

Reappropriating Public Space in Nanchang, China:
A Study of Informal Street Vendors

by

Bryan C. Winter

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Geography and Environmental Science & Policy
School of Geosciences
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Co-Major Professor: Martin Bosman, Ph.D.
Co-Major Professor: Pratyusha Basu, Ph.D.
Jayajit Chakraborty, Ph.D.
Joni Firat, Ph. D.
Ruiliang Pu, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
May 19, 2017

Keywords: Street Vending, Informal Economy, Urban Poor, Urban Space, China

Copyright © 2017, Bryan C. Winter

ProQuest Number: 10604019

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10604019

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. First, and foremost, to my wife, Wan, for her constant love, help, and encouragement in both life and in my educational pursuits. To my daughter, Penny, who makes me laugh and smile each and every day. To my Parents, who have always showed their confidence and faith in me during this long educational journey. Last, but not least, to my Mother and Father-in-law, who have both showed so much devotion for our daughter during the dissertation writing process. This dissertation would not have been possible without all of your support and patience. Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research could not have taken place without the help of faculty members from the University of South Florida's School of Geosciences, research participants, as well as friends and family. Many thanks are in order to the members of my committee, Drs. Martin Bosman, Pratyusha Basu, Joni Firat, Jayajit Chakraborty, and Ruiliang Pu. I also thank Dr. Stephen Buckman for serving as defense chair.

A special thanks goes to my advisors Drs. Martin Bosman and Pratyusha Basu who guided, motivated, and educated me since I started the Doctoral program in Geography and Environmental Science and Policy at the University of South Florida in 2013. Dr. Bosman's clever guidance, enthusiasm for geography, and constant motivation has had great impact in my formation as a geographer. Our informal discussions in the office and around campus concerning the discipline of geography have been some of the most influential during my time at USF. Additionally, Dr. Basu's patience and confidence in me was central in the shaping and fine-tuning of this research project. Our discussions on urban-rural intersections and geographical theory were always enlightening. Simply put, this dissertation could not have reached fruition without the academic vigor and the valuable critiques that both Dr. Bosman and Dr. Basu provided. I also appreciate the financial support the USF School of Geosciences has provided me in the form of assistantships. I also thank the Fred L & Helen M Tharp Endowed Scholarship Fund for supporting my data collection abroad.

Additionally, I would like to thank the friends and colleagues I've made from the School of Geosciences. Tanim, Michael A., Michael E., Milena, Mehrdad, Qiuyan, Lucy, David, Peter, Becca, Rocio, Erick, Julius, and Dereje, I am grateful for our conversations and frequent brainstorming about the field of geography and, potentially, future research ideas. Your interest and comments on my research were always useful.

I am immensely indebted to the participants who were willing to be a part of this research. The street vendors who gave their time and voices made this research possible. It was a pleasure meeting each of you. I will always remember the experiences I have conversing with you while working in the streets and the questions we exchanged about one another and the places we come from. I will always be thankful for your contributions.

I would also like to thank those who assisted me during data collection in the field. Firstly, family members who reside in Nanchang, whose intimate knowledge of the study area aided in the collection of valuable data about the presence and activities of street vendors. Secondly, my wife, who helped in making the interviewing and translation process go more smoothly than it otherwise would have gone had I gone at it alone. All of your support was vital to this study.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their time, patience, and moral support during both data collection and the writing of this dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
List of Abbreviations	vii
Abstract	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS	2
1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	4
1.2.1 SAMPLING	5
1.2.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	7
1.2.3 LIMITATIONS AND ETHICS	10
1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	12
1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION	15
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE AND FRAMEWORK	20
2.1 URBAN INFORMALITY AND PUBLIC SPACE	21
2.1.1 DEFINING AND THEORIZING INFORMALITY	22
2.1.2 THE STREET VENDOR DEBATE	30
2.1.3 THE END OF PUBLIC SPACE?	34
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	37
2.2.1 THE RIGHT TO THE CITY	38
2.2.2 REAPPROPRIATION AS DEGLOBALIZATION?	39
2.3 CONCLUSION	43
CHAPTER 3: CHINA'S STREET VENDORS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT	45
3.1 THE GROWTH OF AN INFORMAL ECONOMY IN CHINA	46
3.2 WHO ARE CHINA'S STREET VENDORS?	50
3.3 CHINA'S STREET VENDORS AND THE STATE	53
3.4 HARD AND SOFT APPROACHES TOWARDS URBAN CHINA'S VENDORS	59
3.5 CONCLUSION	64
CHAPTER 4: STREET VENDING IN PUBLIC SPACE: THE CASE OF A NANCHANG NEIGHBORHOOD	66
4.1 BACKGROUND TO NANCHANG	67
4.2 STREET VENDORS IN NANCHANG	73
4.3 NANCHANG'S SANJINGWUWEI NEIGHBORHOOD	80

4.4 A HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT IN SANJINGWUWEI	85
4.5 SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL DISTRIBUTION OF SANJINGWUWEI'S STREET VENDORS	90
4.5.1 AIGUO STREET: A BUSY MIXED-USE LANE	90
4.5.2 WUWEI STREET: A SPACE IN FLUX	101
4.5.3 THE BAYI BRIDGE UNDERPASS: A PLACE OF WORK AND LEISURE	107
4.5.4 SPACES DEVOID OF STREET VENDORS	112
4.6 CONCLUSION	117
CHAPTER 5: PROFILES OF SANJINGWUWEI'S STREET VENDORS	118
5.1 WHO ARE SANJINGWUWEI'S STREET VENDORS?	118
5.2 REASONS FOR SELLING IN THE STREETS	121
5.3 MOBILITY	123
5.4 MODES OF STREET VENDING	128
5.5 PRODUCT DIVERSITY	135
5.6 CHOICE OF PRODUCTS	138
5.7 WORKING HOURS AND CONDITIONS	142
5.8 ECONOMIC DYNAMICS AND VALUE CHAIN	145
5.9 CONCLUSION	146
CHAPTER 6: NARRATIVES OF STRUGGLE AMONG SANJINGWUWEI'S STREET VENDORS	148
6.1 STRUGGLES IN MAKING THE SALE	150
6.1.1 INCREASED COMPETITION	151
6.1.2 STIGMA	156
6.1.3 GENTRIFICATION	158
6.2 "IF YOU'RE TOO SLOW YOU'LL BE CAUGHT"	160
6.3 CONCLUSION	168
CHAPTER 7: WHAT DO SANJINGWUWEI'S STREET VENDORS TELL US ABOUT URBAN SPACE IN CHINA?	170
7.1 DO NANCHANG'S STREET VENDORS DESERVE URBAN SPACE?	172
7.1.1 EMPLOYMENT	174
7.1.2 NOT COMPETITION, BUT RELIANCE	175
7.1.3 URBAN-RURAL INTERSECTIONS	178
7.1.4 STREET VENDING CONTINUES TO GROW	181
7.1.5 ALTERNATIVE SPACES TO WORK?	183
7.1.6 VENDORS KNOW WHERE DEMAND IS!	185
7.1.7 THE NEED FOR SPACE	186
7.2 STREET VENDORS AND THE DEGLOBALIZATION OF URBAN SPACE	187
7.2.1 RESCALING URBAN SPACE	188
7.2.2 THE SLOWING DOWN OF TIME-SPACE	191
7.2.3 DECOMMODIFYING PUBLIC SPACE	193
7.3 CONCLUSION	195

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION	197
References	205
Appendices	217
Appendix A: Table of Participants	217
Appendix B: List of Interview Questions and Observation Guide	219
Appendix C: IRB# Pro00024809	221

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Nanchang's urban population growth, 1949 to 2016	71
Table 2: The temporal distribution of street vendors along Aiguo Street	99
Table 3: The temporal distribution of street vendors along Wuwei Street	106
Table 4: The temporal distribution of street vendors working beneath the Bayi Bridge Underpass	111
Table 5: Age of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors by age group	119
Table 6: Number of years Sanjingwuwei's street vendors had worked as street vendors	120
Table 7: Sanjingwuwei's street vendors' place of origin	121
Table 8: Street vendors' reasons for working as street vendors in Sanjingwuwei	122
Table 9: Percentage of mobile and itinerant vendors in Sanjingwuwei	129
Table 10: Modes of street vending in Sanjingwuwei	131
Table 11: Specific products or services as percentage of observed street vendors in Sanjingwuwei	136
Table 12: Products and services by category as percentage of observed street vendors in Sanjingwuwei	137
Table 13: Street vending as primary versus additional income source in Sanjingwuwei	143
Table 14: Street vending as full-time versus part-time work in Sanjingwuwei	144
Table 15: Types of challenges faced by Sanjingwuwei's street vendors	149

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Informal employment as a percentage of non-agricultural employment by region	24
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework: Informal street vendors as a form of deglobalization..	42
Figure 3: The Gan River and Nanchang's skyline	69
Figure 4: Aerial view of Nanchang indication location of study area	73
Figure 5: A street vendor sells produce from a push-cart along Nanchang's Yangming Avenue	75
Figure 6: A toy vendor making a sale Nanchang's Bayi Square	76
Figure 7: A typical Nanchang street scene: street vendors and pedestrians along Nanchang's Bayi Avenue	76
Figure 8: Street vendors selling clothing relax beneath the trees along Nanjing Avenue	79
Figure 9: Aerial view of Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood	81
Figure 10: Street map of Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood	81
Figure 11: A group of women sewing and de-husking corn with men playing mahjong in the background	83
Figure 12: Recently adopted logo of Sanjingwuwei renovation project etched into the concrete wall	87
Figure 13: The western entrance into Sanjingwuwei neighborhood	88
Figure 14: A street vendor and ordinary street scene along Aiguo Street	91
Figure 15: A peach vendor selling along Aiguo Street	93
Figure 16: Street vendors working along Aiguo Street	94

Figure 17: In front of the hospital along Aiguo Street with clothing vendor in background	95
Figure 18: The use of alleyways and hidden spaces	96
Figure 19: The reappropriation of unused space by a street vendor	97
Figure 20: An ordinary street scene along Wuwei Street	102
Figure 21: A mobile vendor selling corn along Wuwei Street	103
Figure 22: Street vendors reappropriate a residential entrance along Wuwei Street	105
Figure 23: The Bayi Bridge Underpass serving as a social space for the local community	108
Figure 24: Street vendors' reappropriation of the Bayi Bridge Underpass	110
Figure 25: Sanwei Street: A gentrified lane devoid of street vendors	113
Figure 26: A gentrified intersection with no street vendors	115
Figure 27: Anti-street vending architecture along Wuwei Street	116
Figure 28: Push-carts allow vendors to be highly mobile	132
Figure 29: A watermelon vendor takes a rest in the shade on his three-wheeled loader	133
Figure 30: A vendor sells produce along blankets on the ground	133
Figure 31: A bicycle vendor selling snacks along Yangming Avenue	134
Figure 32: A street vendor uses a table to display home-made shoe insoles	134
Figure 33: A truck full of watermelons parked in the bicycle lane	135
Figure 34: Informal street vending and urban-rural linkages	180
Figure 35: A placard on a building in Nanchang warns street vendors	184

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCP	Chinese Communist Party
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KMT	Kuomintang (Nationalist Party)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRC	People's Republic of China
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
TVE	Town and Village Enterprise

ABSTRACT

Since China's shift to market socialism, many marginalized by this process work as informal street vendors where they reappropriate public space in order to survive—a practice at odds with urban authorities' modernizing agenda. In relation to these competing logics concerning public space's use value versus its exchange value, this dissertation examines the practices, experiences, and agency of informal street vendors working in Sanjingwuwei, an ordinary, yet rapidly gentrifying, neighborhood of Nanchang, capital and largest city of southeastern China's Jiangxi Province. After describing the growth of an informal economy in modern China and providing a history of street vending, I describe the everyday practices of vendors and their reappropriation of public space in Nanchang and the Sanjingwuwei neighborhood. I then provide the socio-demographic details of Sanjingwuwei's vendors and use their voices to demonstrate how city image protection, a burgeoning informal sector, and the globalization of urban space bring challenges to their already precarious work in the streets. The dissertation concludes by linking the practices and agency of Nanchang's vendors into a theoretical discussion concerning the agency of informal street workers. Despite daily attempts by the local state to remove them, this study shows how Nanchang's street vendors, continue to actively engaging in alternative forms of urban space-making through reappropriating of public space. Therefore, this dissertation shows how vendors challenge the city as a system by downscaling, slowing down, decommodifying, and ultimately, deglobalizing urban space to neighborhood-level through their reappropriation of public space.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In Nanchang, the capital and largest city of southeastern China's Jiangxi Province, street vendors are a basic element of the city's everyday urban landscape. The practices and challenges faced by Nanchang's informal street vendors while working in public space are representative of those across China and in many other cities across the Global South. Street vending is among the most visible forms of informal work throughout the world and has a long history as an employment source in Chinese cities. Nevertheless, vendors' reappropriation of public space in Nanchang is treated as illegal by authorities and contradictory to the city's modernization aims. In this sense, street vending is viewed by those in power as a nuisance or what Yatmo (2008) has referred to as an "out of place urban element" (p. 396).

This dissertation examines the practices, experiences, and agency of informal street vendors who work in an ordinary neighborhood of Nanchang, China. For Nanchang's vendors, street vending serves as a means of survival for the urban poor, rural-urban migrants, and for those who found themselves unemployed during China's economic transition. Yet, like many cities across China and the Global South, in Nanchang, the livelihoods of informal street vendors are being increasingly threatened due to the combined effect of local governments' punitive strategies to eliminate the presence of undesirable elements in the city's streets, and the local state's logic of transforming urban space for the interests of capital rather than people. In short, informal street vendors working in China's public spaces must contend with a precarious and constantly mobile

existence in the streets of the city in order to avoid authorities, fines, and space to make their own. Since China's economic reforms in 1978 that shifted China from a communist economy to market socialism, “legally unregulated processes of income generation” (Cheng and Gereffi 1994 p.194), or informal economic activity, of which street vending is one form, has increasingly become a survival strategy for the “growing force of the unemployed” and underemployed in China's cities (Cooke, 2006, p.1). Because of its low barriers to entry, informal street vending is a widely held employment choice for many of urban China’s socially and economically vulnerable groups. This dissertation investigates urban China's informal street vendors through the case study of Nanchang.

1.1 Research Objectives and Questions

The objectives of this study are to investigate: (1) who Nanchang's street vendors are and how they use public space to earn a living; (2) their individual and collective experiences of working in the street, a practice at odds with city authorities' modernizing aims; and (3) the ways street vendors have agency in reshaping and redefining urban space in Nanchang. Specifically, my research questions are:

- Who are Nanchang's street vendors and what type of street vending activities are they engaged in?
- What challenges do Nanchang's street vendors face while working in the streets?
- How do street vendors' practices contribute to the deglobalization of urban space at the neighborhood-level in Nanchang?

The first research question "who are Nanchang's street vendors and what type of street vending activities are they engaged in" describes who Nanchang's street vendors are and what types of goods and services they sell in the streets. To answer this question, a

series of qualitative data collection methods were used ranging from non-participant observation to informal conversations with street vendors while working in public space. Since few works on China's street vendors exist, the data collected on Nanchang's street vendors offers a valuable contribution to who China's street vendors are. This can allow for future work comparing China's street vendors across different cities in China as well as who works in different public spaces throughout the city. This first research question is presented in both Chapters Four and Five. In Chapter Four, the different spaces of selling are described and the areas which vendors reappropriate. In Chapter Five, data concerning who the street vendors are, how they sell their goods, and what they sell are presented.

The second research question, "what challenges do Nanchang's street vendors face while working in the streets," was answered using informal interviews conducted in the streets with vendors. Here, vendors' voices are emphasized as they highlight the major struggles they face on a daily basis while reappropriating public space. This narrative-driven data is useful since few studies on street vendors in the Global South highlight the specific voices of the vendors themselves. This question also delves into the daily experiences of China's street vendors by letting them tell us about their daily lives and individuals working in the streets. These narratives are described in Chapter Six.

The third and final research question of this dissertation, "how do street vendors' practices contribute to the deglobalization of urban space at the neighborhood-level in Nanchang," offers a theoretical perspective to the agency of informal workers' reappropriation of public space in the city. Branching from the geographical literature on public space and interdisciplinary theories of deglobalization, this question seeks to show that vendors are not passive agents in the streets but hold considerable place-making

potential vis-à-vis their reappropriation of city space. This suggestion that informal vendors be considered a form a deglobalization is shown in Chapter Seven of this dissertation.

1.2 Research Methodology

In the summer of 2016, I conducted research among street vendors working in the Sanjingwuwei neighborhood of Nanchang for nearly 4 weeks. Like many mixed-use neighborhoods in Nanchang's old city, Sanjingwuwei is a place where street vendors seek to make a living selling their wares in the cramped alleyways, narrow streets, and among the many who walk the area's sidewalks. My work was conducted in the streets, sidewalks, and alleyways among street vendors themselves while they were working and reappropriating public space, indeed trying to earn a living often through the only means available to them. Over the course of a month, intensive data collection was undertaken through spending hours each day observing and talking to street vendors while they worked.

I embarked on this project with knowledge of the importance street vending has for many of China's urban poor and an eagerness to hear the stories street vendors were willing to share about the challenges of working in Nanchang's public spaces. During fieldwork, I encountered first-hand the precarious work Nanchang's street vendors relied upon to earn a living and the ways they supported themselves and their families in this little-researched city of China. Few studies exist on China's street vendors. However, more broadly, much of the research on China's cities pertains to urban development in the country's largest economic epicenters. Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou, all remain the focus of Western geographers' studies on urban China. It is my hope in this dissertation, to not only present a useful and insightful study and a little-researched

group in China's cities, but to also describe how the geography of street vendors work takes place in Nanchang, a city whose urban geography is rarely investigated.

Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood was selected as a research site for a few reasons. First, street vendors work and use Sanjingwuwei's streets on a daily basis. Second, as a place, Sanjingwuwei is highly representative of many of Nanchang's older, ordinary and mundane mixed-use neighborhoods that street vendors frequent. Third, like many neighborhoods throughout Nanchang, Sanjingwuwei's mundane character is being radically altered by a rapid gentrification process. This changing urban fabric via the globalization of urban space and the daily workings of street vendors make it highly characteristic of Nanchang at the neighborhood level.

1.2.1 Sampling

Since the focus of this dissertation was street vendors working in the Sanjingwuwei neighborhood of Nanchang, I selected participants from street vendors I observed and encountered while walking in the streets at different parts of the day and night. Participants (street vendors) were targeted and purposively selected while they were working in the streets of Sanjingwuwei. If vendors were available and willing to engage in conversation concerning their practices and experiences working in the streets, I then followed a semi-structured interview format with them. In total, 75 street vendors were approached over a nearly 4 week period. Nineteen did not wish to discuss their experiences street vending, and 16 provided insufficient or poor quality data to be included in the principal sample population. Thus, in the end, interview data was collected from 40 street vendors (24 male, 16 female) who were working solely in Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood.

When a street vendor was seen working, I introduced myself, explained my research, and if he or she was interested in participating in my study, I began asking specific questions concerning his or her background and experiences street vending. The interview followed a semi-structured interview format. Instead, of formally handing out questionnaires, pre-determined inquiries were memorized and asked in Mandarin Chinese. English was never used during the interview process. While conversing with the participant, it was important to note whether he or she resided in Sanjingwuwei, Nanchang, or came from further away. If a group of street vendors were working next to each other, I approached every third street vendor. However, if an individual street vendor working in a group agreed to participate in the research, often times, and the other street vendors took the opportunity to say a few words as well. I chose my potential participants according to how busy they were. If a street vendor had a customer or group of customers near his or her stall, I did not attempt to ask if he or she were interested in discussing his or her experiences.

Unlike many studies on informal street vendors that tally the total number and attributes of street vendors in an area based on how many were seen per recording session, my compiling of the total number and attributes of street vendors in Sanjingwuwei was based on observing and tallying street vendors in the study area. While tallying street vendors, I remembered the faces of individual street vendors and their means of selling (i.e., a colorful pushcart, a specific audio-recording, a place occupied on a daily basis) so as to not count them more than once. While I am confident that the recording of the number of street vendors is representative of the study area, unfortunately, I was not able to obtain an exact population of all street vendors working in Sanjingwuwei because of the mobile nature of informal workers and the fluid manner of urban life in which no place is ever the same, from day to day or hour to hour.

1.2.2 Data Collection Methods

In order to answer each research question, this dissertation utilized four interrelated data gathering methods. My primary data gathering technique was non-participant observation. Observing street vendors in the streets offered particular advantages to me as a researcher. Stemming from ethnography, observation allows for a detailed recording of human events. Its strength lies in allowing the researcher to observe a socio-cultural group in its natural setting over a prolonged period of time. Due to the nature of urban life in Nanchang, I was able to easily blend in while observing the activities of street vendors. While I was constantly reminded of my outsider status by the gazes of shopkeepers and passersby, my goal observing street vendors' practices were not compromised due to the vibrancy of Nanchang's streets. In the streets, observing street vendors' practices was easily done while "hanging out." However, the frequent presence of people in Nanchang's streets, while aiding in hiding myself as a researcher, also posed certain challenges to observation. Because of the small scale of the study-site focused upon in this dissertation, my ability to take notes while in the streets of this small neighborhood on a daily basis and multiple times a day, needed to be frequently done away from the street. Tea shops, restaurants, or a quick retreat to my temporary home provided me with a place to record notes into a journal. An outsider jotting notes on streets for a few weeks would no doubt be noticed and possibly attract unwanted attention and suspicion.

Detailed notes were recorded during non-participant observation. Note taking was especially useful in recording street vendor practices, how their usage of the street transformed public space, when street vendors were or were not present in the streets, the social nature of their work, the gender of street vendors, what was sold and how they sold their items, and how their reappropriation of the streets took place in both time and space. Observation also allowed for

identifying the strategies street vendors rely on to not only earn a living while avoiding fines from *chengguan*, who are urban management officers tasked with the job of clearing the streets and enforcing laws in China's public spaces. On one occasion, the arrival of a motorbike-riding *chengguan* led to the fleeing of several street vendors who worked in the alleyway I was in. The street vendor whom I was having a discussion with politely bid me adieu, hopped onto his three-wheeled electric loader, and began speaking into his walky-talky. Before he left, I asked him who he was talking to. He said, "I'm giving instructions to other street vendors from my home village about where to regroup."

The nature of observing and identifying the characteristics of street vendors in urban settings requires the researcher to do a lot of walking throughout the city. Therefore, walking was adopted as a second data gathering technique for this study. Walking, while aiding in the observation process, also allows the researcher to engage in "the city's everyday rituals and habits" by emphasizing "the sensory and sensual dimensions of urban life" (Middleton, 2010, p.578). It was Engels' (1845) ability and willingness to walk the streets of Manchester that allowed him to document how the street served as a stage for different classes to impose themselves upon each other.

Where Pierce and Lawhon (2015) define urban walking "as a self-conscious, reflective project of wandering around to better understand an area's physical context, social context, and the spatial practices of its residents" (p.656), Wunderlich (2008) views walking as an essentially rhythmic" practice "that interacts with and is influenced by other space and bodily rhythms" and "contributes to the temporal continuity and distinctiveness of urban places" (p.136). For De Certeau (1984), urban walking, and the interactions that come with it, serves as a form of resistance through creating new spaces that are not originally planned by the totalizing view of the planner,

developer, or urban elite. Like so many informal practices occurring in public space, De Certeau (1984) asserts that walking “manipulates spatial organizations, no matter how panoptic they may be” (p.101). Therefore, since street vendors reappropriate the sidewalks with the aim of turning passersby into customers, walking seems a fitting approach to understanding the presence of informal street vendors and the ways they are encountered in urban space.

