like this.”

In each case, the particularity of any situation is explained in terms of ethno psychological behaviors.

The singular existence of any of these examples does not in of itself prove an argument about “Chinese racism” in either direction.⁷² They must all be considered within the larger

⁷² There are indeed qualifications deployed when describing *heiren*. When complaining about life in Tanzania, there are Chinese interlocutors who have told me “*heiren hen huai*” (black people are very bad),

context of ordinary discourse. For example, this manager would on other occasions generalize in the negative about *heiren*. The important thing to recognize here is that the *heiren* referred to does not have a single referent, it is an aggregative category. Individuals are either tokens of this generalized type, or they are treated as exceptions to this generalized type. For example, a manager at a Chinese hotel hired a security guard to sit outside the main gate, which was locked. If a guest wanted to leave the hotel, they would have to knock the gate or call out to the guard to unlock the doors. The guards hired for the night shift often fell asleep, and sometimes did not hear the guests knocking on the doors. Now the hotel complex itself belonged to a Tanzanian family which rented out the bottom floor of the building to the Chinese manager, and they had to use the same gate as everyone else. A woman from the family was trying to get outside one evening, but she could not wake the guard. The Chinese hotel manager heard the knocking and came down. The two of them briefly commiserated about the guard, and after they woke him, the Tanzanian woman scolded him for sleeping. The hotel manager, returning upstairs, passed a Chinese guest who asked what all the knocking was about. He explained that the guard often sleeps on the job, adding that “black people are like this.” The irony in this situation, of course, is that it was a black Tanzanian resident of the hotel, the Chinese manager’s landlord, who first complained about the guard. She did not figure into the evaluation of “black” because often when Tanzanian individuals were evaluated positively by Chinese interlocutors, the qualification, “He/she is not like other black people,” would be added, preserving “black” as a remainder category for discontent. In other words, positive evaluations of a “black” individual usually do not allow the meanings of “black” to be reimagined; instead, the person is evaluated positively by how far from the expectations of “black” they are.

and there are also Chinese interlocutors who have phrased the same complaints as “*you de heiren bu hao*” (some black people are not good). There are also people who told me “*you de heiren hao*” (some black people are good). The manager at a hotel described a taxi driver returning a cell phone she had lost, adding “*heiren hao*” (black people are good).

The term acquires shared meaning among a community of Chinese speakers through the similarity and/or concordance of their experiences and assumptions. That is, there are unspoken shared assumptions, a common ground, about the implications of *heiren*, such that speakers will use the term as if it had self-evident character. For example, when I asked a businessman if he had any interactions with his neighbors, he responded:

“No, there are too many *heiren*,” and proceeded to discuss the perceived dangers of socializing.

When I asked another interlocutor of mine to accompany me to the light outside his shop after a power outage, he told us we needed to stay back here because “这里都是黑人” (everyone is black here, *zheli dou shi heiren*). The statement assumes that “blacks” are likely to take advantage of the power outage to steal from their boss. He did not explicitly say that in that particular sentence, but he assumed I would have understood him. Unlike the phrase, “black people are like this,” neither of these statements are directly propositions about *heiren*, but they indirectly point to these associations through a shared ground of assumptions about *heiren*. These assumptions are evident also in the way *hei*, as a signifier as blackness, is often used as a devalued quality in comparison with 白 (ch. white, *bai*) as a signifier of whiteness. This means that when people are talking about 黑人地区 (ch. black person district, *heiren diqu*), 黑人酒店 (ch. black person hotel, *heiren jiudian*), 黑人食物 (ch. black person food, *heiren shiwu*), 黑人海滩 (ch. black person beach, *heiren haitan*), there is an implicit racial devaluation at work which is revealed by the fact that each of these have their opposites. A Chinese business liked to advertise that they were located in a 印巴地区 (ch. Indo-Pakistani neighborhood, *yinba diqu*). A Chinese friend described the food in Egypt during a recent vacation as being tastier than Tanzania because it was a 白人 (ch. white person, *bairen*) country.

The use of this vocabulary is effective because it works at the level of unstated assumptions, that is, it goes unnoticed. This shows again the importance of distinguishing

between racialized speech and indicators of racist attitudes. Another good example is a conversation I had with Mr. Zhang and his wife at their home. Mr. Zhang was a businessman. During our conversation, they frequently used the term “local” (ch. 本地人, *bendiren*) to describe Tanzanians, but they also frequently challenged explicitly the racialized generalizations about Tanzanians other Chinese made. Nonetheless, as I was about to leave, I was told to “watch safety” (ch. 注意安全, *zhuyi anquan*) because I was going to be passing through a “black person district” (ch. 黑人地区, *heiren diqu*).

The implication of these practices is that the one constant is the use of *heiren*. In these situations, it is difficult to distinguish when the use of 黑人 is based on prior stereotypes, and when it is based on experiences in Tanzania. My argument is that it does not matter. “Ignorance” and “Knowledge” are not opposed to each other, but work to reinforce each other. The kinds of associations one speaker may have in using 黑人 may be different from the associations the second speaker has when they hear it. Neither depends on attitudes of the speaker, but rather the consistency of the term itself to describe the other.

The Chinese discourse of 黑人 is racialized, but in addition to this, when interpreted in American language ideologies, it is hyper-racialized. It is not my intention to do a systematic comparison of racial discourse, but it is useful here to briefly compare the coding strategies of Chinese expatriates with Westerners in Dar es Salaam regarding Tanzanians. The first difference is that the latter use the word “black” with less frequency than the former, preferring national or continental labels. Obviously, this does not mean the discourse of Westerners is less racialized, but that colorism is dissimulated and hidden. A white American friend, describing her social networks in a Tanzanian town, for example, noted reflectively that she associated primarily with “Indians” and “Arabs” rather than “fishermen.” The fishermen in her town were all black African. It is implied that “fishermen” means African, but she did not say the latter word. If she had, it would have been an uncomfortable admission of racial segregation. Many of my Chinese

informants, on the other hand, would have readily used the term 黑人. This would not indicate they were more racist than my friend in their practices or attitudes, but the point here is not to argue Chinese are more or less racist than western expatriates. Rather, my argument is that 黑人 is a dominant figure in the everyday discourse of Chinese. Newly-arrived expatriates are inundated with casual impromptu lessons which construct a framework of interpretation, an *epistemology of the everyday* (Kockelman 2007) for characterizing and reasoning with this key interlocutor.

Having established this general overview of the ways in which 黑人 is used in practice, the next part of my chapter examines the racialization of the category in greater detail, but examining how it operates in the context of particular kinds of social practices. Each chapter of this dissertation in fact examines such social practices, and each practice does touch on race. In addressing the topic directly, however, I have chosen to focus on practices related to insecurity and distrust. In an attempt to reflect on broader questions of epistemology and the racialized production of knowledge, I have organized the following discussion in a non-linear fashion. Instead of following a single line of argumentation, the following material could instead be visualized as two parallel discussions connected by a shared ethnographic case. The first thread, extending my account of the semiotic life of 黑人, describes the intersubjective, discursive, epistemic processes through which 黑人 is constructed, not just among my interlocutors, but the interactions between them and researchers such as myself. The second thread describes a particular set of social practices concerning personal security and management which contribute to the racialization of relations. In splitting these threads, I am not comparing “discourse” and “practice,” but following two modes of both racialization and its deconstruction. At the end, I bring the two threads together and provide a critique of the dissimulation of race in the discourse of culture.

Race and the Welcoming of Chinese Strangers

My story begins with an uncanny arrival story: a Chinese graduate student arriving in Dar es Salaam to study the lives of Chinese migrants. I accompanied him on his “first day.” His first day provides an intersecting window into how newcomer Chinese are introduced to Tanzania, and how researchers are introduced. His experiences reflect on my experiences, and on the experiences of other Chinese. Newcomers are provided “informal orientations” which provide both a framework of recommended practices, and an “epistemology of the everyday” (Kockelman 2007) for interpreting the environment around them. These are both highly racialized. Lewis was younger than myself and this was his very first time outside of China. In the spirit of collegiality, we began to cooperate. Through him, I was able to ‘re-live,’ albeit from the perspective of looking over the shoulder of a Chinese researcher, both initial impressions of Tanzania, and also how my Chinese interlocutors interpreted these impressions for his benefit.

The first person to whom I introduced Lewis was Mr. Liu, a wholesaler who worked in an underground storehouse. At the time we arrived, Mr. Liu’s Tanzanian employees were out, and he invited us in to sit. Lewis put down his backpack, and Mr. Liu warned him that it was not safe to carry a backpack like that around Kariakoo. 安全 (ch. security, or safety) was a dominant theme volunteered by multiple people who met Lewis. Lewis received frequent advice about how to protect both property and person. His preference for wearing a backpack in Kariakoo attracted considerable mention. I myself avoided carrying a backpack, and I had also suggested that he might want to avoid carrying one as well.

The Chinese we met had the same advice, but they were more explicit about *why* he should not wear a backpack: “black people might steal it.” I was already self-conscious about this, and had deliberately avoided using this word to describe Tanzanians in most situations. In this situation, I just warned Lewis that there were 小偷 (ch. thieves, *xiao tou*). But in conversations with Chinese, it was extremely common for the risk of theft to be verbally

attributed not just to *xiao tou*, but to *heiren*: e.g. watch your backpack because *heiren* will steal it. It was therefore unsurprising to me that when Mr. Liu's employees returned with one of his customers, and we could hear their voices coming down the stairs, Lewis instinctively grabbed his backpack.

“没事 (ch. it's nothing, *meishi*),” responded Mr. Liu, shaking his head.

In this and other occasions, the Chinese who warned compatriots to protect themselves and their property around 黑人 were also the same people responsible for assuaging the often-inflated fears and anxieties facing new Chinese arrivals.

Personal security is a theme which dominates the informal orientations newcomers are likely to receive from friends and strangers. Newcomers are warned about how they should dress, what to carry in public, which neighborhoods to visit, and what times to avoid. These are reinforced by personal anecdotes of cellphones being snatched from their hands, thieves strong-arming bags, and even armed robbery. Whatever anxieties and pathos regarding “Africa” that newcomers may have, they are reinforced and escalated through these warnings and anecdotes. Because many of these newcomers are private investors, however, how they choose to subsequently conduct themselves will vary. Few of them come without prior ties, however, and it is through the interactions they have with people they know, those with relative “experience,” that they learn basic security practices. Those who come to work for Chinese employers, on the other hand, face stricter regulations on their movement in the name of security. There is a mix of pre-existing stereotypes, in other words, supplemented by new stereotypes provided on arrival.

At this point, I divide my discussion into two parallel threads. First, I follow the chronology of where I and Lewis went next in order to show how the “黑人” introduced in the morning got extra characteristics added to it in the afternoon, and also to reflect on how chains of associations and experiences lurk behind these encounters. Following this, I return to the question of security and elaborate on everyday practices.

Webs of Associations

In Lewis's case, he was feeling sick that day, the sun was oppressively hot, and he was still suffering from jet lag. So I took him to an air-conditioned Chinese restaurant. The Chinese waitress recognized me as the friend of a mutual acquaintance and began to speak to us. Lewis, a keen interviewer, obviously took this as an opportunity to ask her about Tanzania. She had only been in Tanzania a couple of months. "I like Africa," she said, talking positively about the weather and scenery. "The only thing I don't like are the people." She began to list a series of complaints about the *heiren* who worked in the restaurant, particularly what she considered to be a habit of forgetting to do things which they had been trained to do. "I don't know if this is because they don't make an effort or they are unable to learn?"

There was no grand design or theme in the itinerary I provided for Lewis, but no sooner had we left the wholesale shop, which regaled us with warnings of thieves, and oversized backpacks than the waitress volunteered additional charges against the character of locals. She kept glancing at me each time she ended a statement. At the time, I thought she was waiting for me to provide either verbal or non-verbal cues of validation. Retreating from participation into observation, I remained stoically silent, but my facial expression and lack of reaction may have inadvertently signaled my discomfort. Lewis was a more attentive interviewer and in response to her comments about her Tanzanian co-workers, he said that the secretary at another business had described a similar problem with the driver. The day before, Lewis had spoken with April, the young Chinese secretary. She had told him that their driver, an older diminutive Tanzanian man named Msia, frequently forgot how to drive to locations where he had previously transported staff. Another fragment, a fact, an additional charge, with the authority of reported experience, relayed into the conversation. I knew this fragment, but in Lewis's mouth, it was worn of the original affect through I first recorded it. The fragment that I remembered, before Lewis ever came to Tanzania, was bound with impatience and anger towards a man more than twice her own age.

April's job required her to frequently run errands around the city, and Msia was one of the drivers. Autumn's impatience with Msia seemed to mirror her boss's own impatience. Ms. Song frequently maintained a stern attitude towards her Tanzanian employees, characterized by short greetings and imperative sentences in Kiswahili, and a projection of teacher-like strictness which was noticeable to the extent it contrasted with her joking and jocular manner of interacting with not just Chinese and foreign guests, but also Indian-Tanzanians and Black Tanzanian friends who were professionals, middle class or government affiliated. On a couple of occasions, I witnessed Ms. Song quickly lose patience with Msia and repeat her instructions by screaming them. Autumn did the same on an occasion where Msia was driving a group of Chinese and myself to a restaurant. We became stuck in late afternoon traffic, and none of us knew with certainty where the entrance to the park near the restaurant was. One of the men in the car encouraged Msia to use his horn. We eventually got to a street corner where we needed to turn right, but April mistakenly thought we needed to turn left. While Msia was turning the right direction, April began yelling "left, left! LEFT!" incredulous that Msia did not understand her.

I shouted that we were going the right way, and another passenger in the car calmly agreed.

After we entered the gate, Msia looked for a place to park. There was space for cars just in front of us, but the stage for the rehearsal was located a distance to the right. Msia began to park in the space in front, but April shouted "No, there! OVER THERE!"

Msia did not speak Chinese, and April did not speak Kiswahili, and I don't believe anybody had explained to Msia what business we had at this park, not to mention why we would park over there rather than over here. In any case, one of the passengers, who was already impatient that we had arrived late, grumbled angrily when Msia "clumsily" handled a backpack while unloading the vehicle.

I could not help but remember incidents like these when Lewis calmly relayed April's personal observations about her driver. I argue these traces are important to understanding the

problem at hand. Ethnographies largely evacuate the emotional, affective, the personal discomforts, all in the effort to reconstruct a heroic narrative. In those cases where ethnographers have sought to cast the researcher as an emotionally affected object or “vulnerable observer,” (Behar 1996) there is the ready charge of self-indulgence or narcissism. There is an analytical importance, however, in registering discomfort and tracing its lines. Why did incidents like these disturb me? ⁷³

The role of researchers like Lewis and myself in this situation is worth reflecting upon. As ethnographers, it is generally accepted as a basic principle to build rapport for informants, and one of the bases for rapport is conversation. It was likely in this spirit that Lewis shared April’s evaluation of Msia in a manner that would commensurate it with the waitress’s evaluation of her own employees.

My advice on safety, and my practices may not have been explicitly racist, but I operated in a context of shared experiences in which the language used to describe these experiences *are* racialized. This led to a dilemma where, in the process of communicating with Chinese informants about the shared situations of everyday discontent, self-awareness about where these conversations could lead led me to either avoid complaining, or to put great effort in contextualizing my complaints so as to pre-empt racialized interpretations of them. Whenever I did have complaints or frustrations with everyday life in Tanzania which merited sharing with interlocutors in the interest of building common rapport, I often strived to contextualize my complaints, or offer my own theories for why people or institutions acted a particular way. If an interlocutor responded that “black people are like this,” it was evident how quickly an evaluation could become racialized.

My Chinese colleagues also contextualized their responses which such explanations like “it’s their culture.” The transformation of difference into a misunderstanding of “culture,”

⁷³ I think it was a combination of embarrassment at being a bystander and a reticence to take the position of a white anthropologist lecturing Chinese interlocutors about racism.

however, entails its own difficulties which I will return to discuss at the end. First, I return to the problem of security as a key site of racialization.

Security and Its Discontents

It is important to emphasize that “security” (ch. 安全) is an organizing principle for a wide range of Chinese organizations in Tanzania, both those engaged in business, but also those engaged in government-organized cultural programs. I will return to this fact later, but I signal it here in order to argue that widespread racial paranoia depends on a degree of commensurability between social situations that might otherwise seem completely different.

Kariakoo is widely considered by the expatriate Chinese community to be dangerous, both because it is 乱 (ch. chaotic, *luan*) and also because it has been the site of several armed robberies and a murder involving a Chinese victim. Apprehensions about Kariakoo, however, are often much greater among Chinese who live and work elsewhere in the city than they are among the Chinese wholesale traders who actually live there. Nonetheless, concerns for security shape their presence there in particular ways. The greatest anxiety rests on the transportation of cash from shops to banks, or from shops to apartments. Most Chinese shops close up and roll down their metal gates at 5 PM, a full hour before sunset-which being near the equator-stays relatively constant year-round. Tanzanian wholesalers, on the other hand, remain open for at least another hour, and Kariakoo as a whole becomes especially bustling with retailers, customers, and food vendors at dusk. But by this time, Chinese residents have mostly disappeared from the scene and into their apartments. Wholesale businesses, as discussed in Chapter Two, are small operations and the employees generally live together in the same apartment. Managers sometimes explicitly restrict their employees from going out alone. This is especially true when the employees are young people in their early twenties. The older managers would take paternalistic approaches.

Outside of Kariakoo, many private Chinese companies combine work and living space in a single compound; ranging from rented villas used as offices to factory/construction complexes

with attached dormitories. The compounds are generally separated from the outside by high locked gates with security guards. With or without explicit rules restricting travel outside, the arrangements lend themselves to staying inside, especially when one's managers warn of the dangers to be found outside. These arrangements apply as well to Chinese State Owned Enterprises operating in Dar es Salaam. In all these cases, enforcement varies by company and often depends more on the personality of the manager. Employees often interpreted them as informal warnings rather than set restrictions. In one SOE, for example, the management formally restricted its employees from driving the company vehicles, both during work, but also on the weekends. Employees were expected to rely on the Tanzanian drivers. On the weekend, however, the younger employees, in their twenties and thirties, would often ignore these restrictions and borrow the vehicles to eat out, get drinks, or play basketball.

The explanation for these restrictions was invariably "security," the institutional counterpart to verbal warnings like those given to myself and Lewis. Security practices and safety warnings reinforce each other, and both contribute to a racialized paranoia, even if racial segregation is not explicitly recognized to be the goal.

Security practices are implicitly racialized, and sometimes explicitly racialized. The racialization of security, however, has internal contradictions. The logic of minimizing social interactions with Tanzanians in order to guarantee "security" needs to be unpacked; this is because at the same time it provides a justification for racial segregation, it also produces absurdities with consistently threaten (promise) to deconstruct it. My first example is Mr. Ren, an investor from Shanghai who started a company in Dar es Salaam to import and install toilets. I met him only a few months after he first arrived, when his office was still in boxes, and when he was still unpacking. Like other companies, he had chosen to establish his office in a villa located in a neighborhood near the port, but much cheaper than the villas located on the northern part of the city. His villa was located in the middle of a residential district, and surrounded by a high wall topped with an electrified fence and protected by a guard dog. There were no signs at the property

indicating a commercial establishment, and guests would require a guided escort from the main street in order to find it on a small street behind an apartment block and field. When I returned to Tanzania a year later and tried to find the place by memory, instinct, and luck, it took about ten minutes of alternating greetings in three languages (hodi!, 位?, Hello!?) shouted through the metal gate before I got a response and could determine that this was indeed the place, and not somebody's house. How do customers find this place? Asking Mr. Ren why he had no signs, he replied "This is Tanzania." In China, he continued, one would find lots of signs for a business, but here, private Chinese businesses prefer to keep a "low-profile" (ch.低调, *didiao*). If he erected signs indicating his presence, he predicted people or officials would come by to cause trouble (ch.找麻烦, *zhao mafan*). When I asked him later whether he had relations with any of his neighbors, he responded that the neighborhood was all 黑人) and that getting to know his neighbors would lead people to "come and look around."

Conspicuousness for Mr. Ren is closely linked to insecurity, and for that reason, he prefers to minimize all signs of his presence in the neighborhood.⁷⁴ At the same time he sought to minimize his physical presence, however, he was extremely active in maximizing his social presence in the larger Chinese community. I often came across him at multiple public events. These events were often coordinated with the Chinese embassy and designed to both improve "unity" (ch.团结, *tuanjie*) within the Chinese community, and also to improve relations with the local community. When I met a friend of his once, and told him that I knew Mr. Ren, this friend responded with a laugh that Mr. Ren "knows everybody." The distinction between his social

⁷⁴ There are other approaches to security. Like Mr. Ren, Peter considered himself vulnerable to robbery. Peter did not work on his own, however, but in a local bank as part of a youth volunteer program. Peter's strategy, however, was quite different from Mr. Ren. Peter sought instead to make himself as conspicuous as possible, befriending everyone he could in Kariakoo. The reason for this, he argued, was that this social network would provide him "invisible protection." The strategy was different, and it was more conducive to relations, but it was likewise based on a racialized paranoia regarding his presence.

networking across the city versus his immediate neighborhood clearly turned on racialized geographies.

The logic of security is the basis for segregation, but segregation is itself legitimated by security. This is important because in everyday conversation, it is actually difficult to identify a “real” reason a person is imposing racial segregation on their interactions. Mr. Ren’s fears of officials and the possibility of robbery or demands, however, like that of Mr. Song, turns on similar structural conditions of vulnerability, and this vulnerability is based on economic inequality. Chinese investors expect to profit, but they must do so on the basis of their economic mutuality with locals. Wanting to be in Tanzania, but to limit relations with Tanzanians, is a contradiction with doesn’t just describe the Chinese, but broader patterns of “enclave” capitalism more generally (Ferguson 2005).

The contradiction between minimizing or maximizing relationships plays out in other ways. The hiring of security guards exemplifies the absurdity. There are several main companies who provide security. The companies are foreign, but the staff are locally hired. Guards generally work at the gate, either inside the gate, in a special guard box, or on chairs outside. Entering and leaving a compound, interactions between them and their company’s clients ordinarily involve honking (sometimes angrily if guard does not appear), and the gate being opened or closed. As Mr. Song explained, however, hiring guards for one’s own business did not guarantee safety, but might in fact might make a business even more vulnerable. Guards might study your routines and cooperate more effectively with outside robbers. How these conspiracies arose was not always clear, but in some cases, guards might become unwittingly recruited. Reinforcing the Chinese perspective that social relationships expose them to danger, Mr. Kuo identified the danger of guards in the fact that in being on the street, they talk to all manner of people who pass by, and it is through this that either sensitive information is transmitted or conspiracies develop. Consequently, there were some businesses whose attempts to lower the vulnerability of social

exposure went so far that they did not even hire security because doing so would threaten one's security.

It was in this context that some Chinese welcomed the arrival of a new security company onto the market. The company was run by Chinese, but the guards they hired were local Tanzanians, also ex-military. A business run by a Chinese family, however, had their shop burglarized one evening by the security guard. The next day, he disappeared, and the family was unable to get compensation from the Chinese company because they claimed they could not do so without catching the guard himself. The significance of this example is how the quest for security is ultimately futile and cannot be based on ethnic lines.

There was a Chinese-run hotel which hired Tanzanian women as cooks and as cleaners, and men as drivers, but there was also an informal ban on "black" people entering the hotel. The irony of the situation, however, is that the Chinese guests who stay at the hotel need relationships with Tanzanians in order to do business, and they themselves would sometimes invite people over, so the ban actually did not appear in practice. In the case of the hotel, racism worked along lines of class, but also in terms of in-group and out-group, as defined by the management.

The point of these examples is that efforts to ensure security often don't work. And in the end, it's a confusing mix of practices. The relationship to race is that the institution of a racialized system of segregation has a haphazard element to it. The segregation of 黑人 rests on the surface in the form of racism, but in the details, turns on contradictory approaches and plausible deniability. This is important because it de-exceptionalizes Chinese racism and places it in a broader structural logic where inequality, suspicion, and class are the operative factors, and to which racialization can be partially attributed, but not reduced.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Similar practices can be found in urban China regarding suspicions of rural-to-urban migrants. I thank Katherine Mason for pointing out this comparison.