My time spent walking Nanchang's streets allowed for semi-structured and conversation-based interviewing to occur. This was my third data gathering method used for this study. Through interviewing, a deeper narrative-driven analysis of Nanchang's street vendors can take place. I used a semi-structured interview guide that asked primarily open-ended questions to street vendors about their experiences (e.g., challenges faced, how business was, preferred street vending locations, and relations with customers) and background information (e.g., where they were from, how long they worked in the street, and age). All interviews were conducted by me and either one of two family members who assisted me. Both of these assistants lived in the study area and were very familiar with the areas street vendors were normally located. All respondents spoke in their native language (Mandarin Chinese) and research assistants were important due to their fluency with the local Gan dialect of the Nanchang region that most respondents spoke.

While interviewing, my goal was to make the interview more like a conversation after explaining who I was, where I was from, and why I was interested in knowing their stories. The interviews typically lasted between twenty and forty-five minutes. Some participants agreed to be audio-recorded; however, this was not attempted with most participants. The majority of street vendors were not well informed about the topic of public space. Many street vendors acknowledged that, of course, the streets are for the public's use. However, many made clear from their narratives that struggles over accessing public space for certain activities like street vending were daily

occurrences. While many took the chance to explain the difficulties of being a street vendor, others asserted that the streets should belong to everyone. Key phrases and background information were recorded in a journal. After reading through the information gathered from each participant, the data was then coded for themes. Particularly representative quotes were selected as evidence of street vendors' experiences for this dissertation.

My final methodological tool was taking photographs of street vendors and the landscapes they work in. Photographs of street vendors in Sanjingwuwei allow for a visual interpretation of what at first appear to be mundane or unimportant observations of the urban landscape, but in actuality serve as an integral element in the description of the place, people, and practices being studied. Using photographs of street vendors shows how they fit into everyday life in Sanjingwuwei. This dissertation also used photographs to showcase the ways street vendors sold goods, what they sold, and what micro-spaces were reappropriated when selling. Photographs let the reader see who is street vending in the study area while, at the same time, showing the urban landscape that is Sanjingwuwei.

1.2.3 Limitations and Ethics

By conducting my research in the streets of Nanchang, there were some limitations that arose. Although rare, some street vendors were reluctant to receive unwanted attention from an outsider. In these instances, the street vendor was thanked and a conversation with him or her was not attempted again. While most street vendors were willing, and at times excited, to share their experiences with me, there were also individuals who had an unwillingness to discuss their personal street vending experiences in depth resulting in little data being gathered from that particular individual. Some of this might have been related to my being an outsider. Therefore, to

avoid suspicion of myself and any unwanted attention from *chengguan* to street vendor participants, I routinely purchased goods such as fruit and snacks from individuals I had interviewed to compensate them for their time, but never in exchange for information.

Aside from being an obvious outsider in Sanjingwuwei, other challenges to working in the streets stemmed from local factors. Firstly, while having a working knowledge of Mandarin-Chinese I was able to informally communicate and deliver open-ended questions for individual street vendors to answer. However, due to both Nanchang-specific and rural dialects being spoken by many street vendors, there were at times challenges to interpreting what was exactly said between researcher and informant or vice versa. To overcome these challenges, I was aided by two relatives who live in Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood. Secondly, only a third of street vendors interviewed agreed to be recorded. This brought on the challenge of taking extensive notes while in Nanchang's public spaces which may look suspicious to both street vendors and urban authorities. Often, a retreat into a local tea shop was required to record notes in a reflective journal immediately after an interview. Lastly, using the streets of Sanjingwuwei as a field site meant working against the frequent downpours that occur almost daily in Nanchang during summers.

Yet, to my surprise, my outsider status was accompanied by certain unintended advantages to investigating street vendors in Sanjingwuwei's streets. My time on the streets sometimes yielded intriguing, yet short-lived, relationships between me and some of the street vendors. While some street vendors were obviously curious as to why this westerner was interested in researching them, others were equally as curious about me and where I was from. Others were curious whether American cities had street vendors or anything representing *chengguan*? What came to be during my research in the streets of Nanchang was often a friendly, fascinating, and intercultural experience in which the role of researcher and researched were often switched.

Qualitatively examining and observing marginalized groups like the urban poor or informal street vendors inevitably raises questions concerning ethics (Miller et al. 2012). Though the research subjects in this study were engaged in selling legal goods and services, their largely illegal occupation of the street in the eyes of authorities led me to witness first-hand the forced removal of street vendors, the confiscation of their goods, and their reliance on quickly escaping when authorities were near. Confrontations between street vendors and *chengguan* were observed during fieldwork. On three occasions, street vendors were told to disperse while I was conversing with them. The challenges of working in the streets was a reflection of their precarious income-earning strategy, but dealing with such challenges on a daily basis was part of their everyday lives.

I have taken certain measures to protect the identities of street vendors presented in this study. Firstly, I have changed the names of street vendors interviewed. Secondly, I have not made any reference as to where individual interviews took place. Later on, I do however describe in detail where in the Sanjingwuwei neighborhood street vendors tend to work and when. This will hopefully not compromise the identities of street vendors interviewed or observed since urban authorities in Nanchang are already well aware of popular street vending locations. Thirdly, while photographs of street vendors serve as a powerful medium for establishing a visual element of Sanjingwuwei as a place and presenting how street vendors reappropriate urban space, I did not incorporate any photographs of street vendors who were interviewed.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Despite a growing literature on the informal economy throughout the Global South, scholarly contributions on informality in China have been limited to only a handful of works and topics. Common themes in the literature have explored the existence of informal settlements or

“urban villages” within large urban centers (Chance 1984, Zhang et al 2003, Song et al 2008, Xue and Huang 2008, Wang et al 2009, Wu 2009, Zheng et al 2009, Liu et al 2010, Fan 2011, Stefan 2014, Yuan 2014), informal finance in rural areas (Tsai 2001, 2004, Zhang 2008, Ayyagari et al 2010), China’s informal economy in relation to East Asian development (Cheng and Gerrefi 1994), informal employment and gender implications (Cooke 2006), and urban waste collecting and recycling (Li 2002, Chi et al 2011).

Scholarship dedicated solely to informal street vending in China's cities is sparse. Although some excellent research exists on the relationship between informal street vendors and urban space in China, typically these studies focus on street vendor regulation or policy instead of individual or collective experiences of street vendors themselves (see Swider 2014). Recent studies have been on the topics of the business operations of street vendors in Dalian (Reid, Fram, and Chi, 2010), the impact of revanchist urban campaigns on street vending in Guangzhou (Huang et al. 2014), the role identity plays for ethnic minority vendors in tourist towns (Doorne et al., 2003), the unfolding of street culture in late Qing dynasty Chengdu (Wang, 2003), the relationship between politics, planning, and "street hawking" in Hong Kong (Smart, 1989; McGee, 1973), street vending regulation (Xue and Huang, 2015, Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014, and Swider 2014), and Guangzhou's vendors in the context of producing space (Flock and Breitung, 2015).

The results of this dissertation are an attempt to shed more light on urban China's informal street vendors by exploring their presence in Nanchang from three different angles. First, the practices and backgrounds of Nanchang's street vendors provide a place-specific example of how space is reappropriated by vendors in China and who they are. Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris' (2014) work on vendors in Beijing found that the majority of vendors were relatively young males. As this dissertation shows in the context of a single neighborhood in Nanchang, the majority of vendors

were women of or over retirement age. Secondly, a justification for this dissertation lies in the fact that a specific chapter is dedicated to the experiences and struggles of Nanchang's vendors. This type of information on China's street vendors has largely been left out of the existing scholarship. Lastly, building off Flock and Breitung's (2015) findings from Guangzhou, this dissertation is specifically interested in the agency of vendors.

Of further concern is that most work on China's street vendors have focused almost exclusively on a handful of the country's largest cities at or near the coast. Studies on street vendors in China's major cities like Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Dalian have driven what we know about China's street vendors today. Although a handful of exceptions exist (see Wang, 2003), there is a relative lack of work on street vendors working in the more peripheral, interior, and often poorer cities of the country like Nanchang. Additionally, the agency of China's informal street vendors in producing and reappropriating space has also not been adequately investigated.

In what follows, it becomes clear that, first, those who do street vending in Nanchang often fall under what can be referred to as marginalized groups and often must rely on a mobile existence to avoid fines or the confiscation of their goods by authorities. In the context of Sanjingwuwei, this includes the urban poor, the elderly, the unemployed, especially those who lost their jobs decades prior during China's economic reforms, and those who come from villages directly outside the city. Second, the practices of informal street vendors working in Sanjingwuwei are closely attuned to everyday life in the communities they work. Third, that the primary challenges to street vendors' way of life in Nanchang (and urban China) is in large part due to the globalization of urban space; specifically, in the form of urban renewal and local officials' attempts at safeguarding city image, rather than the needs of its people. Fourth, that public space is a vital venue for urban China's marginalized groups to sustain a living through street vending. Lastly, the overall nature

of the specific research questions addressed link this dissertation closely to the productive and transformative power of informal and micro-spatial practices in everyday life. Despite confronting significant challenges on a daily basis, Nanchang's street vendors are not without agency. In this dissertation, I hold the view that street vendors' reappropriation of public space challenges the city as a system, and, thus, rearranges urban space to serve the needs of marginalized groups.

1.4 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. The introduction describes the three research questions this study seeks to answer concerning Nanchang's informal street vendors. The introduction also describes the methodology for this study, the ethical considerations involved during data collection, the rationale for studying Nanchang's street vendors, and the limitations encountered during data collection.

Chapter Two offers a review of urban informality and a conceptual framework for interpreting the agency of informal street vendors. The chapter begins by investigating what is meant by urban informality and how the growth of the informal economy has been theorized in interdisciplinary scholarship. A review of this scholarship is followed by a description of arguments for and against informal street vendors' presence in urban public space. Here, questions concerning modernity, development, and survival are important. However, relevant to the discussion concerning street vendors' presence in public space is the debate regarding public space's use value versus its exchange value. Through these debates, a critique of what is actually meant by public space reveals why street vendors are at times seen as out of place when working in the streets. Henri Lefebvre's idea of a right to the city is then added to these debates about public

space and its significance to street vendors and urban citizenship in general. Lastly, building off Lefebvre's (1991) idea of a right to the city, the chapter describes a framework for understanding not only the agency of informal street vendors, but the ways street vending can be understood as a mundane element in the deglobalization of urban space. In this sense, street vendors become an active force in the downscaling, slowing down, and (de)commodifying of urban space in cities of China and the Global South today.

Chapter Three adopts an historical view of the presence of street vendors in urban China. First, I delineate how China's shift to a free-market capitalist economy spurred the expansion of informal work in cities. I then narrow the focus to informal street vending and explain which groups have relied on informal street vending as a livelihood strategy in post-reform China. Using secondary data and media sources, I show how the Chinese state at different points in history has had a powerful impact in dictating the degree to which street vendors are present in Chinese cities between both late dynastic periods and the post-Mao era. The chapter concludes by describing some ways cities have dealt with the increasing presence of street vendors in both soft and heavy-handed ways.

Chapter Four begins my description of street vendors working at neighborhood-level in Nanchang. The chapter begins by describing the presence of street vendors in Nanchang's public spaces. It shows that, street vendors in Nanchang, like many cities throughout China, work in both ordinary spaces like sidewalks, alleyways, and street corners as well as symbolic spaces in the city such as public squares and parks. After providing basic details and background information concerning both Nanchang's street vendors and the city as a whole, I introduce the study area, Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood. Situated in Nanchang's urban core, Sanjingwuwei is considered part of Nanchang's old city. The chapter continues its focus on street vendors in

Sanjingwuwei by describing the ways Sanjingwuwei's street vendors reappropriate public space. Photographs are used to offer a visual representation of street vendors' usage of streets, sidewalks, and other spaces in the neighborhood. This chapter also describes street vendors' distribution in Sanjingwuwei in both time and space. The chapter shows that the presence of street vendors in the neighborhood is closely attuned to the flows of everyday life that exist in Sanjingwuwei.

In Chapter Five, I describe the profiles of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors. Here, I analyze the socio-demographic backgrounds of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors and describe the ways mobility is vital to street vending in Nanchang. I also explain who Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are, what they sell, how they sell, and describe their reasons for working as street vendors, and how long they have been street vending. Street vendors' links to the formal economy at neighborhood-level are also briefly discussed. While highly descriptive and empirical in nature, this chapter offers valuable data on the lack of background information concerning urban China's street vendors.

The challenges street vendors face while working in the streets of Sanjingwuwei are the subject of Chapter Six. In this chapter, I employ a narrative approach to reveal why street vending is a difficult job for those who rely upon it as a livelihood strategy in Sanjingwuwei. Previous studies on urban China's informal street vendors often reference the tense relationship between street vendors and *chengguan*, the urban management officers in charge of dealing with illegal uses of public space, administering fines, and confiscating street vendors' goods. However, rarely investigated are the voices of street vendors relative to the difficulties they face when encountering and avoiding *chengguan*. While *chengguan* were mentioned by the street vendors who participated in this study as the biggest hindrance to working in public space, others made clear that the increase in the number of vendors in the area were significant struggles to overcome when working in the

streets. For a small portion of vendors, a perceived negative stigma towards them brought challenges to earning a living. Additionally, this chapter describes how the re-capitalization of urban space, in the form of gentrification, brings heavy challenges to street vendors as the spaces they are seeking to reappropriate are being physically torn apart. Through the narratives of street vendors, this chapter showcases the daily experiences of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors and the various forces that contribute to their precarious existence in the streets.

Chapter Seven offers a discussion about Sanjingwuwei's street vendors and urban China's street vendors more broadly by seeking to interpret what street vendors tell us about urban space in China today. Here, the findings on Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are connected to theoretical discussions concerning the use value of public space, the needs of the urban poor vis-à-vis needs of capital, and the agency of informal workers amid the on-going re-capitalization of urban space that is fueled by globalization in China today. First, an argument is made that street vendors and other informal workers in China, the Global South, and even the U.S., deserve a right to urban space. Secondly, the chapter describes some of the contributions informal street vendors make to the cities and communities they work in. Lastly, a theoretical contribution is offered by designating informal street vendors as agents of "deglobalization" in which the needs of people at the neighborhood-scale are examined through the case of street vending (Bello, 2003a, 2003b). Street vendors' agency is examined via the ways they challenge the city as a system through their active engagement in counter-hegemonic space/place-making processes. I argue that despite facing significant challenges to selling in the streets, street vendors' reappropriation of public space unintentionally rescales, decommodifies and, ultimately, deglobalizes urban space at the neighborhood-level. Furthermore, out of the need to reappropriate urban space in order to earn a living, street vendors' occupation of public space unintentionally disrupts the city as a system by

insisting on an alternative way of living that relies on the localization of urban and neighborhood life.

The dissertation concludes in Chapter Eight by offering a brief overview of the study. I first summarize the key findings of this study. Secondly, the conclusion describes the contributions this dissertation makes to the existing literature on urban informality and the limited work on informal street vendors in China today. Lastly, some suggestions for future research on China's informal street vendors are considered. This dissertation offers a unique look into a segment of China's informal sector and how it plays out in the public spaces of Nanchang. By highlighting the everyday practices, experiences, and voices of Nanchang's informal street vendors in the city's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood, this dissertation offers a valuable contribution to the sparse literature on the lives of informal street vendors in post-reform China.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE AND FRAMEWORK

Informal street vendors tend to be negatively labeled as "illegal", "dirty", and "transitory." In direct opposition to the so-called modernizing aims of cities, informal street vending is also seen as "primitive" or "traditional" as if the huge numbers of people who work as street vendors across the world have not caught up with modern times. These labels, however, disregard the fact that those who street vend, often do so for long hours of the day, run the fear of fines and confiscation of their goods, and work within public space, to survive and support themselves and their families. Nor do these labels take into account how such modernizing processes of so many cities across the Global South lead to the need for many to work informally in the streets in the first place. While referring to informal street vendors as "poor," "needy," or even "desperate" may hold a certain truth for many who do such work, these labels omit the fact that the informal street vendor is a person who must constantly reappropriate public space in his or her attempt to sustain the livelihoods of her or himself and her or his families. Therefore, street vendors need to be understood through a humanized lens as this dissertation seeks to do.

Taking a step back from street vendors specifically, we can see that there is no consensus regarding how to define informality as a whole, which systemic factors and institutions are most central to creating and expanding informal work, and how to understand informality's link to the formal economy. Concerning informal street vendors specifically, the question of whether they should be allowed to work in public space is complex. Despite a vigorous debate, clearer concepts

are urgently needed to motivate and support research into the ways public space is integral to the survival of informal street workers. In this view, more humanized perspectives into the informality-public space relationship are required for understanding the experiences of informal workers and street vendors both individually and collectively.

2.1 Urban Informality and Public Space

The lives of the most visible informal workers like street vendors, scrap collectors, recyclers, and transport providers among others clash with ideas of public space in cities across the world today. In short, the presence of these types of informal workers, along with the homeless and other marginalized groups, force us to ask ourselves just how public our public spaces are today? And, who gets to use them? This dissertation focuses solely on street vendors in Nanchang today, however, the findings of this dissertation are relatable to ongoing debates concerning the usage of public spaces throughout other cities in China and across the globe. Before briefly highlighting the history of China's street vendors in historical context and describing the geography of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors today, this chapter is concerning with introducing the theoretical framework central to this study. However, before describing this framework, the chapter defines and describes the idea of informality by highlighting the interdisciplinary literature on informality and its relation to theories of public space. Central to understanding this relationship between informal everyday practices and planned visions of public space, or what Lefebvre (1991) refers to as abstract and concrete space, is Lefebvre's call for a right to the city. Through this concept, all in the city are not only able to access public space, but to produce it for the means of expression and living, but survival.

2.1.1 Defining and Theorizing Informality

Whether referred to as the informal sector, informal economy, shadow economy, undeclared economy, or the traditional economy, informal work is a vital generator of jobs and income for a huge portion of the Global South's urban population (Roy 2011, Watson 2009, Valodia 2001). Informal employment is often labor-intensive, small-scale and low-tech. Informal labor also exists not only in both urban and rural places, but as is often the case, across a rural-urban continuum as both people, processes, goods flow between city and countryside. However, despite lacking legal recognition, protection, regulation, and often a lack of formal employment opportunities, informal work and livelihood strategies have proliferated in recent decades in the Global South (Wilson et al. 2009, Williams and Round 2007).

Typified by low-productivity enterprises and seen as semi-legal or illegal by many city authorities, many of the goods being sold or produced by informal workers consist of legal everyday products and services, and informal labor has become "the rule, rather than the exception" in many cities of the Global South. (Martine, 2012, p. 100). Some have identified social polarization in the Global South's cities as a key factor in the development and reliance on informal economies for the survival of the urban poor (see Pahl, 1988). The neoliberal age of flexibilization and the liberalization of markets have generated an overall escalation of unregulated informal activities in cities across the Global South (Benería, 2001, Boyd, 2006; Castells and Portes, 1989; Chen et al., 1999). The growth, diversification, and reliance on informal livelihoods as a way for the urban poor to eke out a living have a direct connection to processes of urbanization in the Global South (Roy, 2009; Davis, 2006).

Definitions of the "informal economy," "informal sector," or "informality" as a whole are numerous and contested. Feige (1990) has referred to the informal sector as "those actions of

economic agents that fail to adhere to the established institutional rules or are denied their protection” (p. 990). Roy (2005) sees informality as “a state of exception from the formal order of urbanization” (p. 147), something which has significantly expanded during the recent global recession (Horn, 2009). For Dovey (2012), informality “implies a lack of formal control over planning, design and construction” (p. 351), whereas AlSayyad (2004) makes the important point that definitions concerning urban informality “cannot be disentangled from geography” or “from certain area-studies discourses” due to the highly differentiated notions regarding what is meant by the “urban” (p.26). However, as Perry (2007) points out, as economic activities outside the regulation or protection of the state, informality typically connotes “disrespect for the rule of law” for local states and urban authorities (p. 1).

Informal work throughout the Global South is as diverse as definitions of it. Many informal employment activities involve small workshops providing services such as shoe and bicycle repair, brick making, or embroidery, which are often less visible and confined to particular areas, whereas some, such as street vendors, transport providers, scrap collectors and recyclers are highly mobile and clearly visible in the public spaces of towns and cities. The least visible are informal workers who run or work in home-based enterprises, many of whom are women. These more hidden elements are often subcontracted to sweatshops at low wages by formal firms and linked to the clothing industries intended for consumers in the Global North (Sassen, 1994).

Informal employment accounts for a large proportion of total non-agricultural employment across the world. The percentages are particularly high in Asia as a region, yet vary greatly by individual country. In South and East Asia (excluding China), non-agricultural informal employment, according to a 2014 International Labor Organization (ILO) study, ranged from 42 per cent in Thailand, 68 percent in Vietnam, 73 percent in Indonesia, to as high as 84 per cent in

India. The same ILO data taken from six large urban centers in China (Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang, Wuhan, and Xi'an), found that the number of people working in informal employment in non-agricultural activities in China indicated that while “informal employment is fairly significant (33 percent)”, it was “lower than in the other reporting countries of the region” (p. xi). On the whole, statistical data on the size and percentage of non-agricultural informal employment in China is lacking and limited to only a handful of urban areas (ILO, 2013, 2014; Cooke, 2006). However, this data presented at the national scale does not fully capture the importance and growth of informal work must also be supplemented with studies at smaller and local scales as this dissertation does.

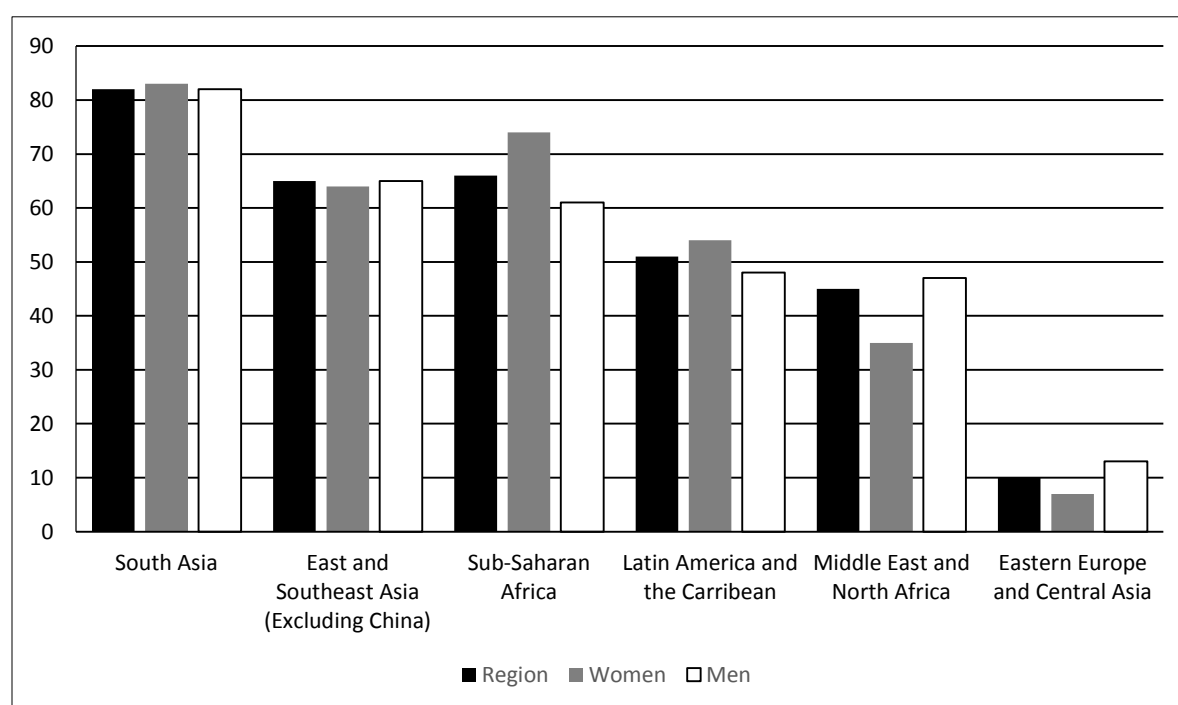


Figure 1. Informal employment as a percentage of non-agricultural employment by region. Source: Vanek et al. (2014).

Across the Global South, informal work offers temporary and long-term means of getting by for those who have lost their job or cannot find a job in the formal sector (Chen 2005). However,

debates over informality's place in cities of the Global South range from positive appraisals of its usefulness for "promoting employment and growth" (Sethuraman, 1976, p.69; also Donovan, 2008), and its centrality in the functioning and livability of informal or shanty-town settlements on the edges of cities (Kudva, 2009), to critical analyses of its lack of "strategic economic power" in cities, to name but a few (Davis, 2006, p. 27). Despite the heterogeneous nature of informal employment around the globe, and the numerous ways the urban poor have relied on their "creativity" as an income generator, informal employment is beset by one common feature: they are almost always deprived of lawful and social protection (Birkbeck 1978, Tripp 1997, Donovan 2008).

As numerous attempts to define informal work exist, so too are there many theoretical explanations as to why informal work occurs and why it has spread. Shortly after the Second World War, scholarly dialogue on development was highly influenced by what is now known as the Lewis model. Proposed by economist Arthur Lewis in 1954, this dual-sector model was based on the assumption that there was an unlimited supply of labor in the traditional or subsistence sector. Arguing that a demand for labor will increase as long as the formal (regulated) sector develops, Lewis and his followers hypothesized that excess labor would be absorbed into the formal industrial sector, resulting in the eventual disappearance of those employed in the traditional (informal, subsistence) sector. However, the reality is in fact contrary to Lewis' predictions (see Williamson 1999, Chen 2005, Kunnanatt 2013). Informal economies in many localities throughout the Global South have continued to expand and grow (Sassen, 1994). Despite the rapid expansion of industrialization in places like South and Southeast Asia that have employed cheap labor throughout the developing world, the "antagonistic relationship" that the capitalist production

system has with traditional and local economies has played a role in the rise in number of people dependent on informal or non-standard employment (Harvey, 1985, p.3).

Discourses on the growth and heterogeneity of informality can be split into four schools of thought. As "the bane of informal economy research since its inception" (Meagher 2001, p.154), the dualist perspective sees the informal economy as being comprised of marginal activities distinct from, and, unconnected to the formal sector, providing a last resort for the poor and "assuring human security in a situation of economic crisis" (Yasmeen 2001, p.92). The dualist perspective originated from British anthropologist Keith Hart's (1973) influential study on the economic activities of rural migrants in Accra, Ghana, in which the term "informal sector" was first coined. Emerging during a period when the developing world was experiencing skyrocketing levels of urban population growth and in-migration from city hinterlands, dualists see structural change and demographic shifts caused by rural-to-urban migration as key factors leading to imbalances in people's skills in relation to modern economic employment opportunities available in the urban formal sector (McGee 1996). Likewise, informal income generating activities played an active role in encouraging urban migration (Sethuraman 1976). For Breman (1996), it is not apt to simply label the formal and informal sectors of poor nations as a "schism between more and less modern or advanced economic segments;" so instead labelling should be along the lines of unequal results "from a faulty policy towards formalization" (pp.6-12).

Viewing informality "as a form of resistance" in which the self-employed informal workforce struggles to make do under repressive and inefficient government regulations, is the position of the legalist (neoliberal) perspective (Biles, 2008, p.543). Associated with the work of economist Hernando de Soto (1989), legalists' prescribe that the rise of informal activity is solely due to the inimical legal system of developing nations whose registration policies revolve around

a costly, time-consuming, and cumbersome process in which formal status requires legally recognized assets as well as expensive property rights. Like the dualist view, the legalist perspective relies on the formation of a formal/informal dichotomy and the state's role in the creation of such a dichotomy (Coletto 2010). However, unlike the dualist perspective, informality is not created by demographic, social, or economic change, but is formed out of “a hostile reception” by the cities’ legal systems towards the urban poor (De Soto 1989, p.10). Therefore, informal “entrepreneurs” hide from government intervention, simultaneously preferring to operate in the informal economy “when it is impossible to comply with the bureaucratic procedures and enforcements of the government” (Khandan and Nili 2014, p.73).

A third position regarding the development of informal economies is the voluntarist tradition. In a policy sense, voluntarists seek to more closely incorporate informal employment into the formal economic system so as to avoid unfair competition. For voluntarists, informality is theorized as the result of a cost-benefit analysis in which informal and self-employed enterprises closely weigh the benefits and disadvantages of both formalization and remaining unregistered. Despite “irregular work conditions, high turnover and, overall, lower rates of remuneration”, voluntarists acknowledge the attractiveness of avoiding formalization (Maloney, 2004, p.1159). Flexibility is often cited as a primary driver to work. Because of this, voluntarists assert the reasons for high numbers of women’s informal self-employment (Maloney, 2014; Chant, 1991). Voluntarists’ emphasis on local policy is, in an economic sense, arguing that the incorporation of informal enterprises and their employees within a formal regulatory environment strengthens local tax bases to fund local services and projects (see Maloney, 2004; 1999). According to Mahoney (2004), the incorporation of informal enterprises and their tax contributions help support the public

good “from which tax-avoiding informal workers cannot be excluded,” otherwise leaving formal sector enterprises to compensate for the taxes missed out from informal enterprises.

Lastly, culminating during the late 1970s and early 1980s was the Marxist or structuralist perspective which viewed the non-waged urban poor (i.e., the informal sector) as the result of an overriding, unequal, and increasingly flexible capitalist system (Portes 1981). According to Gerry (1987), neo-Marxists see informal “petty commodity producers” in the developing world as “little more than disguised wage workers indirectly exploited” through the sub-contracting system (p.112). Therefore, when workers become “redundant or useless,” firms simply returned them to their homes or villages resulting in a “semi-proletarianized” labor force (Gerry, 1987, p.112). Under neoliberal capitalism, Portes (1983) further claims that large firms are able to reach directly into the pool of unprotected workers. By “partially restoring the elasticity of their labor supply” large firms have an ameliorative effect on the Global South’s unemployment while simultaneously bypassing wage increases (ibid, p.163). In short, researchers of the Marxist variety have emphasized that the informal sector is functionally integrated as part of a single global capitalist system and assert that economic dualism as “an expression” stems from the colonial or neo-colonial context of uneven development (Peattie 1980, p.3).

While the dualist, legalist, and Marxist perspectives remain dominant schools of thought regarding the informal economy’s development, other approaches have described the proliferation of informality across the globe. Given that a huge presence of informal employment in the Global South’s cities are made up of women (Lund and Srinivas 2000), feminist writers have refuted the notion that the formal economy's “macho values” cause women to prefer informal work, but argue that women work informally “out of necessity rather than choice” (Hoyman 1987, p.81). Rogerson’s (1996) study on the linkages between poverty and informality in South Africa has

shown that many micro-enterprises not only conduct business in the informal sector because they lack a strong capital base as well as operating permits, but do so as the informal sector serves as a more productive incubator to grow their businesses towards eventual formality. Finally, post-structuralists have invested informal entrepreneurs with more agency, considering informal work with increased subjectivity and identities (Biles, 2009).

Urban informality needs to be understood in relation to processes of urbanization in the Global South. Therefore, the growth of urban informality in the Global South's metropolitan areas should not be understood as only an economic sector, but what Roy (2005) calls a *mode* of urbanization. Here, the state must be seen as a primary producer of informal spaces and practices in the city. According to Roy (2005), the state plays a key role in the creation of an urban informality. However, rather than the strict dichotomy of formal and informal economies giving rise to what is formal and informal, it is "a complex continuum of legality and illegality" within urban and semi-urban spaces that differentiates informality from within (p. 149). Thus, the boundary between formal and informal should be understood as porous, as different forms of informality are embodied by different standards of legitimacy decided by the state.

How does informal work occurring in public spaces fit into the above discourses? The globalization of urban space has transformed urban space in the Global South into patchworks of urban enclaves where public spaces resemble spaces of hyper-consumption surrounded by often slum-like living conditions (Douglass, 2002). This has very real consequences for legitimizing what types of practices are allowed by neoliberal urban elites within city space. Specifically, informal street vendors' presence in these increasingly globalizing urban spaces has triggered serious debate about their role within the public realm (Donovan, 2008). How does public space serve as reproductive spaces for those not tied to the global city-making process? Does informal

street workers' reappropriation of public space challenge municipal governments' prioritization of the interests of global capital rather than the basic life spaces of ordinary people and those who eke out a living at “the bottom of the urban economy” (Breman, 2003)? More specifically, how does the agency of informal street vendors challenge elite and state-led ideas of urban and public space in the neoliberal city? The next sections of this chapter describe the debate concerning informal street vendors' role in public space, how there has been a decline in public space, and how an informal economy has evolved in contemporary China.

2.1.2 The Street Vendor Debate

For many rural-urban migrants and urban poor in the Global South, the ability to attain a livelihood is both difficult and overwhelming. To help ease this burden or achieve what Davis (2006) has referred to as “informal survivalism,” some migrants and urban poor turn to informal street vending as both a short and long-term strategy (p. 178). Street vending and trading in city streets “presently represents one of the most visible and popular occupations in the Global South” (Donovan, 2008, p. 29). Street vending not only offers an employment strategy for those in need of one, but is a fundamental aspect of urban economies and everyday life in many places around the world. Selling local produce and snacks as well as handicrafts, clothing, and in some instances specialized services, street vendors make many vital contributions to the communities in which they work. But, street vendors, in the eyes of local authorities, are not always seen as innovative entrepreneurs, but as an out-of-place element of urban society who congest streets, create disorder, and reflect a pre-capitalist economy associated with illegality and poverty. Donovan (2008) reminds us that these elite notions of informal street vending are “often steeped with modernist

undertones” that emphasize cities as spaces of profit, capital and exchange instead of for the use and survival of a city's population (p. 30).

Responses to street vending by local governments vary greatly. However, in most cities, street vendors are often ill-treated. In countless cities, informal street vendors work in the streets despite city-wide bans on the practice. In Lagos, both those who sell and buy goods on the street run the risk of six months imprisonment and a fine of more than 200 U.S. dollars (Akinwotu, 2016). In some cities, like Cairo, Rabat, Kigali, and Beijing, violence and even death has resulted from local attempts to forcefully remove street vendors from public spaces. In New Delhi, a Street Vendors Act was passed by parliament with the goal of better protecting street vendors' rights in public space, but bribes and harassment ensue as local governments fail to implement the law (Nath, 2016). In Los Angeles, ill-treatment and bans on where street vendors can and cannot work have severely constrained the livelihood strategies of many who have relied on street vending for many years (Estrada and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011). Morales (2000) associates such variation in the (un)acceptability of street vendors because of local governments' poor understanding of economic situations. In this sense, misconceptions regarding informality hide true factors regarding the importance and embeddedness of informal activity in the functioning of everyday urban life. Similarly, Austin (1993) points out that many cities are unwilling to depart from long histories of seeing street vendors as a nuisance.

Additionally, across cities of the Global South, including those in China, urban planners and municipal bureaucrats "prefer public spaces to be clean, tidy, and clear of homeless, beggars, and street vendors who are considered to erode the 'modern' aesthetics of the city" (Walsh and Maneepong, 2012, p.256). Here, local governments keen on upholding a good business climate rely on relocation schemes and, in some cases, bans on street vending in general, to restrict non-

regulated capitalism in public spaces (Cross 1998). Local governments challenging the presence of informal street vendors in the city base their arguments on general claims focused around congestion, 'broken windows', and unfair market competition (Donovan 2008). Following broken windows theory, many urban authorities posit that if street vending is left unchecked, it would result in urban disorder, crime, and "a downward spiral of urban decay" (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004, p.319). Congestion and "disorder" caused by informal street vendors thus becomes the "broken window" symbolizing the advent of urban decline.

In an economic sense, informal vendors are chastised for creating unfair competition on the grounds that street vendors offer cheaper goods than tax-paying merchants, while possibly providing contraband or "knock off" goods (Donovan 2008). These so-called "black markets" are denounced for evading tax regulations, and forcing cities to miss out on possible tax bases to fund larger public projects (McLaren 1998). Lastly, avowals that vending is harmful to city image are major contributors to restrictive policy and removal of informal workers from public spaces. Taken as a whole, opponents to informal street vending bring serious planning concerns. But, questions regarding the continuing omission of informal vending from the urban planning process and the aggressive policies which solely label vendors as local irritants are raised by supporters of street vending who regard them as vital contributors to urban life.

The practice of informal street vending is defended for numerous reasons. Supporters of vendors claim that perspectives regarding informal vending "should be based on the preferences and needs of the majority" rather than those of the urban elite (Illy, 1986, p. 78). Hence, informal street vending should be understood through a variety of contexts in relation to everyday life. In spite of local inconsistencies regarding the acceptance of vendors, supporters of vendors and vending practices advocate for more inclusive local planning policies (Morales, 2000). Informal

vending as a kind of entrepreneurship has been placed at the center of support for street vending (see Bromley 2000). In this sense, entrepreneurial qualities are essential when local welfare systems are lacking, or don't exist at all. According to Bromley (2000), street vending serves as an entrepreneurially-driven safety net which can contribute to sustaining the needs of vendors and their families.

Informal vending also allows women in certain cases to act as entrepreneurs. However, research shows that the opportunities provided to women to take up street vending commonly stem from place-specific institutions, socio-cultural constraints, locally-perceived norms of women's work, and uneven gender relations (Agadjanian, 2002). Despite significant challenges to organizing and often being paid less than men in similar occupations (Lloyd-Evans 2008), vending allows women to make valuable contributions to their households when allowed (Eapen 2001). In some instances, vending and other forms of informal sector employment are among the few employment options that allow women to earn additional income while simultaneously caring and raising children.

Informal street vending is also supported because of its direct links to the formal economy. Researchers in support of street vendors make two overlapping arguments in this regard. First, street vendors, along with other occupational groups in the informal economy, help expand the formal economy. And second, informal street vending in particular provides cheaper goods and services for low-income communities and neighborhoods, thus, allowing them to become consumers. Proponents backing street vendors' ability to contribute to the local formal economy argue that many of the goods sold by informal vendors are purchased from formal sources, and their customers often work in formal jobs. Therefore, "the economic value of street vending cannot be overemphasized" and should not be measured solely in quantifiable terms (Jimu 2004, p.23).

Street vending can also build both cultural and human capital, add to the vibrancy of urban places, and contribute to the distinctiveness of cities. Therefore, we must interpret informal street vendors “as a spatially-grounded activity which fuses cultural meanings, historical experiences, political struggles, and economic circumstances” into our understandings of public space (Lewinson 1998, p. 219). Of central concern here are the values and meanings associated with informal work as the ways that “local” knowledge of street vending is produced in space and time.

What should be clear is that certain competing discourses concerning the nexus between street vendors and public spaces in the Global South exist. These discourses involve (1) the inconsistency of policies towards street vending; (2) street vending as an entrepreneurial strategy for the urban poor; (3) street vendors’ relationship to urban space as either a perceived nuisance or a vital contributor to the urban economy; (4) street vending as an employment strategy for women; and (5) the ways street vendors challenge or fit into local cultural-economic visions of the city. While a multitude of reasons exist for supporting and not supporting street vendors in the city, these competing views concerning informal street vendors' and other street workers' presence in public space must be contextualized in the overarching debates concerning "the end of public space" and the commodification of the public realm in cities today (Mitchell, 1995, p.108).

2.1.3 The End of Public Space?

In the vernacular sense, public space is typically associated with parks, playgrounds, city squares, and other similar places of leisure and social activity. They are spaces used at the scale of the everyday for recreation, social interaction, expression, and for improving the overall quality of life (Gehl, 2011; Lloyd and Auld, 2003). However, for marginalized groups like the urban poor, the homeless, migrant workers, and informal street vendors, the increasingly exclusionary nature

of cities driven by the globalization and commodification of urban space manifests itself most clearly in the realm of public space (Yeoh and Huang 1998). Banerjee (2001) has highlighted how the “overall decline of the public realm and public space” has gone beyond critical questions of “adequacy and distributive equity” to asking “how open are our public spaces?” (p.11). In this sense, focus is placed on the limitations forced upon public life, human capital, and civil society via globalization and the privatization of urban space (Kohn, 2004). Mike Davis' (2006) work in Los Angeles has infused new discussion concerning the semi-public and "militarized" public spaces which so many global cities have adopted. Similarly, Neil Smith (1996) has identified what he sees as revanchist urban policies which regroup, retake, and clear out certain elements (i.e., the homeless, minorities, street vendors) from public streets and parks. In this light, a type of class warfare has been waged through the loss of public space (see Smith, 1996). Street vendors and the urban poor, who rely on public space, have long had contentious relations with local officials regarding their usage of public space (Hunt, 2009; Donovan, 2008; Anjaria, 2006). Everyday practices like street vending can challenge the dominant ways of seeing public space (in both China and throughout the Global South), transforming it from a controlled and ordered space to a space-in-use (Swider, 2014).

For Henri Lefebvre (1991), urban space is socially produced. Lefebvre saw a distinction between what he labeled as *abstract* space, or the commodified and bureaucratized space of cities, and *concrete* space, or the realm of everyday life and lived experience, to which the former superimposed itself over the latter. Abstract space, only allows activities to take place that are deemed appropriate and suitable for that space. Abstract space is also ahistorical and "devoid of any indications of the social struggles around its production, or traces of the concrete space it replaces" (McCann, 1999, p. 169). Viewing public space as an abstract space, we can see that any

"nuisance" or "unwarranted" activities like street vending will be most likely removed from that space by neoliberal elites in power.

By the early 1990s, leaders of American cities began publically denouncing "the increased disorderliness" caused by panhandlers and the homeless (Ellickson, 1996, p. 1167). In response, local statutes and ordinances began to be adopted deeming what is appropriate, when, and in what types of public spaces within the city. Mitchell's (1998) work on the homeless notes how begging from the homeless in cities "seems easily dissociable from 'pure speech,' especially since its message is so frequently inchoate" therefore opening up homeless and panhandlers "to quite severe restriction if not outright legal elimination" (p. 10). Devroe's (2008) research in Belgium and The Netherlands have proven that tensions over public space are often rarely over security, and bring about questions regarding how a "nuisance" in public space is defined. In cities of the Global South, street vendors may give the impression that the local state has lost control of its public spaces. In Mumbai, as Anjaria (2006) points out, street vendors have learned not to fear a regulatory state which sees them as out of place, but a predatory one which demands bribes, threatens demolition of informal markets, and randomly confiscates unlicensed street vendors' goods. Yeoh and Huang (1998) have identified how migrant domestic workers in Singapore are marginalized from public space through the influence of a bifurcated city that treats suburban and home-like spaces as the realm of women, and the city center, characterized by productive and business-type work, as the realm of men.

In building up to this dissertation's theoretical framework, this section has highlighted the complicated nature of public spaces in cities today. When taking into consideration the class-based divisions in our urban societies today, it should become clear that ideas of what public spaces are go beyond simple visions of parks, street corners, or city squares. No longer are these spaces

simply for passing through, relaxing, or recreation. For some, they are spaces of contestation, and even survival; the latter being especially true for the homeless, street vendors, and other informal livelihoods. This importance of public space for marginalized groups comes during a period, described by Banerjee (2001), as one characterized by a disappearance of public space. True, most urban dwellers use public spaces as places of relaxation, walking, or recreation, but for many others, whose survival relies on public space, a direct conflict exists between elite visions of space and the marginalized's usages, reliance, and reappropriation of it. This clashing is what Lefebvre (1991) refers to as abstract versus concrete space. Whereas the latter is produced by individuals in the city, the former can be quite exclusionary vis-à-vis the commodification of city space. This section introduced the idea that we are losing our public spaces, and, that they are strictly designed so to limited out-of-place elements in urban society. That is why this dissertation on Nanchang's street vendors invokes the thinking of Henri Lefebvre and his idea that city spaces are to be both accessed, as well as, produced, by all; hence, maintaining and allowing an individual's "right to the city" (1996).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section outlines two concepts used in this dissertation's theoretical framework. First, it describes Henri Lefebvre's thinking concerning "the right to the city." This idea is useful for understanding why street vendors' and other marginalized groups reappropriate public space, turning it into a space of usage. Second, this section highlights what is meant by deglobalization and how it is relevant to understanding street vendors' agency in the shaping of public space through their reappropriation of it.

2.2.1 The Right to the City

Questions concerning the politics of public space and the limitations to individual and collective representation in public space have been asked through Lefebvre's idea of a 'right to the city.' For Lefebvre, whose 1967 book *Le droit à la ville* strongly influenced the Paris protests of May 1968, the right to the city encompasses many things related to the right to urban life in capitalist society. Central to Lefebvre's interpretation of urban society is the importance of the ways space is produced for, and by urban inhabitants. To Lefebvre (1996 [1968]), a right to the city is a "transformed and renewed right to urban life" (p. 158). Further still, the right to the city is both "a cry and a demand" (Lefebvre, 1967, p. 158). Here, the city dweller's ability to produce urban space and inhabit the city should be allowed in ways that lets them counter alienation. In this sense, the social value of urban space weighs equally with its monetary value.

Broadly speaking, for Lefebvre, citizenship belongs to all who live in the city and has no relation to state or national citizenship status. There is direct relevance here for informal street vendors. As their practices in public space are often seen as contradictory to modernization, a kind of outsider status is projected onto them, therefore, limiting their status as urban citizens. Secondly, Lefebvre's right to the city concept has stirred a wide-ranging discussion concerning the capitalism-urbanization nexus. For David Harvey (2008), a right to the city assists in attempting to democratize collective power to reshape urban life. Since the "disbursement" of surplus capital "typically lies in a few hands," the right to the city, for Harvey (2008), "depends on the exercise of collective power to reshape the process of urbanization" (p. 23).

For Lefebvre, a right to the city is also the right to appropriate public space. In this regard, it is the right to access, use, occupy and appropriate (or reappropriate) public space (Mitchell, 2003). Here, space is to be produced by people, and for the needs of people, not capital (Brenner et al.,

2012). Through appropriation, the possibility of a different kind of city can take place. When informal street vendors are deprived of their ability to use, occupy, and reappropriate public space, significant challenges arise for them to maintain an alternate way of living that allows them to survive. Restrictions to public space are contrary to Lefebvre's idea of the city as an oeuvre: or, a comprehensive work made up of different elements of urban society. The oeuvre, to Lefebvre, is a privileged site of social interaction. It is a space of meeting where both the labor and daily practices of urban inhabitants coalesce to produce a finished product called the city (Kofman and Lebas, 1996). Lefebvre's conception of the city as an oeuvre stems from his criticism of specific forms of urban rationality driven by the state, bureaucratic agendas, private ownership and economism. For Lefebvre, the increasing market logic suppresses the city as an oeuvre when the "use value of cities as centers of cultural, political and social life" become "undermined by processes of industrialization and commercialization, creating exchange value and the commodification of urban assets" (Brown, 2010, p.2). As Kofman and Lebas (1996) note, modern statism displaces "the creative capacity of the oeuvre" (p. 20). This is similar to what Habermas (1985) sees as the colonization of the "lifeworld" by bureaucratic and capitalist "systems."