Security is ambiguous, however, because it is both the basis for segregation, but also a means of legitimating segregation. There are other division points which separate people, but it is perhaps security which is the hardest to argue with because it touches on issues of obligations to others. There is an element of care that goes into warning people to look after their safety, but the downside of this care is the dehumanization of others which accompanies it. It is important to recognize here that among those who extend such care are Tanzanians, many of whom would often warn Chinese about protecting their property. This did serve to challenge racialized ways of dealing with robbery, but as I argue, the ubiquity of the term 黑人 has a centripetal pull in discourse.

Security justifies practices which promote racial segregation, but also shapes practices in organizations which are ostensibly dedicated to the promotion of people-to-people interactions. Chinese employers frequently take on responsibility for the safety of their employees. This is not just due to whatever personal connections they may have with them, but also concerns their reputation within the larger organizations they are responsible for. This means that managers will sometimes make decisions on the part of subordinates because of obligations they have, directly or indirectly, to the subordinate's relations back in China. As I have mentioned for example, many companies hire young people in their twenties, or sometimes in their late teens, and sometimes, the bosses personally know the parents. Even in state-operated organizations, the leaders are obligated to the parents back in China.⁷⁶

How managers understood their responsibilities could lead them to pursue policies which they otherwise recognized as racially problematic, or even counter-productive to their own seemingly genuine visions of China-Africa cooperation. Mr. Song, for example, was the project manager for a state-owned construction company which could trace its institutional history back

⁷⁶ . For example, I once met a former Chinese diplomat who described how the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs once stopped posting female officials to its embassies in Africa, in response to behind the scenes campaigning from families worried about their "safety."

to the engineers who constructed the Tanzania-Zambia railway. When I interviewed him, he described in extensive detail the need for the Chinese government to provide opportunities for people-to-people exchanges. He noted that the best way for his own subordinates to gain a better understanding of Tanzanian society and culture would be for them to go out into the city and meet people. He then identified one of the challenges, however, to be “security.” Over the past few years, he explained, there had been a selection of high-profile robberies which resulted in the deaths of Chinese, and many more expatriates had more mundane stories of being pick-pocketed or strong-armed while walking in public, but the more generalized danger that Chinese perceived was that local robbers did not distinguish between “bosses” and “employees,” meaning that any individual Chinese on the street could conceivably be seen as “rich.” Mr. Song explained that because of these dangers, he required his employees to stay in the office, and to not go outside on their own.

“This is a contradiction,” he volunteered, and admitted he did not know how to resolve it.

The contradiction goes beyond explicit projects of “people-to-people” cultural understanding, affecting even the economic exchanges which might otherwise be cynically identified as the hard “base” of China-Africa cooperation. The Chinese Embassy in Dar es Salaam, for example, hosts an annual Brands of China Showcase, inviting Chinese companies and investors to a trade show held at the Diamond Jubilee Center in Upanga. The ostensible goal is to introduce Tanzanian investors to Chinese manufacturers, and to introduce Chinese investors to Tanzania. As I would learn from one its former Chinese attendees, the organizers had warned them to stay in their hotels for dinner, and not to go out alone for their own security. This attendee and several people that he met decided to ignore this advice, and went out for dinner anyway, ending up at a South African seafood restaurant in the upscale Masaki district. “It’s not that bad,” he observed, surprised that the city was much better than the organizers had led him to believe. Below, I will return to this restaurant, but first I want to discuss the implications of this situation. This was why he did not attend the exhibition the year I was there, but instead visited

on his own in order to find importers in Kariakoo for his product. Most Chinese investors came on their own and did not work through these state-promoted platforms. There are a number of reasons for this, but my main point is the institutional imperative of limiting people's mobility in the name of safety.

I met instructors with the Confucius Institute, for example, who encountered similar restrictions justified on the basis of "safety." In this case, however, the concerns appeared to be more generalized beyond the mundane concern about robbery, and touched more generally on anxieties about the perceived dangers of interpersonal relationships with Tanzanians. I touched on some of the logics behind this in Chapter Three. In the case of the Confucius Institute, however, the fact it was located in an academic community within a middle class milieu, and was tasked most explicitly with the goal of "cultural" diplomacy, makes the suggestion of such restrictions especially notable.

This was the case of Sara, a young teacher assigned to a Tanzanian university. She had recently graduated from a Chinese college which hosted many African students. While in school, she had befriended many of them, and had participated in events organized by the African Students Association. It was these connections which led her to apply for a position as a Chinese language instructor in one of the many Confucius Institute programs across Africa. At the University, Sara had a wide network of friends from across the university. Each time I saw her on campus, I would see her exchange greetings with Tanzanian faculty and students whom she knew that were passing us. One of her friends was a professor of anthropology whom she introduced me to one afternoon. When we met, the two of them hugged each other and discussed plans they had with each other that one weekend. The professor told me that Sara was "different from the other Chinese teachers." Whenever she greeted the other teachers, they always seemed to be in a hurry. "Maybe she has international experience, maybe it's her education, I don't know."

According to Sara, however, her supervisor occasionally expressed concern that Sara was "too sociable." Her reasoning was that in having so many friendships, Sara was "exposing"

herself. Other Chinese friends as well would comment to Sara that her friendliness put her “in danger.” Sara understood these warnings to be symptoms of a limited “sense of security” among Chinese linked to the assumption that friendly strangers must have ulterior motives. These concerns could not stop Sara from pursuing her friendships, however.

Sara did not explicitly say it, but it is likely that the concerns of her supervisor turned on gendered anxieties about the motives of male interlocutors. The experience may have been different for male teachers. In either case, the similarities across these cases evince a common organizational logic that is constant despite the diversity and explicit goals of the organizations themselves. This is why paternalistic attitudes in a small wholesale company resemble that in a Chinese embassy. That said, my two examples here both involve employees or subordinates ignoring these restrictions and warnings and cultivating their own interpersonal relationships anyway. The lesson of this is that these organizations do not restrict interactions, and people do what they want to do. However, those who ignore warnings are actively doing so. There is no institutional pressure for them to do so, and therefore, those people who prefer to segregate themselves are able to do so by default.

Claire and Nancy were employees for a Chinese newspaper. The working conditions at the newspaper were different than they had imagined based on the job description they read. The office and staff accommodations for the newspaper were located within the same apartment complex, and there were restrictions on employees going out alone, especially at night. Claire and Nancy both considered off-work time to be “private time,” but they were frequently pressured to stay close to home. Claire and Nancy wanted to go out to eat, but their supervisor would often insist that they should eat at home together, and when they did eat, there would be little pressures like being encouraged to finish their rice.

“I felt like I was three years old,” Claire said, “My parents never managed me this way, what right did they have to manage me this way?”

Claire and Nancy would go out anyway and sometimes come back late, which led to conflicts with their supervisor, a man in his mid-thirties. He would argue that these restrictions were for their own safety. Businessmen whom Claire knew as friends tended to agree with the supervisor's position. During a conversation when Claire was explaining her own position, an older entrepreneur responded that he agreed with her boss's position.

“If something were to happen to you, whose responsibility would it be?”

“It's fine for a boss to manage my working time, but it is not ok for them to manage my personal things.”

The man shook his head, and said it could be very dangerous, “people would ask you out to have a drink.”

The restrictions imposed on Chinese employees, whether formal and informal, apply to both men and women, but in this and other contexts, they are reinforced by an often explicit gendered logic. In these cases, it is a male supervisor discouraging younger women from going out alone because he believes it is not safe for them. Female researchers who have done fieldwork in the Chinese community have experienced similar efforts by male community members to discourage them from going around alone (Mohan et al. 2014). These attitudes came into conflict with Claire and Nancy's own motivations for being in Tanzania. They said they came in order to 体验 (ch. experience, *tiyan*) Africa, but the pressure to stay close to home and to spend time with other Chinese was an obstacle to doing this.

In the next section, I address a broader concept of security, relating to mistrust, the fear of being cheated. As in this section, I develop two parallel threads, but in the following case the connections are more direct. Both threads develop around a single event, a conversation between myself, Lewis, a Chinese woman named Susan, and the employees of a shop owned by a man named Mr. Tang. In bringing these sets of young actors together, I examine the collaborative

racialization of 黑人 between the dynamics of the dinner conversation and the experiences of Mr. Tang in managing his employees, and his fears of being cheated.

The Collaborative Construction of 黑人

The English metonym of the “table” for a discussion (“put on the table,” “bring to the table,” etc.) reminds one that discourses are social interactions located in particular spaces. Likewise, the phrase, “making a case” is derived from the physical practice of collecting specimens together in a wooden case. The placing of specimens together was to make an argument about their interconnection, to “make a case” that these disparate objects belonged to shared category (Forrester 1996). In the previous sections, I have described how, in the everyday discourse of expatriate Chinese, “黑人” is used to describe a disparate set of actors and collectivities in Tanzania. Like an empty wooden case or a table, the term retains an internal coherence regardless of the individuality of the objects placed on top of it. A table is also a social object, affording interlocutors to come together, eat together, drink together, and share conversation. In the case of conversations held among expatriates, at tables or otherwise, about aggregate others-黑人- everyone is invited to place their own stories on the table. A guest may hesitate or refuse to place their stories on the table, or they may seek other pieces of furniture, but rarely does the guest exclude themselves by overturning the table.

In this section, I will demonstrate how the racialization of 黑人 implicates multiple interlocutors as collaborators regardless of the individual particularities in experiences and attitudes between them. My example is itself a dinner table in an apartment shared by a couple of Chinese interlocutors in Kariakoo, Tang Jie and Liu Hua, and the guests include myself, Lewis, and Susan. The dinner happened because I had introduced Susan and Lewis to Tang and Liu, a couple of wholesalers. I choose this example because, between the five of us, we had all come to Tanzania for disparate reasons. I also choose this example because of the relative similarity in

age. The oldest person was Tang, who had not yet reached forty. In particular, I want to highlight the differences between our hosts and Susan, a Chinese backpacker living in Kariakoo.

A Tale of Two Kariakoos

The different motivations for Susan and our hosts' presence in Tanzania registered most conspicuously for me in the divergence in enthusiasm between them while Liu Hua was preparing dinner. Whereas Susan talked excitedly about the experience of traveling in Africa, Tang and Liu's accounts of living in Tanzania were more subdued, even weary. The two of them lived and worked in Kariakoo because of business, and viewed their presence in Tanzania as a means to fulfilling the ends of a better economic life back in China. Susan surprised more than a few Chinese expatriates by choosing to live in Kariakoo for the experience; because it was "traditional" in appearance, and a source of "inspiration" (ch. 灵感, *linggan*) for her artistic work. For Tang and Liu, on the other hand, Kariakoo was "chaotic" (乱, *luan*) and "dirty" (脏, *zang*). These differences in motivation, in turn, appeared to be correlated with a willingness to move in spaces that other Chinese expatriates avoided on the basis of racialized rationales. Susan surprised Liu and Tang while they were preparing dinner by telling them how she regularly used *daladalas*⁷⁷ to get around the city. Liu and Tang, who had a car, responded that they avoided *daladalas* because there were "too many" people riding them, and therefore "dangerous." They also did not like the smell. Susan responded that they were inexpensive and convenient. All she needed to do was tell the conductor where she wanted to get off, and he would always inform her. Her comments reflected a broader enthusiasm for living in Tanzania as a travel experience, in contrast to Tang and Liu, who considered it a work requirement. This was reflected in how the conversation took different turns as Susan and the men alternated turns on the same theme.

Tang said that Kariakoo was too "chaotic" and "dirty" for them.

⁷⁷ The privately operated vans that constitute the bulk of public transportation, not just in Dar es Salaam, but in cities elsewhere in Africa, where they go by more familiar names like "*matatu*." The term *daladala* is derived from "dollar."

Susan responded that there were other places in Africa better than Kariakoo. “Life in Rwanda is very good!” she said, “It is very clean there, cleaner than China even!”

“The best place to live,” Tang responded, “is in rural China. You can have a house, and a car. You just need to find a way to earn money.”

Susan enjoyed traveling, but with only a few months left planned here in Tanzania, she was looking forward to leaving, returning to China, or perhaps visiting other places, maybe Turkey, or Switzerland. She enjoyed the weather in Tanzania, but a problem, she admitted was that she frequently got ill while living here.

The differences between Susan and our hosts were not just a difference in attitudes, but also a difference in motivations informed in part by different trajectories of socio-economic mobility. Tang’s primary destination was a better life in China where he was married and raising children, but his younger co-worker Liu himself enjoyed traveling. Despite his complaints about life in Kariakoo, he was also excited about the prospects of visiting tourist locations like Zanzibar and the national parks. Each time I visited him, his preferred topic of conversation with me was travel. However, unlike Susan, his job requirements and financial limitations prevented him from traveling except during occasional holidays.⁷⁸ Susan’s presence in East Africa fit into a longer history of international experience. She had studied in Australia before coming to Tanzania.

These differences contributed to a conversational dynamic which swung between enthusiasm and discontent for things “Africa” and “African.” There were nonetheless points of convergence where Susan could come into alignment with Tang and Liu. The two men continued to describe Kariakoo to be dirty, and Susan herself looked forward to leaving because she was

⁷⁸This is true of other Chinese expatriates I met. Not everyone fit the stereotype of the “economic migrant,” and not just students and those like Claire with more disposable income. For example, I met a middle-aged Chinese man who had spent time in Congo working for a small Chinese company who told me he wished people would pay him to do research like myself or to make documentaries. He would prefer that to the work he was doing now.

often sick. She had talked about this before, but in bringing it up here, she brought herself partially closer in alignment with the hosts' stance of generalized discontent.

The differences between Susan and our hosts' stance towards Tanzania also emerged in the chains of association which a particular comment or observation might provoke. Comments and observations about Tanzanians, or about relationships between Chinese and Tanzanians often provoked lengthy associations among Chinese interlocutors. The first time I had met Susan and introduced my research, she had asked me my opinion of the relationship between the Chinese and Tanzanians. She continued voluntarily that she personally considered the relationship between Chinese employers and employees to be very bad. She placed the blame for this primarily on the Chinese. During our dinner with Tang and Liu, she did not bring up this observation, but she did address relations between Tanzanians and Chinese indirectly by introducing what she had learned during the process of talking to people.

Tang had asked her what she learned from Tanzanians. "The Tanzanians say that the Chinese (ch. 歧视, *qishi*) discriminate against them," she commented while standing in the kitchen. Liu and Tang continued cooking while listening. Susan continued that she had been asking Tanzanian and Chinese men and women both about whether they would consider marrying Chinese or Tanzanian women and men.

Most of the Chinese men she had spoken to had primarily identified the possibility of family opposition to preemptively take it out of the question. In conversations I personally had with Chinese men on the topic, I sometimes heard the viewpoint expressed that although the "body type" was good, the "skin was too black." I did not share this with Susan, Tang, and Liu during the dinner, but I did relate a conversation I had with a Chinese investor who claimed that Tanzanian women had a "Chinese dream" to find a wealthy Chinese man to marry. I did not share, however, the additional gossip that the man, married and with children back in China, had, the week before, been introduced by one of his Chinese colleagues, a female co-worker, to a

Tanzanian woman at a bar, who he subsequently went home with and engaged in intercourse. As an ethnographic anecdote, a story like this invites a tangent for elaboration, contextualization, and broader argumentation. I do not have the space to do that here, but I include here as a fragment in order to make a point about the chains of associations which emerge in both ordinary conversation and ethnographic research. Like my thoughts following Lewis's reduplication of April's complaints about Msia, particular experiences, memories, associations, and affective discomforts arise to make moments or comments meaningful in ways which might not be directly known to the interlocutors. Ethnographers do this, and it is in fact the preliminary basis of ethnographic claims-making. Ethnographic interlocutors also make chains of associations during conversations, but although the researcher can never document the thought process going on in another person's head, they can document how conversations change direction, and therefore make claims.

Susan was talking about how Chinese and Tanzanians saw each other as potential marriage partners. Tang and Liu remembered an incident which had happened when they went to the beach one afternoon with a female friend. They said were still sitting in the car, with the windows down, when a “黑人” came up to the window and kissed her. Tang described his disgust at the incident and implied that this behavior characterized Tanzanian men more generally.

Susan had been raised the issue of Chinese-Tanzanian marriage. A chain of associations led me to remember a one-night stand between a married Chinese man and a Tanzanian woman at a bar. A chain of associations led Tang and Liu to recount an incident of sexual assault and, in turn, shift the tone of discussion to one implicating Tanzanian men as potential sexual predators threatening Chinese women.

This would not be the first time that Tang would shift a conversation about Chinese-Tanzanian interactions into a racialized register. My intention here, however, is not to highlight Tang's preoccupation with delivering racist complaints, but to instead place him in a

conversational and dialogical context, and therefore trace the problematic continuities between his racist speech and the discourse of his many interlocutors. In order to do this, however, I must follow Tang's chain of associations in switching the focus of my analysis from the dinner conversation back to my parallel thread on everyday practices of security.

Everyday Suspicion

When Tang shifted the topic of discussion to his discontents about 黑人, he indexed the shift by replacing the term 黑人 with the hostile term 黑鬼 (ch. black ghost, *heigui*). Susan had been talking favorably about the environment in Tanzania. In a formulation similar to the waitress in an earlier section, he agreed that Tanzania had a nice environment, but added that he did not like the people. As he began to elaborate, he began to casually replace the word 黑人 with the term 黑鬼. “*Heigui* always have bad intentions, so it's important to pay close attention. *Heiren* easily 欺负 (ch. bully, *qifu*) people, they are always looking for ways to *qifu* you.” Mr. Tang's face contorted to convey the visage of a scheming man. “If they are in a rough situation, or have an opportunity, they will take advantage of you. They are 太穷 (ch. too poor, *tai qiong!*” The shift is important because it shows the problematic distinction between space and people, and it shows in the process, the shift in terms from 黑人 to 黑鬼, which, as I argue, is about a sharpening of a similar term. The significance of Mr. Tang's statement is the generalized suspicion about the intentions of 黑人. The assumption is that the person is going to harm you in a particular way. I discussed this in my chapter on greetings, and here there is an opportunity to expand this. In that chapter, I argued that the distrust is based on an appreciation of one's political-economic position. Mr. Tang shifts to the fact they are “too poor.”

Mr. Tang related the story of a man who had worked for their boss.

“Our boss treated him very well, he treated him like a friend! He treated him like family! One day, the boss discovered he had lost \$700,000RMB (\$104,783USD). The man had taken the

money and ran away. You always have to pay attention, you have to 管 (ch. manage, *guan*) *heiren* every day. If you don't manage, there will be problems. You can't give them important things to manage, like cash, because it is not safe.”

The story that Tang tells about his boss's former employee is not unique, but reappears in other Chinese narratives of doing business in Tanzania as cautionary tales about the limits of interpersonal trust. These stories usually concern initial business projects and relationships with people they describe as having been friends, or “like family.” Tales of deception, as both experience and warning, are taken also as guides for action, a justification for being more cautious about subsequent relationships.⁷⁹ Those who 管 their employees everyday on the basis of racialized suspicion would deny that they acted upon “racial discrimination,” but rather that they acted ethically as “responsible” business people, if not for themselves, then for the people they worked for. For example, Wang Hui helped manage a wholesale shop for his older brother. In my conversations with him, he often expressed persistent concerns that he was not yet “mature” or “experienced” enough. One incident which reinforced his self-critique was when a customer disappeared with a large order of motorcycles. Wang blamed himself for the incident and told me he had not been “responsible” enough, and by that, he meant he had been too trusting. These notions of suspicion as a form of self-awareness and responsibility operate independently of however that person might act in their everyday relations vis-à-vis Tanzanians. In other words, both Chinese interlocutors who amiably socialized with their employees and co-workers, and those who maintained social distance, would make similar claims about the need to be careful and suspicious, with the reference point being the generalizing category of 黑人.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Obviously, Chinese expatriates also deceive other Chinese expatriates, and just as there is a discourse of discontent about 黑人 deceiving Chinese, there is also a discourse of discontent about Chinese deceiving or taking advantage of other Chinese abroad. In both cases, it is the experience of engaging in business ventures in an unfamiliar setting where such risks are usually high.

Racialized suspicion is perhaps most manifest in how keys are controlled. In most Kariakoo shops, the keys to the shop or store are always held by the boss, or by a Chinese employee. In a subtle reflection of the racialized division of labor, the Tanzanian employee of the shop often closes the metal door and locks it while the Chinese employer watches them. The employee then hands the keys to the employer and the two of them part ways until the next day.⁸¹ As described in Chapter Two, Tanzanian employees are rarely entrusted to retrieve orders from the store alone, but are rather accompanied by a Chinese employee. Entrusting the key to the wholesale shop to a Tanzanian employee was so unusual that during an interview, a Chinese interlocutor who did entrust their key highlighted the practice herself as symbolically significant. Her reasoning, however, illustrates how it is racialized. She pointed out that we may have noticed that her employee looked “different,” that he was not a “local” Tanzanian, but a “Muslim,” by which she meant a Zanzibari with Arab ancestry and lighter skin.⁸²

Racialized suspicion is nonetheless beset by contradictions which reveal both the structural contradictions of doing business in Tanzania, and the persistent conservation of the term 黑人 as a negative repository of meaning. This became evident when Tang shifted the topic later to a power outage which had happened earlier in the afternoon. He and Liu had to leave the underground storage because there was no light down there. He was concerned that their employees might have taken advantage of the situation to steal some of the clothing from the cartons.

⁸¹ When one of the wholesalers needed to return to China for a month, he entrusted his Tanzanian employee to run the shop, but entrusted the keys and the money to a Chinese friend of his who ran a nearby shop. Every morning, this friend would come to the shop and open it for the Tanzanian employee. At the end of the day, he would come to the shop, review the account books, and collect the money and the keys.

⁸² The racialization of “Muslim” as non-local and “white” is significant for several reasons. The first is that it reflects a Chinese folk understanding of Islam as something foreign to Africa. The second is that, intentionally or not, it aligns with Tanzanian racial imaginaries which ascribe the ancestry of the Swahili to non-African origins, to Arabs or to Persian Shirazi.

“You have to be more careful,” Mr. Tang told Mr. Liu, “you have to make sure you are always the one to close the place.” He then explained to the rest of us that their employees sometimes cooperate with people outside to steal from them. “We know it happens,” he said, but they didn’t have evidence.

“They are very smart, they will wait until the right moment, when you are distracted, and then take it. When you ask who did it, everyone will deny it.”

Mr. Liu had no proof other than the way his employee suspiciously seemed to consciously block his view while standing close to the customer, and how there were occasionally discrepancies in the stock. He imagined the customer whispering to the employee and asking him for a little extra.

“Can we get rid of George?” Mr. Liu asked.

“Aren’t you afraid he will get revenge?” their friend asked.

“No,” Mr. Tang responded, “You just have to pay the salary and they will go. But this man is very shrewd, very smart. He has worked here for four years, and really understands things. He is not like other *heiren*, he puts his money in a bank account. He puts up his own money sometimes if we have to pay someone. Other *heiren* won’t do this. He is very smart. I don’t like this kind of person. He tries to sell as many shirts as possible, even if it means lowering the price. But you have to trust them. Otherwise you can’t do business. But you have to call the customer to determine what the real situation is. But things are dangerous during power cuts.”

This exchange exemplifies several things. The first is that Tang’s warning to Liu to be more “careful” exemplifies the development of a racialized suspicion as the basis of common-sense business practice. This is based on the characterization of both employees and customers as always potentially looking for ways to deceive their Chinese employers and sellers. These suspicions, however, are always accompanied by a degree of unknowability. Rarely do Chinese employers who suspect theft by employees possess sufficient “evidence” that the theft had occurred. This is important because in situations where employers attempted to fire employees,

the accused had recourse to the fact there was no evidence with which to fire them. This led in turn to situations where employers continued to employ people who they suspected of theft because they still relied on them. Instead, their solution would just be greater “management.”⁸³ Tang’s friend’s fear that firing the employee would lead to “revenge” reflected his own particular fear of Tanzanian “violence” which he discussed on other occasions. The paradox is that George engages in practices which Chinese often complain about Tanzanians not engaging in: saving money by placing it in a bank.⁸⁴ Rather than improving Tang’s opinion of him, however, Tang is instead suspicious. The paradox is that he has to trust someone he does not trust.