2.2.2 Reappropriation as Deglobalization?

I argue that understanding street vendors' practices in public space should be understood through the concept of deglobalization and the recolonization of the lifeworld. In its simplest sense, globalization refers to the accelerated integration of production and markets at the international scale, rather than the local. Here, at the global-scale, globalization has several key dimensions, the most basic of which are: (1) it is a process driven by the reduction or elimination of tariffs and quotas in international trade and the erasure of barriers to capital flows and direct investment; (2) its main engines are transnational corporations whose endless quest for profit drives them to bring

down trade barriers; (3) the relegation of the national economy and the reliance on different parts of the global economy based upon its functionality to the system; and (4) a shift from government to governance to which the state at all levels yields to global economic governance.

The influence of globalization on urban space in the Global South has been dramatic, and has incorporated the interconnectedness of global capitalism, the hybridization of spatial phenomena, and the increasing spread of globalization. Unquestionably, globalization has tremendous power in rearranging urban space (Douglass, 2002). Cities throughout the Global South exhibit how the globalization of space has challenged the uniqueness of place as spaces of retail consumerism in the form of shopping malls, fast food chains, and commercial districts erode local landscapes, economies, and cultures (Bao, 2008). Equally influential to the transformation of urban landscapes in the Global South is the never-ending pursuit by local governments of attracting capital from abroad, which has “begun to ever more effectively trump the local and national roles of cities” (Douglass, 2002, p. 557). In this sense, the needs of global markets trump the needs of local people. This has greatly influenced how the city as a lived space is experienced and the ways public space has become increasingly privatized. As is frequently the case, “the spaces of everyday culture yield to the spaces of commodified cultural creations that are increasingly linked to global name brands and franchises” (Douglass, 2002, p. 557).

On the whole, globalization and the rhetoric of "growth" associated with it has not ushered in prosperity for most of the world's people. A 2013 United Nations Development Report titled "Humanity Divided" claimed that there could be one billion people living below the \$2 per day poverty line in 2030 and fully acknowledged that global financial integration weakens "the bargaining position of relatively immobile labor vis-à-vis fully mobile capital" (p.8). Therefore, pushing back are communities, nations, and individuals who suggest an alternative economic

system with emphasis on local needs, not global capitalism. Supporters of deglobalization say that those who are already well-off economically are the ones who prosper from globalization. And, the organizing of economic space is solely to serve the needs of consumer capitalism (Bello 2003a, 2009). Such critiques of globalization contend that local political systems are not willing, nor can they adequately deal with the challenges brought on by globalization (Beck, 2000). However, as Bond (2005) argues, “the forces of globalization and commodification, and the countervailing forces of deglobalization (of capital) and decommodification (of basic needs) are together locked in combat” at many scales and in numerous places across the globe (p. 337).

But what components comprise a push for deglobalization? Some basic rudiments of deglobalization call for: (1) production for the domestic, not export markets; (2) an acknowledgement that growth has limits, and diverse economic systems should be encouraged; (3) the production of goods at local and national-level as much that they can preserve community; (4) trade policies to protect local economies from the power of transnational corporations, not for them; (5) democratic, rather than bureaucratic, economic decision-making; (6) greater supervision of the private sector, and a replacement of global economic institutions with regional ones; (7) ending the rural-urban divide that is endemic to capitalist systems; and (8) an implementation of policies that redistribute basic services such as education, water, housing, and health and prevent? land-grabbing in rural areas so to preserve community and limit urbanization. In sum, "deglobalization is not a synonym for withdrawing from the world economy. It means a process of restructuring the world economic and political system so that the latter builds the capacity of local and national economies instead of degrading it" (Bello, 2003b, p. 1).

What is noteworthy in regards to this dissertation is that despite being a product of the inequality brought on by globalization, informal street vendors should also be understood as a

mundane force in the deglobalization of urban space. First, informal street vending is not export-oriented, and helps sustain local urban economies that are not reliant on the privatization of urban space. Second, informal street vendors sustain local cycles of rural-urban interaction in the form of selling and providing goods from the immediate area. Third, informal street vending serves the needs of local people, not capital; in the ways it acts as an employment strategy and sells goods to local people and the urban poor. Fourth, informal street vendors are not market-dependent nor influenced by over-accumulation. Finally, informal street vendors create an energetic street life and enhance urban vitality, thus challenging dominating spaces of retail consumerism driven by globalization in the urban Global South.

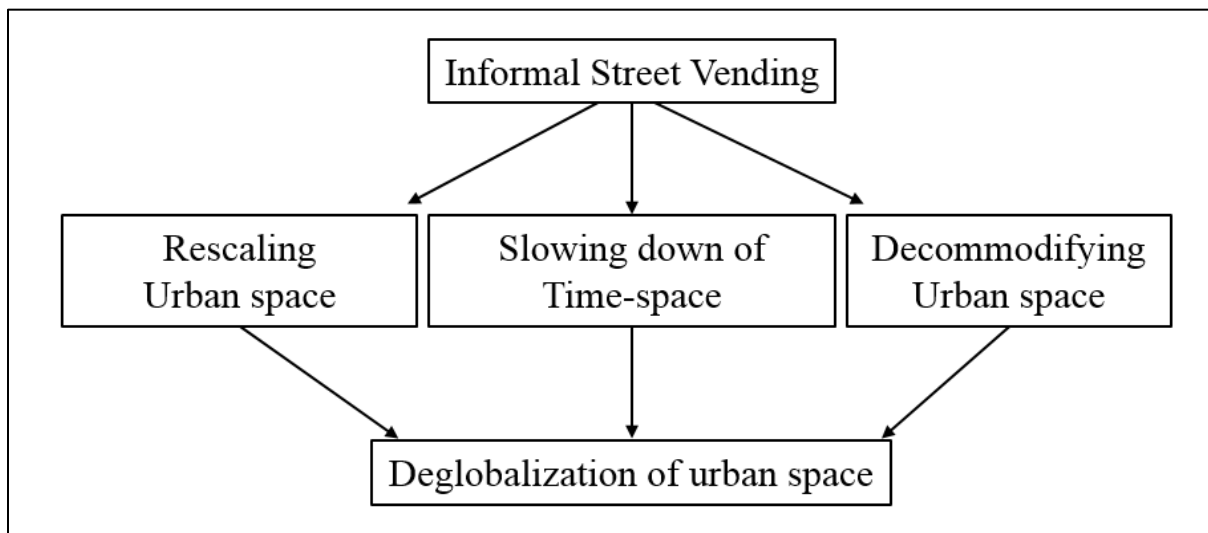


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework: Informal street vendors as a form of deglobalization. Source: Author

When taken together, these descriptive elements of informal street vendors’ relationship with the deglobalization of urban space offer a broader perspective concerning the agency of informal workers and suggest a new framework for understanding the agency of informal street vendors in particular. By framing informal street vendors as agents of deglobalization, it becomes clear that, street vendors and their practices reshape urban spaces in three ways that are inherently

geographical. First, in the simplest sense, street vendors re-scale urban space. Secondly, the way street vendors exist in public space represents agency in the temporal geographies of the city. Lastly, and perhaps in the most extreme sense, street vending practices resist the commodification of urban space by emphasizing public space's use value instead of its exchange value.

The conceptual framework above is a key component of this dissertation. In Chapter Seven of this dissertation the framework will be used to describe and analyze the agency of Nanchang's informal street vendors and the ways they reshape urban space at the neighborhood scale. Can informality occurring in public spaces be considered as a process contesting globalization's dominance of urban space? The literature pertaining to (de)globalization and the nexus that links it to urban space does not take into consideration the role of informal livelihoods despite in some places constituting a large portion of a city's workforce. Hence, the opportunity arises to link informality, and the ways informal work shapes urban space in a place-specific context, to the ways their work in public space acts as a mundane force for the deglobalization of urban space in both urban China and the Global South more broadly.

2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have described what is meant by urban informality, its theorizations, and the debates that surround informal street vendors' presence in public space. As public space becomes increasingly privatized and activities allowed in those spaces is kept to a minimum, street vendors become a contentious group in the power structures that shape and determine norms in public spaces. This chapter has also laid out a suggested theoretical framework for interpreting the agency of informal street vendors not only in China but throughout the globe. In this framework, I see vendors as an element of deglobalization. What follows is an in depth description of the

practices and experiences of street vendors who work in an ordinary neighborhood of Nanchang, China. However, before showing the results of data collected on this group of informal vendors in Nanchang, Chapter Three offers a brief history of informal street workers in China, how the development of an informal economy evolved in recent decades, and who exactly relies on informal street vending as a livelihood strategy in urban China today.

CHAPTER THREE

CHINA'S STREET VENDORS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The presence of street vendors in China's cities is a centuries-old phenomenon of Chinese urbanism (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014). Different forms of street commerce were central to the everyday lives of city dwellers for much of China's urban history (Wang, 2003). For Wang (2003), this was especially true for the urban commoners and lower classes who resided in China's cities during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The importance of street commerce, in particular, street vending, holds similar significance today in China's rapidly growing cities. Today, street vending offers an important lifeline for those left behind or disadvantaged by China's shift to capitalism. Yet, after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, street vending and private commerce was strictly suppressed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the decades that followed Mao Zedong's leadership. Today, the presence of street vendors is a rapidly growing phenomenon throughout China's cities since deregulation, the large-scale movement of villagers to cities, and widespread layoffs supplanted cradle-to-grave employment for many urban inhabitants. However, informal street commerce in China's cities is still suppressed. In general, during the pre-reform era (1949-1978), China's cities “were devoid of beggars and squatters” and “of any apparent social disparity” because urban orderliness “was achieved largely by immobilizing its population, especially those in the countryside” (Chan, 1996, p.134).

There is now, however, a highly visible social disparity in China's cities that was unleashed by China's economic reforms. These reforms, according to Chan (1996) “have gradually shaken

the basis of previous social orderliness” and a highly polarized two-class society has emerged (p.134). Thus, a growing reliance on informal street vending as an employment strategy for many people in China’s cities demonstrate one side of this socio-economic transformation. Further, like so many cities across the Global South, the presence of informal street workers and vendors, incites much local debate concerning the use of public space as a work place in China's cities. On the one hand, informal street vending alleviates urban poverty, increases urban employment, allows low-income individuals and communities to sustain themselves through human capital, and contributes to vibrant communities and streetscapes. On the other hand, city officials see street vendors as a nuisance, arguing that their presence destabilizes local economies through unfair competition, are contradictory to urban management standards, and undermine city appearance. As this chapter shows, these in-the-street debates concerning the accessibility of public space for China's street vendors usually brings them into conflict with urban management officers, or *chengguan*, who have the power to remove, fine and confiscate street vendors' goods and items.

3.1 The Growth of an Informal Economy in China

Since the commencement of economic reforms under Deng Xiaoping in 1978, which shifted China from a planned socialist economy towards market socialism, China’s urban areas have experienced dramatic social and spatial changes (Wu, 2002). Through the combination of market reforms, rural areas with large pools of surplus labor, and a gradual loosening of state control on people’s mobility, China’s urbanization rates quickly grew, as did the expansion of an informal economy (Shahid and Saich, 2008). For rural-urban migrants and the urban poor, informal employment serves as a survival mechanism done “to cushion the negative impact caused by the shift from the planned economy towards the market economy” (Cooke 2006, p.1471).

Historically, there have been four major factors driving the growth of informal employment in reform and post-reform China since the 1980s. First, beginning in 1978 and rapidly expanding throughout the 1980s, so-called township and village enterprises (TVEs, or *xiangzhen qiye*) allowed peasant entrepreneurs in the countryside to set up small market-oriented manufacturing bases, resulting in an instant industrialization of rural and peri-urban areas. Relying on an organizational structure which hired informal wage labor or relied on unpaid family members, TVEs in 1978 totaled roughly 1.5 million with nearly 30 million employees. Two decades later, there were nearly 24 million TVEs employing more than 135 million workers throughout China (Dacosta and Carroll, 2001). With the disintegration of China's rural commune system and a name change from the former "commune and brigade enterprises" to TVEs, by the early 1990s, TVEs were employing a third of the agricultural sector's workforce (Fan, Chen, and Kirby 1996, p. 73). According to Zhang (1999, p. 62) by 1995, TVEs also accounted for two-thirds of the total rural output, 45 percent of the gross industrial output, and roughly one quarter of China's gross domestic product (GDP). Not only did this change help kick-start China's economy, TVEs absorbed surplus labor from agriculture, alleviated poverty, brought money and capital to local communities and governments, and improved the living standards of hundreds of millions of rural inhabitants.

Another factor driving the growth of an informal economy that stemmed from China's turn to a free market capitalist system was the growth of rural-urban migration. Beginning in the early 1980s, tens-of-millions of rural-urban migrants (*nongmingong*) migrated to cities to seek out employment. While many were employed in formal businesses or enterprises, many were in some way informally employed (Meng 2001). Accepting not only the lowest-paid but also the hardest, dirtiest, and most dangerous jobs spurned by urban residents, *nongmingong* are not allowed formal urban resident status due to the registration system (*hukou*) which designates services and benefits

based on an urban/rural division (see Chan and Zhang 1999, Knight and Gunatilaka 2010). While almost always working without benefits and social protection, rural-urban migrants found employment in small so-called 'private enterprises' (*siying qiye*) in cities and towns as well as less-regulated forms of 'self-employed' labor "in a great variety of pursuits" (Huang 2009, p. 406).

A third component contributing to the growth of the informal sector in China during the 1980s stemmed from privatization of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Through privatization, tens-of-millions of urban residents, many of whom are now elderly, lost their jobs in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of the massive downsizing and privatization of state-owned enterprises (Meng, 2001; Cooke, 2006; Huang, 2009). Most notably, jobs in manufacturing were heavily downsized in which many state sector employees increasingly found themselves without work. Bai et al (2009) points out that "earlier privatized SOEs" during reforms were quicker to revert to layoffs than SOEs that were not immediately privatized during the first years of economic reform (p. 17). Many of these people (*xiagang*) have ended up in the informal tertiary sector, providing services such as informal transport and street vending (Chen, 2004).

Finally, since the early 1990s informal private enterprises and informally self-employed "businesses" (*getihu*) have also added to the growth of the informal economy in China. Perhaps the most ambiguous group of the four contributing to the informal sector's growth in China, *getihu* are very small, quasi-formal businesses that are commonly managed and run by a single family and attain a local business license but outside the coverage of social security. These self-employed businesses are extremely prone to the risks of market competition as well as urban renewal and demolition as they are typically located in poorer areas of the city as well as on the urban fringe. Since these types of self-employed businesses typically help deal with unemployment issues in urban China, numerous large urban centers have exempted these self-employed micro enterprises

from paying the majority of taxes. Recently, the city of Wuhan has exempted those self-employed businesses which attain a low-level business license and earn less than 30,000 *yuan* (\$4,897) per month, with estimates of around 70% of micro enterprises in Wuhan enjoying nearly 900 million in tax relief (*Hubei Daily*, 2014).

In short, rapid urbanization from the countryside, the growth of urban poverty, the growth of marginalized neighborhoods, and those laid off during the shift to a free market capitalist system led to the development of an informal economy in China during the 1980s and 1990s. However, drastic social and spatial changes have not only shaped the nature of China's informal economy but have also shaped the urban landscapes of China today. First, while the development of an urban informal economy served as an advantage and benefit for rural-urban migrants and those marginalized by economic reform in the form of earning and income, ongoing economic restructuring "has released more workers into the informal labor market" resulting in "some of this initial advantage" to be lost (Wu et al., 2010, p.26). Secondly, "punitive urban policies" have taken place in Chinese cities which aim to exclude "subordinated groups" like informal street workers (Huang et al., 2014, p.170). This has forced informal street vendors to resist such policies out of necessity "to survive and improve their lives" in post-reform urban China (Huang et al., 2014, p.177). This has exposed elements of the informal sector to much more hostile local governments when compared to informal-state relations immediately following reform. Finally, despite these sometimes fractured relations with urban governments, the spatial impact and transformation of China's informal sector since the early 1980s has been obvious. At the onset of China's economic reforms, the majority of informal activity was exclusively linked to TVEs in rural and peri-urban areas. Today, the informal selling of goods and the providing of everyday services in public spaces

has resulted in a more visible and heterogeneous informal sector throughout China's cities in which informal street vendors have had a central role.

Although a handful of exceptions exist (see Wang, 2003), there is a relative lack of work on street vendors working in the more peripheral, interior, and often poorer cities of the country like Nanchang. Connections between China's informal street vendors and globalization have also not been adequately investigated, nor has the agency and the ways the millions of street vendors and other informal street workers produce urban space been given attention in the China context. With these topics left out of the literature on urban China's informal street vendors, it is easy to see how studies on China's informal workers can enrich theories and infuse new understandings of informal livelihoods in the Global South today. When considering that the number of informal street vendors hover around the hundreds of thousands in some cities alone (Xue and Huang 2015), it is surprising that only a small number of studies have focused on street vendors' presence in China's cities.

3.2 Who are China's Street Vendors?

Informal street vending in urban China today is relied upon as a livelihood strategy by a number of different social groups. When walking the streets in China's cities it is easily noticed that many street vendors are elderly in age. Reasons for this vary. Many lost their jobs in the state-sector employment during the 1980s and 1990s as a result of the massive downsizing and liberalization of China's economy. The now elderly street vendors who found themselves out of work typically received or continue to receive only marginal compensation from their former work-units (Xie and Wu, 2008). Frequently, elderly street vendors serve the communities and neighborhoods in which they live. Certainly, not all of today's elderly street vendors in China's

cities found themselves without work during China's shift to free market capitalism. Many work informally as street vendors as a way of making cash on the side as many are retired pensioners.

A second group who became street vendors in China's public spaces are rural-urban migrants who are either unemployed or underemployed. While many rural-urban migrants living in large urban centers tend to reside in older residential areas; interstitial spaces like alleyways, between apartment blocks; next to construction sites; and recently razed areas are common places to find small-scale street markets where migrants sell items. In addition to the millions of rural migrants who moved to the towns and cities through the loosening of the *hukou* system, peasants from surrounding villages just outside the city frequently make day trips into smaller satellite towns as well as the streets of larger cities to sell locally-grown produce. Shue (1995) has noted the importance of smaller, more rural cities and towns as important places where villagers from the surrounding countryside sell their products either solitarily or in crowded street markets. Frequently, peasant farmers from outside urban areas make daily commutes into cities driving trucks, motorized carts, or riding cart-pulling tricycles to sell their goods. The setting up of stalls and tables next to the entrance gates of suburban apartment complexes are commonly the doing of vendors from adjacent villages. According to Liu (2013), the selling of surplus farm products in the cities and towns, as well as providing urban dwellers with locally-grown vegetables, fruits, and other services after economic reforms, initiated a more vibrant economic linkage between the Chinese city and countryside.

Another group coming to the cities from rural areas who relied on open air street commerce and street vending after market reform were the millions of formerly "sent-down" youth of China's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) who returned to the city after more than a decade in the countryside. As the "defining decade of half a century of Communist rule in China," spurred on

by Mao's fixation with revisionism, no classes were offered during the ten-year period (Macfarquhar and Schoenhals 2006, p.1). In addition, over 17 million urban so-called "educated youth" were sent to live and work in remote areas of the countryside (Macfarquhar and Schoenhals 2006, p.1). As Zhou and Hou (1999) point out, for the sent-down youth, a decade in the countryside inevitably shaped their life course, and "interrupted their education and delayed their accumulation of skills and work experience in the urban labor force" (p.14). In the end, many returning from the countryside relied on informal work and street vending once back in the city and were encouraged to become small-scale entrepreneurs as there was little room for them to be absorbed in the public or formal sector (Liu, 2013).

Additionally, some of China's ethnic minorities, many of whom are socio-politically marginalized, residing in large cities across China, revert to street vending as a means of earning an income. Muslim minorities originally from the western regions of Xinjiang and Ningxia Provinces commonly sell handicrafts and ethnic foods in both ethnic neighborhoods and busy streets (Gu et al, 2005, p. 171). Similarly, some Tibetans and other minority groups from southwestern China use street vending as a way to earn income in tourist-oriented regions. The goods they sell commonly attract domestic and international Chinese tourists, as well as Western tourists. Tibetan street vendors in particular, according to Doorne et al. (2003), "are characterized by their overt representation of ethnicity and minority group identity" when working in public spaces (p. 6). Despite remaining in a peripheral position in China's cities, for China's ethnic minorities, "symbolic associations of objects and experiences" between producer and consumer allow them to "integrate themselves with processes of production and consumption operating through the town" (ibid., p. 6). Finally, another group who street vends in China's cities are university students who can be seen selling jewelry, handicrafts and other small items (*China Daily*,

2013). In China's largest cities, it is not uncommon to see university students selling within areas active with commercial activity. The outside of malls are perhaps the easiest places to find students among other younger people selling goods in the evenings.

3.3 China's Street Vendors and the State

Street vending is an old practice in China's cities with a long history prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. During dynastic periods, the presence of vendors, merchants, and street commerce in the cities was directly related to state-structured urban-rural relations and the attitudes of the dominant social class called *shenshi* or "gentry" toward trade and economic development. During much of the Tang period (619-906), the state put an overwhelming emphasis on the preservation of social order (Lin, 2007). Tang cities were regarded as semi-autonomous sites or towns and were concerned with the functional and hierarchal organization of society. A strong autocratic presence limited street commerce to specific areas of the city, and commerce rarely extended beyond night fall. However, this does not mean street markets, bazaars, and street hawkers did not exist. Despite curfews in most Tang cities, and city gates being shut with cylinder blocks at dusk, these were at times ignored as the commercialization of Tang cities took place (Benn, 2004). According to Lewis (2009), by 831, urban authorities "noted that everybody was violating the curfew" and that "many people, notably soldiers, were setting up shops and stalls on boulevards, extending the early Tang practice of allowing food vendors to ply their trade freely along avenues" (p. 114). Through increasing trade, regular night markets also began to spring up in Tang cities (*ibid.*, p. 115).

After the end of the Tang, cities of the Song dynasty (960-1279) were characterized by population growth, urbanization, and a "loosening of traditional controls on merchants and the growth of new marketing centers" (Smith, 1994, p. 34). This made street commerce more visible

than in the previous Tang period. During much of the late dynastic period, and particularly during the late Qing dynasty (1644-1912), there was a “lack of a sharp urban-rural dichotomy” which allowed peasant street merchants to enter more freely into the cities (Smith 1994, p. 95). Just prior to the end of the dynastic period in 1911 and during the foundational years of Republican China, numerous urban centers made attempts to modernize their economies and limit the presence of street hawkers, vendors, and mobile peddlers. Exhibiting and selling their goods “within a context of fluctuating regulation,” the control of street vendors and other forms of street commerce during the late Qing and the Republic era (1912-1949) was conducted “principally on the prevention of nuisance rather than oversight of commerce or revenue-generating practices” (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014, p. 224).

With the collectivization of labor in the decades following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, street vendors would either be incorporated into urban cooperatives, cooperative stores, or removed from urban centers altogether. As Huang et al. (2014) point out, prior to China's opening up and economic reforms, street commerce and street vending was labeled as the "tail of capitalist economy" (p. 174). After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, and during both the Mao-era (1949-1978) and the reform-era beginning in 1978 which shifted China to a market-oriented economy, the practice and presence of street vendors, and the formation of an informal sector, was integrally linked to state-derived processes of class and social stratification. Whereas the during the Mao-era street commerce was removed, collectivized and even punished individuals small-scale entrepreneurs for their petty-capitalist undertakings that did not conform to socialist ideology, during the reform-era street commerce small-scale entrepreneurialism was both directly and indirectly encouraged to kick-start the economy.

Several factors devised by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with the goal of completing the socialist transformation of China led to eliminating the presence of street commerce. Taken as a whole, the Maoist period banished informal activities like street vending through making any private commerce illegal and restricting rights to mobility. The first factor in eliminating the presence of private commerce in the streets entailed a systematic collectivization of labor in both the city and countryside. In the cities, entrepreneurs and the private sector were quickly collectivized. In rural areas during the 1950s and 1960s, “a rigid class hierarchy, based on pre-revolutionary conceptions of society” was established by the state revolving around “‘good’ and ‘bad’ class labels inherited in the patriline” (Watson 1984, p.13). As opposed to previous attempts during late imperial times and the Republican era which sought to regulate the use of public space through the occasional clearing out of street vendors, efforts to control and banish street vending after 1949 were “focused on a perceived incompatibility with CCP goals and State economic philosophy and practices” (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2015, p. 225).

Following the socialist transformation, small-scale entrepreneurs and capitalist activities were nearly non-existent in China’s cities. The limiting of private commerce was done by grouping urban residents into local work units, or *danwei*, whose domineering presence in everyday life both served as a place of employment, housing, and child care, as well as directly linking workers and their families to the CCP (White, 1978). *Danwei* were typically walled-in structures of SOEs that were heavily monitored, leaving no room for private commerce like street trade. Further, the strict control of access to commodities and foodstuffs in *danwei* also led to the disappearance of street trade in China’s cities during the Mao-era since the allotment of items, services, and food was done through a ticket system specific to each work unit. While living quarters could be downgraded, and pay docked within *danwei* for workers which was not in accordance with work-

unit policy, working for SOEs was seen as a source of permanent employment under the communist system, therefore, leaving little need to take-up private employment.

The economic importance of Chinese cities during the pre-reform period was solely tied to the success of the national industrialization strategy. Like most socialist countries, China's planners remained intent on achieving industrialization with limited urbanization. This approach situated cities as sites of production, rather than consumption and, therefore, would swiftly restrict any form of private commerce or street trade. In order to protect this "single-minded focus on the extractive role of cities," a rural-urban division was established (Naughton 1995a, p.71). To attain such a division, two significant barriers were erected by the post-1949 government between city and countryside.

First, while an extreme division of labor between city and countryside was the upshot of situating cities as primary centers of industrial output, it was the significant lack of labor mobility before the reform era that enabled cities to be engines of production. The development of the household registration system (*hukou*) was the defining mechanism that separated rural from urban labor, turning rural dwellers into farmers and employing urban dwellers in a host of large-scale industries. Fixing a person's residence to her or his native place, the *hukou* system, introduced in 1960, divided the country into agricultural and non-agricultural employment. Whereas non-agricultural (urban) *hukou* holders were entitled to subsidized allotment of food, employment, housing and an assortment of other dispensations, those with an agricultural *hukou* living in the countryside were expected to be self-sustaining. Further, the *hukou* system "was an effective means to prevent urban-bound migration" and potentially informal, non-state allocated employment in cities because access to basic commodities such as food, housing, and other

consumer products “could only be redeemed in one’s place of permanent residence” (Friedmann 2005, p. 12).

The second factor limiting urbanization rates and the potentiality of any form of informal street commerce to develop was the state monopoly on farm products. Prior to the implementation of economic reforms in 1978, which led to a system where peasant households were allotted a piece of land and permitted to keep whatever they harvested for personal consumption or sale once state-contracted quotas were met and delivered (see Lin 1988), peasants working in rural communes had no claim to agricultural yields before reforms. The combination of the *hukou* system which constrained any labor surplus and mobility and the state monopoly on farm surplus held off any ability for informal activity to occur in Chinese cities between 1949 and 1978.

Before economic reform, informal employment was contrary to socialist ideology. After 1978, China’s extensive economic reforms radically transformed labor markets and “unintentionally pushed both peasants and urban wage-earners into informal employment” (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014, p. 222). At the outset, the state’s economy was sluggish, and a serious lack of incentive characterized both urban and rural labor as the former worked in state-assigned industrial work and the latter had only marginal access to the agricultural surplus they grew. As liberalizing economic reforms dissolved industrial and government workers’ promise of secured employment, and a loosening of the *hukou* system allowed peasants easier movement into urban centers in search of work, an increase in urbanization and informal employment took place.

The reemergence of self-employment and street vending through the 1980s and 1990s in China’s urban landscape was one practice among many that contributed to the development of urban economies as many services and goods were in short supply immediately following reform. Street vending flourished, and became an important part of the post-1978 urban economy. Initially,

small-scale private sector work was encouraged and the state's intervention and regulation of street vendors and other informal work ebbed and flowed during the 1980s.

When unlicensed vending was banned in 1983, the reasons were more economic rather than ideological (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014; Solinger 1993). Immediately following reform in the 1980s, small-scale "enterprises" and individual street traders were applauded by those outside of China as the heroes of China's market transition, yet resentment and suspicion of street vendors by ordinary Chinese grew as private employment was accused of earning wealth through the bribing of factory managers (WuDunn 1986). This resentment, at times, stemmed from the decades-long denial of private commerce under the Maoist system and the nature of such a transitional period in China from Communism to market socialism. Nevertheless, street vending "was a necessary complementary component to the state-owned economy and collective owned economy, both in terms of improving people's livelihood and creating jobs" (Liu 2013, p.83).

Since the reform and opening up in 1978, informal street vending as a way of life has "proliferated rapidly" in China because of the deregulation of private economies and increasing urbanization (Huang et al., 2014, p. 174). Nevertheless, as Huang et al. (2014) importantly point out, "the responsibility for street vendors has been re-scaled "downwards to local state authorities in the general process of power decentralization as a response to market-oriented reforms" (p. 174). Therefore, as street vending no longer remains under the purview of national policy, city governments use a flurry of revanchist strategies and campaigns to control or erase the presence of informal street vendors from public spaces (see Huang et al., 2014; Hou and Wang, 2014; Yang and An, 2014; Watts, 2013; Zheng, 2013). Due to its capability of "alleviating serious poverty and supporting the undeveloped urban retailing system," street vending was by and large allowed by city officials during the 1980s (Huang et al., 2014, p. 174). However, subsequent years have seen

an increasingly hostile approach to informal street vending in urban China which has further marginalized poor social groups who rely on vending to survive and support their families (Wan, 2013; Watts, 2013).

3.4 Hard and Soft Approaches towards Urban China's Street Vendors

Street vending, in the eyes of China's urban authorities, is unsightly, dirty, unhealthy, and impedes traffic. Further, vending is seen as harmful to a city's image and poses potential dangers to the security of both state and society. Recent responses to the proliferation of street vendors from both central and local authorities in China have involved efforts to strictly control, limit, and at times remove vendors completely from cities. While regulations differ from city to city, in general, local reaction towards unlicensed and informal street vendors during the 1990s and into the present day commonly involve a host of "hard approaches," involving the confiscation of goods, fines, arrests, and the disbandment of small-scale street markets "under the pretense of street widening or easing congestion" (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014, p. 228).

While policies regarding open space vending are largely administered by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MIC), urban patrol officers, called *chengguan*, who are charged with regulating the streets, sanitation, and a host of other non-policing responsibilities are in charge of removing, fining, and controlling the presence of street vendors. Aggressive means of dealing with vendors by *chengguan* "have come under the scrutiny of the public and [been] the subject of extensive media coverage in recent years" (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2015, p. 229). Like many places around the world, each city in China is shaped by its own spatial politics in regards to street vendors. As Swider (2014) notes:

In some spaces, *chengguan* and local authorities take a 'let it be' approach, creating spaces of tolerated illegality in which vendors can operate freely. In contrast, other spaces are off-limits – *chengguan* and local authorities have a 'clear it away' or

'zero tolerance' policy which keeps migrants and vending out. Finally, there are some spaces in-between, which are grey areas, increasingly contested and characterized by clashes between *chengguan* and migrants. In spaces that have been established as 'off-limits' there is zero tolerance for activities like informal vending and they are heavily policed with regulations strictly enforced (p. 7).

Increasingly, the legality of *chengguan*'s actions has been questioned (Hou and Wang 2014). Attempts by *chengguan* to remove from public space, spatially distribute, and enforce the registration of vendors through force has at times resulted in violence since their actual authority in urban space is debated and they are not a branch of local police forces (Zhang 2010). Hostilities between both *chengguan* and vendors have occurred in different cities throughout China resulting in both injury and death. In 2011, a handicapped fruit vendor in Anshun, Guizhou province, died after he was beaten by three *chengguan* for refusing to close his business (Beardson 2013). After an official statement did not give details about the cause of the vendor's death, violent protesters smashed and overturned *chengguan* vehicles parked in the street (Yang and An 2011). Aggression by *chengguan* against a pregnant migrant vendor in Guangzhou spurred days of violent public protest during the summer of 2011 (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014) and the sudden death of a fruit vendor in Chenzhou, Hunan, also by *chengguan*, gained national media attention (Feng and An, 2013). More recently, a group of *chengguan* beat up a man in Zhejiang province for taking pictures of their violent crackdown on a migrant vendor. The urban management officers, in turn, were beaten up by "some angry onlookers," according to a 2014 *China Daily* article. Attacks from vendors against *chengguan* have also occurred. In Hangzhou, also in Zhejiang province, an unlicensed watermelon vendor stabbed two *chengguan* after they asked him to stop his business which was said to be impeding traffic (Lie 2014).

The continuance of violent clashes and the growing distrust by street vendors of *chengguan* and their confrontational reputation has incited the state to search for better regulation of vendors

in public space. Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris (2014) note how government efforts to “appease anger” toward *chengguan* have involved approaches ranging from the establishment of online forums for the public to discuss and devise non-violent methods for *chengguan* to use when dealing with vendors, to the giving of all seized agricultural products to charity, as well as auctioning off non-agricultural products in hopes of lessening the concerns about abuse of power and corruption by municipal authorities and *chengguan*. Additionally, some municipal and provincial authorities have devised plans so unlicensed street vendors will be allowed to sell their food and products in specified areas and times, so as to cut down on *chengguan*-vendor conflict and help protect the legal interests of mobile vendors in towns and cities (Zheng, 2014). While the physical and violent use of force against street vendors by *chengguan* has placed vendors in a marginalized position, their lack of organizational power also puts them further under the influence of hard-handed approaches of urban authorities and *chengguan*.

While instances of street vendor frustration against *chengguan* do occasionally lead to violence as stated above, the majority of street vendors rely on their mobility as a form of nonviolent resistance to elude random patrols and street sweeps made by *chengguan*. While not policy related, the intimidation of street vendors by *chengguan* has suppressed vendors by forcing them to consistently adapt new methods of resistance in defense of their way of life. Evacuating and retreating to nearby hidden alleyways, or vending late at night when few *chengguan* are working are common ways of operating a vending business in China.

Suppressive patrolling of vendors has resulted in creative means of avoiding conflict with *chengguan* which can involve attaching products to their bodies, using tables or blankets that can be quickly folded up, and developing warning systems to announce when an urban patrol is in the area. What these strategies of nonviolent resistance mean is that vendors have been forced to rely

on both their mobility and creativity to make their presence seem less like an occupation of public space (Huang 2014). Further, motivations to avoid *chengguan* are exacerbated because urban citizenship is determined by one's hukou "which not only spatially and socially segregates rural migrants and urban natives in the cities," but as Swider (2014, p.1) points out, evokes new legitimate avenues of claims-making such as NGOs, courts and arbitration which intensifies conflicts for vendors' right to the city.

Municipalities have also proceeded to do away with street vendors through removal and punitive strategies. Attempts to drive vendors from city streets began shortly after economic reforms. During a 100 day campaign against illegal street trade in 1986, Beijing removed more than 100,000 unlicensed street workers and businesses under the pretense that they were aggravating shortages and inflating prices (WuDunn 1986). More recently, Beijing has cracked down on barbecue vendors in order to cut down on air pollution (Zheng 2013). Informal street markets have become increasingly targeted for removal in order to combat congestion and make way for new development (Hui and Xuan 2013). Municipal attempts at closing street markets are often related to desires for orderliness of public spaces, the termination of illegal activities, and the requiring of vendors to pay taxes and license fees (Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014). The role of informal vending as a way to absorb unemployment and provide a subsistence income for the urban poor has only been partially realized by urban authorities in China, even as calls for greater leniency towards street vendors have been prevalent within the public and media (Kang 2007, Huang 2008, Ming 2009, Zheng 2014).

While a conflictual relationship seems to remain the norm between vendors and *chengguan*, Flock and Breitung's (2015) work on street vendors in Guangzhou have identified a kind of informal relationship between informal vendors and *chengguan*. As they describe, local security relies on a

type of experimentation when in the streets through a series of "soft" approaches which "differentiate everyday enforcement according to zones and periods of control as well as ethnic associations" (p.159). This "flexible form of governance" allows for "some leeway to street vendors" as their reappropriation of public spaces are seen as contributing "to the open-ness in usage, the socioeconomic characteristics, and the translocal connectedness of public space" (p.159). While in many cities of China, street vendors must be submissive to the demands of local authorities and *chengguan*, Flock and Breitung's (2015) findings in Guangzhou identify two forms of flexibility towards vendors. Firstly, what Flock and Breitung (2015) identify as "forbidden zones" which are informally "surrounded by several layers of varying strictness of control, decreasing with increasing distance" (p.163). In this sense, vendors know to "linger at the edges," go back and forth," and use "strategic withdrawals" from areas deemed "forbidden" at certain periods of the day. This usage of "forbidden zones" within public space allows for a flexible step away from an outright ban on street vending in public spaces and allows for a gray in-between area. Secondly, as discovered by Flock and Breitung (2015) the city of Guangzhou in 2010 demarcated numerous "trial areas" in which vendors could register and work in the streets. "One intention" of this experiment "was to offer income opportunities for the urban poor" (Flock and Breitung, 2015, p.164). In general, their study on migrant vendors in Guangzhou has identified a reduction in aggressive policing of vendors in which "instead of seizing goods or issuing fees, the emphasis lies on talking to peddlers, convincing them to leave and, at most disturbing business through *Chengguan* presence" (Flock and Breitung, 2015, p.164).

Informal street vending has become an important survival strategy for the urban poor, rural-urban migrants, and other marginalized groups since the country's turn to free market capitalism. This chapter has also shown that street vending in China has a long history. However, informal

street vendors in China's cities are often not treated very well and face heavy-handed methods used by urban authorities. For people in urban China reliant on street vending to survive, a lack of political power puts them at the mercy of *chengguan* and urban managers who are intent on maintaining a good city image and removing street vendors when told to do so. The often aggressive tactics used by *chengguan* to clear the streets and sidewalks of any nuisance elements within public space have forced China's street vendors into a precarious existence while trying to earn a living in the streets.

3.5 Conclusion

Urban China has had a long history with street vendors and other forms of street commerce. As this chapter has shown, street vendors in China's cities have had a complicated relationship with the state and public spaces since the dynastic periods and into today's post-Mao era. While certainly not an exhaustive overview of China's street vendors, what should be taken from this chapter is that since China's shift to market socialism, the acceptance by authorities of street vendors and other small forms of street commerce in China's cities has waxed and waned. As discussed, street vendors and small commercial enterprises (*getihu*) were vital to opening China's market economy and helping to develop local economies of scale. Of particular importance was the rural to urban flow of agricultural goods to aided in rural development and provided urban dwellers with resources to which street vendors played an important role.

However, like many cities around the world, informal street vendors in China's cities today need to rely on their mobility so to avoid fines from authorities, especially *chengguan*, urban management officers tasked with the order of keeping streets and sidewalks unobstructed and unregistered activities under control. As this chapter has shown, street vendors' relationship

with *chengguan* has been marred by numerous violent clashes leaving both *chengguan* and vendors injured, and in some instances, killed during confrontations in public spaces of different cities across the country. Additionally, this chapter has also briefly highlighted the often hard approaches urban management has taken in China's cities so to curb the presence of street vendors in recent years. While a handful of softer measures used by *chengguan* including softer policing measures towards vendors who occupy public spaces but do not impede major thoroughfares, entry ways, or commercial areas have been documented, the overall relationship between vendors and urban authorities in China is a conflicted one (Flock and Breitung, 2015). Whereas vendors see the public spaces as vital avenues to earn a living, authorities often see informal vendors in China's cities as backward, dirty, and a hindrance to growth and development.

The remainder of this dissertation investigates street vendors who work in the public spaces of Nanchang, capital of southeastern China's Jiangxi Province. As a case study, Chapters Four, Five, and Six offer a rare glimpse into the practices, experiences, and agency of Nanchang's street vendors in an ordinary residential neighborhood of the city called Sanjingwuwei. These chapters provide data on the little-researched topic of China's street vendors and the way their lives are entangled with different visions of public space, the challenges they face in their everyday lives, while also describing who Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are.

CHAPTER FOUR
STREET VENDING IN PUBLIC SPACE:
THE CASE OF A NANCHANG NEIGHBORHOOD

This chapter provides a background to this dissertation's analysis of street vending by (1) introducing Nanchang and the city's street vendors; (2) describing the chosen study area, Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood; and (3) focusing on three streetscapes that vendors used most frequently in the neighborhood. The streetscapes chosen as case studies are approached in two specific ways. Firstly, investigating street vendors' usage of public space in the neighborhood must take into account the ways their practices coexist with both formal and informal aspects of public life in the area. In this sense, it becomes clear how, in the three specific areas focused upon, vendors' practices are attuned to the specificities and rhythms of each place in both space and time. Therefore, vendors are influenced by the daily rhythms of people in the neighborhood and act as agents in the shaping of the neighborhood.

Secondly, contextualizing and describing street vendors' practices means examining the specific micro-spaces that are reappropriated by the vendors themselves. As becomes clear, each sub-area within Sanjingwuwei is typified by different spaces within the built environment that are used by vendors. This is significant for two reasons. First, it determines what spaces are available for vendors to use and why they reappropriate a specific micro-space. Secondly, since each sub-area as a place is slightly different from the others, certain factors come into play about how vendors use and contribute to public space. Important here are the roles street vendors play in contributing to Sanjingwuwei's streetscapes as an open, vibrant, places shaped by

a group of people who hold similar backgrounds, ways of life, or experiences. In this sense, vendors add to the streetscape as a medium between the home and the work place, or, what Oldenburg (1989) refers to as a "third place."

This chapter's investigation of the conditions of street vendors' reappropriation of space in Sanjingwuwei is closely related to, and inspired by, the literature on informal urbanism and Lefebvre's idea of a 'right to the city,' that is, the range of ways in which urban space is contested, occupied, and produced (Lefebvre, 1971; Harvey, 2006). Further, this chapter is also grounded in the thinking of De Certeau (1984) and his distinction between the strategies imposed by planners and the myriad ways employed by urban inhabitants that evade and challenge those strategies. Sanjingwuwei offers a rich environment not only to investigate the embeddedness of informal street vending in everyday life in Nanchang but also the ways in which various tactics are used by vendors at the scale of the everyday.

4.1 Background to Nanchang

Nanchang is a city that stirs with urban life. It is also a city shaped by rapid urban development and a tumultuous political history that is reflected in its landscapes and monuments. The city was founded 202 BC, but today, Nanchang's central location, between the manufacturing-epicenters of the Pearl River Delta region in the south of China and the Yangtze River Delta region to the northeast, has made the city an important regional rail hub. Situated along the banks of the Gan River (*Gan Jiang*), a tributary of the Yangtze (*Chang Jiang*), which passes through the city from south to north, Nanchang is a city of rivers and lakes.

To Nanchang's west lie green mountain ranges and dense forests. To the east is a lowland riverine landscape that empties into Poyang Lake, China's largest freshwater body. To the north

and south are rolling hills and wetlands. Soaked from frequent downpours, Nanchang's narrow streets, originally designed for simpler means of transportation, are being increasingly widened, but nevertheless remain jam-packed on a daily basis with cars, buses, and a flurry of motorbikes. Most notable are the countless green and blue taxis whose drivers commence their ceaseless honking from dawn to dusk. For much of the city's history, Nanchang's position along the Gan river system made it a vital distribution and storage center for the world-renowned porcelain crafted in the nearby city of Jingdezhen, eventually on its way to merchants and consumers in Europe and America.

Nanchang is a spatially polarized city which on the one hand clings firmly to its past identity as the site of one of the most important events in the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) history, while on the other it reaches forward as an entrepreneurial city struggling to attain a more globally-integrated economy, leaving its residents and their voices somewhere in between. The muddy waters of the slow-moving Gan River dissect Nanchang into two halves. On the eastern side are the original urban districts of Nanchang. Here, the majority of Nanchang's residents dwell in large apartment complexes that tower over the narrow winding streets that were originally designed for simpler means of transportation. Almost always directly adjacent to these complexes are the numerous small single-room family-run stores that employ many in the city and sit side-by-side along shady tree-lined roads. These shops often serve as more than employment for many living in Nanchang, but are often the homes of shopkeepers, many of whom originate from the surrounding countryside. These small streets that are so common to Nanchang are often used as shortcuts to larger avenues which are always congested with people, parked cars, and motorbikes that weave through.



Figure 3. The Gan River and Nanchang's Skyline. Source: Author

Distinctly different from the older more densely-populated eastern-half of Nanchang, the soaring and shimmering skyscrapers and half-filled apartment blocks, new malls, and thinly-populated urban fabric of the city's recently developed Honggutan "New District" makes up the western-half of the city. Honggutan attests to the entrepreneurial endeavor of local officials' ambitions of rectifying Nanchang's position in China's urban hierarchy. It is also the site of Nanchang's new central business district. While small shops like those found in the older districts of Nanchang exist in Honggutan, this Nanchang is typified by wide avenues designed for automobiles, not for foot traffic. The development of Honggutan has been fueled by circuits of capital which have shifted from the industrial to urban real estate sector (Harvey 1987, 1989)

resulting in a diversification of Nanchang's urban landscape (Wu and Gaubatz 2012). As a primary tool of accumulation in China today, spatial planning has led to the "insertion of new physical or regulatory boundaries into the existing urban fabric" resulting in the building of newly built science parks, extravagant expo centers, European-themed gated communities, and an innovation-focused technological development zone also dotted around Nanchang's urban periphery.

Today, Nanchang is home to five million people with Nanchang hukou, with roughly half residing in the city's designated six urban districts while the remaining half resides in either of the four rural counties administered by the Nanchang government. Between 1926 and 1928, both the Northern Expedition, a Nationalist military campaign to retake much of China from the grip of warlordism and the August Uprising by the Communists which temporarily took the city from the Nationalists in 1927 were important factors shaping Nanchang's population at the time. As Ferlanti (2013) notes:

Between 1926 and 1928 the population in the city decreased 16.39%, while in 1928 the population increased by 26.5%; translated into numbers this meant that 46,920 residents resettled in Nanchang. The population kept growing during the Nanjing decade, with the exception of 1934 when it decreased, not dramatically, yet by nearly 3%. In 1928 Nanchang had 224,123 residents and by 1937 the number had reached 298,576 (p. 50).