Tang’s suspicions of “黑人” in Tanzania led me to wonder what he would say about his experience in Guangzhou, where he had worked in the wholesale market for two years. He had worked with African customers there, and I figured his experience, as a seller, would have been different than that of managing Tanzanian employees, as a boss, in a different setting. “What about in Guangzhou?” I asked?

“It’s different,” he responded, “it is more chaotic. There are Africans there from Nigeria, Congo, Cameroon...” He began to casually use *heigui* again to describe them. “Their behavior is bad.”

I repeated my question, “Is the behavior of Africans you meet in Guangzhou different from here?”

“They are a little better than in Africa. They are wealthier.”

⁸³ In one case, an employee for whom there was evidence that he sold directly to customers was retained. The rationale, according to the employer, was that they now knew how to manage the employee, but if they were to hire a new person, there would be even greater uncertainty.

⁸⁴ Lest the reader be mistaken, the ethical imperative placed on “saving” money must be placed against the ethical imperative of assisting and providing for family. Chinese narratives of saving, accumulation, and wealth must be contextualized within the context of China’s economic transformation over the past three decades, in which case, not only has there been more capital available, but also more business opportunities in an expanding economy. Among Tanzanian interlocutors, limited business opportunities were coupled with frequent obligations to assist family and friends.

In asking Tang about his experience in Guangzhou, his first response is to shift to another line of discontent about the presence of Africans in Guangzhou. After rephrasing the question in terms of the claims he had been making about his relationships in Tanzania, he introduced a mild qualification that they were “a little better” because they were “wealthier.” When this comment is taken against his earlier statement that 黑人 are “too poor,” a class-based rationale begins to emerge, but it is buried in the discursive heat of the moment where the category on the table is 黑人. There are other conversational situations where interrogation reveals contradictions and alternative rationales, but these tend to be footnoted in the context of discussions focused on the thoughts and actions of 黑人.

Susan then provided another intervention which reinforces this point. She asked him, “how are your relationships with customers?”

Tang responded that he did not have problems dealing with them. He watches people closely to see if they will cheat him.

“How do you judge?” I asked.

“It depends if the person treats me in a 平和 (ch. gentle, *pinghe*) manner.”

“Is this based on what they say, or how they act?” I asked.

“It’s based on my feeling.” Mr. Tang responded, “You can’t disrespect people when doing business. You cannot discriminate against them.”

Tang’s response to Susan about his customers is interesting because after having gone on at length about 黑人 as being intent on “discriminating against,” and deceiving the Chinese, he responds that he does not have problems with his customers. His discontents are rather directed towards employees (and also government officials, although he did not discuss them on this occasion). A counter-factual question might, of course, be asked: what would “黑人” mean as a category if it was defined on the basis of encounters with customers? Mr. Tang’s characterization of relationships with customers, however, is nonetheless delivered with the qualification that he

“watches people closely.” His basis for judging the trustworthiness of his customers is based on his “feeling,” which he attributes to the emotional performance of the customer, whether they are 平和 or not. In Chapter Three, I described differences in greeting and joking styles wherein Tanzanian social styles are both considered to be “friendlier” than that of Chinese, but also to be cause for suspicion. Tang’s reference to being *pinghe* refers to a mode of interaction characterized by subdued emotion, “seriousness,” and lacking the kind of joking banter otherwise associated with Tanzanian business. As I described in Chapter Three, there are differences among Tanzanian traders themselves such that those who own shops tend to be quieter than *wamachinga*. Again, these are relative distinctions, but they do indicate another example of class which registers here in how Tang distinguishes between Tanzanian customers.⁸⁵ Tang also qualifies his racialized suspicion with the business ethics of “you can’t discriminate customers” in business. As in the case of Wang Hui being suspicious as a matter of good business practice, not being too racially suspicious is also a matter of good business practice. These tensions exemplify the situation I discussed in Chapter Two regarding the dual imperatives of doing business in Kariakoo, the need to move products, but also the need to protect products. The mechanism for achieving the balance between the two is, for Tang and other traders, based on a “feeling,” a chain of associations connected in this case not by logical connections but by affective associations. These reproduce a racialized ethics of dealing with Tanzanians which ultimately operate regardless of Tang’s or his co-workers’ attitudes. This becomes particularly obvious when we consider the interlocutors in this conversation.

Putting Things on the Table

The ethics and politics of participating in a racialized conversation raise many questions, especially for anthropologists who must occupy a dual identity as both, in the ethnographic

⁸⁵ My argument, however, is not that class affects cancel out racial affects. Rather, they complicate them in particular ways.

stance, sympathetic listeners, and in the anthropological stance, public intellectuals and “teachers.” Traditional assumptions about the subjects of fieldwork and the readers of ethnography obscure how these stances can be in contradiction, and this is especially true when one is working between different research populations. In this case, being a white male anthropologist in this conversation is obviously different than being a person of color in this conversation. My silence in this conversation, apart from a few clarifying questions, is, if not seen as ethnographic methodology, can reasonably be taken as complicity, especially insofar that Tang and Liu sometimes assumed that I, as a “white person,” would share their prejudices. In my personal effort to balance my roles as a listener with my stance against reproducing racialized knowledge, I would often hyper-contextualize my own stories, always concerned that something I might say could be interpreted or repackaged with racist meaning. I only point this out in order to highlight the dilemma of ethnographic reportage. The example I discuss here concerns Susan’s contributions to the conversation as the dinner developed. It is not my intention to single Susan out, and I could not know what Susan was thinking, but my goal is to rather to identify how racial knowledge is reproduced through the sharing of experience. As I already discussed earlier, Susan’s stance towards Tanzania was different than that of Tang, and her comments often went different directions than that of Tang. Nonetheless, as the conversation progressed, her comments began to come into alignment with those of Tang. The conversation reveals the intersubjective construction of a racialized other.

Susan contributed to the conversation at this point by sharing something she had learned at a Chinese-owned importer the previous week. There was a power-outage that day as well. The man who worked there, an interlocutor of mine to whom I had introduced Claire, said he did not want to follow us to the front of the shop where there was more light. He said it was important to stay in the shop because power outages were very dangerous, *Heiren* would steal the spare parts they sold.

Susan told the dinner table she “had not realized it was like this here. This is why I would never go into business here”

“*Heiren* are like this.” Mr. Tang responded.

“I wonder if South America is different,” Susan added.

“This place is *too* poor”

“South America is also poor”

In sharing our friend’s racialized comment on the need to keep watch in the shop in the event of a power outage, Susan, like Lewis to the waitress in the earlier section, shared an ostensibly similar experience which could be placed on the table and reinforce, for the attendees, generalizations about 黑人. Despite her seemingly contrasting positions on Tanzania, and despite her criticisms of Chinese discrimination of Tanzanians, and despite the fact Tang was liberally using a term, 黑鬼, which, as compared to 黑人, is unequivocally racist, she provided an example to support Tang’s narrative rather than to challenge it. My point is that this is representative of the fact that, regardless of individual attitudes or stances about racial discrimination, my interlocutors rarely challenged the substance of stereotypes themselves, but rather passively or even actively contributed to their reproduction. When Susan later began talking about the interest white women seemed to take in African men, particularly men dressed as Masaai warriors, Susan emphasized she would never have a local boyfriend because people here were not 靠谱(ch. reliable, *kaopu*). She gave the example of how she went to the college today to meet people for a video she was filming, but none of the four students had appeared. “These are college students! I had not realized people here were like this!” The issue is the cultural characterization, whether or not is racialized, is nonetheless intelligible and commensurable for people like Tang.

The reason for my personal discomfort was, like that of my experience with Lewis and the waitress, a chain of association which linked an ostensibly neutral statement of fact with affects of racial hostility. For example, during a Sunday afternoon trip with them to a popular

tourist-oriented African arts market, we encountered heavy traffic as is usually the case. Interspersed with the automobiles and *daladala* were thousands of pedestrians moving along the street, engaging in petty trade, or as is the case throughout the city, simply hanging out and talking.

“Drive into the *heigui*,” said the man in the passenger seat.

“Don’t say that,” replied the driver, “If you say it, I might actually want to do it.”

The passenger looked out the window and yelled in a slow humorous way, “*heiiiiiguuuuuuu*,” but even if anyone had heard him, there was a low probability anyone in this part of town understood Chinese or would understand what he was saying.

The driver laughed. The passenger said to me, sitting in the backseat, “Derek, say *heigui*.”

I was sitting there with the collusive silence only available to a privileged white anthropologist, wondering what I had to put up with in the name of ethnographic rapport.

“In the United States, you say ‘nigger,’ right?”

“That is not a good thing to say,” I responded, “there are people in the US who are racist, but they do not say that.” The words did not come out right, but what I was intending to deliver was a short summary of Jane Hill’s *Everyday Language of White Racism* (2009).

“But white people *want* to say that in their hearts (ch. 心理, *xinli*), right?”

Susan’s attitudes and languages obviously contrasted greatly with that of our hosts, but she was able to participate in the conversation in such a way that the reproduction of stereotypes did not arise as problematic. Susan never used the word *heigui*, but the referents of her complaints about unreliability was the same dynamic object as that referred to by those who *did* use that term, and this is what was making me uncomfortable at the time. Perhaps I had been hoping that a Chinese interlocutor would make an anti-racist critique to spare me the label of hypocrisy. But what was I doing during this conversation? Similarly, I remained silent and turned over these

issues in my head, but during the conversation, I did nothing to object, call-out, or otherwise challenge, instead keeping fieldnotes in my head.

The lesson from these examples is that the racial category of *heiren* (black person/people) is the collaborative product of an assemblage of everyday judgements, experiences, and discursive practices. The “racism” which is produced is neither the exclusive property of particular individuals nor the cultural property of “the Chinese.” Even if distinctions are to be made between the persons with nuanced/un-nuanced views of difference, or between people who actively seek positive relationships with Tanzanians, and those who try to minimize social contact beyond what is economically necessary, there is still a shared set of understandings about the difficulties of living and working in Tanzania (or Africa more generally) which are routinely described in terms of *heiren*. As the vignette above demonstrates, the collaborative construction of the category links a variety of discursive and social contexts together.

These also raise troubling questions about complicity and representation, particularly in ethnographic work. Susan’s comment on South America may have been an attempt to challenge the racialization on the basis of class, and Tang responded, as he had hinted before, that part of the basis for his problems was local poverty. Nonetheless, poverty was associated with culture and race, and it is to these linkages that I now turn.

“It’s not Racism, It’s Their Thinking is Different”: The Condescension of Cultural Relativism

Li Anshan (2016) and other scholars of China-Africa relations have proposed that in describing Chinese racial discourse, it is important to distinguish between *prejudice* based on “ignorance” from *racism* as a systemic technology of inequality and oppression (Sautman and Yan 2016; Castillo 2016). The distinction rests on the premise that because Chinese actors did not participate in the construction of a globalized system of racial capitalism, and because Chinese subjects have also been racialized within this same system, Chinese anti-black attitudes must be qualified. My

argument in this chapter has been that the structural context of Chinese-Tanzanian encounters and the way Chinese actors make sense of these encounters reproduce globalized forms of racial discourse which are not necessarily “Chinese” as much as they reproduce global hierarchies of whiteness. This appears not just in how discourses about Africans are racialized, but also in how Chinese actors critique and/or qualify these same attitudes. In a move which should not be unfamiliar to readers outside the Chinese context, my interlocutors sometimes claimed that the generalizations they made about Tanzanians were not based on “racial discrimination,” but the recitation of “cultural difference.” Chinese interlocutors criticizing Chinese racial prejudice would identify a deficit in cultural understanding to be responsible, but in invoking “culture,” they both reproduced racialized representations of Tanzanians *and* reinforced hierarchies of social class among Chinese on the basis of the level of their understanding of cultural difference.

The Chinese discourse of race in Tanzania is accompanied by a Chinese discourse of anti-racism, or more accurately, a Chinese critique of Chinese racism. The critique centers on the argument that Chinese who complain about *heiren* lack an understanding of local cultural norms. In some cases, the examples are of straightforward ignorance. For example, a Chinese doctor related the story of a friend who was upset at a Tanzanian friend. The friend had invited him to a wedding, but did not provide beer, instead suggesting that the man purchase his own beer if he wanted. The doctor explained that this was not an example of a lack of hospitality, but rather the man being Muslim. Chinese expatriates frequently criticized the attitude of those compatriots who lacked an understanding of local cultural norms and religious sensibilities. In other cases, however, the target was less a misunderstanding of local customs than a failure to recognize that they were *cultural* differences based on social development rather than flaws of character.⁸⁶ In

⁸⁶ In these auto-critiques, elements of local culture might be identified as superior to Chinese practices. For example, I met several Chinese expatriates who described religion, particularly Islam as having disciplinary effects on morality which were seen to be absent in a Chinese context. For example, one woman saw Muslim men as more reserved and quiet in public than Chinese. Another man, a Chinese businessman, saw the forms of religious association afforded by Islam as providing opportunities for unity in the community which were missing from the Chinese community.

such cases, people would occasionally use China's recent past as a means to critique contemporary attitudes. One long-term wholesaler complained about Chinese who complained about thieves and immigration inspectors:

“Who are you to complain if you don't do things correctly? These Chinese people who complain have low culture. They have no right to complain about people stealing here. Think of China a long time ago. Children would sneak up and steal fruit from vendors. It's exactly the same thing. We are all people, we are Chinese, you are a foreigner, but we both have noses.”

The attribution of these complaints to Chinese who have a “low cultural level,” and to those who engage in practices which bring trouble to themselves, reveals an important aspect of these internal critiques discussed elsewhere in the dissertation: the fractal recursivity (Irvine and Gal 2009) of blaming particular kinds of “low-quality” Chinese for possessing attitudes and engaging in practices which are problematic to the image of Chinese as a whole. In the interviews that I conducted with the more established Chinese business leaders in Dar es Salaam, complaints about the behavior of other Chinese constituted a significant part of the information they volunteered. This included criticisms of the manner in which Chinese expatriates talked about and treated Tanzanians.

In criticizing the attitudes of other Chinese, particular employers would position their own practices as superior. Mr. Kuo, a successful entrepreneur, offered an explanation to me in an interview about why people in Tanzania were “slower” than Chinese in terms of productivity. In addition to the folk explanation regarding the effects of hot weather, he argued that most Tanzanians did not eat enough each day. In response, he requires his employees to eat lunch each day, and provides them the funds to purchase lunch.

There are other instances of Chinese employers describing the practices they engage in as more effective. Despite the discourse of 素质 (ch. quality, *suzhi*) and social class, I found that

management styles were actually quite individualized. One wholesaler explained to me, for example, that he didn't like it when other Chinese complained about *heiren* stealing.

“That’s because you manage badly!” he explained. He could trust his employees, he explained, because he paid them at a higher rate than others, and also included food and water subsidies (similar to Tanzanian workplaces). He also donated funds for employees who had weddings.

Susan articulated similar critiques of other Chinese, but as the vignette in the previous section demonstrates, articulating a critique of racialized practice did not necessarily mean not contributing to the reproduction of racial discourse. Nancy, a woman from Shanghai, like Susan, argued that those Chinese who came to Africa to do business were of low *suzhi* and education. Nancy described how her own understanding of who “the Chinese” were had changed after coming to Africa. Previously, her only experience of “the Chinese” were those who lived in Shanghai. The people she met here were the kinds of Chinese she never encountered in Shanghai, not only those with “less education,” but as she added, also those who drank more. Both of them considered the behaviors of their compatriots to be very 土 (base, low-class, *tu*), and worried that Tanzanians got the impression that this was how all Chinese were. Susan considered the Chinese in Kariakoo, for example, to be people who, because they were unable to keep up with economic modernization in China, had come to Africa in order to do the “traditional” kind of work in trade they had done before in China.⁸⁷

Hierarchical thinking extended as well to Tanzanians. Susan and Nancy’s interest in Africa was informed by tropes which, while disclaiming the racism of their compatriots, nonetheless reproduced tropes of modernity and tradition which identified Africans in the “traditional slot” (with respect to Trouillot’s “savage slot”)(1991). Unlike other Chinese

⁸⁷ As discussed in Chapter Two, the people who come to do wholesaling actually have varied backgrounds, but the image of Chinese in Kariakoo as being of low social class is common, even among those who work there.

expatriates, for whom these differences were associated with discontent about Africa, Susan and Nancy would more often value them positively (but not absolutely). For example, they were both impressed with the 热情 (ch. friendliness, *reqing*) Tanzanians put into conversation, and considered people to be friendlier here than in China.

“Strangers greet each other here,” Nancy observed, but in Shanghai, neighbors don’t even know each other. Older people could be seen on the street at night, but in Shanghai, they never went out. Nancy also considered Tanzanians to be better at “preserving traditions,” and she often commented how young children would dance to traditional music, whereas young people in China did not like traditional Chinese music. Those qualities which other Chinese considered to be “simple,” “primitive” or “backwards,” were reversed as positive qualities free of the problems of Chinese modernity. When discussing those characteristics ordinarily associated with discontents among other Chinese, they would suffix those here with the comment that Tanzanians were 好玩(ch. fun, *haowan*).

There were nonetheless points of discontent, but these were often muted in tone, or attributed to different “thinking” (ch. 思想, *sixiang*). When Susan was once asked if she would ever consider marrying a local man, she responded, “No!” shaking her head for emphasis. “It’s not discrimination, it’s just that the 思维(ch. thinking, *siwei*) is very different. Men here don’t tell the truth.” Nancy described local people to be “like artists, 随时(ch. anytime, *suishi*). I am an artist, I’m *suishi*, but not as *suishi* as they are.” For example, she described how people would disappear for two to three days and not tell them where they were. The emphasis on “thinking” shows how racialized discourses are reproduced through ostensible statements of cultural relativism.

The emphasis on the fact there is a different “thinking” between Chinese and Africans operates as a seemingly objective observation of cultural difference, even of educated cultural understanding. This is perhaps best represented in an article published in a Chinese language

periodical with the title, “How to get along with African Black People.” The article exemplifies the pitfalls of describing Chinese experiences in Africa through the lens of “culture.” The author, a former student of Swahili, begins with the expository statement that following Reform and Opening, there have been increasingly intimate (ch. 密切, *miqie*) relations between Chinese and Africans, but “due to different national conditions and cultural differences, contradictions have become increasingly obvious.” The language of “national conditions” evokes official Chinese discourses regarding non-interference and the inapplicability of universal models, but also Marxian conceptions of developmental social stages. The article then proceeds to explicitly define “sub-Saharan Africans” in racial terms. He begins with a short introduction that identifies “Negros” (in transliterated form as 内格罗人(*neigeluoren*)) as one of the world’s “three races,” pointing out that “because their skin is black, they are called black people.” He lists a set of physical characteristics: “black skin, curly hair, thick noses, protruding mandibles, little body hair, and strong physical endurance and explosive force (ch. 爆发力, *baofali*).” He continues with a list of “characteristics” rehashing longstanding racial stereotypes associated with the discourse of European colonialism, but declares that his intention is to challenge Chinese ethnocentrism and to encourage Chinese to “respect” local cultures. The result is an uncanny mix of a call for inter-cultural understanding with the reproduction of offensive racial stereotypes. The manner in which the article does both is revealing, nonetheless of how the more progressive legacies of Maoism can be combined with something rather different.

The centerpiece of the article is a list of negative stereotypes Chinese expatriates have about “Africans,” and why these stereotypes are wrong. The manner in which the author debunks them, however, is by validating part of the stereotype, but contextualizing it terms of “history” and “culture.” For example, he produces in written form a crude folk evolutionary explanation I often heard from older Chinese, that the assumed “optimism,” and “easily-satisfied” nature of

Africans was due to the historical condition of the ground being fertile (and thereby needing less cultivation), and fruits being readily available on trees.

In providing these stories, the author frequently casts a critical eye on Chinese practices. In doing so, he posits African practices as different forms of cultural practice, which in some cases may be preferable to Chinese practices, rather than as simply a *lack*. However, he does so in terms which reconfirm the framework of developmental hierarchies implicit within. The argument that social relations with Africans are “simpler,” for example, can be read as both a critique of Chinese practices of face, but also the reproduction of a claim about African ethnopsychology as being less developed on a civilizational hierarchy of complexity. His response to the stereotype of laziness appears to affirm a local ownership of personal time outside of work, and therefore a critique of Chinese tolerance for being exploited, but also reproduces the false claim that African people do not think about “subsequent generations.”

He challenges the stereotype that “Africans are stupid and naïve,” arguing that because of this belief, Chinese have engaged in “unscrupulous behavior.” His response, however, indicates that he can only imagine “education” in terms of colonialism, as he continues that “although education levels are low,” the effect of colonial education has been that the legal consciousness of Africans is even stronger than the Chinese, despite weak implementation. The author intends this to be a warning to Chinese that they are “guests” who should respect the rules of the “host,” especially in terms of environmental protection. Even when identifying the detrimental effects of colonialism, the consequence of that identification only reinforces global hierarchies. For example, in talking about the need for “respecting” and understanding local culture, the author identifies the causes of Africa’s position in the world to be a product of Western colonialism. However, the implications drawn from this, such as “slave mentality,” don’t deconstruct the stereotypes as much as attempt to “explain” them and in turn encourage Chinese to be more respectful. There is thus an easy slippage between historical explanation and claims of naturalism, or natural properties.

The article is a complex document because it simultaneously critiques ethnocentrism, and encourages learning local cultural perspectives while at the same time reproducing problematic cultural stereotypes premised on notions of social development, and discussed in a generalizing language of “African” and “black,” which reaffirm the stereotypes as *racial* stereotypes. The article, however, is presented in the language of cultural difference and inter-cultural understanding.

Furthermore, the expression of opinions, which are “culturally relativist” or ostensibly “objective” in their comment, can nonetheless be laden with moral judgment. Therefore, even those who claim to “understand” Tanzanian ways of thinking as being different than Chinese ways of thinking index an evaluation that the *Chinese* ways are better. For example, when Chinese sometimes commented on Tanzanian norms of reciprocity, they would explain that what looked like “ingratitude” was actually a different way of thinking wherein gratitude is due towards God rather than individual people. The tone in which such explanations were delivered, however, sometimes conveyed astonished surprise. For example, people would tell me that Africans believed the rich should help the poor as a matter of right. “They think it’s you *should* do it (ch. 应该的 *yinggaide*).” One man argued that people did not know stealing was “wrong.” Instead, Tanzanians had the *thinking* that it was right for the poor to take from the rich. Other Chinese debated this, of course, but my argument here is the salience of hierarchical, developmental thinking behind these debates.

Yan and Sautman, who object to arguments that there is a distinctive “Chinese” discourse of race, have tried to argue on the basis of their own research interviews with Chinese investors in Zambia that Chinese conceptions of difference center more on ideas of social development rather than hereditary race (2016). The difference is that whereas Western theories of race are based on notions of heredity, Chinese notions of 素质 (ch. quality, *suzhi*) are based on ideas about civilization and cultivation. The consequence of this is that “backward” practices are not

attributed to something essential about being “black,” but are rather a consequence of a particular level of social development. The corollary is a “moral optimism” which undergirds Chinese investment in Africa, unlike a “West” which abandoned Africa as “hopeless.” There is an intelligibility to this comparison even in the article described above which, despite naturalizing race and particular physical and temperamental features, argues that economic and social development is nonetheless changing people’s “thinking” in such areas as punctuality for appointments.

Racism does not depend on a theory of heredity, however. Even if *suzhi* is considered an organizing principle, the concept of “civilization” and social development still ranks people in terms of hierarchies of “developed” and “backward.” Even when attributing behaviors to social and economic context rather than racial ethno psychology, the behaviors identified are still treated deterministically. In the examples I have provided earlier, interlocutors interchange “black,” “poor,” and “thinking” to describe devalued practices. For example, when Tanzanians are described as being disposed to such practices as petty corruption and stealing, there is an explanation that these practices are based on *poverty*, which in turn leads to notions that poor people are predisposed, by their circumstances, to be morally problematic. As one Chinese wholesaler described: “The problem with the police is their treatment is not good, so they need extra-income. If one is poor, there is often a morality (ch. 道德, *daode*) problem. In China, it also happens. I can understand the reason for this, it has logic.”