When the PRC was founded in 1949, Nanchang had over 1.3 million permanent residents. At the end of the Great Leap Forward in 1961, where tens-of-millions perished in Mao Zedong's attempt to transform China into an internationally competitive industrial nation, Nanchang had a population of around 1.80 million. Nanchang saw significant population growth during the mid-1960s to the late 1970s with the city reaching 2.10 million in 1965, 2.43 million in 1970, 2.85 million in 1975, a year before Mao Zedong's death, and 3.17 million in 1980. The initial decade following China's economic reforms saw Nanchang's population rise nearly by a half a million

more people from 3.06 million in 1978 to 3.55 million in 1988. Nanchang would gain a million more people between 1998 and 2014, when the population rose from 4.15 to 5.17 million (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). From 2013 to 2015, Nanchang's total resident population increased by 118,700 (nc.gov.cn). In 2016, Nanchang's registered urban population was 5.24 million. Aside from the registered population, few statistics exist on Nanchang's migrant population, but the government estimate is around 1 million (nanchang.gov.cn). Nanchang, as of 2015, was ranked as the 36th most populous city in China (China Statistical Yearbook).

Table 1. Nanchang's urban population growth, 1949 to 2016. Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2016.

Year	Population (in millions)
1949	1.30
1961	1.80
1965	2.10
1970	2.43
1975	2.85
1978	3.06
1980	3.17
1988	3.55
1998	4.15
2014	5.17
2016	5.24

While referred to as one of China's "mega-cities," Nanchang's economic growth today has positioned it at China's periphery. Despite being an interior urban center, Nanchang's GDP in 2015 grew more than 9% in the production area and reached 13.9% in total fiscal revenue. In 2015, the city maintained roughly 500 million RMB of fixed asset investment which totaled a growth number of 17%. As of 2014, the average money wage of Nanchang residents was 51,848 renminbi (RMB). This is 11,393 RMB less than the national average which includes both urban and rural areas. However, the per capita disposable income for Nanchang's urban residents was at 29,091 RMB, only slightly less than the national average of 29,381 RMB. But, by 2015, the per capita disposable income of Nanchang's urban residents grew by more than 9% (nc.gov.cn). The 2014, registered unemployment rate in Nanchang was 6.46 % (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). While these numbers concerning growth, investment, and assets prove that Nanchang, like so many of China's cities, are rapidly transforming, one needs to be at the street-level to examine the vibrancy of Nanchang's public life and the presence of the city's informal street vendors.

No data exists on how many street vendors there are in Nanchang, but the city's street vendors can tell us a lot about how urban space is organized. To analyze the dynamics between street vendors and space in Nanchang, this study now shifts focus to where the majority of vendors can be seen working—in the ordinary residential neighborhoods that exist between the major thoroughfares of the city. The neighborhood where this study takes place, Sanjingwuwei, is one of those neighborhoods and is characterized by the presence of informal street vendors on a daily basis. While Sanjingwuwei is not the place in Nanchang where most street vendors can be found, its urban and social fabric combined with its urban design makes it highly representative of Nanchang as a city and the quotidian elements of urban life that shape Nanchang as a place.

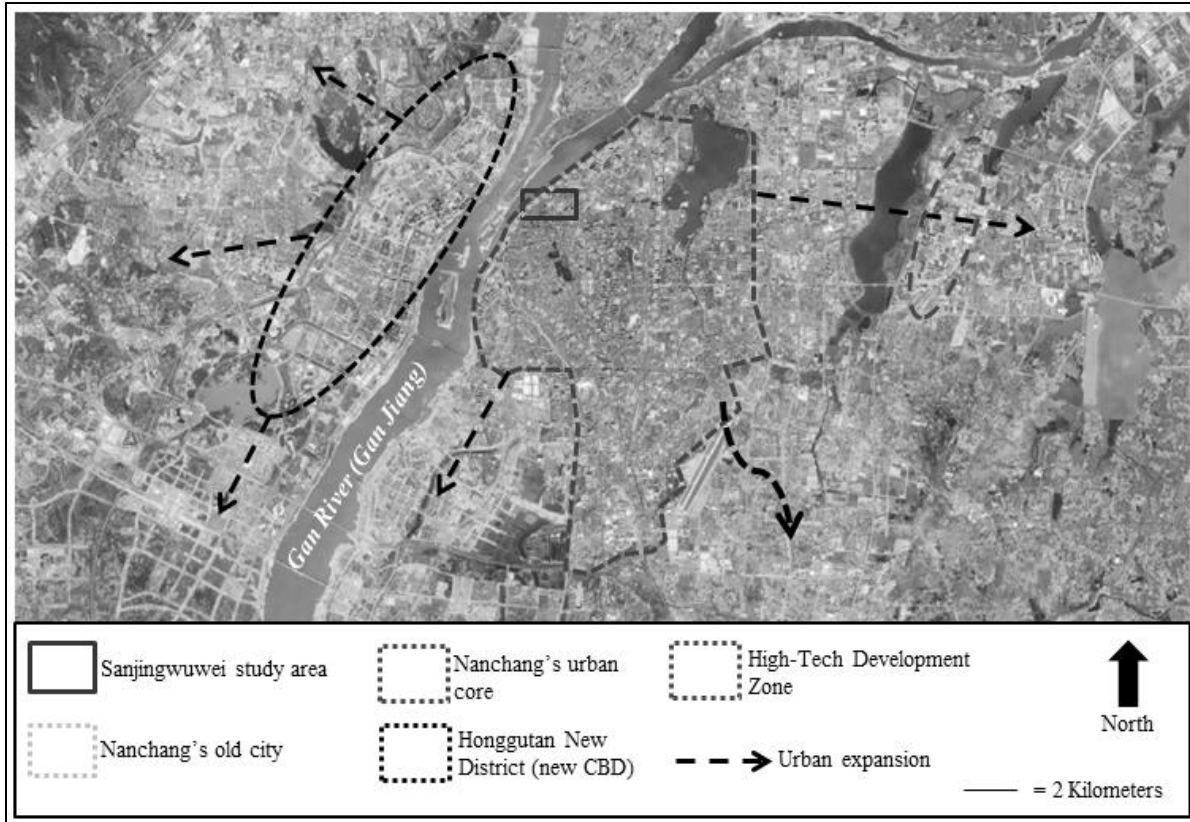


Figure 4. Aerial view of Nanchang indicating location of study area. Adapted from Google Earth image.

4.2 Street Vendors in Nanchang

In Nanchang, many of the city's urban poor rely on street vending to survive. Walking along the streets and sidewalks of Nanchang, capital and largest city of southeastern China's Jiangxi Province, it is difficult to not encounter street vendors who occupy many different types of spaces in the city. Both Nanchang's street vendors and residents reappropriate public space for a host of reasons. Like many cities in China, Nanchang's sidewalks serve as yards for children to play, places of random encounter and gossip, a leisure space for the elderly, and for the city's many informal street vendors, an important work space to earn a living.

Nanchang's street vendors occupy and use a host of physical spaces. These range from traditional public spaces like sidewalks and street corners, highly commercialized spaces like the open areas in front of shopping centers, malls, parks, the train station and hospitals, to transitory and unmarked spaces like alleyways, parking lots, unused lots, the spaces between buildings and underneath overpasses. While street vending is used as an employment strategy, street vendors themselves often provide convenient goods or services to communities and play a significant role in defining Nanchang as a place. Despite this, like so many instances around the world, Nanchang's street vendors live a highly mobile existence, rely on the temporary reappropriation of public space, and are often not treated very well by local authorities.

Along Nanchang's major avenues, street vendors seek to sell to the steady stream of passersby. As is often the case, street vendors situate themselves on the sidewalks or in unused parking lots. Nanchang's mobile street vendors also make use of space in symbolic and tourist spaces of the city like Zhongshan Avenue, Nanchang's most vibrant commercial center, and Bayi Square, a massive open space memorializing the Communist Uprising that took control of the city from the Nationalists in 1927 and led to the birth of the People's Liberation Army (Guillermaz, 1962). However, street vendors in this space are quickly told to leave by security personnel. Just as informal street vendors act as a representation of China's shift to free-market capitalism, in a more concrete form, Nanchang's most symbolic place of CCP power is now encircled by an endless ring of cars, boutiques, towering buildings, malls, banks, and a Wal-Mart supercenter.

After nightfall, numerous street vendors flock to Nanchang's central Zhongshan Avenue. Shopping districts like Zhongshan Avenue are now a quintessential element of Chinese urbanism spurred on by the globalization of urban space. Whereas Beijing has Wangfujing, and Shanghai has Xintiandi, Nanchang has Zhongshan Avenue. Bright lights, shopping centers, and throngs of

shoppers make this street among Nanchang's busiest. Zhongshan Avenue is not a residential area, therefore, most street vendors come from outside the area in an attempt to make some money selling to the late-night shoppers and young people who hang out there on a nightly-basis. Outside of this commercial zone, street vendors often occupy more mundane spaces in the city including street corners, alleyways, park entrances, and near bus stops.



Figure 5. A street vendor sells produce from a push-cart along Nanchang's Yangming Avenue.
Source: Author.



Figure 6. A toy vendor making a sale in Nanchang's Bayi Square. Source: Author



Figure 7. A typical Nanchang street scene: Street vendors and pedestrians along Nanchang's Bayi Avenue. Source: Author.

The push-carts and bicycles Nanchang's vendors use to transport their goods are not flashy or eye-catching. Since most of Nanchang's vendors do so without proper registration, they rely on occupying a good spot near customers, with the hope of not warranting too much attention from *chengguan*. Walking through the streets of Nanchang, it is easily noticeable that many of the city's vendors are elderly and often poor. In many instances street vendors are former laid-off workers whose pensions do little to sustain them. In other cases, as is easily noticeable around Bayi Square, vendors are disabled and often homeless.

Proximity to the customer is vital for Nanchang's street vendors. Some vendors position their carts immediately in the crowds of people along the sidewalk. Some sit at street corners while watermelon vendors often sit under the shade waiting for customers, or resting before a peak period in activity later on in the day. Since many vendors come from outside the city, it is not rare to see vendors sleeping next to their goods while a lull in sales takes place between peak periods. Residential areas are perhaps the easiest places to find food and snack vendors who cater to the needs of local residents who crave a convenient snack or vegetable to prepare. In these spaces, vendors on bicycles roam from neighborhood to neighborhood selling corn, potatoes, or fruit they either purchased wholesale or grew themselves. The old parts of the city, which this dissertation focuses on, are usually home to cramped alleyways that lead to hidden living quarters. Frequently, old ladies selling fried snacks can be found in these places. Vendors in Nanchang use a variety of ways to advertise their wares. Some use signs written on paper or cardboard to let passersby know what they are selling or offering. Others, especially in the residential lanes away from major avenues, rely on loud recordings to advertise what they have in stock. Nanchang's street vendors are present at all times of the day and night. They operate in the mornings when children are off to school and people wait for the bus to go to work. Both mornings and early evenings are the peak

times for street vendors to be in the streets of Nanchang. However, vendors can be seen on the sidewalks on in the streets of the city during quiet times as well.

Unlike the famed designated vending zones found in Bangkok, Nanchang, along with most cities in China do not have areas solely for street vendors to work. This often brings them into conflict with *chengguan* regarding the right to access public space for the purposes of selling. Along walkways, in front of hotels, near subway stations, and along stairways are often signs that prohibit street vending. However, during peak periods, street vendors often situate themselves in spaces they have claimed on a daily basis. Despite vendors' constant lookout for *chengguan* who may remove or fine them, Nanchang's street vendors are a major source of the sensory geographies of Nanchang's sidewalks.

In recent years, a spatial shift of Nanchang's street vendors has taken place. What has occurred is a gradual clustering of vendors in more peripheral, hidden, and residential areas of the city resulting in a decrease in number of vendors working along the city's major avenues like Bayi Avenue, Yangming Avenue, or Nanjing Avenue. While street vendors continue to work along the city's larger streets, they are becoming increasingly less visible for two major reasons. First, like so many of China's cities, the globalization of urban space in Nanchang is moving in the direction of highly commodified spaces of consumption, capital, and modernization. This makes access to public space for Nanchang's vendors more difficult as authorities quickly identify vendors as a hindrance to the city image and the project of modernization. For Yatmo (2008), these processes throughout urban Asia have relegated vendors to "out of place urban elements" in the eyes of urban elites and decision-makers.

The second influence shifting the majority of Nanchang's vendors to more hidden environs and streets of the city has been the development of Nanchang's subway system. While nearly all

cities in China have a higher density of people moving about the sidewalks than cities in the U.S., Nanchang's public life is particularly active when compared to many other larger cities in the country, including Beijing or Tianjin. This has been due to the streets found in the old parts of the city being incredibly dense and made for walking. However, with the construction and increasing expansion of the city's subway system, many people on the move in the city have come to rely on the subway. For vendors, who have commonly sold goods to those moving along the sidewalks, a large portion of potential customers are now underground. Further, because of Nanchang's expanding suburbs, many who reside in the city and rely on the subway, come from further outside the city and spend a large amount of time between destinations in the subway. In order to seek out customers, many vendors work in the narrow streets that lead to residential complexes behind the larger avenues. Additionally, these hidden neighborhoods offer greater security for vendors to work when seeking to elude and avoid conflict with *chengguan* on the streets.



Figure 8. Street vendors selling clothing relax beneath the trees along Nanjing Avenue. Source: Author.

4.3 Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei Neighborhood

In the northern part of Nanchang, wedged between the Gan River to the north, bustling Yangming Avenue to the South, Nanchang's largest bridge to the west, and a blotted landscape of ruins that used to be low-income housing to the east, is the mundane, yet very busy residential neighborhood of Sanjingwuwei. A gentler way of life shaped by numerous types of everyday informality exists in this part of Nanchang's Old City. However, through the local government's prerogative of modernization, a revitalization process has begun to slowly change the urban fabric. Sanjingwuwei's landscape of narrow streets lined by small one-room shops and dilapidated multi-story apartment complexes, reminiscent of many of Nanchang's older mixed-use neighborhoods, offer a place for street vendors to sell their goods.

Sanjingwuwei has a vibrant street life. Students laughing as they walk to school, laundry hanging from windows and power lines, parents sitting on the step outside of their one-room shops watching their children at play, groups of women sitting on brightly colored plastic chairs at an intersection in discussion, old men trying to stay cool as they play mahjong in the middle of the sidewalk under a tree, small shops whose goods force walkers to walk in the street as their goods spill onto the sidewalk, and the owners of tiny noodle shops whose doorways billow steam into the air setting up makeshift tables and benches on the sidewalks for customers who decide to eat outside are but a few aspects of Sanjingwuwei's sense of place. Like much of Nanchang, it is difficult to find a street or sidewalk in Sanjingwuwei that is not being occupied by public life. This type of social fabric was one of the reasons for Sanjingwuwei's selection as a study area. To fully understand Sanjingwuwei, its streets must be explored by foot. However, while walking is the easiest way to get around in Sanjingwuwei, by noon, this is made more difficult by the throngs of

motorbikes and taxis that traverse through the neighborhood as they use it as a shortcut to larger streets a few blocks over.

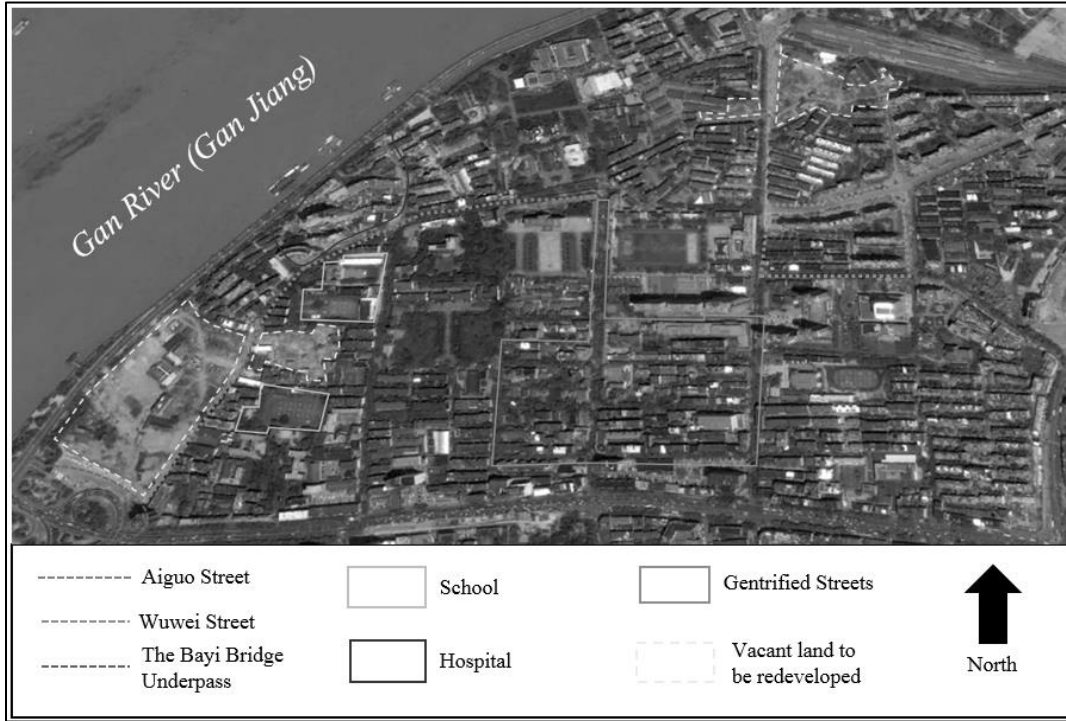


Figure 9. Aerial view of Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood. Source: Adapted from Google Earth Image.

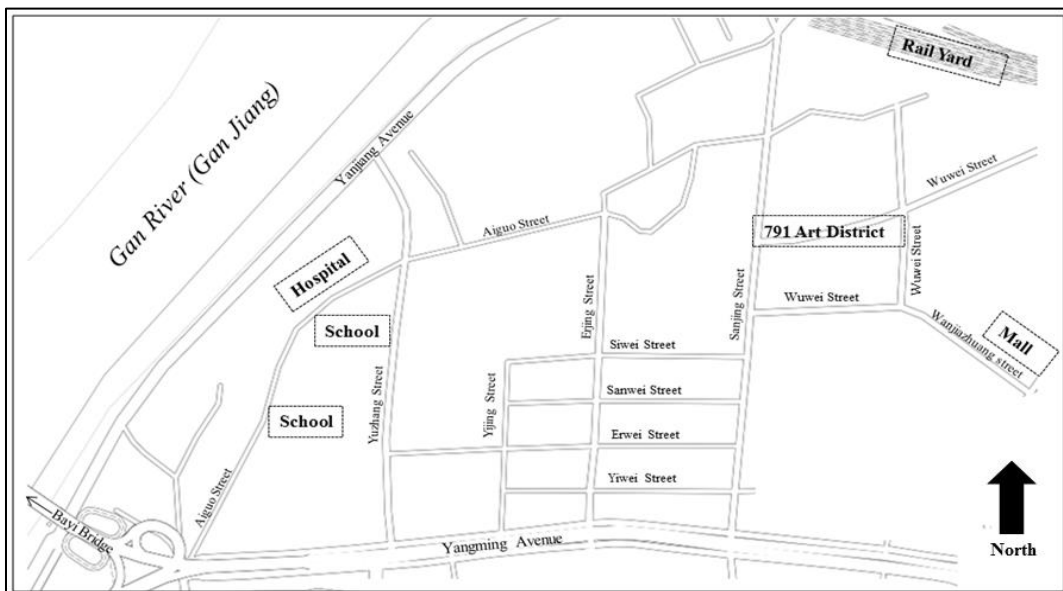


Figure 10. Street map of Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood. Source: Author.

The pace of life in Sanjingwuwei is both fast and slow. In the mornings, Sanjingwuwei's streets aren't too busy. The majority of movement comes from elderly folks walking, chatting, and interacting along the sidewalks. At the same time, students are easily recognizable by their blue and red tracksuits as they walk to school. The whizzing of motorbikes on their way to Yangming Avenue gives the neighborhood's atmosphere a buzzing sound as it coalesces with heavy machinery in the background taking down old buildings or breaking up concrete. The construction workers, often migrants from the countryside, work in large teams simultaneously debating what to do next while puffing cigarettes. The mornings in Sanjingwuwei are also filled with the sounds of street vendors wheeling their rickety carts down the sidewalk, the announcements they make, and the crackling of snacks being fried on the large pans vendors use to prepare food. Even on the sunniest of days in Nanchang, the grey-colored apartment blocks give the neighborhood a dark hue as one walks from street to street.

By the afternoon, Sanjingwuwei is bustling with life. If the rain is not falling, street vendors can be seen strategically setting up their push-carts, tables, and loaders along sidewalks and street corners. The students who slowly walked to school in the morning are now scurrying quickly to purchase snacks from both street vendors' and small shops during lunch break. The intersection in front of the hospital is filled with taxis and people enjoying a smoking break outside the gates. Attempting to navigate through the crowds, motorbikes beep their horns in an attempt to get by the slow moving cars and people. As the sun begins to set, a lull in the neighborhood's activity is easily noticeable. Few vendors are present at this time. Students have gone home from school. And, the busy street scene that existed prior is now calm and filled only with locals out for a walk or parents outside playing on the narrow sidewalks with their children. A few hours earlier, Aiguo Street, Wuwei Street, and Yuzhang Street in the central part of the neighborhood were busy with

both pedestrian and motor traffic. A few blocks over to the east, Sanjing Street remains busy as its small single-room shops are passed by many urban walkers.



Figure 11. A group of women sewing and de-husking corn with men playing mahjong in the background. Source: Author.

One of the many types of everyday informalities so characteristic of Nanchang are street vendors who work Sanjingwuwei's streets and sidewalks in order to earn a living. Like much of the city, street vendors use the sidewalks, streets, and alleyways to earn a living. The sounds and smells that come from food being prepared by Sanjingwuwei's street vendors intermix with the groups of people moving through the neighborhood and those who are using public spaces as a

place of interaction. Street vendors who work in Sanjingwuwei reside both within and outside the neighborhood. Sanjingwuwei is by no means the place where the most street vendors in Nanchang can be found, but the neighborhood's location next to the city's largest bridge that crosses over the Gan River and into the city's new district and surrounding villages makes it a popular location for vendors who come from outside the city to sell their goods.

A variety of street vendor types exist in Sanjingwuwei. Most sell fruit and produce. Others sell clothes, fried snacks, toys, and even furniture. Other vendors in the neighborhood provide specialized services. Old men relax on the corner as they fix bicycles. Elderly women sit in an alleyway next to their sewing machine. Even some urban poor who offer shoe shining can be seen working along the neighborhood's streets. However, the majority of vendors here sell snacks and produce. The highly mobile character of the neighborhood caters to vendors who seek to earn a living from those passing through the neighborhood and those who live in the neighborhood. Of the latter, many vendors rely on customers who come to purchase goods on an almost daily basis. It is not uncommon to see local residents of Sanjingwuwei carrying groceries they purchased from one of the many small super markets in the neighborhood while also buying items from vendors at the same time.

Street vendors in Sanjingwuwei also contribute to the neighborhood as a social space. Often times, people congregate around the carts and tables of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors. As women prepare stacks of steaming *jiaozi*, a small crescent-shaped dumpling found all over China, groups of people relax, chat, and socialize as vendors prepare fried snacks. Often times, groups of elderly women discuss as they talk with vendors whom they know from the neighborhood. At the western end of Sanjingwuwei, where Aiguo Street connects with the Bayi Bridge Underpass, vendors and locals establish a market-like scene as the underpass is transformed into a vibrant

social space. Produce vendors, often waiting patiently, have the foodstuffs they sell ready to quickly be purchased. Like much of Nanchang, Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are an integral element of everyday life. To imagine Nanchang's streetscapes without the thousands of vendors that fill its streets would be difficult. Like Nanchang in general, vendors and public life seem to maintain a reciprocal relationship. The vendors, benefitting from the purchasing of goods by passersby, and public life emerging from the exciting and vibrant streetscape that shapes Sanjingwuwei as a neighborhood, a community, and a place.

4.4 The History of Development in Sanjingwuwei

Before China's economic reforms began in 1978, the neighborhood of Sanjingwuwei saw street vendors from time to time covertly selling goods. Many of those selling goods on the streets during the 1970s came from rural Jiangxi Province and neighboring Anhui Province (ref?). People selling goods on the streets of Sanjingwuwei provided much needed goods for the local community as well an income source for people in need of one even prior to economic reform. One elderly man from the neighborhood reminisced about how he used to buy snacks after school from street vendors when he was young. A middle-aged woman who also lived in the neighborhood most of her life recalled an elderly man who used to sell eggs during the 1960s from a bucket that he covered with a towel when walking around. The woman claimed that the man could sell this way because most people on her street knew he was the one to buy eggs from despite individual selling of goods being directly against state policy. After reform, the presence of street vendors in the neighborhood, like much of Nanchang, boomed as street vendors filled voids through the selling of everyday goods and providing much needed services.

Over nearly a century, the Sanjingwuwei area evolved from a beachfront along the Gan River to a vibrant neighborhood in the northern inner-city of Nanchang. Sanjingwuwei has undergone four waves of urban renewal and development in its history. First, prior to the 1930s, much of the area now known as Sanjingwuwei was entirely a beach along the Gan River. Immediately before the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, the beach was used as a place for Nationalists (KMT) to execute communists in Nanchang during the first decade of the country's civil war. Later on, the KMT government began extensively building streets and homes for upper-class KMT officials. KMT officials were encouraged to move from other cities to Nanchang due to the city's strategic military importance during both wars. The streets Yijing, Erjing, and Sanjing in the study area were developed to house many KMT officials as they bought property along the beach area and renewal took place. These three streets, among others, were planned in a modern-style grid pattern and were quite different from the more traditional winding streets in the area that housed poorer residents. One street in Sanjingwuwei, called Xiashawo Street, is still a remnant of this original winding pattern. Additionally, the grid pattern of streets that still exists at the center of Sanjingwuwei was characterized by ornately decorated high grey walls which divided individual KMT housing compounds from the street.

The second wave of urban renewal and change in Sanjingwuwei came after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the end of the Chinese Civil War. Communist (CCP) officials moved into the streets of Sanjingwuwei that used to be occupied by the KMT officials. Today, most of the residential buildings where people reside in Sanjingwuwei (outside of the central grid area) were built in the 1960s and designed as urban work units (*danwei*). These residential buildings are typified by low-income households and are being increasingly razed for new developments.

The third wave of urban renewal in Sanjingwuwei followed economic reform and the transition to a capitalist system after 1978. In the following years, many of the walls originally constructed in the 1930s and adjacent to streets were knocked down. According to conversations held with long-time residents of Sanjingwuwei, the walls were removed to make room for buildings that could house single-room shops and stores. Many of these shops are still in use today and are a defining characteristic of Sanjingwuwei's streets. These shops are not only defining characteristics of Sanjingwuwei but of many Nanchang's more hidden residential neighborhoods and they remain an important job source. Many urban poor in the city rented out these shops from families who have prominent military ties in the area.



Figure 12. Recently adopted logo of Sanjingwuwei renovation project etched into concrete wall.
Source: Author.

Like many cities across China, after reform, the growth of commerce was made a priority and the expansion of small shops boomed. Many of the small shops were originally owned by military officials and military personnel would informally work in the shops. However, those

working in the shops would be given benefits in the form of money or housing improvements if profits were good. Over the course of reform, the military ownership of small shops diminished and was handed down to military families. Today many of the urban poor rent these small shops from military families who inherited them. Today, Sanjingwuwei is characterized by the original grid-pattern of streets at its center with narrow winding streets surrounding it. Both the grid-pattern area and the winding streets are being considerably gentrified and are rarely places where street vendors work due to the open street design and a lack of pedestrian life.



Figure 13. The western entrance into Sanjingwuwei along Aiguo Street; the red banner reads: "Donghu District old city transformation project. Build a beautiful living area. Accelerate the old city transformation." Source: Author.

The most recent wave of urban change in Sanjingwuwei began only recently. In January of 2016, Donghu District of Nanchang, in which Sanjingwuwei is located, began the Sanjingwuwei Street Renovation Project. Initiatives and goals of the project are posted throughout the renovation area through posters and placards and electrical posts, walls, and signs. The local government has also initiated a series of historical placards along walls parallel to the streets throughout the neighborhood describing the area's changing urban aesthetic over time. However, the original grid-pattern at the center of the study area once was a place where many street vendors worked. However, the renovation project now seeks to create upper-middle class housing over an area of a few blocks. Like the original look of the area during the KMT's presence in 1920s and 1930s, this central area of Sanjingwuwei will be unified through a gray color tone and walled-in style. Local newspaper reports conclude that this will reflect both the folk and former military culture of the area. This grid pattern of streets now houses single-family middle-class households and has made expansive space available for upper-middle class storefronts that currently remain empty. In addition, the high-density older residential blocks built by the CCP, which for decades were used as urban work units but now serve as living quarters for Sanjingwuwei's urban poor, are being extensively torn down to make way for newer more expensive housing developments.

In sum, there are now two main land use types in the Sanjingwuwei study area. First, is the high density mixed use streetscapes of small shops adjacent to the street in which apartment blocks are either directly above or behind the shops. Hundreds of small alleyways that receive little light wind between apartment buildings and behind these one room shops. Those who work in the shops either live in a room behind the shop floor or in an adjacent apartment. The second most defining land characteristic in Sanjingwuwei (and much of Nanchang) are gentrifying or gentrified streetscapes. With regard to the former, large swaths of land that used to be residential apartments

are now fields of rubble. These areas are most prominent on Aiguo and Sanjing streets in the west and east of the study area. The constant crushing of concrete and the motion of heavy machinery behind walls is an ever present sound in Sanjingwuwei.

4.5 Spatial and Temporal Distribution of Sanjingwuwei's Street Vendors

The previous sub-section described a typology of micro-spaces informal street vendors used in Sanjingwuwei when working in public space. This section describes the spatial-temporal distribution of vendors in the neighborhood. While street vendors can be spotted throughout the neighborhood, they are more commonly found in three specific places in the neighborhood. While reappropriating these spaces, street vendors also help transform sidewalks, street corners, and other spaces into "third places." These "third places" serve as alternative social environments outside of work and the home. Third places are shaped by those who frequent the place on a daily basis. The physical design and the clientele who situate them there together make up the character of that place.

4.5.1 Aiguo Street: A Busy Mixed-use Lane

The first area in Sanjingwuwei where street vendors often work is Aiguo Street. Aiguo Street is a somewhat unremarkable lane that stretches from one end of the study area to the other. Aiguo Street is in the process of being gentrified. It remains, however, a popular place for street vendors to work as local people like to conveniently purchase snacks and goods from them as they walk along the narrow lane. Aiguo Street is centrally located in Sanjingwuwei and connects the eastern portion of the study area to the western portion adjacent to Yangming Avenue. Like many of Nanchang's smaller residential streets, Aiguo Street is typified by small, single-room shops that line this narrow street. Gray-colored residential buildings built during the Mao-era are tucked

behind the shops and small alleyways between the shops enter onto Aiguo Street and often lead to a small courtyard area (*yuanzi*) that is surrounded by the towering residences. These small-courtyards continue to serve, as they did during the Mao-era, as mini-public spaces for the residents of the residential complexes. Along Aiguo Street, the roads are narrow, the sidewalks uneven. Many of the residential complexes at the street's southwestern end are being destroyed in order to make room for newer urban developments. Here piles of rubble that used to be residential buildings spill onto the streets where passersby traverse.



Figure 14. A street vendor and ordinary street scene along Aiguo Street. Source: Author.

During the reform and opening up period that launched China into a capitalist system, Aiguo Street was transformed into the landscape that largely exists today. By the early 1990s, Aiguo Street had become a popular place for street vendors to work. Through the downsizing of state-owned labor during this period, some workers living in the residential complexes turned to informal vending as a means to get by. These vendors remain an important element of Aiguo Street's landscape today. Aiguo Street remains a vibrant street filled with lots of foot traffic, taxis, and motorbikes passing through the area. Because of this, Aiguo Street attracts many vendors seeking to capitalize on the constant presence of passersby. Today, much of the urban fabric of Aiguo Street stems from the street's usage as a connector lane between the much larger Yangming Avenue and Sanjingwuwei's residential complexes. The small one-room shop houses that line Aiguo Street often serve a similar role as gas-stations do along many American streets. These small shops sell a variety of goods ranging from snacks, drinks, alcohol, produce, and sometimes furniture. The small shops are the most noticeable aspect of Aiguo Street when traversing the lane on foot. In the single-room stores, husbands smoke cigarettes watching tiny televisions and wives sit chatting with family members outside the door while waiting for customers. As is often the case, their children, still in their school uniforms, hang out and play outside of the shop's doorway running along the brick sidewalk.

At the intersection of Aiguo and Yuzhang Streets, people often congregate in discussion outside of the hospital that is located there. *Chengguan* constantly patrol this area telling street vendors to move away as well as telling shopkeepers to stop their things from overflowing onto the sidewalks. This area is busy during all times of the day as loved ones and hospital workers step outside to get some fresh air, street vendors seek customers, cars stop in the middle of the road dropping people off, and people go in and out of the hospital, all contributing to the intersection's

congestion. However, it is the presence of street vendors that have the most impact in shaping Aiguo Street into an informal space.



Figure 15. A peach vendor selling along Aiguo Street. Source: Author.

At the western end of Aiguo Street, street vendors throughout the day setup shop selling to the flows of people who walk down the lane. While all of Aiguo Street is narrow, this part of Aiguo

Street is without both sidewalks and trees, as it is under extensive gentrification which has turned the landscape to ruins. Here, however, small shops continue to sell to passersby as do street vendors. At the other end of Aiguo Street, which is not currently being gentrified, vendors tend to sell along sidewalks and under the shade of trees that line the road. However, for vendors at both ends of the road, certain environmental factors contributed to their presence along Aiguo Street turning a formal space into an informal one.



Figure 16. Street vendors working along Aiguo Street: Left: A woman transports goods using a traditional *biandan* carrying pole; center: Children’s clothes sold on a folding table along the sidewalk; right: A mobile vendor selling fried snacks to a student. Source: Author.

As was often the case, street vendors sought to sell snacks and other goods to middle-school and high-school students who lived and walked in the area. The presence of two schools in the area was reason for a large number of students walking in Sanjingwuwei at all times of the day. Secondly, at the intersection of Aiguo and Yuzhang Streets, street vendors sought to sell to those coming in and out of the large hospital. As was often the case, food and fruit vendors were most

common here selling to both workers and visitors in the hospital. The third environmental factor shaping the ways vendors used space along Aiguo Street was the presence of ephemeral spaces at the western end of the lane. With the ongoing destruction of residential complexes, some vendors used the flattened areas adjacent to the street as a temporary space to park and sell their wares. Lastly, at the eastern end of Aiguo Street, some vendors positioned themselves along the sidewalks which at nighttime are well-lighted. While vendors rarely set-up next to shops, they sought to benefit from the flow of people coming in and out of the small stores that lined the street.



Figure 17. In front of the hospital along Aiguo Street with clothing vendor in background.
Source: Author.

Along Aiguo Street, and in-between many of the residential complexes, are tiny courtyards and alleyways that lead to hidden entrances to residential buildings. In these spaces, it is not uncommon to find street vendors selling hot food and snacks to those who come in and out of the complexes. While most vendors in these spaces were mobile, these hidden spaces were where stationary vendors chose to sell their goods. On a few occasions, it was observed that vendors selling food did so by offering a buffet-style snack stand so passersby could easily take food to go. Since these spaces often were used by stationary vendors, pre-recorded announcements from mega-phones or speakers were repeatedly played so as to let customers walking along Aiguo Street know that they were there. Street vendors who use stationary stands to sell goods often sold hot food and snacks. By selling in-between buildings and in alleyways, these vendors were allowed a heightened sense of safety as *chengguan* rarely ventured into the alleyways. As was often the case, vendors who sold in the alleyways did so because they lived in close proximity. These vendors usually worked directly next to the buildings they live in.



Figure 18. The use of alleyways and hidden spaces. Source: Author.

At both the extreme western and eastern ends of Aiguo Street, considerable gentrification has begun to take place. In the early mornings and evenings, vendors made use of ephemeral spaces and spaces of ruin as sites to work. As apartment blocks are taken down, the vacant spaces formed as a result often sit idle for long periods of time before new construction takes place. Throughout Sanjingwuwei, but most noticeably along Aiguo Street, street vendors used these unused sites as areas to sell prepared food and snacks. As the photograph below shows, during the evening hours, vendors often set up lighting and reappropriate the space so to attract customers.



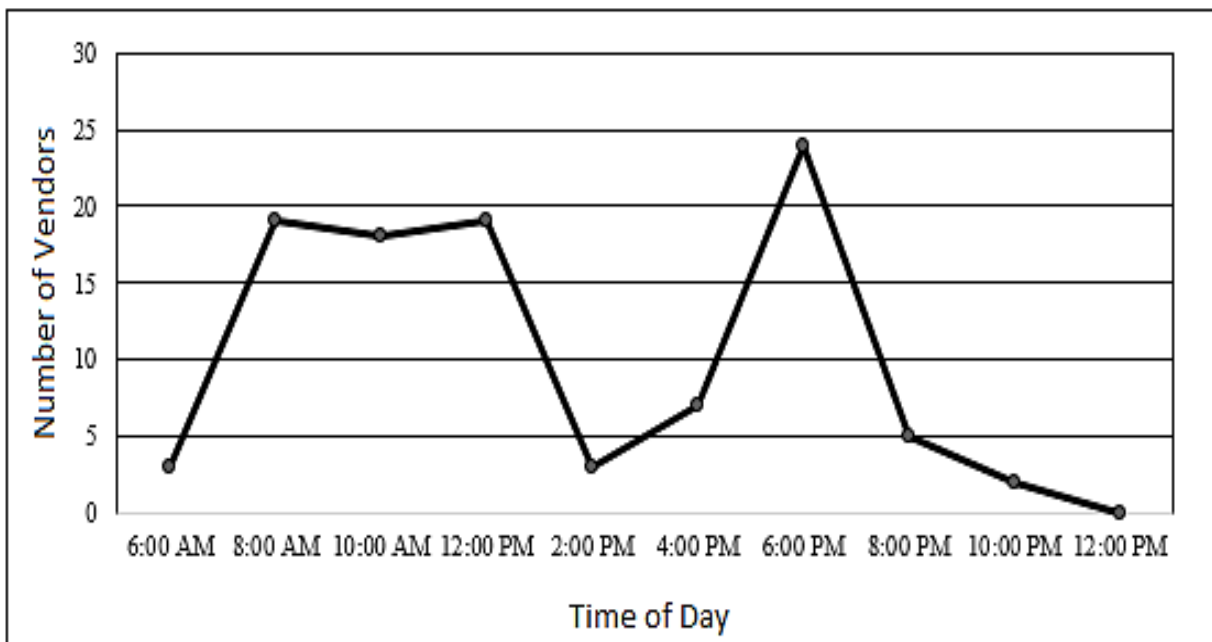
Figure 19. The reappropriation of unused space by a street vendor. Source: Author.

If you were to walk along Nanchang's Aiguo Street at around 8:00 AM, one of the first sights you would see, along this small road crossing most of the Sanjingwuwei neighborhood, are men and women positioned along sidewalks and in the streets selling tofu, fried snacks, and porridge. In the early morning hours, the announcements of mobile snack vendors, recyclers, knife-sharpeners, can be loudly heard from within one's apartment above the street. At the street's intersection with the tree-lined street of Yuzhang, multiple fruit vendors whose three-wheeled electric loaders are full of produce would be parked outside of the hospital. On the weekdays, a short walk down Yuzhang Street would reveal a handful of people selling fried snacks and steamed buns for students on their way to beginning their school day at the middle-school located there. By, 10:00 AM, most street vendors leave the streets until lunchtime. Around noon, the same street vendors outside of the middle-schools and in front of the hospital would return in order to sell to those looking for a snack during lunch break. However, by 1:00 PM, Aiguo Street is nearly devoid of street vendors until around 5:00 PM, when people get off work and students begin to walk home. Street vendors at this time typically close up shop by 7:00 PM. Like much of Sanjingwuwei, street vendors are rarely seen after nightfall.

As the table below demonstrates, the reappropriation of public space by street vendors along Aiguo Street took place not only in space but in time as well. In the case of Aiguo Street, a lull in street vendor activity was observed between roughly 1:00 PM and 4:30 PM. This was largely due to the ending of lunch time, the lessening of pedestrian activity in the area, and in some cases the need for street vendors to rest or take a break during the hours were they were less likely to make a sale. However, two peak periods in street vendor activity can also be observed. The first peak, beginning in the morning in synchronous with the flows of pedestrians out shopping for

groceries, walking their children to school, or going to work. The second peak period coincides with the returning home from work and school. It should be noted, however, that this observational survey took place in summer, to which, the presence of vendors may differ from other seasonal periods like winter. As was the case in other street vending zones in Sanjingwuwei, there was a general lessening in the number of street vendors as the evening hours became later. The collection of this data was gathered during a ten-day survey period to which the total number of street vendors observed along Aiguo Street was tallied during each time slot and subsequently averaged.

Table 2. The temporal distribution of street vendors along Aiguo Street. Source: Author.



The lack of street vendors along Aiguo Street and in Sanjingwuwei as a whole after sunset is contradictory to many studies that identify street vendors as a principal element of the urban nighttime economy in cities of the Global South (Chiu, 2013; Yeoh, Hee, and Heng, 2012). However, in the context of Sanjingwuwei, the reasons street vendors do not work along Aiguo Street at night are threefold. First, many street vendors live in Sanjingwuwei and return home after sunset to care for their families. Second, many of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are elderly, and

therefore return home earlier than most. Third, while Aiguo Street's sidewalks are always beset by urban walkers during both day and night, those street vendors who chose to work at night leave Sanjingwuwei for night life areas near Zhongshan Avenue in Nanchang's original CBD.

As is the case in other areas of Sanjingwuwei where street vendors can be found, vendors contribute to Aiguo Street as a "third place." The vendors along Aiguo Street cater to Mehta and Bosson's (2010) definition of a third place as "a place of refuge other than the home or workplace where people can regularly visit and commune with friends, neighbors, coworkers, and even strangers" (p.780). Street vendors' push-carts, particularly those of elderly women, which occupy portions of the sidewalk quickly became sites of conversation and interaction among those who have known each other for a long time and those who did not. Many customers enjoyed watching the women hand make in front of their eyes they dumplings and other snacks which they sought to purchase. As is the case throughout Nanchang, life in the streets often involves much social interaction. Whereas most do not own vehicles, crossing paths and congregating around a street vendors' cart are frequent occurrences which contributed to micro-spaces along Aiguo Street becoming mini third places. While most who congregated around vendors' push-carts where there to buy snacks, others enjoyed watching how they food was prepared and inquired about each others' lives. More hidden spaces along Aiguo Street were also transformed into third places. Some vendors chose to sell in the more hidden alleyways connected to Aiguo Street that lead to the doorways of apartment complexes. In these cases, the alleyways became third places focused upon individuals who knew each other well as they live in the same apartment block.

In a way, the ability for third places to form around street vendors' push-carts and loaders allowed for myself as a researcher to inquire into the personal lives of the vendors. In some instances, vendors along Aiguo Street were solitary and often without customers. However, if a

"third place" had developed around a vendors' area it was possible for myself as a stranger to engage in conversation about what was being sold, the challenges vendors faced in the streets, and engage in simple conversations with the vendors while in the streets. These instances of third places allowing myself as a researcher to engage with the vendors themselves also occurred in other areas of Sanjingwuwei outside of Aiguo Street.

4.5.2 Wuwei Street: A Space in Flux

The second area of Sanjingwuwei where street vendors are present on a daily basis is Wuwei Street. Separated from Aiguo Street by a series of recently built walled-in apartment towers, Wuwei Street is about a ten minute walk to the east from Aiguo Street. In comparison, Wuwei Street is wider and has fewer pedestrians than Aiguo Street. Much of Wuwei Street encircles a recently built city block called the "791 Creative Art District" which is home to ceramic shops, beauty salons, small restaurants specializing in local Nanchang cuisine, and a dozen or so unique (some might say strange) public statues with political connotations. The 791 District was designed to act as a small-scale creative 'growth pole' for the area while also serving to enhance the artistic, cultural, and creative ambiance of this part of Nanchang with the aim of attracting higher-end art-based industries and galleries. Unfortunately, the art district continues to struggle economically.

Many artists who rented space in the district have now left and have found the area not profitable. Because of this, many empty gallery spaces exist along 791's streets. One explanation for this is that Nanchang is a relatively poor city which results in a limited market for fine art. Other explanations are tied to Wuwei Street's acting as the district's southern and eastern boundary. Since Wuwei Street is typified by numerous tiny one-room shops which specialize in services such as kitchen repair, scrap metal cutting, mattress sellers, tool stores, grocery stores, and the

occasional noodle shop, the eastern end of Wuwei Street is home to many migrant workers who rent out dilapidated and low-income housing adjacent to the railroad yard two blocks over. At the time of data collection, many of these homes that exist along small roads connected to Wuwei Street were marked for, or have begun to be knocked down. Many of the still-standing homes adjacent to Wuwei Street are characterized by slum-like housing built directly atop the existing buildings.



Figure 20. An ordinary scene along Wuwei Street. Source: Author.



Figure 21. A mobile vendor selling corn along Wuwei Street. Source: Author.

Similar to Aiguo Street, street vendors on Wuwei Street make use of particular spaces in this part of Sanjingwuwei with the hope of making a sale. The first space street vendors reappropriate are the open and unused spaces of the 791 Art District. While street vendors were never observed selling on the sidewalks in front of stores, street vendors selling produce used street corners devoid of traffic due to the high number of shop spaces not in use. As was often the case,

street vendors using the open space of the art district were found relaxing underneath trees in the shade with their push-carts and three-wheeled loaders parked either along or next to the sidewalk.

Secondly, street vendors along Wuwei Street chose to carve out a temporary market space directly outside the gates that led into multi-story apartment complexes. Here, the majority of street vendors were elderly women selling fruit, vegetables and a variety of specialty mushrooms. These vendors often resided in the residential complexes and sold to passersby going in and out of the complex as well as along the sidewalk. One female street vendor along Aiguo Street mentioned the reason she worked outside of a residential gate was because of the customers who frequently come up and down the stairs from their apartments like purchasing convenient snacks. Street vendors working along Wuwei Street were far more relaxed than those found on Aiguo Street and often were seen sitting in the shade, engaging in open conversation with one another. One reason for this could be that *chengguan* were also rarely seen along Wuwei Street.

Many of the vendors who worked outside the entrances of large apartment complexes worked there because of it being in close proximity to their homes. Most vendors said they felt safe working here because they maintained an informal agreement with the housing complex's authority. While *chengguan* were occasionally a concern, the majority of vendors worked around this large residential complex because of these two reasons. Many of the vendors who worked both inside and outside of the residential complex's entrance were former workers of a textile factory. The factory building exists today but most workers lost their jobs as the factory ceased production during China's turn to capitalism. Most vendors here were elderly. While close to their homes, the location was also good because of a constant flow of people, children, and family members going in and out of the complex.