In describing *heiren* as always looking for opportunities to take advantage of the Chinese, Mr. Tang had added that they were 太穷 (ch. too poo, *tai qiong*). Poverty and inequality contributed to relationships marked by the suspicion that one party would take advantage of the other. Poverty itself would serve as an explanatory mechanism to explain certain practices and behaviors associated with being *heiren*.

On multiple occasions, Chinese interlocutors who expressed critical views about *heiren* to me would qualify that what they were telling me was not based on “(racial) discrimination,” but a statement that there existed a cultural difference between “Chinese” and “Africans”:

“I have nothing bad to say about *heiren*, it’s just their thinking is backward”

“It’s not discrimination, it’s just that the 思维(ch. thinking, *siwei*) is very different.”

“Both 黑人国家(ch. black people countries, *heirenguoja*), 穷人国家(ch. poor people countries, *qiongrenguoja*) have a different thinking (ch. 思想 *sixiang*). It's different from developed countries. They don't think the Chinese have helped them or anything like that. They think what is given to them is what God has given to them!”

And so forth.

Herzfeld has written that the “globalization” of racism has included the globalization of the frequent disclaimers used by “racists” to deny that their racialized discourses or practices are “racist”(2007). The Chinese argument that their points of friction with people in Africa are the product of different “thinking” might be interpreted as a local version of the prevalent American disclaimer, “I am not a racist, but...” (Hill 2009). In American racial discourses, concepts of “culture” largely came to replace generalizations about race after the notion of biological race and hereditarianism were delegitimized after the Second World War. The nuances of theories about whether differences in human behavior are the product of *racial* or *cultural* differences are in practice irrelevant when the naturalness of the categorization is accepted and any person from a particular set is assumed to act and behave in the terms which define that set.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have elucidated the reproduction of race in Chinese-Tanzanian interactions from the Chinese perspective. The topic of race and racism in China-Africa relations has been controversial because the geopolitics of comparison have often set “Western” and “Chinese” racism against each other in ways that say may more about racialized hierarchies of global civility

than it does about relations between African and Chinese actors themselves. Some Chinese scholars, for example, have argued that the discourse of 黑人 among ordinary Chinese are expressions of ignorance rather than racist attitudes married to the systemic racism of “the West.” In contrast, I have argued that racism is produced dialogically regardless of the individual “attitudes” or goodwill regarding interpersonal relationships. Chinese interlocutors are interpellated into, and contribute to anti-black narratives not just within the Chinese-speaking community, but also within global discourses. These global discourses are shaped not only by white supremacy, but also ideas of cosmopolitan civility which claim to disavow racism.

The story to be told here, however, is not just about discourse, but particular practices and situations which contribute to the reproduction of these categories. The themes discussed in the previous chapters on market hierarchies, gratitude, and extortion link together with the practices of security discussed in this chapter as examples of frictions emerging from the character of the economic relations which are unfolding. As I have argued in each of these cases, these frictions involve distributed agency and interdependence. They are nonetheless generative of political-ethical debates about responsibility, privilege, and vulnerability. These contribute to both othering and auto-critical evaluations. In this chapter, I examined how the concept and language of 黑人 provides Chinese expatriates in Tanzania a dynamic object of discontent. These stereotypes are not simply a symptom of ignorance, but a process where old prejudices are deconstructed, but also sustained, reproduced, or even replaced by new (and still problematic) prejudices of another variety.

The critique of Chinese racism itself, however, can reproduce hierarchical thinking. Chinese expatriates who express racist attitudes towards Tanzanians are easily disavowed by other Chinese in terms of class, as being low in “quality,” and “education.” Those who claim to be otherwise nonetheless reproduce racial stereotypes themselves through a form of cultural relativism that nonetheless naturalizes “African” traits in a manner which is either implicitly or

explicitly condescending. If these practices are uncannily familiar to readers unfamiliar with Chinese contexts, that is evidence enough why such practices and discourses must be considered in the global context of racialized inequalities rather than in terms of “China” versus the “the West.”

This chapter is missing an engagement, however, with how Tanzanians themselves interpret Chinese racial attitudes, and how they themselves map Chinese into racial orders. This is a topic to be explored in depth in further publications.

In the next chapter, I examine how these global material inequalities play out in another context where the relative power positions of Chinese and Tanzanian actors are even more ambiguous. Inspections and the solicitation of tips from Chinese migrant entrepreneurs by Tanzanian street-level bureaucrats contribute to Chinese anxieties about their status in global hierarchies, but the similarity of their experiences to the challenges faced by Tanzanian *wamachinga* illustrate another shared horizon of experience divided by conditions of material inequality

CHAPTER 5
WEAK PASSPORTS AND “LOW-QUALITY” PEOPLE: EVERYDAY EXTORTION,
RECOGNITION, AND THE STATE

On the afternoon of January 7, 2016, there was an immigration raid on Narung’ombe Street in the Kariakoo wholesale district of Dar es Salaam. The street is home to several dozen Chinese wholesale shops selling inexpensive footwear to everyone from Tanzanian *wamachinga* petty traders to foreign African wholesalers. Following the inauguration of the reform-minded President John Magufuli, it was little surprise that the government would follow through with its promise to conduct a “house-to-house” search for illegal immigrants. Alongside Ethiopians and Somalis, many Chinese were caught unprepared, especially after the government cancelled Tanzania’s short term work permit program.⁸⁸ During the raid, Chinese who were unable to present their papers were arrested and placed in a vehicle for transport to the immigration office. During an operation which arrested about thirteen individuals (out of around twenty in the city overall), some of the targeted people tried to run, some physically struggled with the agents, and one woman was hit and fell to the ground. The hitting incident was quickly reported by Chinese present to the multiple WeChat and QQ groups which link Chinese residents of Tanzania in a continuous exchange of news, advertisements, and playful banter.

On the group I happened to be following at the time, a man responded to the incident with a denunciation of the behavior of “black ghosts” (ch. 黑鬼 *hēiguǐ*), the racially hostile term for those more commonly referred to by the similarly generalizing term, 黑人 (ch. black people, *hēirén*). Others responded by calling the immigration agents “crazy” (ch. 疯狂, *fēngkuáng*), and accusing them of engaging in the kind of behavior which guaranteed Tanzania would remain “primitive” (ch. 原始, *yuánshǐ*). The focus of the discussion quickly shifted, however, from the criticism of *hēirén* to the criticism of the inaction of the Chinese Embassy, and in turn, how Chinese abroad are easily “bullied” (ch. 被欺负, *bèi qīfū*).

⁸⁸ A number of Chinese employees had used the short-term working visa in lieu of the more expensive and more bureaucratically cumbersome standard work visa.

“The embassy will suppress news of the incident.”

“They only protect rich people.”

“China is not like the Qing Dynasty a hundred years ago,” one man protests, exhorting people to visit the Embassy together and demand a response from the Chinese government to the hitting incident. Only when Chinese are united, he adds, will foreign countries be unable to “humiliate” (ch. 羞辱, *xiūrù*) them. China is strong enough now to act, he argues, but lacks the will to do so.

As I followed the conversation, I was not surprised when somebody eventually repeated the rumor that the Chinese passport is “weak” on account of language which disclaims consular responsibility for the welfare of Chinese citizens abroad. Long before this incident, I had been asked by multiple Chinese interlocutors whether it was true that the US passport includes a sentence which says, “no matter where you are, the United States will always strongly back you!” (ch. 不论在哪里,美国永远是你的坚强的后盾, *Bùlùn zài nǎlǐ, měiguó yǒngyuǎn shì nǐ de jiānqiáng de hòudùn!*). The Chinese passport, on the other hand, is said to instruct citizens to follow the law of foreign countries, respect local customs, and to not embarrass China. The Chinese government did not assist citizens in peril abroad, expatriates complained, but instead preferred to “scold” (ch. 骂, *mà*) them, assuming that if Chinese got into trouble, they were personally responsible.

The attempt to mobilize a protest visit to the Chinese Embassy soon encountered resistance from leaders in the Chinese business associations. They asserted that they had personally been working all day with staff from the Embassy to investigate the cases of the people who had been detained. In response to the critical tone of the majority of comments, Ms. Fang, a long-term resident and leading figure in the Chinese community posted an extended comment encouraging her compatriots to reflect on their own practices in Tanzania. People had argued the arrests demonstrated how little gratitude Tanzanians had for the investment China

provided. She responded that the Chinese should recognize themselves as “guests,” make sure they followed the law and had their papers in order, and that they had no right to demand gratitude. Instead, she argued, they should be thankful to the Tanzanians for giving them business opportunities they did not previously have in China.

A following comment responded sardonically “商会来了”(Ch. here come the Associations, *shānghuì láiile*). “Did the Embassy ask you to say that?” he continued. She insisted they did not, and that despite what everyone might think of her, as someone with good connections, she had suffered as much while doing business in Tanzania as they had. The exchange reveals the fault-line within the Chinese community between a network of long-term residents and community leaders on the one side with close ties to the embassy, and shifting networks of migrant entrepreneurs on the other.

The diverse set of responses to the January 7th incident illustrate the existence of competing etiologies of blame for the harassment of Chinese. These include not only racialized characterizations of Tanzanians, the topic of the last chapter, but also discontents about the vulnerabilities of *being Chinese* in the world, whether attributed to the weakness of the Chinese passport or the consequence of what is considered to be the problematic behavior of “low-quality” overseas Chinese as insufficiently law-abiding subjects. These criticisms mark social distinctions, but also bespeak ethical aspirations and contested projects to improve how expatriates interact with the Tanzanian state, especially because individual conduct is seen to affect the Chinese community as a whole.

The passport rumor, and the sentiments to which it is connected, indicates how Chinese expatriates consider themselves denied the kind of imperial citizenship which inheres in the American passport. Calls for the Chinese state to do ‘more,’ however, itself raises dilemmas about the kind of state China should be in the world, and whether the “rise of China” translates into the increased status and privileges of Chinese citizens abroad. These dilemmas become

particularly relevant in the frequent interactions Chinese expatriates have with Tanzanian street-level bureaucrats, particularly immigration, officials. These interactions, which usually end with the payment of a “tip” (ch. 小费, *xiǎofèi*), or bribe, are a frequent topic of everyday discontent among Chinese expatriates. They are interactions which reveal the vulnerability of Chinese expatriates as subjects of Tanzanian sovereignty, but they are also interactions which reveal the ability of Chinese subjects to use capital they have accumulated to evade the enforcement of Tanzanian laws. Bribes are transitive transactions in the sense that either “sovereigns” collect them as forms of informal tribute, or foreign business people suspend the law with the sovereignty of their money. In this chapter, I examine how these interactions are key sites through which the mutualities of Chinese-Tanzanian relations are negotiated. Practices of corruption mutually implicate Chinese and Tanzanian actors, and in turn pose questions about relative moral agency and power between them. Claims of “anti-empire,” and the specters of “empire” have immediate relevance here because how Chinese expatriates interpret their own treatment and moral agency turn on how they perceive their own rights and privileges as Chinese citizens in Tanzania. As I will demonstrate, expatriate Chinese in Tanzania perform multiple versions of Chinese-ness *vis-à-vis* local interlocutors, as do Tanzanian street bureaucrats who perform multiple versions of post-colonial sovereignty *vis-à-vis* both foreigners and Tanzanian citizens. I argue that these interactions turn on performing both post-colonial sovereignty and the sovereignty of money to suspend that sovereignty. Secondly, I place these interactions into comparison with interactions between Tanzanian *wamachinga* and street-level bureaucrats. In doing so, I am able to both show similar semiotic ambiguities which personalize the state, and also highlight how inequalities in capital changes the vulnerabilities of different actors in these relationships.

Imperial Privileges Denied

The first social etiology among Chinese for the weakness of Chinese citizenship is the perceived weakness of the Chinese state in the world. Despite the contemporary rise of China as a geopolitical power, early twentieth century temporalities of national humiliation continue to inform interpretations of the difficulties Chinese subjects encounter abroad.

Mythical comparisons between US and Chinese passports are symptomatic of a popular discourse which, despite the “rise of China,” continues to view the Chinese place in the global hierarchy of value as precarious. When Chinese interlocutors would claim that there was a difference in the language of the two passports, a simple comparison of our passports was enough to prove my claim that the language of these passports were standardized, but on other occasions, the comparative strength of the passports was in fact revealed to us when immigration agents would appear before us. On multiple occasions, plainclothes immigration officers would arrive in the morning at a hotel where I was staying. The hotel, a frequent host to Chinese entrepreneurs and employees newly arrived in the country, was a popular target for officials who, as was generally understood by those staying here, targeted Chinese for document errors in order to extract bribes. Accompanying the hotel manager, the officials would knock on each door.

“Mr. Sheridan?” The manager called to me.

I opened the door and saw a stern-faced heavy-set middle aged man looking at me.

“Immigration,” he said, “Do you have a passport?”

“Yes, yes. Just a moment.” I scurried for my passport, residence permit, and research permit. On other occasions, I handed the agents a photocopy. On the last occasion, my photocopy was tattered and torn.

The agents would stare at my documents, occasionally ask me about my university affiliation, but on each occasion, would finally say “*sawa*” (sw. ok), handing me back the documents.

“You are clean, the documents are clean.”

On one occasion, I realized they had overlooked the fact I had given them an old permit rather than my renewed one. After the agents left, I sat in the downstairs courtyard with several of the Chinese guests discussing what had happened. A man explained that it was because the Chinese could not speak English, and because officials assumed they had money.

“Wow!” exclaimed Mr. Chen, a long-term hotel resident, “You should have seen them look at Derek’s passport.” Whereas others had been interrogated for longer periods, they had simply looked at my passport and waved me on. Commenting on the tattered documents I had provided to immigration, Ms. Zhang, another guest, complained that “they just bully Chinese!” (ch. 欺负中国人 *qīfù Zhōngguó rén*).

Although there were some who agreed with my embarrassed retort that it was my student (rather than business) status that protected me, the argument was more often that it was my status as an American, and more to the point, a white American, which granted me protection from not only petty corruption, but according to some, even the possibility of robbery. If an American was harmed or killed, it was assumed, the US Embassy would pressure the local government to solve the case. Being an American was also assumed to protect motorists from traffic stops. On a few occasions, I was asked to sit in the front passenger seat because it was assumed the police would be less likely to stop us. Another Chinese friend kept an American flag bumper sticker on the back of his car, for example, hoping the police might assume he was an American citizen.

And on a couple of occasions, a neighbor of mine in the hotel, who I will call Robert, attempted to use my American citizenship as a strategy to recover \$20,000USD which had been stolen from him by fraudulent gold suppliers. Seeing that the men were unmoved by his threats, Robert informed them that he had an “American partner” who would take the issue to the US Embassy if the money was not returned. I declined Robert’s request to make an appearance to “scare them,” and protested that the US Embassy would in any case be unlikely to intervene in

such a case. He responded that it did not matter, since in any case Africans would not be scared of the Chinese, but they would respect white people.

“They are like little brothers, or dogs, around you,” he added with disgust.

Setting aside my own discomfort with his assumptions, I finally relented to call the US Embassy and casually ask, hypothetically, what they could do if a situation like this faced a US citizen. The woman on the line confirmed there was nothing the Embassy could do in this situation. Robert seemed genuinely surprised. He had often talked about how the Americans possessed advanced weaponry, and the power to control the world economy through the global hegemony of the US dollar.⁸⁹ He really expected that the US embassy would have extended services to me that the Chinese embassy would not extend to him.

In describing these different incidents, I don't mean to minimize differences between Chinese experiences and American expatriate experiences with globalized forms of white privilege. However, what these incidents do demonstrate is how the meanings and expectations associated with the US passport, and with US citizenship are often over determined, sometimes leading to rather fantastical ideas about the kinds of privileges American expatriates like myself could expect in Tanzania. Ideas about American privileges are often more directly a commentary on the privileges, vulnerabilities, rights, and responsibilities of being a Chinese global citizen.

There is a genealogy to the discourse about the relationship between the strength of the Chinese state, and the status of Chinese individuals abroad, which dates back to late 19th/early 20th century reform movements. As described in Chapter One, reformist and anti-Qing movements were influenced in part by the experience of overseas Chinese, particularly in white settler societies (Fitzgerald 2003). The inability of the Qing to protect overseas Chinese from discrimination was linked by reformers to the inability to protect territorial sovereignty. As Fitzgerald (2003) argues, “liberation” in 1949 was framed as the Chinese achieving recognition,

⁸⁹ He based his argument partially on the best-selling Chinese book *Currency Wars* (Song 2007).

having “stood up” and no longer being “slaves.” It is unsurprising, therefore, that overseas Chinese draw upon this when confronting Chinese embassies to demand greater protection. The Chinese state, however, has attempted to balance the assertion of national dignity in the anti-imperialist mode with a disavowal of the kinds of imperialist and hegemonic practices that it criticizes the United States for engaging in.

Chinese experiences in post-colonial African states, therefore, are complicated because expectations of treatment are informed by the contradictory legacies of how Chinese nationalism(s) imagined Africa in relation to its own anti-imperialism. Although both African and Chinese subjects have been subaltern within global European imperial formation, their relationship to each other has been ambivalent. Within the development of the discourse of modern Chinese nationalism, Africa and Africans have been either racial foils to nationalist anxieties and ambitions, or racial allies in the struggle against European imperialism and white supremacy. The Maoist internationalism of the 1960s and the 1970s has had a lasting influence on official Chinese discourses about how citizens should conduct themselves when abroad. The Chinese engineers and laborers who came to Tanzania in the 1970s to work on TAZARA and the many other aid/cooperation projects around the continent distinguished themselves from other “foreign experts” by foregoing the latter’s expected privileges.⁹⁰

The new Chinese migration following Reform and Opening, and the emergence of private investment has in turn challenged expectations regarding the kind of state an ascendant China should be in the world, and the kind of subjects expatriate Chinese should be; how should migrant Chinese conduct themselves and what are their responsibilities? The competing historical legacies of Chinese Social Darwinism and Maoist Internationalism have informed

⁹⁰ This was explicitly set as policy in the “Eight Principles for Economic Aid and Technical Assistance to Other Countries,” in which it was written that “in providing aid to other countries, the Chinese Government strictly respects the sovereignty of the recipient countries, and never asks for any privileges or attaches any conditions..... The experts dispatched by the Chinese Government to help in construction in the recipient countries will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities”(Yu 1970).

expatriate Chinese expectations in Tanzania in multiple ways. The first is an enduring racial mapping of the world which not only identifies the Chinese as ahead of Africans on a civilizational scale, but also projects onto Africa an understanding of colonial history which claims an indigenous “slave mentality” vis-à-vis Europeans (but never Chinese). The second is an interpretation of the Maoist period which views Chinese assistance implicitly as historical “gifts” (Mauss 1925) not obligating Tanzanian counter-gifts as much as informing Chinese expectations of “gratitude.” These are implicit expectations of gratitude insofar as it is only in moments when social expectations have been violated, as in the case of being extorted or being robbed, that Chinese informants identified “ingratitude” to be a local characteristic. In response to these expectations, a counter-claim within the Chinese community is that expatriates have no rights to expect special treatment, a disavowal of imperial potentialities (Jørgensen 2011), a claim I return to after the following section.⁹¹

The Bases of Recognition

Before moving on, however, I want to first discuss how Chinese expatriates disagree on what establishes the kind of prestige and respect which they believe themselves to lack in Africa. As I will argue, the conceptual linkage between national prestige and expatriate privilege described in the previous section turns on competing ideologies and phenomenologies of sovereignty. Reflecting on the 19th century Chinese empire’s encounter with European imperialism, Lydia Liu asks if there is any concept of human dignity which is not linked with the “mystique of sovereign thinking” (2004:5). The sovereign thinking in question here, however, turns on still unsettled understandings of Chinese geopolitical modernity. Chinese expatriates sometimes connect

⁹¹ Chinese expatriates do not always articulate their difficulties with the Tanzanian state in terms of national identity or exclusively in Chinese historical terms. They also articulate them in terms of their identities as foreign investors. Chinese interlocutors frequently identified corruption and security as harmful to the investment environment, and therefore areas where the Tanzanian state *should* be more attentive. As investors, foreigners such as themselves are understood to bring benefits (in terms of capital, skills, and commodities) which would otherwise not be available locally. Sentiments like these were as common among traders I interviewed as they were among other investors.

harassment in Africa to the *absence* of a Chinese colonial history; a linkage which runs contrary to the official discourse that it is in fact this absence which is the basis for its continued prestige in Africa. There is obviously an empirical question here as to whether or not China is, in fact, “respected,” by *whom*, to which China or Chinese this refers to, and how this is even measured; but there is also a more fundamental difference of opinion about what sorts of practices establish recognition and dignity.

The meanings of Chinese sovereignty and citizenship in these ordinary encounters turn on contending historical understandings and contending claims about national-racial character. Ordinary Chinese offer, explicitly or implicitly, their own political theories of Chinese power.⁹² I categorize them here in a shorthand way as either “Hegelian” or “Confucian.”

The “Hegelian” interpretation of sovereignty is implicit in the claim that Africans targeted Chinese expatriates for extortion or robbery because Africans neither respected nor feared Chinese. The reason for this is that, unlike “white people,” the Chinese never colonized Africa.⁹³ I describe this perspective as “Hegelian” because it depends on a master-slave framework for understanding recognition. Recognition and respect are established through mastery based on violence and subjugation. For many of my Chinese interlocutors, this perspective depends on a particular interpretation of Western imperialism as based on enslavement and colonialism, and a reading of African history primarily through the lens of enslavement and its consequent “slave mentality.”

These histories are extended to the interpretation of global American hegemony, and the supposedly extra-ordinary immunities that it grants to citizens abroad. Locals “fear white people,”

⁹² Most academic discussions of contemporary Chinese foreign policy, whether in Africa or elsewhere, make note of the “non-interference” doctrine. The doctrine is generally studied in terms of state decision-making to intervene/not-intervene, rather than in terms of how ordinary Chinese themselves conceive of their “interventions” abroad.

⁹³ Many Chinese expatriates I met regarded the Indian community, inaccurately, as being merely historical auxiliaries to European colonialism.

a young Chinese Kariakoo wholesaler explained to me, because the US might attack them the same way it did in Syria or Iraq. It was unclear in the way he said this whether he was criticizing US imperialism or expressing a kind of perverse admiration, or both. Robert's scheme to use the threat of US embassy involvement demonstrates the belief that US imperialism is efficacious in providing individual American expatriates a wider degree of agency than Chinese expatriates have. Popular interpretations such as these obviously challenge the narrative espoused in Chinese state discourse that Chinese prestige in Africa is based precisely on having never colonized.

The historical narratives that they use to explain European imperialism and Africa is based on historical facts, but they are also simplified, generalized, and unspecific. The histories of Western conquest to which they refer approximate a primal Western colonial myth, described to great effect by Lydia Liu with respect to *Robinson Crusoe*. In the novel, the gun that establishes sovereignty over Friday is also that which establishes who is ruler and who is ruled. In a small book by SOAS-based scholar Stephen Chan on the *Morality of China in Africa* (2013), Chan offers an alternative primal scene which would distinguish a Chinese approach to foreign affairs different from the Western tradition. He discusses the story of Meng Huo, a "barbarian" leader of southern China, and Zhuge Liang of the ancient state of Shu Han, as recounted in *The Romance of the Three Kingdom*. Meng Huo repeatedly rebels against Shu Han, is repeatedly captured, but is also repeatedly released by Zhuge Liang when he protests the capture. "On his seventh capture, Meng finally realizes he is being (consistently) defeated by someone who is not only superior militarily, but superior in virtue" (2013:20). The premise of the story is that Chinese polities have (ideally) established centrality and dominance in political hierarchies through moral example and cultural prestige rather than through conquest. Recognition is achieved not through the application of violence but through the demonstration of moral acts and generosity which either

inspire or shame others into recognizing the subject.⁹⁴ These are also assumed to inspire sentiments of gratitude.

The narrative aligns more closely with Confucian ideals of political virtue than with the historical record (Ge 2015).⁹⁵ However, the primal scene supports a Chinese political narrative that China has always restrained itself from territorial conquest and sovereignty even when it could have done so. In Chinese state narratives, China's prestige is argued to derive from this restraint and benevolence. This is an argument promoted by Chinese political philosophers like Zhao Tingyang (2009).

These mythologies align with the anti-imperialist narrative of “non-intervention,” but are contradicted by Fanonian promise of recognition through revolutionary violence. Through revolutionary violence, argued Fanon, colonized subjects seek not recognition from the colonizer, but to make themselves recognized when they “turn toward the master” and “demand a different relationship of reciprocity” (Fanon 1963; Fitzgerald 2003). In Mao's famous inaugural speech for the People's Republic, he claimed that China had “stood up.” Half a century later, it continues to be debated as to whether China has stood up enough.⁹⁶ Even if the ethics of non-interference are imagined to characterize a Chinese political subjectivity, Chinese subjects in the context of an

⁹⁴ The narrative, while positing an anti-imperialist stance, nonetheless entails an order of hierarchy. It derives from older conceptions of Chinese world order wherein hegemony is based on the recognition by peripheral states and actors of the superior civilization of the center. China and Chineseness provide models for emulation, but they are models which are supposed never to be imposed by force. Among Chinese in Tanzania as well, some see their presence as encouraging economic development in Tanzania by way of example (cf. Nyíri 2006).

⁹⁵ The unification of the Qin Empire by Qin Shi-Huang was a decidedly violent affair, although the intellectual legitimization for its conduct was informed by the explicitly anti-Confucian Legalist school. As described by Dean and Massumi (1992), the conceptions of sovereignty of the legalist school are close enough to contemporary imperialist subjectivities for them to position their work as a comparative critique of late Cold War American imperialism.

⁹⁶ In East Asia in particular, Chinese foreign policy discourse embodies the contradiction between an anti-imperialist stance towards US containment policies, and the re-assertion of Chinese centrality *vis-à-vis* peripheral regions. In the 1960s, Chinese discourse represented African struggles for liberation in similar terms (Lefkowitz. Forthcoming). In my fieldwork, I did not encounter Chinese informants who talked about African-self-making in these terms.

emerging global China increasingly contest them. Some I spoke to emphasize Confucian principles as precisely the quality that they believed made China a morally superior actor in the world. Unlike the United States, China brought investment rather than war. Others identified it to be either weakness or a lack of political will. After the immigration raid of January 7th, 2016, some actively mocked the official discourse of the Chinese state about a “peaceful” foreign policy.⁹⁷ The experience of Chinese abroad is increasingly prompting challenges to concepts about the kind of state a geopolitically ascendant China should be.

The dilemma has not gone unnoticed among those invested in the narrative that China’s “rise” should be understood in terms of empire. In discussions about Chinese foreign policy, the doctrine of “non-interference” is generally understood to mean a deliberate policy choice to not intervene in local politics, and in these discussions, the doctrine is frequently characterized as unsustainable (Parello-Plesner and Duchâtel 2015). As Chinese investment and migration in “unstable” overseas regions grows, the argument goes, the Chinese state will be increasingly compelled to undertake political and military actions to protect its overseas investments and interests. The argument takes aim at discourses of Chinese exceptionalism which argue that China’s rise will involve dynamics different from those of Western expansion. Within the horizon of positivist political science and sociology, these are not just claims about the China, but claims about the validity of theories about global states and capital following similar dynamics despite rhetorical claims to the contrary (Vukovich 2013).

The meaning of non-interference for ordinary Chinese expatriates, however, is usually not considered; how it structures Chinese understandings of their own position, rights, privileges, and possibilities in a foreign country. In interactions between Chinese expatriates and Tanzanian street-level bureaucrats, who is understood to have legitimate authority? Anthropologists who have studied sovereignty have generally concurred that it is enacted through claims,

⁹⁷ This is, of course, not only a discourse to be found in Africa, but more broadly in the Chinese public sphere vis-à-vis territorial disputes with Japan and Southeast Asian states.

performances, and practices rather being an intrinsic property. As performances and practices, they always remain “tentative and emergent” (Hansen and Stepputat 2006:297), depending on iteration, but always potentially contestable. This is especially true in post-colonial situations where the status of national sovereignty is ambivalent vis-à-vis geopolitics, neo-imperialism, and neoliberal regimes (Chalfin 2010; Friedman 2010).

The performance of sovereignty by street-level bureaucrats interpellate particular kinds of subjects. When Chinese expatriates, for example, are detained and forced to pay “tips,” the Chinese are exposed as vulnerable to arbitrary extraction, and the sovereignty of the Tanzanian state is re-asserted. Agamben’s critical theory of sovereignty (2005) identified the “sovereign” as the agent who declares the state of exception from the procedural “rule of law.”⁹⁸ In performing administrative and police acts, post-colonial states are able to demonstrate the existence of their sovereignty even in contexts of global dependency (cf. Chalfin 2010; Friedman 2010). If sovereignty is understood to be performed through interactions which interpellate people as subjects of the state, when Chinese are robbed by bandits or extorted by officials, they are exposed as vulnerable to arbitrariness and extraction. The difference is between those who are authorized to use the “legitimate means of violence” (Weber 1965) and those who are not. When officials solicit or receive bribes from civilians, the law is “suspended” in the sense that its enforcement has been reduced to the selective discretion of the street-level bureaucrat. But the resolution is not just dependent on the sovereign powers delegated to the official, but also to the individual who is able to suspend the law by means of payment. The extortion of Chinese and foreign investors is from one perspective, a performance of local sovereignty over foreign capital, but at the same time, it is based on the recognition of the Chinese, rightly or wrongly, as

⁹⁸ As Hansen and Stepputat (2006) have argued, however, the unexceptional legal state was always a Eurocentric construction whose contradictions were most evident in the colonial encounter. “As the tradition of oppressed tells us,” Benjamin (2009) wrote, “the state of exception is the rule.” In the post-colonial period, the myriad interventions, overt and covert, by the United States and European powers in former colonies, and the invasion of Iraq in the name of the United States as an exceptional power in the global order, have reinforced the conceptual linkage between imperial sovereignty and the West.

privileged foreign actors who can use wealth to suspend local law. The bribe suspends local law, and performs sovereignty, as much as the street-level bureaucrat who precipitates the crisis.

This is only partially correct, however. Street-level bureaucrats do not only target foreign capital, but also solicit bribes from Tanzanian citizens. This reveals that at the same time that Chinese expatriates are interpreting their harassment to be evidence of their vulnerabilities within a global hierarchy of privilege, ordinary Tanzanians also experience commensurable obstacles *vis-à-vis* street-level bureaucrats. This has implications for how both Chinese and Tanzanians claim their own rights and authority *vis-à-vis* the Tanzanian state. Before discussing that, however, it is important to first address the etiology of blame which most directly challenges Chinese critiques of the Chinese state, and the Tanzanian state. This is the argument that Chinese citizens are harassed because of the negative effects of “low-quality” Chinese behaviors on the image of China as a whole.

Being Good Citizens Abroad

A common counter-narrative blames the vulnerability of Chinese overseas on the behavior and conduct of private citizens. Tensions between central governments and the demands of sojourners on the frontier is a dynamic with multiple historical parallels: the experience of American expatriates in China under the extra-territorial regime of the late 19th and early 20th century (Scully 2001), the development of international law over four centuries of European imperialism more generally (Benton 2010), and Chinese imperial policy under the Qing towards Han settlers on the frontier (Brown 2004). The dynamic is the demand of those on the edge for the protection and intervention of their states against the “native,” and the desire of the central government, on the other hand, for peace and stability on the frontier. In the context of the contemporary global

nation-state system, and the Chinese state's investment in being "non-imperial," the appearance of these tensions in Tanzania is potentially problematic for the Chinese state.⁹⁹

A frequent discontent within the Chinese community is the existence of an assumed deficit in "legal consciousness," both in the sense of knowing the laws, but also in following them. If expatriates are not effectively managed, who is responsible for managing them? However, through such self-management, individual Chinese are supposed to be responsible for protecting the image of China through their actions. If the Chinese passport is said to contain a clause instructing its bearers to follow the law and to not embarrass China, and if this indicates for some the weakness or lack of will of the Chinese state, then another interpretation I heard is that it is a response to the behavior of Chinese people. The Chinese manager of a factory told me that the Chinese passport included the reminder because, otherwise, "Chinese thinking is very complicated." Chinese, he argued, looked for loopholes when working abroad. If local officials trouble them, he claimed, they will readily use money to resolve it. Euro-Americans (Ch. 欧美人, *Ōuměi rén*), according to him, would never pay a bribe if asked, but patiently insist that the official follows the law.

In early 2014, the Chinese Ambassador to Tanzania, Lu Youqing, granted an interview to a Chinese newspaper in which he criticized the behavior of expatriate Chinese. Ambassador Lu had stated that no other foreign embassy in Tanzania had to deal with the kinds of consular problems they did.¹⁰⁰ Although this statement was only a small portion of the interview which was subsequently magnified by international media, the tenor evoked not only a strand of

⁹⁹ The appearance of these tensions, however, should not necessarily be interpreted, as Howard French (2014) does, as evidence China's development in Africa will be a direct parallel of earlier imperialism.

¹⁰⁰ Discussing this interview with Mr. Shen, a wholesaler in Kariakoo, he responded angrily that it was unfair for the Ambassador to complain: "Of course they have more to do! There are more Chinese expatriates here than expatriates of other countries, so of course there will be more people among them who do illegal things." He proceeded to scold the Embassy for being useless. In comparison, he spoke highly of the leader of a Chinese association in another country (where he also had a business) who had worked extensively to improve relations between the Chinese community and the government there. However, interlocutors I met also claimed these associations were unhelpful in protecting Chinese.

Chinese-critique-of-Chinese which is easy to find within the community, but also reinforced perceptions that Chinese Embassies prefer to “scold” rather than to assist expatriates who find themselves in trouble. When I suggested to Richard the gold buyer that he go to the Chinese Embassy, he echoed a sentiment that I had heard elsewhere, that it was “no use,” and that the staff would just “scold” you and accuse you of being wrong. The discourse of both the Chinese Embassy and the official statements of Chinese associations regularly exhort Chinese to “follow the law.” If you follow the law, if you have all the documents correctly prepared, the logic goes, there is no reason to fear or worry about officials who could find errors to exploit.¹⁰¹

This is the position also taken publically by the leaders of the Chinese associations. During a news interview, one of them complained about Chinese who “use money to open roads” (ch. 拿钱开路, *ná qián kāilù*). In particular, he strongly protested Chinese who paid bribes illegally requested of them by officials, especially if their own papers were in order and the situation could be resolved legally.¹⁰²

The Chinese who willingly pay are similarly seen to display deficiencies on the same civilizational continuum. Indeed, there are even some Chinese who told me the story that the Chinese introduced corruption to Tanzania because of their willingness to initiate bribes. In this latter perspective, everyday corruption encounters with Tanzanian officials is understood to be an unfortunate extension of practices associated with business in China. Corruption in Tanzania, but also in Africa more generally, can be problematic for Chinese identity because its familiarity inevitably puts a spotlight on discontents about practices in China. The cultural auto-critique of expatriate Chinese corruption is sometimes contrasted with an imagined Western counterpart who

¹⁰¹ Exhortations to develop a “legal conscious” partake of a broader pedagogical Chinese discourse which problematizes the “civility” of other Chinese. With the increasing number of mainland Chinese traveling abroad, there have been high profile stories about the “misbehavior” of global Chinese abroad, particularly in the tourism industry. The Chinese state has responded through public campaigns aimed at raising the “civility” of Chinese who go abroad. At the Chinese Embassy in Dar es Salaam, I once found a flyer with cartoons instructing Chinese on how to conduct “civilized travel.”

¹⁰² Original news story no longer available online.

does not engage in such corruption because of what is assumed to be a higher legal consciousness or education. Such individuals are assumed to be more aware of their rights, and to have the support of their governments. These perceptions may be shared by some Western expatriates themselves, who, in other parts of Africa, not only readily assume that Chinese companies engage in corruption on a massive scale, but also that Western companies are in fact at a disadvantage because they don't engage in such corruption (Hannah Appel. Personal Communication). These claims, however, may say more about Chinese and Western self-perceptions than they do about comparative business practices themselves.

These auto-critical evaluations often turn on sociocultural hierarchies within China insofar that people who make claims about Chinese expatriates engaging in corruption often attribute these behaviors to the low “quality” (ch. 素质, *Sùzhi*) of particular Chinese different from themselves.¹⁰³ Evidence of this can be found in the fact that following an announced operation in 2011 to evict Chinese traders from Kariakoo, the comments on one Chinese blog were overwhelmingly critical of the traders themselves, rather than the Tanzanian government. The behavior of such Chinese expatriates is problematic for the Chinese community as a whole because it is believed to make everyone more vulnerable to harassment from officials. David, for example, was an engineer working for a state-owned enterprise. Learning of my research in Kariakoo, he told me that he did not like going there. One of the reasons, he told me, was that when he had, immigration officials had stopped him. He blamed this on there being too many Chinese in Kariakoo who he claimed did not have the proper immigration papers.

Arguments like this were subject to a counter-argument among Chinese I met who considered it a misunderstanding of the “thinking” of Tanzanian officials. During a discussion among the hotel guests where I was staying about a Chinese academic detained earlier in the day

¹⁰³ The concept of 素质 is relatively recent, emerging in the context of 1980s population reform, but becoming popularly associated with concepts of civility (Greenhalgh and Winckler 2005; Kipnis 2006).

by immigration officials, the academic insisted that he was unconcerned during the arrest because his papers were in order. The other guest at the table started shaking his head, telling my colleague that he did not understand the “thinking” of the arresting officials.

“[The Tanzanian officials] *want* us to pay a bribe!” exclaimed a wholesale trader on a different occasion when I asked his opinion about these critiques. They also *want* Chinese to violate the law, he implied. He proceeded to describe a series of encounters where street-level bureaucrats confronted him, his co-workers, or his friends for legal infractions they were both unaware of, and which they had had no intention of violating. To insist upon legal resolution would entail the kind of patience and time in short supply among aspiring entrepreneurs. People paid bribes in order to expedite faster resolutions even if they were in fact not in violation of any actual laws. The idea that “they want us to pay” suggests there is consequentially an ambiguity in these transactions about who is responsible for them. The street-level bureaucrats who initiate the transactions are the most immediate targets, but the criticism of expatriates for not just paying bribes, but a preemptive willingness to pay them suggests that a more complex evaluative politics is at work. These are anticipated by the interactions themselves, which are performatively ambiguous with respect to agency and ethics.

Defining Corrupt People in Encounters

The contradiction between the insistence that officials “want us to pay” bribes, and the insistence that Chinese don’t need to pay bribes if their papers are in order indicates that there is ambiguity about who is ultimately responsible for any given transaction. In the previous two sections, I discussed how these are debated in abstract terms about the status of Chinese and Chinese citizens in the world. In this section, I attend to the dynamics of these encounters themselves. In doing so, I introduce a key figure in this story, the Tanzanian street-level bureaucrat. As the opening anecdote to this chapter indicates, the Tanzanian state, whether encountered as officials or racialized in Chinese discourse as 黑人 is a primary subject of discontent. In discussing

Chinese anxieties about the strength of the state and the quality of overseas citizens, however, I have shown how these encounters are generative of secondary auto-critical etiologies of blame. In returning to the Tanzanian state, I am able to highlight that Chinese expatriates share with Tanzanian citizens commensurable discontents. Tanzanian economic actors, particularly petty traders, have commensurable encounters with street-level bureaucrats. These facts complicate the Chinese narrative of being singularly targeted, and in turn, raise intriguing questions about the encounters themselves in terms of agency, power, and ethics. In what follows, I first describe encounters between Chinese expatriates and Tanzanian street-level bureaucrats. In the following section, I compare these encounters to those between Tanzanian *wamachinga* and Tanzanian officials. As I show, these interactions are (deliberately) semiotically ambiguous, implicating actors in different ways.

Everyday encounters with officials seeking what Chinese call “tips” (ch. 小费, *xiǎofèi*) is a frequent feature of Chinese life in Tanzania,¹⁰⁴ and even more significantly, a central feature of everyday discourses of complaint. These are situations where “Tanzanian” and “Chinese” identities are defined. In the everyday discourse of discontent, it is because of corruption that black people are described as “greedy,” the Chinese as unfairly targeted *and* the complaint that the Chinese too readily use money to resolve legal problems. A close look at everyday corruption encounters, however, reveals that a focus on individual responsibility overlooks the structural features of the encounter. The most prevalent encounters are with immigration agents, but there are also officials from other government departments. In addition to these are regular stops by police officers and traffic police. The condition of possibility for these encounters is the murky legal space between the actions of foreigners and the uneven enforcement of laws by the Tanzanian state. Street-level bureaucrats enact state sovereignty through such uneven

¹⁰⁴ On Chinese social media, people would regularly notify members of their WeChat groups whenever immigration officials were reported to be making the round in Kariakoo. These reminders warned compatriots to carry their papers with them, or, if for whatever reason there was a problem, to stay away from Kariakoo.

enforcement, and the discretionary power it provides (Landau 2006). In my experience, it was often the case that Chinese did not necessarily intend to break the law, but simply were not aware of what the laws were. They believe that officials methodically search for mistakes (ch. 毛病, *máo bìng*). If they encounter multiple mistakes, I was told, they may obtain a tip for one the first time, but return again another time to address the others.

The encounters have ritual conventions which turn on the officials performing different roles: the delegate of state sovereignty, the co-conspiring and subversive friend, and even the supplicant. The encounters follow a classical ritual logic of disaggregation, liminality, and re-aggregation (Turner 1967). In these moments, whether a police stop, or immigration coming to check, the officials precipitate an apparent crisis where small legal infractions appear to portend high stakes consequences. They would adopt a serious demeanor, identify themselves, and seek identification. When an infraction was found, the officials would inform the individuals that the mistake was very serious and that the consequence could include going to jail to wait for court the next day, with the possibility of deportation following after that. As a foreigner encountering these threats for the first time, they could seem serious and frightening. In some cases, officials are highly skilled in creating an emotional environment of crisis, creating the conditions of possibility for their “friendship” and “help” to be subsequently welcomed.

I had an experience one afternoon when visiting a Chinese interlocutor, Nathan, who had an office in a building owned by a government agency. Although Nathan had been able to speak to the guard multiple times, on this occasion, an official and his superior arrived at our room.

The man was very angry, demanding to know who had given my friend permission to allow a guest. Nathan attempted to apologize, and also attempted to provide evidence that I was an English teacher,¹⁰⁵ but the superior refused, threatening to take me away and deport me. But he also began to talk about how they needed to “calculate” how much damage my visit had done.

¹⁰⁵ I had met Nathan originally because he wanted an English tutor, and in this particular meeting, we had just been practicing English with a notebook.

Eventually, Nathan asked to talk to him outside. Outside, the official started asking him, “what are we going to do to resolve this?”

“How about I give you and your friend \$50,000Tsh (25USD),” Nathan responded.

The man suddenly smiled. “Why not \$100,000Tsh(50US)?”

Before leaving, the official, in a friendly demeanor, reminded Nathan to just apply for permission from them the next time I wanted to visit.

The ritual process of extortion starts with crisis and coldness, and is resolved by payment, “forgiveness,” and warmth. With experience, one can recognize an official is seeking a bribe from the beginning, and recognize the script to follow. I knew this to be the case when the officials arrived, but was still impressed by the emotional discomfort they were able to create.

Newly-arrived Chinese are particularly vulnerable to fear during these encounters because of their unfamiliarity with laws and procedures. Wu Hui, an employee for a Chinese firm, recounted how when he first arrived, he made a small mistake on the form he filled for his landing visa. The very next day, immigration agents came to his house. It is said that Chinese who appear too “white” are more likely to be stopped by officials on the street: Chinese who have lived in Dar es Salaam a longer time, so the story goes, would be darker from sunbaths. Immigration agents detained a Chinese colleague of mine who had also arrived in Dar to conduct ethnographic fieldwork three times in his first week!

Experiences like these lead many Chinese to pre-judge the motives of officials, and lead them to more quickly offer the bribe, which in turn, reinforces the idea that Chinese are too quick or willing to pay bribes to resolve problems.

Expectations of these encounters form an important component of the informal orientations resident Chinese provide newcomers in casual conversation. As a consequence, many Chinese newly arrive expecting to pay tips, and discussions with others about the precise rates render them as ordinary start-up costs. There is a complex orientation among Chinese towards these exchanges because while they may complain, they also accept it as part of the ordinary

expense of doing business. I often heard Chinese ameliorate the anxieties of others worried about incomplete documents by assuring them they could just pay the official a tip. “The good thing about Tanzania,” one man told me, “is you can pay.” In the customs clearance industry, the payment of tips to officials is so routinized that agents will verbally itemize the rate for clients alongside the other legal fees. In these situations, paying bribes signify not vulnerability and supplication, but empowerment. The consequences of legal infractions are not to be worried about because “you can pay.”

In some cases, one sees the emergence of a transcultural cultural intimacy (Herzfeld 2005), wherein Africans and Chinese are able to recognize each other as “understanding,” in contrast to Europeans, how business is actually done. As one Tanzanian businessman explained to me, “Chinese, Indians, and Arabs are all able to be more successful at doing business in Africa because of culture,” by which he meant, they understood that government officials would want something “extra.”

Chinese practices and idioms of corruption partially inform expectations of how to deal with Tanzanian officials. An investor named Mr. Song dismissed the fears of another fellow investor about petty officials by describing them as “just Earth Gods” (ch. 土地神, *tǔdì shen*). In China, one makes offerings to local officials, as one does to the Earth Gods, to prevent them from being angry. Accompanying Mr. Song on visits to government departments to apply for his licenses, I saw him actively try to make friends with individuals there, request that those individuals personally handle his application, and tell them that he would be *thankful* later. In the end, however, a mistake on his visa led him to paying a large tip anyway. The art of social relationships with state officials in China is the transformation of power relationships and transactions into interpersonal ethics and emotion (Yang 1994; Chu 2010). These don’t turn reductively on practices alternatively glossed as “corruption,” but also on the possibilities of human emotion to overcome the legal. Extended to the global migration regime, the Fujianese

migrants to the United States that Julie Chu (2010) describes relate stories where sympathetic American visa interviewers approve their applications despite their suspicions. Mayfair Yang (1994) even goes so far as to describe practices of 关系学 (ch. the study/skill of *guanxi*) to be a source of popular “counter-power” vis-à-vis the state.

Despite the commensurable cultural and moral intelligibility of these practices, Chinese interlocutors would often insist that corruption in Africa was both quantitatively and qualitatively different than that found in China. There may be corruption in China, my interlocutors would admit when asked, but it was much more “exaggerated” here in Tanzania. There are several reasons for these differences. The first is that “corruption” is not a clearly identified practice which is identifiable in China the same way that it is identifiable in Tanzania. When Chinese interlocutors discussed the politics of interactions with government officials in China, these were understood to operate in more indirect, subtle, and longer-term ways than the relatively direct, unsubtle, shorter-term interactions with street level bureaucrats in Tanzania. Petty extortion by police officers, for example, is much less common in China today than before. While establishing mutually beneficial relationships with government officials is understood to be one of the conditions of business in China, the art of pursuing these relationships turn on the delicate balancing between the instrumental logics of material transaction and the moral reasoning of memory and favors (Yang 1994; Mason 2016). The “art” that Yang describes is the presentation of gifts and the asking of favors in ways that accord with moral expectations. Those individuals who appear too deliberate or transactional are morally sanction-able (cf. Smart 1993). In complaining about interactions with Tanzanian officials, the feature which Chinese expatriates found to be the most disconcerting was the directness and, especially in the case of petty extortion, the unfriendliness of the officials.¹⁰⁶ This is not surprising when it is considered that

¹⁰⁶ It is worth pointing out that these discontents about directness are not unique to Chinese interactions with Tanzanians, or with Africans more broadly. During the Reform and Opening, interactions between mainland officials and Hong Kong investors were also sanctioned in terms of their directness (Smart 1993).

Chinese expatriates and Tanzanian officials encounter each at the edges of their respective spheres of reciprocity, a zone where reciprocity approaches bargaining (Sahlins 1974; Bourdieu 1990). There is also difference in the time-scale of these interactions. Chinese interlocutors describes relationships with government officials in China to be based on long-term relationships, meaning that the benefits provided to the official in exchange for their assistance in obtaining the needed permits or licenses would be reciprocated, indirectly, at a later date. In Tanzania, however, these interactions were comparatively short-term, and investors found themselves needing to pay officials upfront before they had developed their businesses.¹⁰⁷ Finally, Chinese expectations of the benefits of relationships with high level officials were based on Chinese experiences which did not translate over into the Tanzanian context. For example, as one investor explained, in China, it is necessary to establish good relationships with the right kind of people. Once one has done that, it is no longer necessary to handle other officials in the bureaucracy. In Tanzania, however, he explained that establishing good relations with an official in one part of the state apparatus did not protect the investor from demands from other officials. An example of this is a manufacturer from China whose executive officer visited Tanzania on an official business delegation and provided gifts to a local government agency in a public ceremony. Following this, officials from the Tax Revenue Authority began visiting Mr. Meng, the wholesaler with the exclusive contract to market the company's products, to investigating his taxes. According to Mr. Meng, this was evidence of Tanzanians lacking 感恩 (ch. a sense of gratitude, *gǎn'ēn*). The performance of generosity, in other words, invited the attention of other officials. There are some aspects of this story worth nothing, however. First, the manufacturing

In the case of interactions in Africa, where language and cultural practices are even more different, the appearance of directness is magnified.

¹⁰⁷ Differences like these even led some to rank which form of corruption was 'preferable.' As one investor explained to me, the best situation for Tanzania would be to not have corruption, but if Tanzania were to have corruption, he joked, it would be best for it to have China's style of corruption. In that case, businesses could develop and benefit people first.

company and Mr. Meng's wholesaling shop were legally separate entities, although the officials may have assumed they represented the same company. Second, the gifting was a public ritual. The reason I mention it, however, is that public rituals of Chinese generosity have contributed in part to the concept that China is wealthy, which in turn leads to difficulty for Chinese investors who may not be very wealthy.¹⁰⁸ Like in Chapter Three, my argument is that in addition to different idioms of exchange, the structural features of the China-Africa relationship shape these interactions in particular way. Finally, Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign led many Chinese, and also some Tanzanians, to argue that China was more effective at dealing with corruption, a sentiment which partially foreshadowed the incoming presidency of John Magufuli.

Everyday practices of extortion and the practice of paying bribes have the capacity to situate both Tanzanians and Chinese as particular kinds of moral actors, in terms of both practices and circulating discourses about the kinds of people these categories represent. Discourses of corruption as pathological reduce such transactions to moral lack, either on the part of the person who pays, or the person who receives, which can be expanded to implicate entire national communities as inherently "corrupt." In response, economic perspectives in the social sciences have defined corruption as a "collective action problem," which means that, moral perspectives on corruption notwithstanding, the costs of not participating are higher than the costs of participating. Anthropologists have added the qualification that these "costs" are not simply economic, but also moral. In a situation where one has obligations to family and friends, to not participate would be to forsake one's obligations to them (Smith 2007). To take a "principled" stance would not only make most ordinary transactions impossible to fulfill, but also be a failure of obligations to friends and family, on whose behalf such transactions are undertaken.

¹⁰⁸ One of my informants, an agricultural specialist, suggested that one of the reasons for the failure of Chinese agricultural investment was that local officials often assumed investors were wealthy, and therefore demanded payments which made investment unprofitable for them.

Narratives which blame Chinese expatriates, Tanzanian officials, or even the Chinese state for these encounters are to some extent etiological myths, in the sense of “myth” not as “false,” but rather in the sense of meaning a story which justifies a particular moral ordering of the world. Isolating moral agency within an economy of transactions entailing what Enfield and Kockelman (2017) call “distributed agency” is, if not arbitrary, itself the site of the politics/ethics of accountability. Who is responsible? How should one conduct themselves in a situation? Questions of conduct here are about more than simply tactics or “best practices,” but also bear on both Chinese and Tanzanian identities.

How to Handle Officials: Notes from a Road Trip

Discontents about the position of Chinese in Tanzania, and the image of Chinese in the world more generally, can shape how Chinese residents structure their own conduct in Tanzania.

Discussions and experiences about how to deal properly with officials entail claims about one’s own place in social hierarchies of value, and one’s own affinities and identities. Remember that in soliciting a bribe from Nathan, the official himself adopted two different roles during the course of interaction. He positioned himself first as an unyielding protector of Tanzanian sovereignty, and only after, as a flexible friend. Chinese expatriates as well have different possible roles they choose from. Nathan maintained the position of an apologetic guest throughout the interaction, until the final moment, when he invited the officials to follow him outside. The kind of roles one should adopt, however, is subject to contestation, and turns not just on matters of efficacy, but also on terms of ethics. This is related to how one chooses to respond to the state. Althusser (2006) described interpellation with the famous scene of the police officer hailing a citizen. His primary intention, however, was to describe ideology by way of a metaphor rather than to describe a police stop. His main point is that the hailed person already knows it is for him or her, but also says that it is the act of turning which makes the subject. In the cases I describe here, the hailed subjects do not always already recognize themselves as hailed. The naïve expatriate stopped by immigration officials may believe he is a criminal subject, but not recognize that he is

actually being hailed, as Chinese sometimes joke, as a “walking ATM.” This is because that may be hidden. The experienced expatriate on the other hand, recognizes the encounter for what it is.

How Chinese and Tanzanian subjects alike respond to street-level bureaucrats suggest that while they are always potential subjects of state power, the interpellation is never transparent and one-dimensional. Although officials may present themselves as delegates of an impartial state, there is always the subtext that a different interaction has been initiated. In the interactions I am describing, the initial interpellation is “false” to the extent that it constitutes subjects in a relationship which will, in the course of the interaction, be subsequently revealed to have in fact been a different kind of relationship all along. Immigration officials, tax revenue agents, and traffic cops hail Chinese expatriates as subject to the jurisdiction of Tanzanian law, but the intended outcome, an economic exchange, is performatively hidden. The subjects may or may not be aware of who they are in the interaction. Some may not be aware of what the official is intending, others may know that, despite the official’s opening performance, what they “really” intend is to do is to collect a bribe. How a person responds may or may not align with the official’s intention. In some situations, it is possible for an individual to respond as a legal subject and never give the official an opportunity to solicit a bribe. In other situations, as in the case below, an individual may respond with an attempted bribe only to discover that the official actually intended to enforce the law as written.

This was driven home for me during a long road trip taken with several Chinese men. Prior to the trip, we knew that traffic cops would stop us. How to respond to them was a subject of debate. It was possible that if I rode in the front seat, my white face would grant us immunity, an assumption which proved unfounded.

A friend of ours suggested we take an aggressive approach which emphasized the importance of our home countries to Tanzania. If a cop stops us, we should yell at him and ask him, “do you know how much China (or the United States) has given to you!?”

An Indian-Tanzanian man assured us the officers were not strict, “just hungry.” He said he never paid bribes, or even showed his license. When they would stop him, he would just “talk to them,” telling them the license was in the back, and too hard to get.

On the road, we would often get stopped for passing over the speed limit. Police officers had detectors which displayed images of our vehicle and the speed we were traveling. Each traffic stop began in a similar fashion. The officer would come to the car, show us the image and inform us we needed to pay a \$35,000Tsh (\$17.50) fine. In only one case, the officer directly told us that it would be \$35,000 with a receipt, or \$20,000 without a receipt. In most cases, however, it was our Chinese driver who would first propose a smaller amount without a receipt. As the driver did not speak English, he would take out a \$5000 and slip it to the officer. The officer would propose a larger amount, or refuse and insist we had to pay the full legal fine. This would lead to us sitting by the road for an extended time while the officer went back to handle other matters.

The first time we paid, a man in the backseat offered the officer a water as well. Following this, Sam, a Chinese man who had been in Tanzania for ten years, told us that we should not pay anything, because this only made cops think that Chinese were easy to solicit bribes from. He went further, however, and insisted that we did not even need to pay the legal fine. At multiple stops, he would use a mix of English and Swahili to talk with the officer at length, assert he was a Tanzanian just like they were, and that we had been stopped too many times already. We were surprised when this worked on a few occasions. The officer, once he had already begun smiling, would wave us on.

In one instance, however, the officer we spoke with would only accept our payment of the legal fine. There was one Tanzanian friend in the car who became impatient. He pointed out how the cop was even getting a legal fine from a government official stopped in the car in front of us. The official was also trying to talk their way out of paying, but this officer would not accept anything but the legal fine.

The variety of strategies displayed here entail performing or enacting different identities. The advice to scold police officers draws on assumed imperial rights in an unequal global relationship. The payment of bribes is criticized in the car as precisely that *Chinese* habit which makes these situations more likely to occur. Sam's use of English-Swahili verbosity to get off without payment draws on a particularly Tanzanian idiom of "*walla walla*" (i.e. talking too much). In addition, pretending to be unable to speak any language other than Chinese draws on and reinforces the image of Chinese as duplicitous, or at least insufficiently cosmopolitan.

How people talked about their approaches related to claims about identity. For example, southern Chinese were considered by some to be more likely to engage in corruption on account of their entrepreneurial ethics. Northern Chinese, on the other hand, were considered to be more likely to get in trouble with officials because of an assumed haughty temper. In my experience, however, the differing approaches Chinese have towards dealing with Tanzanian officials do not map as neatly onto the distinctions of social class as quality discourse implies. Although discursively associated in these terms, individual differences in personality and approach always seemed more significant. Nonetheless, I did find among wealthier and more established Chinese a readier discourse of discontent about those other less Africa-experienced Chinese. But I also found differences in the approaches taken by newly arrived entrepreneurs. In both cases, I came to see their claims as ethical positioning, in which criticism of other Chinese often bracketed implicit or explicit claims that their own approach was different. They argued that a more ethical approach, as defined in terms of non-corruption, having legal status, paying employees well, and respecting Tanzanians, was the same as a smarter business approach.

In the same fashion that how government officials treat one is shaped by the actions of Chinese whom one has never met, how one responds to extortion shapes the experiences which other Chinese might have with these same officials. Billy, a young entrepreneur, recounted to me one evening a conversation he had had with a similarly-aged entrepreneur the evening before. The two of them had discussed the problem of Chinese not having legal documents, and paying

bribes to deal with troublesome officials. This was a flaw of the older generation, they concluded. The two of them were young. They agreed never to pay a bribe to officials. If Chinese began responding to officials through the assertion of legal rights, he continued, the Tanzanian perception of Chinese might change and it would be less likely that Tanzanians could “bully” (ch. 欺负, *qīfū*) Chinese.

It was therefore with shock when, after the January 7th raid, I saw Billy’s picture in several Tanzanian newspapers. He had not only been arrested during the immigration crackdown, and accused of not having proper papers, but the press had also been invited along for the arrest, providing them a photograph to headline the stories about the larger raid. Despite Billy’s comments about other Chinese, the norms of business practice were always potentially precarious. Chinese who fell afoul of immigration law often did so less out of willful intent at fraud, but rather a lack of clarity about immigration procedures, and difficulties with bureaucratic response times that would open up them to vulnerability while waiting to receive their visa. Paying “tips” would forestall such difficulties, but Billy had pledged not do so if he was not legally at fault. Would Billy have broken his pledge and paid the official in order to avoid arrest? Or would he have been arrested in the name of his pledge? Both these situations are only speculative because the accompaniment of the media meant that this was not an ordinary arrest, instead, it was a public demonstration of the efficacy of the new immigration raids under Magufuli. Billy’s personal projects and efforts to distinguish himself against other Chinese were ultimately rendered moot when he was interpellated by the Tanzanian immigration services and Press as an unlawful Chinese subject. Billy was released, but he abandoned his enterprise and returned to China after that.

In practice, the individuation of approaches is balanced by the manner in which Chinese identity ties the fates of strangers closer together than they might wish. In describing what he calls “representational agency,” Kockelman (2007) defines agency in terms of the degrees of

control an actor has over how their identities and actions are interpreted by others. The recognition that there are inequalities in the degrees of control actors have over how they are viewed opens up questions about power. In this regard, the limited degree of agency Chinese have over the image of China in Tanzania raises questions about power dynamics between Chinese citizens and the Tanzanian state. Chinese expatriates routinely describe their treatment by government officials as a form of discrimination, and some Chinese scholars, in a deliberate effort to refute narratives of Chinese “neo-colonialism” and demonstrate the vulnerability of overseas Chinese, even argue that this is a form of “racial discrimination” (Sautman 2013).

In her discussion of the experience of Western expatriates in China, Conceison uses the term “privileged marginalization” to describe the experience of racialized interpellation by Chinese to be about privilege rather than vulnerability. These include everything from being ushered to the front of lines to being charged higher prices. Privileged marginalization is accompanied by “imperialist guilt,” meaning that “resentment at being treated as Other is accompanied by feelings of guilt due to recognition of this privileged status” (Conceison 2004:4). Not all Chinese expatriates in Tanzania, however, can be said to possess the same economic privileges. Employees, contract miners, and cooks carry less cash than those who come to “do business,” but might nonetheless be assumed to be wealthier because the officials may not know exactly what livelihood the person is engaged in. My Chinese interlocutors also describe their interactions with street level bureaucrats to be more than material burdens. As Shon writes with reference to policing, “the sight of a uniform, badge, and gun evince apprehensive emotions,” (Shon 2000:170) and among Chinese residents in Tanzania, the sight of a stern middle-aged Tanzanian man with a large belly and a crisp white button-shirt similarly evince apprehensions that someone from the government is here to “look for trouble” (ch. 找麻烦, *Zhǎo máfan*), and the experience leaves them “feeling uncomfortable” (ch. 不舒服, *bú shūfú*) and “tired.”

As the previous example of the road trip, demonstrates, however, there are multiple reactions that Chinese might have to officials, and in turn, officials themselves enact different roles. A debate around Althusser's famous scene has turned on whether the subjects hailed are, in his words "always-already subjects" or are, in fact, constituted by "this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion" of turning their head (Shon 2000).

In order to understand claims of privilege and vulnerability in Chinese encounters with Tanzanian officials, it is necessary to place these encounters in comparison with the kind of encounters ordinary Tanzanians themselves have with street-level bureaucrats. This is because many of the same rituals of encounters between Chinese expatriates and Tanzanian officials also apply to encounters between Tanzanians and officials. In the next section, I examine these interactions, and their convergences and divergences with Chinese experiences, in order to come to a fuller understanding of how Chinese subjects in Tanzania are constituted, and where Chinese etiologies of blame fit within Tanzanian etiologies of blame.

Tamu and the Manispaa

Chinese encounters with Tanzanian officials are generative of contested claims about the vulnerability of Chinese citizens in the world. These are based, however, on the assumption that Chinese are targeted for harassment and extortion because they are foreigners and because they are Chinese passport holders. What happens when the perspective is shifted to that of another vulnerable population, Tanzanian petty traders? The 2016 immigration raid on Chinese shops was unusual. Immigration inspections are more generally small-scale visits quietly conducted by a pair of officials to individual shops or residences. The conduct of this raid, however, including foot chases and physical struggles, resembled the far more periodic raids conducted by the Municipal Government on the Tanzanian *wamachinga*. Chinese commentary focused predominantly on the rights and status of the Chinese, but the resemblance also points to a shared horizon of structural experience between Chinese and Tanzanians with the Tanzanian state. This is true even though their economic positions are different, and even though they negotiate with

different sets of bureaucracies. The structural similarity of their encounters is based on sharing a liminal legal space between the letter of the law and its partial enforcement. In the case of *wamachinga*, however, the liminal space is much wider given that their unregistered businesses make up much of the actual urban economy. This is different from Chinese businesses, but a close examination of how Tanzanian petty traders and street-level bureaucrats interact with each other reveals uncanny resemblances.

The *Wamachinga*, like the Chinese, are migrants in the city, and in Kariakoo, many are likewise involved in making lives around the buying, selling, and distribution of Chinese goods (see Chapter Two). They also provide secondary services ranging from selling food and drinks, to selling sim cards, to providing phone and shoe repair. It has also been a recurrent theme in Tanzanian urban history that successive state formations have attempted to govern, limit, or eliminate this informal economy.¹⁰⁹ Legally speaking, retailers are required to have a license, rent a shop or stall, and to pay taxes with the aid of an electronic receipt machine registered with the Tax Revenue Authority. In practice, this is not how much of the retail economy actually works. Enforcement is either limited or sporadic, and retailers are determined to exercise their “right to subsist” (Tripp 1997).¹¹⁰ As with the selective enforcement of the legality of Chinese business practices, this simultaneously empowers and disempowers petty traders *vis-à-vis* the state. Their livelihoods wax and wane with the state’s annual cycles of tolerance and enforcement.

When I came to Tanzania in October of 2014, I could still see the aftermath of an April 2014 crackdown which cleared the streets of *wamachinga* and left a space that was surprisingly

¹⁰⁹ The justifications have turned on successive visions of colonial, postcolonial socialist, and neoliberal modernity: preserving a rural labor force, rationalizing and taxing distribution, and clearing traffic.

¹¹⁰ “Formal” economic actors have exploited the “informal” sector for distribution and services. For example, the major telecom firms distribute Sim Cards, and provide mobile money services by franchising these services to individual distributors who often own nothing more than a table with which to conduct their businesses, and many of these are in themselves “illegally” engaged in business on the street. The telecom firms have given opportunities to “people as infrastructure” (Simone 2004) while limiting their own liabilities.

empty compared to my first experience in 2013. About a month later, however, the *wamachinga* began to return, filling the streets with sheets, shoes, bags, and blocked traffic, building in number until they peaked the week before Christmas. There were multiple explanations about why the *wamachinga* returned,¹¹¹ but perhaps the most evocative that I heard was that young people were “tired” of sitting at home, unable to pursue to livelihood. As soon as word spread that enforcement activities were loosening, petty entrepreneurs began to fill Kariakoo and to pursue a variety of informal economic activities. The impetus for this, according to a SIM-card vendor named Tamu, was that some Members of Parliament had raised the issue of *wamachinga* lacking a space to do business during a parliamentary session. The speeches, according to Tamu, “gave us the strength” (sw. *tumepata nguvu*) to return in force.

Tamu had returned to his street corner long before this parliamentary session, and when I saw him in early October, he was only one of several SIM card vendors at his corner in Kariakoo. Following the debate in Parliament, several more competitors suddenly appeared on his corner. One of them worked from a large plastic table with an umbrella bearing the TIGO logo. Tamu’s office by comparison was a small makeshift table constructed from discarded wooden boards. Under these new circumstances, Tamu informed me that he too would purchase a new table and umbrella. When I returned again, he was dressed in a button-down shirt rather than his usual t-shirt. He told me that he had not only purchased a new table and umbrella, but had also opened a bank account that day. His oft-stated goal was to accumulate enough capital to rent a shop and sell cell phones, like the shops directly behind him. These goals reflected not only his personal

¹¹¹ Tanzanian informants provided me multiple explanations for their return. In one story, the police officers responsible for rounding up traders were not coming to work because of a salary dispute with the municipal government. Another explanation was that in anticipation of upcoming municipal elections, the city government did not wish to antagonize the *wamachinga*.

ambitions, but also his assessment that the market for SIM cards was becoming saturated and that sales were decreasing.¹¹²

In January, once both the municipal elections and the holiday season had passed, a newly elected official at the Municipal Government launched a new crackdown. During the crackdown, Tamu remained the only SIM card vendor on that corner who dared to risk doing business. He took precautions, however, by reverting back to the small makeshift table he had used before. As he went about his work selling SIM cards and registering customers, I glanced back and forth looking for the uniformed officials. He made fun of me for being nervous, arguing that he had enough experience of how the municipal authorities worked to know that he was not in any danger at the current moment. This was true even when there was a police van going around the marketplace, arresting *wamachinga* and placing them in a holding pen. I asked Tamu if he wanted to start packing up. He told me we could wait and see. The truck was on the other side of the street around the corner, and because it was almost four in the afternoon, the truck would not be returning to arrest people on this side of the street today. He could stay. He had seen enough of these raids to know the patterns and how to evade them.

Machinga like Tamu could evade arrest by anticipating and adapting to the different faces the government itself adopted. The raids involved two to three different sets of actors: municipal officials in business attire, National Youth Service volunteers wearing T-Shirts emblazoned with the words *Linzi Ya Usalama: Manispa ya Illala* (Security Surveillance: Illala Municipality), and police officers in green riot gear, tear gas guns, and trucks for detaining *wamachinga*. The Municipal officials could not be distinguished from the regular pedestrians conducting business in Kariakoo, so when they would randomly arrest informal traders, those who did not recognize the faces would be caught before they had an opportunity to gather their goods and leave. Before the officials and police would arrive, however, *wamachinga* in flight would alert people. Many

¹¹² My return to Tanzania also played a role. He planned to ask me for assistance in start-up capital, but he built up his request in stages before asking.

wamachinga are prepared for situations like these. Those who sell shoes, for example, often use mats with interwoven strings that they can lift up, tie up, and yank away if in a hurry. During the major operations, the Municipal officials deployed at least 100 youth from JKT. They walked down the street in mass, but there were not pursuits, and arrests were sporadic. Most of the *wamachinga* had left, or had stored their inventory within nearby shops. During morning raids, several Manispa officials carried large hammers, clearing the road of makeshift tables, grabbing them, and placing them in the large truck. Behind this vehicle was a large pick-up truck with a cage-like structure attached to it. This was the holding pen for arrested *machinga*, guarded by several policer officers. The arrests of *machinga* were occasionally rough, but I never witnessed beatings. On occasion, the arrested trader would struggle with his captors, attempting to escape, or slapping the official on the head. On one occasion, a police officer did find him or herself in a situation where they fired a tear gas canister, and everybody came running down the street. The man driving the truck had a loudspeaker, into which he warned the shops to keep all of their boxes and cartons off of the street, and in the shop. Because many shops kept boxes stacked outside while waiting for customers, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish those cartons being sold by shops from those being sold by *wamachinga*. There provided plausible deniability for some *wamachinga*. In other cases, officials would confiscate goods, but not the traders. On one occasion, several officials grabbed shoes from a trader with a limp leg who used a cane and his upper arm strength to move around. He was unable to protect (most) most of his inventory from the JKT volunteer who subsequently leaped up onto the truck and turned to stare down the man.

In addition to the uniformed personal and police officers were plainclothes municipal officers. After the JKT volunteers and the police had left, several municipal officials wearing regular shirts and pants would return to the market and arrest and detain those *machinga* who wrongly assumed it was safe to return to work. Anticipating these patterns, Tamu's responses to raids reflected accumulated skill. I was sitting with him one afternoon when he pointed out the Manispa across the street. I looked out to see several dozen people in yellow shirts. Tamu did

not move, however, because he said they were not coming in this direction at the time. Later, the crowd of vendors around us began getting up and moving steadily down the street. A friend passing Tamu informed him the Manispa were coming. Tamu stood up, took down his TIGO umbrella, and directed me to follow him about a half a dozen steps away from his shop. By standing away from his office, Tamu had plausible deniability in the event an official came looking for him. He could tell them that the office did not belong to him. In front of us, a truck of armed police officers passed, followed by the police van used for arresting *Wamachinga*. Since they were driving right past us, I assumed the first response would have been to flee, but Tamu instructed me to wait a moment. The trucks passed and stopped across the street, where the police transferred the arrested traders and their goods to another truck. Tamu told me he had lots of experience, and knew how they moved. Once he thought they were out of sight, he took out his umbrella and set it up again, although he would take it down again later. Not long after, however, we heard a commotion behind us. Several plainclothes municipal agents were arresting a *machinga*. "Look," he said. Tamu got up again and instructed me to walk away with him a few steps off. After the men left, Tamu told me they would not return today. This is the "technique" they use, he explained. They send in people with colored uniforms first, and then follow it with plainclothes people. But now, it was "*Amani*" (sw. peaceful), they would not return.

On another occasion, another group of uniformed JKT came from around the corner. We got up and stood out in the path. They stopped, and one of them started calling someone on a cell phone. "This is their technique," Tamu said. They call someone and say, "Hey, come get this guy."

Tamu returned to work, but asked his friend, who worked with him, to keep an eye out (sw. *angalia*). Tamu continued to receive customers during the crackdown, as did other vendors, and their customers even included soldiers and police officers. Meanwhile, white uniformed traffic officers directed traffic in the street nearby.

The consequences of being arrested ranged from the immediate loss of inventory and cash to sometimes months of incarceration. The fine for informal trading is \$50,000Tsh, but if one is caught with a table, the fine is increased to \$100,000Tsh. To give a sense of what that means, consider the average income per day is about 5,000Tsh. This means an arrest would be equivalent to losing twenty days of work plus all of one's stock. If one is unable to pay these fines, they are arrested and incarcerated for up to six months. In that event, an arrested trader reaches out to friends and family, who are able to pay even from a long distance because of *m-pesa*. If no one can provide the money for bail, they still need assistance for food because the municipal government does not provide it. If one does not have friends or family provide food, however, the other detainees often share food, which is already considered proper Tanzanian manners. These raids therefore, don't only affect individual traders, but a network of interlinked individuals, and contribute to the network of unexpected expenses that characterize economic life in general.

In the event of arrest, however, there was the possibility of avoiding all this by paying a bribe. These were more likely to occur when officials made individualized arrests rather than when they were coming through with the police van. For example, the plainclothes officials would often arbitrarily identify a petty trader, come up behind him two at a time, and grab him by locking their arms through his arms. On some occasions, one might ask, in a menacing matter, "are you selling?" On one occasion, I was speaking to a trader and his friends when a couple of men came up the steps quietly behind, and grabbed him by interlocking their arms with him. They both looked at him severely, and pulled him away. He did not resist. About ten minutes later, he returned. He told me that after they had taken him around the corner, he was able to negotiate and had to pay them \$30,000Tsh. This was the equivalent of a week's income for most people, but still cheaper than the \$50,000Tsh he would have paid if he would have paid the legal fine.

The stakes would lower considerably, however, in the aftermath of the initial crackdown.

Several mornings after a major raid, the JKT volunteers returned to patrol the marketplace, but this time, either the municipal superiors or the police did not accompany them. While I was sitting with Tamu, who was serving a customer, one of them, in a bright red shirt, came up from behind and tapped him on the back. Before I suddenly realized this was a municipal official, Tamu bluntly told him to "wait!" and the man promptly walked off. The customer remained and looking around, I saw a group of JKT walking around the market place. Nobody was running, was however. Nearby, a cell phone repairman was talking with one of them and telling him to come back later. At the other SIM card stand, a lone municipal agent sat on the bench next to the vendor. A small group of them, mostly men, but also a few women, gathered close to us. They were smiling, chatting, and pointing in different directions around the street corner. I overheard them naming prices to each other, and Tamu filled me in that they were planning on where to get money and how to divide the earnings. There were to be no arrests today, it was just "corruption" (sw. *rushwa*). If they had a truck, Tamu, continued, then it was dangerous. In a matter of a week, the government crackdown had transformed into mutual accommodation on account of the agency of *wamachinga* and JKT volunteers.

In the process, the power relations obtaining between the state and *wamachinga* appeared to symbolically reverse themselves. As in the case of experience between officials and Chinese businesses, in some situations, the street-level bureaucrats are delegates of a legalistic state enacting its power through the encounter; but in other situations, they are potential "friends" with whom the power of the legalistic state is subverted. Officials encourage the shift through either expressions of interpersonal sympathy ("I want to help you"), or solicitations thereof. They also expressed it nonverbally through shifts in emotional self-presentation. During the raids, the Manispa officials on the day of the raids rarely smiled, especially not when they were arresting the *machinga*. On the day of collecting gifts from traders, however, they moved at a slower pace, smiling, and joking with each other. The JKT volunteers who went through the market collecting gifts positioned themselves as "friends" collecting money.

When they came around, they would say things like “brother, give me some money” (sw. *leta pesa*), and they would smile when they said it. On other occasions, they did not even speak directly, but would request assistance indirectly. On one occasion, I was sitting with Issa, a shoe trader when an official from the municipal office appeared next to us. After a short greeting, the man told me that Issa was an “uncle” (sw. *mjomba*). He continued to stand there while Issa continued to speak with me, finishing the point he had been on before. Eventually, however, he got up, reached down to his pants, and gave some cash to the man, who then left. When I asked Issa what had happened, he explained that although he was no longer a *machinga*, he still gives the man some money for soda. He added that it was not necessary to give, but that he chose to. In engaging in such practices, officials engage in culturally intimate encounters with citizens. In these situations, the *wamachinga* are interpellated not as criminals, but as generous “brothers” whose earnings allows them to share a little. Tamu and others are able to tell officials to “wait!” because in the morning they had not yet accumulated enough cash with which to pay them. In these encounters, power hierarchies seem to be very different from those situations where *wamachinga* are forced to abandon their businesses and flee upon their arrival.

These interactional practices resemble those between officials and Chinese entrepreneurs. Traders with lengthier experience in Tanzania, like Sam in the previous section, are able to exercise elements of joking banter, and in this way, to also refuse officials. In Kariakoo, some Chinese shopkeepers have learned to handle Tanzanian officials in much the same way as the *wamachinga*. I was in the office of a wholesaler when two men in crisp, clean, white shirts came into the shop. For most Chinese, this usually identified that government officials were here in order to “look for problems” and get a tip. In this case, however, the manager, an elderly man, got up, went up to them, and took them both by the arms and escorted them out of the shop while chatting and smiling with them.

“Who were they?” I asked when he returned.

“Manisspa,” he replied, code-switching into Swahili. “They come around often. They told me their stomachs were hungry.” The manager had responded that he had no business now, so they should come another time. It worked because they had left, but I still did not know what ‘problem’ they had identified.

“Oh,” he responded, “they say the banner outside the shop is too large.”

Chinese and Tanzanians alike negotiate with a state which is both threatening and manageable, a state which, in the unfolding dynamics of interactions, positions itself as either the enforcement of law or a friendly interlocutor “hungry” for just a little assistance. The similarity between them raises questions about how to think about the differences, and these differences have implications for the interpretation of power relations.

Convergences and Divergences before the Law

Chinese businesses and informal Tanzanian traders alike negotiate with street-level bureaucrats who position themselves as either/both enforcers of the law or/and “hungry” friends. Chinese and Tanzanian citizens are therefore interpellated as commensurable subjects, both empowered and disempowered vis-à-vis the state, but does this mean their structural experience is the same? There are reasons to argue that Chinese and Tanzanian encounters with the state do approach a common horizon, but there are also reasons why these subsequently diverge. In this section, I first describe how their experiences converge. There is convergence, I argue, in the language used to describe these encounters.

Chinese in Tanzania have learned from their Tanzanian interlocutors to describe corruption in terms of officials just “being hungry.” A hungry state is, paradoxically, either a state that is less threatening because all one has to do is “pay,” or it is a state which is even more threatening to economic actors because its hunger can become insatiable. Officials themselves use the language of “hunger” to make requests for small tips, just enough to purchase lunch or a cup of tea. In making the request this way, officials position exchanges in terms of an amiable

gift, either complicating, concealing, or even symbolically reversing power dynamics.¹¹³ As Sam was able to demonstrate during the road trip, it was even possible to talk our way out of paying fines by joking around with the officials. The “hunger” at work here is metonymic rather than merely metaphorical. In some cases, the amount of the bribe is just enough to purchase a small meal. The political economy of Tanzanian poverty again asserts itself as a framing condition for ordinary interactions. Because of this situation, those who have money are both targets, but they also empowered to ignore the law because the officials who might sanction them are “just hungry.” In this situation, the experience of Chinese expatriates and *wamachinga* are different on the basis of the capital available. Chinese entrepreneurs are better able to withstand some forms of extortion than Tanzanian *wamachinga*.

The hunger of the state and the power of money make the state less threatening for some, and may even make some economic actors feel empowered, but for the majority of people I spoke with, these encounters are described as burdens which not only affect people financially, but which also makes them “uncomfortable” and “tire” them emotionally. Chinese and Tanzanian interlocutors both experience encounters with street-level bureaucrats as a burden, and both describe them in strikingly similar terms of exhaustion. Dealing with officials leave Chinese expatriates feeling 累 (ch. tired, *lèi*), and petty traders like Tamu feeling “*nimechoka*” (sw. tired). The state is experienced as a burden both materially and emotionally. For Chinese interlocutors, immigration or tax officials always threatened to crash in on their businesses and force them to make unplanned expenses. For Tamu, the Municipal Government, or *Manisipa* for short, constantly haunted his everyday livelihood, always ready to strike and remove whatever capital he had managed to accumulate. The unevenness of enforcement, the flexibility of enforcement by

¹¹³ The unthreatening hungry official even contributes to the national image of Tanzania as *Amani* (sw. peaceful). As one Tanzanian friend explained to me one day in the market, the police here were preferable to those he had been reading about in the United States. The worse that might happen in Tanzania would be that you have to pay a bribe, but the police would never shoot you. Chinese expatriates with experience as well commented favorably on Tanzanian police in comparison with their experiences in Angola, where police stops were said to routinely involve half a dozen armed men with their guns drawn.

means of gifts, and the accumulated knowledge about urban governance were enabling of economic life for Tamu, but they also contributed to its precariousness.

When I first met Tamu, he described the difficulties that urban governance posed for his livelihood, but he also projected a degree of confidence that under-emphasized his vulnerability. This was first hinted when a repairman nearby told me that Tamu had been arrested many times. Tamu smiled and said he had only been arrested twice, but that was because he was reading a newspaper and not paying attention. Prior to his subsequent arrest, he had had plans to diversify from the saturating SIM card market to begin reselling Chinese-produced power banks that a friend of his purchased from Egypt. He had purchased about fifty of them wholesale, and lent half of them to a friend of a friend who planned to resell them outside of Dar es Salaam in the city of Morogoro. That friend disappeared however. And when Tamu was arrested several months later, he lost his SIM cards, his table, and the rest of his power banks. When I went to go see him shortly after, the confidence that I had known in him seemed to have vanished. On that and subsequent occasions, he often described his troubles in terms that implicated both the state and his own “thoughts,” which he described as increasingly disturbed.

The Municipal Government practices which Tamu had seemed to have mastered was instead a presence which haunted his thoughts and made him uneasy. The ever-present risk of arrest meant an unceasing uncertainty. “Every day, it’s Manisspa. When I go to work, I think, ‘will the Manisspa come today?’ When I wake up, Manisspa. When I go to work, Manisspa. When I go to sleep, Manisspa. When I am in the gym, I am thinking of Manisspa. Derek, I am tired (sw. *nimechoka*). Sometimes, I get crazy. I think a lot. I want to support my sister.” Tamu revealed that the Manisspa, whose patterns on other occasions he seemed to have mastered, in fact haunted him beyond the marketplace, and beyond the sporadic quality of its policies to constitute a generalized state of precarity. The state was something one could both master through skill but at the same time always be a (potential) victim of.

The state occupies a common horizon for *wamachinga* and Chinese migrants in the sense that a relationship of vulnerability pertains vis-à-vis street-level bureaucrats, although the consequences of these vulnerabilities on respective material circumstances vary. I would like to emphasize, however, that the commensurable challenges Chinese and ordinary Tanzanian trade face vis-à-vis the state provide a basis for mutual recognition which challenges the racialization and particularism that interprets these encounters with street-level bureaucrats as distinctively “African” or “Chinese” problems.¹¹⁴ In this section, I discuss how mutual recognition of these commensurable experiences among Chinese interlocutors emerges, but is disavowed on the basis of Chinese understandings of their identities as “foreigners” outside a Tanzanian political-moral community. The context of this discussion is the 2015 national elections in Tanzania. Many Chinese interlocutors sympathized with the anti-corruption sentiments of ordinary Tanzanians, but the fact the election was primarily interpreted through the lens of consequences for social stability reinforces the centrality of Chinese experiences of vulnerability.

Chinese learn about the Tanzanian state, and Tanzanian politics, through their ordinary Tanzanian interlocutors. Tanzanians readily criticize the behavior of government officials when explaining to Chinese interlocutors what to expect in different transactions. In the process, Chinese are frequently exposed to listening to Tanzanian political critiques. In the many hours of downtime which characterized wholesale trade, or in conversations with customers, it was the Tanzanians whom Chinese personally knew who provided the primary source of political education and news. Chinese interlocutors relaying those opinions to me or to other Chinese would report these political attitudes as “黑人说” (ch. black people say, *hēirén shuō*), which in

¹¹⁴ Chinese and Tanzanian actors encounter the state as business partners and shared workplaces. In these situations, Tanzanians play important roles as mediators, using their linguistic abilities to negotiate with the officials. Through such interactions, Chinese migrants often come to rely heavily on their employees and associates to help them navigate both street-level and office bureaucracy. In these cases, the assumption is that Tanzanians will be better at handling Tanzanian officials due to language and “cultural understanding,” and also due to the belief that Tanzanian officials will be more lenient on their compatriots than they would be towards the Chinese.

the details tended to mean that this was something their employee had said to them. In the context of a national election in which political discourse dominated the marketplace, Tanzanians voluntarily shared information with the Chinese.

Shared horizons of discontent between Chinese and Tanzanians towards government officials sometimes counter-acted the tendency for Chinese interlocutors to racialize their discontents with officials as contradictions with 黑人. Instead, some Chinese, like Tanzanians, would identify the origins of poverty to be a consequence of bad government policies.¹¹⁵ In interviews, they would also carefully distinguish their impressions of ordinary people from their impressions of officials. One Chinese employee for a local firm told me that he liked most ordinary Tanzanians he met because they were friendly, but those he did not like were the government officials. As his response revealed, this was not just due to the burden of paying “tips,” but also the emotional demeanor of the interlocutor. As my earlier examples demonstrate, street-level bureaucrats approach Chinese interlocutors in a stern manner which is very different from casual Swahili greetings.

The Chinese traders who worked in Kariakoo generally sympathized with the *wamachinga*, and some of them would let the traders keep their boxes in their shops during police raids, even if they did not do business with them directly.¹¹⁶ Like other Tanzanian shopkeepers, however, they also complained about the disruptions to traffic, and occasionally argued with petty traders who were blocking physical access to their shops. The crackdown on *wamachinga* was

¹¹⁵ In some cases, these led Chinese expatriates to take the Chinese government into higher regard. A Chinese colleague of mine who conducted fieldwork in a different African country came away with an appreciation of the Chinese revolution as having removed the colonial structures which he saw as the reason for the country’s continued underdevelopment. In other cases, however, the relative political freedom in Tanzania was sometimes compared favorably to the restrictions on direct speech in China.

¹¹⁶ At the same time, as shopkeepers, they also complained, as did other Tanzanian shopkeepers, about the effects on traffic. The Chinese called the *Manisspa*, 城管 (ch. *Chéngguǎn*), comparing them to the municipal officials in China who had a similar role in cracking down on street traders. The Tanzanian 城管 were compared favorably to those in China, who were considered to be more “fierce,” and more prone to beating.

worrisome to some Chinese interlocutors, however, because it was understood to force the young men involved to seek other means for livelihood, including robbery. After the crackdown in January, a Chinese interlocutor warned me that I would need to be extra careful because the likelihood of robbery was higher. This reflected a common tendency I noticed among Chinese interlocutors to interpret a range of Tanzanian social issues through the lens of its effects on the “environment” for Chinese to safely live and profitably conduct their businesses. The 2015 election was generally interpreted through the same lens.

The Election

The 2015 election is significant to the story here because the themes that informed the narratives of opposition supporters in Kariakoo echoed the discontents of Chinese expatriates about the conduct of government officials. As I have described above, Chinese experiences with corruption in Tanzania were generative of debates about both *African* and *Chinese* practices, although some Chinese interlocutors made distinctions between the conduct of state officials and the conduct of ordinary Tanzanians. Tanzanians on the other hand, did not critique Chinese corruption in the same terms because it was never Chinese corruption which was a primary target of discontent. Instead, the target of moral-political sanction was usually the government. From the perspective of ordinary Tanzanians, Chinese businesses behaved much the same as other foreign businesses, and it was therefore Tanzanian leaders who my interlocutors considered blameworthy for accepting bribes and neglecting the long-term economic growth of the country.

My interlocutors often referred to them as *viongozi* (sw. leaders), and sanctioned them in moralistic terms which sometimes uncannily echoed the racialized moral sanctioning of 黑人 by some Chinese actors. The Chinese government was sometimes taken as a counter-example of a government which regulated foreign-investment in the interests of local economic growth.

Commensurable discontents with the Tanzanian state separated, however, along boundaries of race and nation-state. Some Chinese interlocutors conflated the Tanzanian state and

ordinary Tanzanians into an aggregate collective assumed to work together to cheat or take advantage of Chinese because the Chinese were foreigners.¹¹⁷ A Tanzanian employee who argued on behalf of his Chinese employer when they were visited by government officials, for example, was identified by the employer to be of good character because of this incident because the employee has sided with the employer. As I have mentioned, Chinese residents depended on Tanzanian intermediaries to navigate state bureaucracies, but these also entailed risks, particularly the fear, founded or unfounded depending on the situation, that these intermediaries would collude with government officials to cheat the Chinese. Newcomer Chinese described stories in which Tanzanian interlocutors responsible for securing documents instead colluded with agents to provide them falsified documents.

Even when sympathizing with ordinary Tanzanians vis-à-vis the state, Chinese expatriates claimed to avoid actions which might be construed as “interference” in local politics. In Kariakoo, however, political discourse was so ubiquitous throughout 2015 that this would take considerable effort. To be in public space during this time was to be routinely interpellated into political discourse, and Chinese shopkeepers were no exception. To an extent, Chinese shopkeepers were able to separate themselves by retreating to the back of the shop chatting in Chinese on their cell phones while their employees, some of whom (many by the final weeks before the election) wore hats emblazoned with the opposition colors and debated with each other, and with customers about the upcoming election.

¹¹⁷ One Chinese complaint was that the Tanzanian government “looked after black people,” based what they considered to be liberal labor laws. In practice, however, as the cases here have shown, the law was unevenly enforced, although this is true in general and not just among Chinese. Even if an employer was in violation of a labor law, inspection would not necessarily lead to its resolution, but rather to the kind of payments I have been discussing. Unsurprisingly, the perspective that the Tanzanian government privileged locals over foreigners was different from Tanzanian interlocutors who argued that the government only looked after the interests of the rich. Tanzanians did not say the government looked after the Chinese, except in the sense that the government looked after those who had given it money or support.

Chinese interlocutors were not always aware of what was going on. For example, one of my Chinese interlocutors had been given a Chadema “Movement for Change” hat which he regularly wore to protect himself from the sun. It was not until I asked him about the hat that he learned what it meant.¹¹⁸ Tanzanians did attempt, however, to get opinions from their Chinese interlocutors regarding who they supported, or to encourage them to support their preferred candidate. In withholding political opinions or expressions of support for either the ruling or opposition party, some Chinese interlocutors cited their government’s non-interference doctrine as a justification.

The limit to Chinese identification with the political narratives of the opposition was also due to a broader anxiety about the election itself as a source of social instability. My conversations with Chinese interlocutors on the topic suggest this was less about skepticism towards democracy in the abstract, but rather skepticism about *African* democracy. One Chinese interlocutor offered the opinion that Tanzania had democratized “too early,” drawing on the Chinese experience to articulate the Huntington-esque argument that economic growth and stability depend on a measure of authoritarian control before the conditions of possibility for liberal democracy could be reached. Elections suggested the specter of riots and violence, and in turn, the Chinese themselves would be at risk. This had nothing to do with anti-Chinese politics or populism, but rather the generalized fear that Chinese were primary targets of robbery. The closeness of the election raised anxieties in the weeks prior to the vote. Many expatriates actively made plans to leave the country, or take mini-vacations during that period. The election delayed business by slowing port clearance, as well as scaring away customers from neighboring African

¹¹⁸ In a highly publicized incident, the Ambassador to Tanzania was himself given a CCM hat during a rally that he intended, prompting criticism from the opposition party.

countries.¹¹⁹ Chinese interlocutors warned me to look after myself because of fears that the election would bring “chaos” (ch. 亂, *luan*).

The significance of this discussion is to demonstrate both the commensurability of critique, and also to demonstrate how “banal nationalism” and an ethics of “non-interference” contributed to Chinese interlocutors maintaining an active separation from the Tanzanian political community. The effects of political change, however, would affect Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians alike, but with significant differences that demonstrate the inequalities in class.

Mark and Tamu versus the Bulldozer

In 2015, CCM nominated John Magufuli as its presidential candidate. A former interior minister responsible for infrastructure, he had developed a reputation as a “get-things-done” official responsible for successfully completing a multitude of road projects, earning him the nickname of the “Bulldozer.” He was respected even among opposition supporters, and there was some debate among them about whether “individual” or “party” was more significant in making voting decisions. The slogan of his campaign was *hapa kazi tu*, which is best translated colloquially as meaning that he would get to business and not play around. Upon assuming the presidency which he handily won in October, his governing style proved that he meant to act on his slogan and reputation. His first acts were to fire underperforming government ministers and authorities. On the first day in office, for example, he made a surprise visit to the national hospital and upon seeing the lack of hospital beds and medicine, fired the management staff. His next acts were to impose austerity on government officials. He canceled the celebratory receptions and redirected funds to purchase medical equipment, he prohibited government officials from using government

¹¹⁹ There was a distinction, however, within the Chinese community. Those who had lived through previous elections were much less worried, and considered their less experienced compatriots to be over-reacting. The election went peaceably, and despite the mobilized opposition having lost, support for Magufuli quickly developed in the early days. The genuine surprise in the Chinese community was registered in an interesting article published in a local Chinese paper in which Chinese commentators effusively praised the stability and orderliness of the voters.

funds to take foreign trips unless approved by his office. He then went after the business community for tax evasion, targeting the customs agency for failure to collect customs fees, and mobilizing the Tax Revenue Authority to investigate tax fraud. In the first several months, these policies were extremely popular, even among the *wamachinga* who had only recently supported Lowassa. They soon adopted his campaign slogan, *hapa kazi tu*, into everyday greetings, as discussed in the previous chapter, and multiple interlocutors claimed that Magufuli had inspired a new ethics of hard work.¹²⁰ There were rumblings of concern, however, among some interlocutors about what Magufuli's policies would mean for business. The economy of Kariakoo, for example, thrived on the avoidance of customs duties and value-added taxes. Chinese interlocutors whom I asked adopted a wait-and-see position, but one Tanzanian businessman I spoke to was quite livid that Magufuli was "going to kill Kariakoo" because if business people were required to pay taxes, their businesses would not be profitable. He worried about the return of Nyerere-style socialism.

I was surprised by this interview at the time because I had only been hearing praise of Magufuli's austerity from other interlocutors. So deploying a method I often used, I put his opinions into dialogue with other interlocutors indirectly by sharing them anonymously with a Tanzanian shopkeeper.

He immediately became suspicious regarding the background of the person I was talking about. "Was he Tanzanian? Was he Chinese?"

"He was Indian."

"If he doesn't like it, he could go back to India."

His response indicates how Tanzanian state actions against wealthy capitalists continue to be interpreted in racial-ethnic terms, just as they had during the administration of Nyerere (Brennan 2012). The responses of other traders I spoke to also indicate a critique of the same

¹²⁰ There was more than a whiff of Julius Nyerere to these changes. The Nyerere government had similarly advocated austerity among officials and moral entreaties to "hard work" among ordinary Tanzanians.

practices they themselves participated in, directly or indirectly. Issa, a wholesaler and retailer who worked closely with the Chinese, admitted that Magufuli's policies would affect his own income because he would need to pay more in customs fees, but he also admitted that the government needed revenue for such public goods as medicine.

By August 2016, however, opinion of Magufuli in Kariakoo had changed, and many of the *wamachinga* returned to their initial support for the opposition parties against CCM. What was different in this case was the additional criticism of Magufuli as an authoritarian whose strictness made it difficult to conduct business. Rebuffing comparisons to Xi Jinping's anti-corruption crackdown, one Chinese expatriate complained that, unlike Xi, Magufuli was primarily going after business people. Magufuli's policies are similar to recent anti-corruption drives elsewhere in Africa which have been surprisingly met with opposition from people otherwise opposed in principle to corruption. The problem is that practices like paying tips to officials is experienced or seen as so much a necessary part of business that the crackdown undermines the basis for doing business.

It is in this context that Billy and Tamu, two individuals whose stories I have already introduced earlier, each found themselves rounded up in the series of crackdowns initiated under the new government to demonstrate that the government was *hapa kazi tu* by enforcing the law to the letter. Mark and Tamu's stories provide a coda to this chapter with elements of classical tragic irony. Billy was caught in the January raid described at the beginning of this chapter. Tamu's arrest was less unprecedented, but similar in form. Both men had positioned themselves as actors whose economic activities would follow certain ethical principles. Billy had pledged, for example, to never pay a bribe. Tamu, on the other hand, routinely described his work as honest in comparison to what others in his situation might do. In the end, however, their projects were both disrupted by new crackdowns. The irony is that even if Billy had decided to pay, he might have been unable to because the officials who arrested him had invited the media to film the arrest. The immigration authority had clearly intended to demonstrate that they were enforcing immigration

law. In Tamu's case, there was no way out of a large-scale arrest. Tamu, as the other *wamachinga*, would always return to their place of business and start over again. This was different from Billy and other Chinese migrants whose options could include abandoning Tanzania, returning home, or moving to a different African country. In August of 2016, however, Tamu told me of plans to increase the fine on *wamachinga* to \$200,000Tsh. In the face of this situation, Tamu raced to secure the rent for a shop, even though he only had enough for about a month of rent.

The state is not only the source of uncertainty in the economic lives of people like Tamu, but it is perhaps the most subject to moral blame among my interlocutors. There are a multitude of circumstances which contribute to the precarity of economic life, and the seeming impossibility of sustained capital accumulation. In absolute terms, the expenses and obligations Tamu had in terms of rent, food, transportation, support for his sister attending college, and his mother's household in Mbeya were in excess of his actual income. In addition to this, he reduced his own income by sharing his office with friends who needed a job. And in addition to all of this, unexpected emergencies like when his mother needed surgery risked decimating any savings he had managed to accumulate. He did try to save, and even opened a bank account at one point. Despite this, however, a single arrest in a raid could quickly decimate accumulated capital. The contingency of arrests was different from other contingencies, however. In the event of emergency expenses for friends and family, there was an implicit moral obligation which made these payments legitimate. Even when the friend of his friend disappeared with power banks, for example, Tamu maintained his friendship despite admitting to me the possibility (which he considered ultimately unknowable) that his friend could have been involved.

A friend of Tamu tried to convince him that buying and selling Chinese shoes was profitable, but as Tamu described, "but where can one do their business? The Manisspa make it hard to do business. I have no money, no money for tea or food, and I am out here trying to do business, but the Manisspa come and say 'are you doing business here?' and then take me away."

The contradictions between myriad life projects and conditions of vulnerability are revealed by these commensurable but different experiences with the state, in either its guise as a “hungry” interlocutor or aspiring Weberian agent. Ordinary Chinese and Tanzanians share some conditions of vulnerability, but are divided by distinctions of class and national affiliation which not only mean the material consequences differ, but also that the political-ethical implications of these structural conditions are interpreted very differently.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used expatriate Chinese and Tanzanian encounters with everyday extortion in Tanzania, and discourses of discontent about these encounters, to examine competing etiologies of blame and agency. For Chinese expatriates, encounters with street level bureaucrats are generative of debates about who is responsible for the status of Chinese citizenship within a global hierarchy of value. I began with examples which, for Chinese living and working in Tanzania, provide evidence of distinct vulnerability to inspection in a manner which does not apply to foreigners from the United States or Europe. This is exemplified in rumors about a difference in language between the American and Chinese passports which grants to the former a kind of imperial citizenship not unlike the extraterritorial privileges once granted to similar foreigners in China. These claims should be seen in context of longer genealogies of Chinese nationalism which have drawn close links between the strength of China as a state, and the status of Chinese abroad.

I have shown how Africa has been divergently situated in these renderings, for some a foil to the respect and recognition China is seen to deserve, and for others, sharing a common struggle against Western imperialism and white supremacy. These legacies complicate the expectations of Chinese about how they should be treated in Tanzania. For some, recognition is seen to come only through histories of violence and imperialism, and for others, the conspicuous absence of those practices. I then examined how official and elite Chinese criticisms of “low-quality” Chinese creating their own vulnerabilities in Tanzania balance complaints the Chinese

embassy is “weak”. As I have demonstrated through examples, however, the assignment of moral responsibility for situations of corruption is far more complex. Learning how to properly deal with officials becomes a space for not only making social distinctions among Chinese, but also enacting moral aspirations, not the least to other Chinese, through the effect one’s actions are seen to have on the image of China more generally.

As my examples of interactions demonstrate, however, agency and responsibility for the outcome of paying tips is often distributed between the street level-bureaucrats and the person paying the bribe. This is reinforced by the fact that street-level bureaucrats take on different faces during an encounter and perform different positions of power and privilege *vis-à-vis* their interlocutors. Placed in comparison with encounters between officials and Tanzanian *wamachinga* traders, these encounters exemplify the apparent contradiction between the sovereignty of the post-colonial state and the “sovereignty” of capital in unequal global exchanges. The difference in how one reacts to the state is partially a consequence of whether one is able to pay them. Chinese investors, in relative terms, have more resources at hand to deal with officials than do *wamachinga*, even though they may not consider themselves particularly privileged.

Attending to the quotidian interactions of Chinese expatriates with Tanzanian officials is important for understanding broader negotiations about what “the rise of China” means for ordinary Chinese “going out” into the world. Too often, discussions about “China in Africa,” have focused on the intentions and agency of the state, not only ignoring the diversity and complex of “Chinese” actors, but also what the Chinese experience in Africa means for the development of new Chinese subjectivities. Rather than debating whether China in Africa constitutes an “empire,” it may be more productive to ask how the people involved in these transactions themselves understand the privileges, vulnerabilities, and inequalities entailed. Corruption produces a variety of agents: the corrupt official, the Chinese who pays, “black people” as possessors of a particular ethnopsychology, and corrupt “leaders.” I have argued these

attributions of agency turns on two related questions: the first is the *political* question of accountability, and in turn, the possible vectors of transformation: whose behavior can change in such a way as to change the system. The second is the *ethical* question of character, how these actions position a person within a global hierarchy of value (Herzfeld 2005). In practice, the moral evaluation of corruption implicates a variety of identity claims that complicate many conceptual boundaries. This chapter has advanced the argument about the close relationship between racializing discourses and modes of political critique, between discourses of othering and projects of ethical self-improvement which blur the lines between mechanisms of power and ethical life. For example, the critique of the China-Africa relationship is often delivered in the form of the critique of China, or the critique of Africa, both of which operate as either racializing discourses or modes of political critique or auto-critique. For example, Chinese critiques of “African” practice tend towards racialization, but elements of these critiques also appear in Tanzanian social critique as part of political critiques of the state. Furthermore, criticisms of “Chinese” practice in Africa also draw on orientalist racialization, but elements of these critiques also appear in Chinese social critique as aspirational projects of self-improvement and ethical projects which can be both positive (in the sense of self-directed forward motion), but also productive of social distinction. The encounters I have described demonstrate alternative readings of power: on the one hand, the state collects tribute in the form of “tips,” but on the other, Chinese capital and wealth is able to suspend local law. Neither agent is pre-eminent, although the situation described here touches closely on longstanding debates about imperialism, agency, and extraversion (Bayart 2000) in Africa. In these encounters, this double relationship is performed, the officials presenting themselves first as guardians of sovereignty, but revealing themselves to be powerful friends. These are not pre-determined, however. Expatriates negotiate how they should relate to the state, and in the process, how to conceive of themselves in the world, as patrons or as guests.

These situations reveal the limitations of a debate about Chinese “empire” or “neo-colonialism.” The chapter demonstrates how the issue of agency and accountability plays out in practice. Empire is relevant here in terms of questions about political agency and accountability, but the political should be understood widely as not just involving the state, but also forms of moral self-reflection. I end with an observation made by an older Chinese shopkeeper: “Mao once said that the US was imperialist, but after reform and opening, one can see now that imperialism and capitalism are the same.”

CONCLUSION

During the 1960s era of decolonization, the Chinese and Tanzanian governments framed the close relationship between them in the relational language of “friendship” and “cooperation”; concepts intended to portend an interconnected world without imperialism. Following several decades of dramatic economic growth in China, however, the expansion of Chinese investment, trade, and migration in Tanzania has been haunted by the specter of older North-South dependencies being reproduced in new South-South connections. While Chinese and Tanzanian elites combine narratives of anti-imperialist friendship with the promise of “win-win” economic development, in this dissertation, I provided an ethnographic account of how Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians themselves contend with these emerging mutualities and inequalities through how they negotiate the interpersonal ethics of social interactions.

It was based on seventeen months of ethnographic fieldwork among Chinese living and working in Dar es Salaam, and their Tanzanian interlocutors. My material drew on a wide range of industries and experiences, but I focused primarily on the wholesale trade in the Kariakoo marketplace for several reasons. First, for Tanzanians, the importation of Chinese commodities exemplifies the repetition of “neo-colonial” dependencies despite the promise of a Chinese-facilitated industrial future. Second, Chinese wholesalers themselves occupy an ambivalent position within Chinese social imaginaries as lower-class emigrants who pursue careers in Africa because of both limited opportunities in China and/or limited opportunities for emigration to the West. These positions complicate state-promoted models of Sino-Tanzanian relationalities. Ordinary Tanzanians question the proper Chinese role in a local division of labor, and the responsibility of the state for governing foreign capital. Chinese elites hold such figures to damage the reputation of Chinese in Tanzania as a whole because they are accused of engaging in

morally problematic behavior due to their competitive ethics and social background. These don't necessarily reflect the details on the ground, but these are common ways that my interlocutors evaluated each other.

My dissertation addressed different sites of tension which are generative of debates among Chinese and Tanzanians alike about the comparative privileges, vulnerabilities, and moral agency that Chinese expatriates have vis-à-vis ordinary Tanzanians. These tensions include market competition and trading hierarchies between entrepreneurs, mistrust and interdependence between co-workers, the contested terms of material and emotional reciprocity between friends and strangers, and the art/ethics of petty corruption between expatriates and street-level bureaucrats. I examined these tensions through the perspective of their mutualities, by which I mean existential interdependencies and mutual constitution.

The stories I provided involved situations which reveal the interdependence of actors; how their position in the world, their trajectories, projects, and aspirations are shaped in part by the agency of others. Beginning with the premise of mutuality, my dissertation tried to avoid positing a dichotomy of incidents of inter-cultural conflict alongside incidents of inter-cultural cooperation/solidarity. Instead, I began with the fact Chinese expatriates and ordinary Tanzanians need each other in order to conduct business. Such mutualities pose the ordinary ethical question of how to relate to each other. I argued that the differing expectations Chinese and Tanzanians bring to these relationships is informed not just by "culture," but also by the economic inequalities which are the very conditions of possibility for Chinese investment. Expectations about how to act in turn bear on how Chinese and Tanzanian identities are performed, and how they are understood within both national, regional, and global hierarchies of value.

In Chapter One, I began tracing the emergence of Chinese-Tanzanian mutualities and relations by historically contextualizing them within a *long durée* history of Afro-Asian connections. My contribution is to provide an alternative narrative of Sino-Tanzanian Friendship and Cooperation outside the narrow framework of colonialism/not-colonialism found in most

surveys on the topic of China-Africa ties. I did this by starting with histories of mobility and transnationalism, and from this standpoint, tracing how the projects of Chinese and Tanzanian nationalism, conceptualized as anti-imperial projects, involved the problem of how to govern so-called extraterritorial mobility and privilege.

I situated the emergence of the Chinese community in Tanzania from the perspective of these histories. From the Chinese perspective, the rise of China as a global power has added a new factor to a longstanding tension between the experience of overseas Chinese as either transnational cosmopolitans or global subalterns; the question of whether the rise of China is equal to the increased status of Chinese citizens in the world. From the Tanzanian perspective, Chinese expatriates, particularly those involved in trade, may be seen as the latest “middleman” in a long history of trading groups which have risen and fallen in the trading hierarchies of the Swahili coast. The politics of trading hierarchies was reframed by colonialism and decolonization into the politics of the role of foreign capital, particularly the role of Indians as middlemen minorities. The entrance of the Chinese in post-colonial Tanzania, initially, for the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia railway, was also based on transnationalism, but now for an anti-imperial project of achieving autonomy through what would eventually come to be called South-south cooperation.

These multiple legacies informed my discussion in Chapter Two, in which I traced how with the industrialization of China, new mutualities emerged between Chinese industries looking for new markets and import-based economies in East Africa. I emphasized the role that both Tanzanian and Chinese actors have played to facilitate the distribution of Chinese commodities; and how the availability of these inexpensive goods transformed local trading hierarchies by reducing the position formerly held by Indian-Tanzanians, and opening the market to Tanzanian rural-to-urban migrants. The narrative of the chapter follows what happened when Chinese exporters themselves came to Tanzania to sell directly to local retailers. For Chinese wholesalers and their employees, the Tanzanian market provided new opportunities for pursuing individual

and family strategies of transnational mobility. For Tanzanian wholesalers, the presence of Chinese limited the transnational mobility they had previously enjoyed in traveling to China. For petty traders, the presence of the Chinese provided new forms of livelihood and even new possibilities for transnational mobility.

The contribution of this chapter is to argue that the politics of Chinese presence in Tanzania turn on where Chinese locate themselves in an imagined trade hierarchy where everyone has their share of the labor of distribution. It is also to demonstrate how despite the promise of Chinese investment in industrialization, these aspired futures remain distant from the perspective of general urban economy. The second chapter also illustrates my meaning of mutuality by showing how the economic strategies of one set of actors has different effects on the economic strategies of other actors.

In the following chapters, I considered the implications of this fact for social ethics and the character of Chinese-Tanzanian relationships. A theme which emerges in these chapters how competition among Chinese expatriates is generative of moral anxieties about ethnic unity and practices of social distinction which map unethical business practices onto devalued sub-ethnic, or sub-regional categories of Chinese-ness. These extend the politics of social distinction in China to an African setting, where Chinese imagine Tanzanians to be either ahead of Chinese in “unity,” or even more exaggerated than Chinese in putting self-interest above social ethics.

In Chapter Three, I examined these themes in Chinese-Tanzanian interactions by examining how material inequalities between China and Tanzania shape the possibility of friendship. I did this through an analysis of the semiotics of public greetings. The contribution of my chapter is to draw connections between the historical legacy of Sino-Tanzanian Friendship, and its performances and disappointments in the possibility of stranger sociality. I explored the claim that “Chinese don’t greet,” either Tanzanians or each other, and the ways in which the experience of (refused) greetings are mobilized by actors to make claims about the moral character of individuals, racial categories, and the broader terms of Sino-African relationships. I

examined greeting practices themselves and their relationships to concepts of social and emotional exchange, and showed their relationship to the material dimensions of Chinese-Tanzanian interactions.

Tanzanians judge Chinese to be narrowly focused on business as the expense of what it means to be human (and social). Chinese draw on Tanzanian judgements to likewise reflect on Chinese practices, but also judge Tanzanians to be narrowly focused on the contingent materiality of relationships at the expense of what it means to be human (and social). I argue the symmetry of these evaluation shows both common moral horizons and how they are complicated by the mutualities of inequality. I also demonstrated how agonistic tensions (cf. Singh 2011) are being registered in ambiguously amiable “joking relationships” (sw. *utani*) between Chinese and Tanzanians which ironically announce the integration of the Chinese into local social practices.

In Chapter Four, I expanded on the interpersonal suspicions raised in the previous chapter to examine the everyday racialization of discourse among Chinese expatriates about Tanzanians. The contribution of this chapter is to make an intervention, primarily within Chinese Studies, regarding racism and blackness. As such, it might seem redundant or overly contextualized to other audiences, but the intention is to anticipate, acknowledge, and then critique the counter-arguments.

The theme of the chapter is how the term 黑人, or black person, mediates conceptualizations of trust, ethics, and hierarchies of value. The chapter aimed to accomplish three main goals. The first is to examine the racialization of relationships through discourses and practices of security across a broad range of Chinese households, workplaces, and organizations; and how it contradicts even state-supported projects to cultivate people-to-people connections.

The second goal of my chapter was to demonstrate how the discursive racialization of Tanzanians is based on collaboration and complicity through intra-Chinese (and intra-non African) dialogue rather than simply “attitudes” or “ignorance.” The third goal is to show how

Chinese generalizations about Tanzanians are based on ideas about social hierarchies of development which link material development to ethical development. These aspects tie back to the argument that Chinese-Tanzanian interactions are shaped by mutualities of inequality. The limitations of the chapter, however, is that I didn't address how Tanzanians interpret Chinese racial attitudes and practices, or how Chinese are themselves racialized. This is an important topic which I will address in much greater detail in future publication.

Having discussed Chinese racial discourses, I provided some context for the opening vignette in Chapter Five. The chapter itself, however, examined how Chinese migrant entrepreneurs manage everyday encounters with petty corruption from street-level bureaucrats. The contribution of the chapter is to examine how concepts of empire/anti-empire play out in the genre of interactions where Chinese expatriates most commonly express vulnerability. Inspections and bribes are good to think with because they combine questions of state sovereignty, the sovereignty of money, and ethical debates about what one should do. These in turn link to debates about responsibilities of global Chinese citizenship.

Many Chinese expatriates advance the argument that they are targeted because Tanzanians don't respect them the same way they are seen to respect those with US passports or white skin. Other Chinese expatriates argue that it's their compatriots themselves who make themselves targets because of a failure to follow laws or a willingness to pay bribes. I examined these encounters themselves, paying close attention to how agency in these interactions is performatively ambiguous in a way which reveals both the sovereignty of the Tanzanian state *vis-à-vis* Chinese expatriates, and the role of Chinese capital *vis-à-vis* Tanzanian street level bureaucrats. I contextualized these encounters in comparison with Tanzanian petty traders in order to show convergences and divergences on the basis of one's resources. I examined the challenges faced by both in pursuing their vision of ethical practice.

My dissertation makes contributions to multiple fields of study. My contribution to African studies is to provide an ethnography of Chinese migration which challenges both the

casual logic (not shared by all, but still prevalent) that Chinese presence is “colonialism,” and also the counter-argument that Chinese investment is fundamentally transformational. Instead, I disaggregate the actors involved in order to show how Chinese investment is beneficial to some actors and harmful to others. This argument is not surprising, but what I do hope to conclude with is an element of measured skepticism regarding the promise of Chinese industrialization. I believe showing how Chinese trade sustains the “contingent livelihoods” described by Ferguson (2015) in *Give a Man a Fish* might help contribute to the discussion on whether the issue in development is “industrialization” or a rightful share. But I hope to argue this is more than about something distinct to Africa, but also about the global availability of economic livelihoods. This is why it is important to me to show how Chinese expatriates are themselves seeking livelihoods (but without simplistic celebrations of them as simply entrepreneurs). What is at stake for all my interlocutors is the pursuit of those futures they find worth living, and the challenge is how these pursuits are either complimentary to those of other people or not. Sometimes, these align, and at other times they don’t.

My contribution to Chinese Studies is to examine what the rise of “Global China” means for how ordinary Chinese, particularly new Chinese transnational actors, conceive of their own rights, responsibilities, and moral subject-hood in the world. I argue that if one wants to understand the “moral crisis” in China (Yan 2009), one must also consider how Chinese map themselves in global moralized geographies. Of course, this has been done already with regards to the United States and the West, but my contribution is to consider what Africa and the Global South means to the moralized geographies of ordinary Chinese. This means addressing ideas of social development and race. I go beyond studies of blackness in Chinese media to examine, ethnographically, the production of knowledge in new transnational connections in the global South. I consider my largest contribution here to be on the topic of race.

My contribution to “China-Africa Studies” is to bring critical perspectives to bear on what is a field dominated by a strong empiricist, technocratic bent. My main target is how

particular concepts (e.g. empire/not-empire) or topics (race) are overdetermined by either/or logics and a hermeneutics of suspicion focused on Chinese versus Western narratives. I want to bring up the question of what all these narrative struggles mean in terms of the ethical evaluations different actors bring to the table.

My contribution to the Anthropologies of Empire and Transnationalism is to examine its questions and topics through the lens of the ethnography of ordinary ethics. I find this perspective helpful because it provides a way to answer the “so what?” of the critical analyses of power, and of the insights of ethnographic work. I believe my approach helps make sense of what has been at stake in seemingly terminological debates about “empire” and “dependency” among such anthropologists as John Kelly (2003), Catherine Lutz (2006), James Ferguson (2006). I also bring to the anthropology of ethics the same concerns about power, inequality, and tension which has long been a theme in anthropology, and revived again in recent work by people like Peter Geschiere (2013) and Bhrihupati Singh (2011), and to extend it to transnational inter-cultural settings.

My contribution to the broader scholarship on international relations is to challenge the emphasis on state-actors, disaggregate the state, and instead looks at transnational migrants/expatriates is itself a given. I also hope to draw attention to the moral entailments of theorizing global orders.

The argument of this dissertation is that critiques of the Africa-China relationship, including the dichotomous characterizations of these relationships as “empire” or “anti-empire” are fundamentally ethical-political critiques of the proper mode of relations to be pursued between unequally situated people in the global division of labor. Decolonization was intended to be not just about autonomy, but also development, and this involved questions about reforming global political economy, which is the basis of the new optimism regarding south-south alternatives.

Enthusiasm for China is based on this hope for change but these relations have entailed inequalities and unevenness. I end with a call to think about the problem as Fanon notes, as a problem of the global distribution of wealth, to think about the problem of how people are helped and roles people play. Fanon's warning on the eve of decolonization rings as true today as it did then:

The accession to independence of the colonial countries places an important question before the world, for the national liberation of colonized countries unveils their true economic state and makes it seem even more unendurable. The fundamental duel which seemed to be that between colonialism and anticolonialism, or indeed between capitalism and socialism, is already losing some of its importance. What counts today, the question which is looming on the horizon, is the need for a redistribution of wealth. Humanity must reply to this question, or be shaken to pieces by it (1963:98).

The suggestion in Ferguson's *Give a Man a Fish* (2015) that the world's poor and/or progressive movements and/or policymakers should abandon the dream of productive labor and instead embrace the labor of distribution as the central activity of economic life challenges the aspirational premise of Chinese investment in Africa, suggesting that investments in infrastructure and industry are ultimately futile. Such suggestions would come as a disappointment to my Tanzanian interlocutors in Kariakoo, who don't oppose the Chinese so much as wish they would do more to invest in industry. Chinese industrialization in places like Ethiopia and pledges of industrial investment in Tanzania periodically raise optimistic projections of Africa becoming a "second China" in a seemingly endless "flying geese" pattern of industrialization and export growth on the peripheries of global capitalism. It is still too early to know whether these are mere phantoms, as skeptical interlocutors in Kariakoo claim, or in fact real transformations.

Looming overhead, however, the growth of automation, and the limits of ecological sustainability portend that distribution may indeed become recognized as the primary matrix of social action. Ordinary Tanzanians getting by have already caught onto this lesson, but in the context of deindustrialization in the global North, people there may also begin catching up (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 2015).

But even in the best of times, national and racial boundary making, the racialization of inequality, even in the most quotidian of everyday discontent portends Foucault's darkness of making life and letting die (2003). Moments of subaltern solidarity, emergent alternatives, counter-examples of friendship and possibility. They exist by the dozen, as models, points of aspiration, possibilities, but would need to be more than exemplars if they are not to be buried in the rubble piling before the angel of history (Benjamin 1974).

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