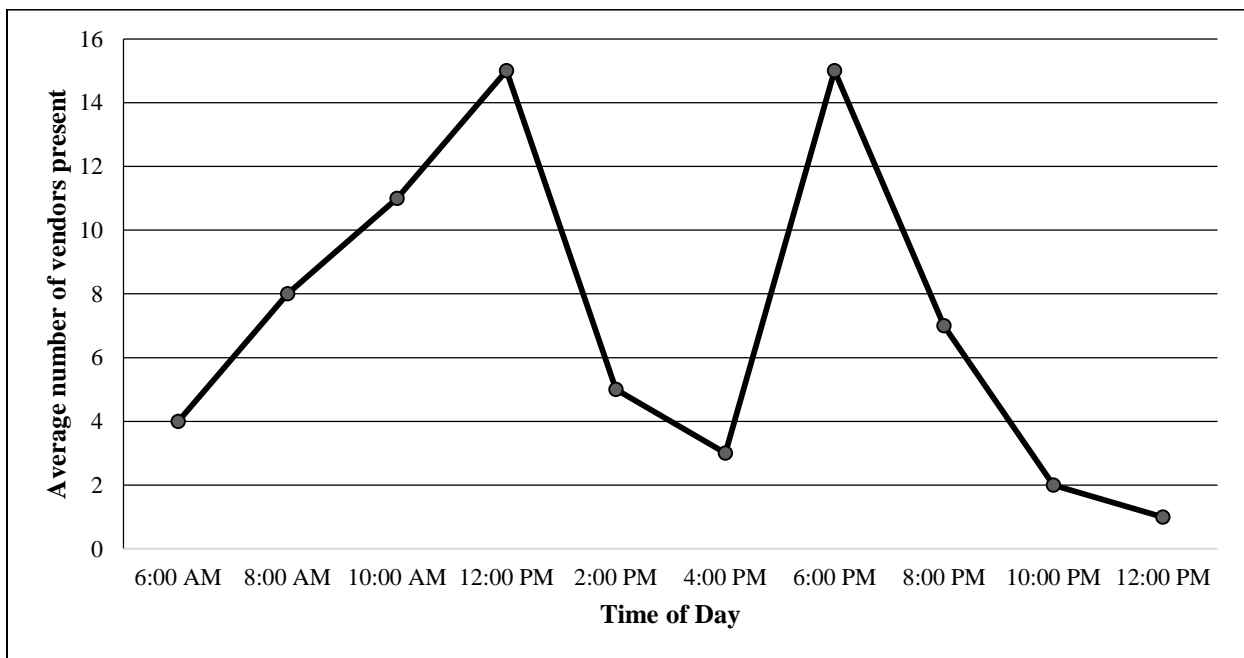


Figure 22. Street vendors reappropriate a residential entrance along Wuwei Street. Source: Author.

Street vendors' reappropriation of space along Wuwei Street differed from street vendors' reappropriation of Aiguo Street in three distinct ways. First, street vendors, while reappropriating space, tended to cluster together and share a certain space. This was largely due to Wuwei Street's relaxed and less busy nature when compared to Aiguo Street. Second, street vendors relied more heavily on the residential spaces of the street. In this regard, vendors either worked directly outside of residential complexes or in the case of the old textile factory, within the main yards of the complex itself. Third, there was a greater diversity in the kind of street vendors along Wuwei Street when compared to Aiguo Street. Aiguo Street's vendors largely catered to the flows of pedestrians using the street to get somewhere else. This meant mostly selling snacks and produce for urban walkers. In the case of Wuwei Street, vendors sought to sell directly to the residents who live along the street. So, snacks were rarely being sold and most common were fruit, vegetables, and household items.

Similar to Aiguo Street, the presence of street vendors on Wuwei Street waxes and wanes with the flow of public life. Street vendors along Wuwei Street are most prevalent between 4:30 and 6:30 PM, as many people return home after work. Like Aiguo Street, few street vendors are found along Wuwei Street after sunset. However, whereas Aiguo Street's street vendors may be higher in number, street vendors along Wuwei Street are more densely situated. Therefore, Wuwei Street's vendors carve out a space more representative of a small-scale informal street market, referred to as "horse-road markets," whereas Aiguo Street's vendors are carefully separated so as to not warrant attention from passing *chengguan*.

Table 3. The temporal distribution of street vendors along Wuwei Street. Source: Author.



Like Aiguo Street, the street vendors along Wuwei Street contribute to the creation of the streetscape as a third place. While vendors along Wuwei Street sold goods along the sidewalks, the most visible third place was outside of large residential gates that were outside of the walled residential complexes. The creation of a third place occurred in a handful of ways along Wuwei

Street. First, as vendors tended to congregate outside of the residential gates, these spaces became important areas for social interaction between the vendors themselves. Some of the vendors resided in the residential complex. While waiting for customers the vendors created a village-like atmosphere to which chatting, laughing, and selling took place all at once. Many of the vendors knew each other for years. Therefore, street vendors were able to carve out their own spaces of earning a living as well as social interaction. Secondly, the Wuwei area took the form of a third place because many of the customers who resided in the residential complex engaged in conversation with many of the vendors outside the gates. Some customers were friends with the vendors, where in other cases, family members of vendors kept them company while selling along the sidewalks.

4.5.3 The Bayi Bridge Underpass: A Space of Work and Leisure

The third area of Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood that is commonly occupied by informal street vendors is the Bayi Bridge Underpass. The Bayi Bridge Underpass is a large open area with massive grey pillars rising up from the brick floor to the bridge above. An inner-circle of bushes goes around an open area that both street vendors and public life reappropriate for their own use. The beeping of cars and the sound of tires on pavement from above add to the conversations that take place below. Surrounding the open area is a lane that twists upwards taking bicyclists and motorbikes up onto the bridge and over the Gan River. This lane wraps around the open space and, where the underpass connects with Aiguo Street, a large parking lot for cars and buses exists. Both beneath the underpass and where the bicycle lane meets the street are places where street vendors can be found. The Bayi Bridge underpass is a space where home and work are intertwined. This makes it a popular place for vendors to sell their goods. While the rise of

malls and highly policed public spaces may contest the meaning of public space both in Nanchang and abroad, the Bayi Bridge underpass serves as a place shaped by many forms of informal public life. As a meeting and gathering place for local elderly and a place for vendors to try and make a sale, the underpass' vicinity to Sanjingwuwei and numerous apartment complexes allows it to transform into both a space of leisure and of work.

As a “third place,” the underpass is transformed by a myriad of actors who come from the neighborhood and from further away. The underpass, as many third places are, is a site of hanging out and of fluidity as people come and go as they please. The Bayi Bridge underpass serves as a site for local elderly residents to socialize. Surrounded by rows of parked motorbikes and sitting next to concrete walls draped with CCP party propaganda written on long red banners, groups of old men engaging in card games on a dozen or so folding tables are a daily occurrence. Women also play card games under the bridge and in the shade, but often do so away from the men.



Figure 23. The Bayi Bridge Underpass serving as a social space for the local community.
Source: Author.

Here informal vendors and informal public life intermix to carve out an important space for local residents to socialize, purchase, and sell goods. The Bayi Bridge Underpass not only has the most street vendors in Sanjingwuwei, but also the highest density. Here, street vendors transform an interstitial space beneath this massive bridge into an informal market place. Within the market place are street vendors selling both goods and services. Street vendors selling watermelons and other fruit tend to park on the sides of the motorbike lane and in the parking lot. Street vendors using three-wheeled electric loaders often park in the middle of this parking lot to talk with other street vendors and sell to those on motorbikes before they go above and onto the bridge that takes them across the river.

The large open area underneath the bridge is where most street sellers in this location work. Toys for grandparents to purchase for their grandchildren, rows of gently used leather shoes spread on the brick floor, and blankets with shirts and other clothes are but a few things for sale at the underpass. A few women also sell fried snacks underneath the bridge. In addition to goods, numerous services are offered by local people from the area. Elderly women heat bricks in charcoal heated ovens made of old oil drums and attached to pushcarts. These bricks are placed under large bowls of water that sit on the ground where one can pay to relax and soak one's feet while engaging in conversation or receiving a foot massage. A handful of other women sit on stools providing nail care. Also, a few elderly men stand next to wooden chairs ready to give haircuts. Since no shops exist at the underpass, street vendors had free reign to reshape the space in an attempt to sell fresh produce to motorbikes and provide services for local residents. Differing from the two other street vendor zones in the study area, the underpass was mostly dominated by vendors offering services and vendors selling non-produce related goods. This included shoes, clothing, furniture, and handicrafts.

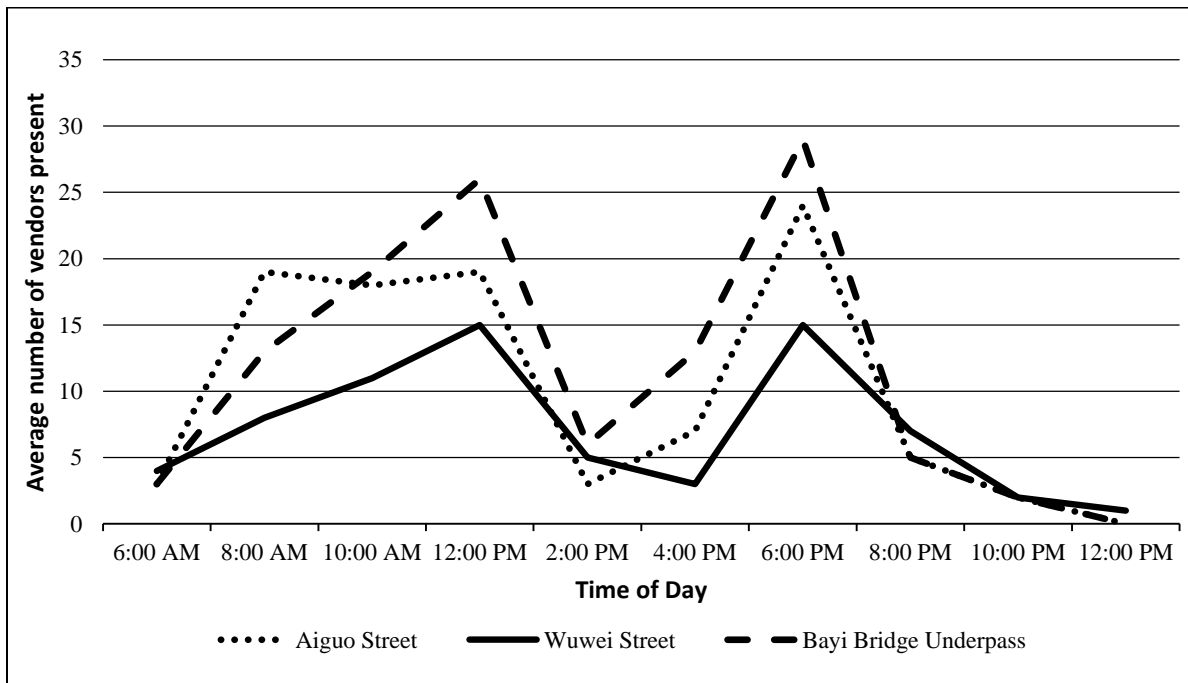


Figure 24. Street vendors' reappropriation of the Bayi Bridge Underpass; Top left: a street vendor selling furniture; upper middle: a street vendor sells shoes along the sidewalk; upper right: a woman sells boiled corn and eggs; lower right: women provide foot massages; lower middle: a produce vendors awaits a sale; lower left: a vendor displaying watermelons in the bicycle lane. Source: Author.

Street vendors arrive at the underpass early in the morning. The first to do so are fruit and vegetable vendors who come from the surrounding countryside. These street vendors venture into Nanchang on electrically-powered three-wheeled loaders and are often positioned on the side of the street where pedestrians pass by on the sidewalks. By 8:30 AM, an informal market place has

developed beneath the bridge. Between 8:30 and 11:00 street vendors have now fully carved out an informal market place and the variety of goods and services being sold increase. While the presence of street vendors underneath the bridge waxes and wanes just as Aiguo and Wuwei Streets do, there is a much more continuous presence of street vendors underneath the bridge. While *chengguan* do come through when too many street vendors congregate there, for the most part, *chengguan* rarely walk through this space. Hence, due to the size of the area and the overall lack of *chengguan*, the Bayi Bridge underpass remains an informal market for most of the day. In the afternoon, things slow down under the bridge. Aside from the informal forms of public life that take place under the bridge, between noon and 4:00 PM, relatively few street vendors are present. However, by 5:00 PM, the area becomes a chaotic market place once again.

Table 4. The temporal distribution of street vendors beneath the Bayi Bridge Underpass. Source: Author.



In addition to the Bayi Bridge Underpass, Wuwei Street, and Aiguo Street, some of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors occupy the parking lot in front of a large mall at the southeastern

edge of the study area. While street vendors are not numerous here, a few are normally present between 4:00 and 6:00 PM, when Sanjingwuwei's streets are at their busiest. Additionally, some of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors make use of vacant land areas where old apartment buildings have been razed. These ephemeral spaces covered in rubble often place street vendors in places with a lot of foot traffic as residents go to and from their still existing apartment buildings.

As the figure above demonstrates, the presence of street vendors in Sanjingwuwei is closely attuned to the rhythms of everyday life in the neighborhood. All three places are characterized by two peak periods concerning street vendors' presence. The first peak is during the morning hours and the second between 4:00 and 7:00 PM. Along Aiguo Street the morning peak occurred earlier and remained relatively constant. Along Wuwei Street, the first peak was highest around noon but dipped quickly. Finally, beneath the Bayi Bridge underpass, after 4:00 PM saw the biggest presence of street vendors. Interestingly, street vendors are not an integral part of the neighborhood's night time economy. This is contradictory to many studies of informal street vendors throughout East and Southeast Asia where street vending is an integral part of everyday night life and may reflect the dominance of studies on informal street vendors which solely focus on major thoroughfares of major cities instead of mundane residential areas like Sanjingwuwei.

4.5.4 Spaces Devoid of Street Vendors

Within Sanjingwuwei, there were also areas where street vendors and public life more broadly were nonexistent. This was due to two major factors: gentrification and hostile architecture intent on prohibiting public congregation. Along Aiguo Street, the ongoing gentrification process temporarily provided spaces where vendors could set up shop. However, as Chapter Six will show, the gentrification process was in general a large hindrance for street vendors to overcome. Along

streets where gentrification had been close to completion, street vendors were not present. This reduced the overall territory vendors had to work in the area and was due to three specific factors associated with the gentrification process.



Figure 25. Sanwei Street: A gentrified lane devoid of street vendors. Source: Author.

The most obvious reason for vendors to avoid the close-to-completed streets in Sanjingwuwei was because of a lack of people. As the beginning of the chapter described, these projects are intent on designing the streets in a similar style that existed during the 1920s to early 1940s. However, during data collection, few people had begun to rent out these areas and in some cases entire streets were still empty. This differed from a few blocks over where hundreds of people could be found on a single street. Obviously, the lack of people along these streets also meant a loss of customers in the area. The second factor associated with gentrification that had a

detrimental impact on street vendors' work was the erecting of walls. These walls, parallel to the sidewalks, acted as barriers dividing any public life from the housing that was on the other side. Since most of the homes along the gentrified streets were intended for upper-class consumers, the walls acted as a way to protect such developments from unwanted elements like street vendors. Additionally, instead of small shops that are found along both Aiguo and Wuwei Streets, the walls limited the number of people who came to the streets.

Lastly, along the recently gentrified streets of Sanjingwuwei, much space had been dedicated to cars and parking space. This severely limited space for vendors to work in the streets and limited any ability for public life to form in the narrow lanes that would normally be popular places for vendors to work. For many of those who resided in the newly built housing on the inside of the walls, cars were parked along the street. The combination of these three factors made certain streets within the study area unusable for street vendors. Some street vendors commented how they used to work along these streets until the changes were made.

In addition to gentrification, the constructing of certain forms of architecture that made public congregation and street vending difficult was also identified. This was most clearly seen near Wuwei Street and the 791 Art District. Intentionally constructed jagged stones along the ground in areas of the Art District made it unappealing for vendors to work in an otherwise good location for vendors to sell. The jagged stone made it very difficult for any vendor to pull his or her cart up onto the stone and most certainly would eliminate any reason for public life to occur. The combination of both gentrified streetscapes and fortress-style architecture limited the space in which vendors could work. The gentrification process in particular forced street vendors into closer proximity with other vendors thus making their work more visible and increasing competition.



Figure 26. A gentrified intersection with no street vendors. Source: Author

In certain areas of Sanjingwuwei there were attempts by local authorities to curb the presence of street vendors through urban form and architecture hostile to vendors. This was most notable along Wuwei Street near the art district where intimidating designs made it difficult for vendors to access an otherwise good location for selling where two roads intersect. As shown in the photograph below, the ridged structure of the concrete surface made it unpleasant for both vendors and pedestrians to go onto the grid-like structure. While in the image the structures may not look very daunting, their design was craggy, uneven, and sharp, making it a difficult task to pull a push-cart atop if any customers would even want to walk onto it. During previous visits to Sanjingwuwei, this intersection along Wuwei Street and the art district normally had a vibrant

street life that vendors, pedestrians, and local residents used as an informal space for social interaction and selling. However, during field research in the summer of 2016, the rugged concrete structures had been put in place to obviously curb the presence of street vendors in the area designed to be a small growth pole for economic development on the block. Therefore, the presence of street vendors along this intersections was significantly less than seen during previous visits to the neighborhood. Some vendors on electrically-powered loaders did use the streets as places to sell despite the small square along the intersection being no longer available for them to reappropriate.



Figure 27. Anti-street vending architecture along Wuwei Street. Source: Author.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter emphasized the ways informal street vendors used public space in the Sanjingwuwei neighborhood of Nanchang. Street vendors in this area of Nanchang reappropriated a variety of spaces in the neighborhood which ranged from streets and street corners, sidewalks, ruins, and interstitial spaces like alleyways and beneath bridges. The use of photographs collected during field collection were used as visual evidence to portray the ways Sanjingwuwei's vendors interacted with the physical and social spaces of the neighborhood.

The temporal and spatial distribution of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors were also highlighted. By doing this, it became clear that the neighborhood's street vendors followed specific temporal patterns of reappropriation. The presence of street vendors in the study area was dependent on the flows of traffic through the neighborhood on which vendors were reliant to make a sale. Spatially, street vendors in the neighborhood were found along most of the streets. However, the Bayi Bridge Underpass, and both Aiguo and Wuwei Streets were the most popular places for vendors to sell their goods. As this chapter has shown, each of these areas was shaped by a different temporal presence of street vendors. This suggests that even at the neighborhood-level, differences in the time of use, and the ways public spaces are used, exist between different streetscapes in the city.

While staying in the context of Sanjingwuwei, the next chapter investigates more closely the socio-demographic profiles of the neighborhood's street vendors. Specifically, Chapter Five offers data concerning who Sanjingwuwei's vendors are, where they come from, what they sell, the most common modes street vendors used to transport their goods, the role mobility plays in their everyday lives as street vendors, and the reasons they work as street vendors in the first place.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROFILES OF SANJINGWUWEI'S STREET VENDORS

This chapter explores the profiles of street vendors who work in Sanjingwuwei by describing their gender, age, length of time street vending, place of origin, and whether or not respondents were registered or not to work in the streets. These traits are described using data collected from a street vendor's sample of 192 observed street vendors and 40 individual conversations held with street vendors who agreed to participate. Whereas the previous chapter showed the street vendors' spatial-temporal distribution in the neighborhood, the aim here is to describe the socio-demographic traits of the street vendors who operate in Sanjingwuwei's streets. The mobility of street vendors and their choice of products sold are discussed through individual cases. However, two key attributes concerning the vendors' backgrounds were intentionally not gathered during data collection. Firstly, inquiries concerning weekly incomes while street vending were not asked in order to remain polite. Secondly, respondents were not asked to disclose their highest level of education. These two important inquiries were omitted from the interviewing process in accordance with cultural norms.

5.1 Who are Sanjingwuwei's Street Vendors?

During a three-week observation period in Sanjingwuwei, 192 individual street vendors were observed working in the study area. This involved extensive walking throughout the neighborhood and remembering individual street vendors so to not count them more than once. Out of the 192 individual street vendors observed, female street vendors were the largest group

(60.41%), whereas males (37.5%) were less present and male/female teams (2.09%) were rarely observed. However, the individual participants, who numbered 40, gave perspectives into street vendors' age, total number of years vending, place of origin, and whether or not they had registered as street vendors. All 40 of the participants admitted or suggested that they were doing so without registration. Almost half (47.5%) of participants were between the ages of 50-59 years. Apart from those between the ages of 34-49 (35%), relatively few street vendors were young in age with 18-25 years (2.5%) and 26-33 years (2.5%) being the smallest groups. Street vendors over the age of 60 were represented by 12.5% of the sample collected. The age profile of street vendors in Sanjingwuwei is contradictory to Bell and Loukaitou-Sideris' (2014) work in Beijing, which reported that 80% of street vendors were between the ages of 20-49 and were represented more heavily by males (60%). What this may suggest is that the age groups who rely most heavily on street vending in urban China are place-specific and may vary at different scales, including at urban, neighborhood, or street-level.

Table 5. Age of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors by age group.

Age Group	Percentage
60+	12.5%
50-59	47.5%
34-49	35%
26-33	2.5%
18-25	2.5%

There was a wide range in the number of years participants had worked as street vendors: 22.5% of participants had been street vending between 1-3 years, 40% were street vendors for 4-

7 years, 32.5% for 8-12 years, 2.5% between 12-15 years, and 2.5% had been street vending for more than 15 years. No participants had street vended for less than a year. Data collected from the participants also showed certain gendered dimensions concerning the number of years street vending: 75% of female participants said they had been street vending for 4-7 years. 18.75% had been street vending for 12-15 years and 6.25% for more than 15 years. Male participants who had been street vending between 8-12 years (41.66%) were the largest portion. However, 37.5% did so between 1-3 years, 16.66% for 4-7 years, and only 4.1% had worked as street vendors between 12-15 years.

Table 6. Number of years Sanjingwuwei's street vendors had worked as street vendors

Number of years street vending	Percentage
1 to 3 years	22.5%
4 to 7 years	40%
8 to 12 years	32.5%
12 to 15 years	2.5%
More than 15 years	2.5%

Nearly half of the participants (47.5%) working in Sanjingwuwei resided in the neighborhood and almost one-third (32.5%) came from outside of the city entirely but none from outside of Jiangxi Province. A relatively small percentage (20%) came from other neighborhoods within Nanchang. This suggests, first, that Sanjingwuwei's proximity to the Bayi Bridge makes it a jumping-off point for street vendors who came from villages outside the city. Second, Sanjingwuwei serves as both a venue for street vending and a place of residence for almost half of the participants. Additionally, the high percentage of female street vendors (60.41%) in

Sanjingwuwei can be explained through the data collected from participants. While only a small percentage of females came from outside of Nanchang (6.25%)? and other neighborhoods (25%), the majority (68.75%) of them lived in Sanjingwuwei. Data on male street vendor participants was nearly the opposite of female participants. Whereas 50% of male street vendors came from outside of the city, 33.33% resided in Sanjingwuwei and only 16.66% came from other nearby neighborhoods in Nanchang. Most female street vendors came from within the neighborhood but nearly the same percentage of men came from outside the city. Clearly, street vending activities in Sanjingwuwei are gendered.

Table 7. Sanjingwuwei's street vendors' place of origin.

Place of residence	Total	Female	Male
Reside in Sanjingwuwei	47.5%	68.75%	33.33%
Reside in nearby neighborhood	32.5%	25%	16.66%
Reside in village or suburbs	20%	6.25%	50%

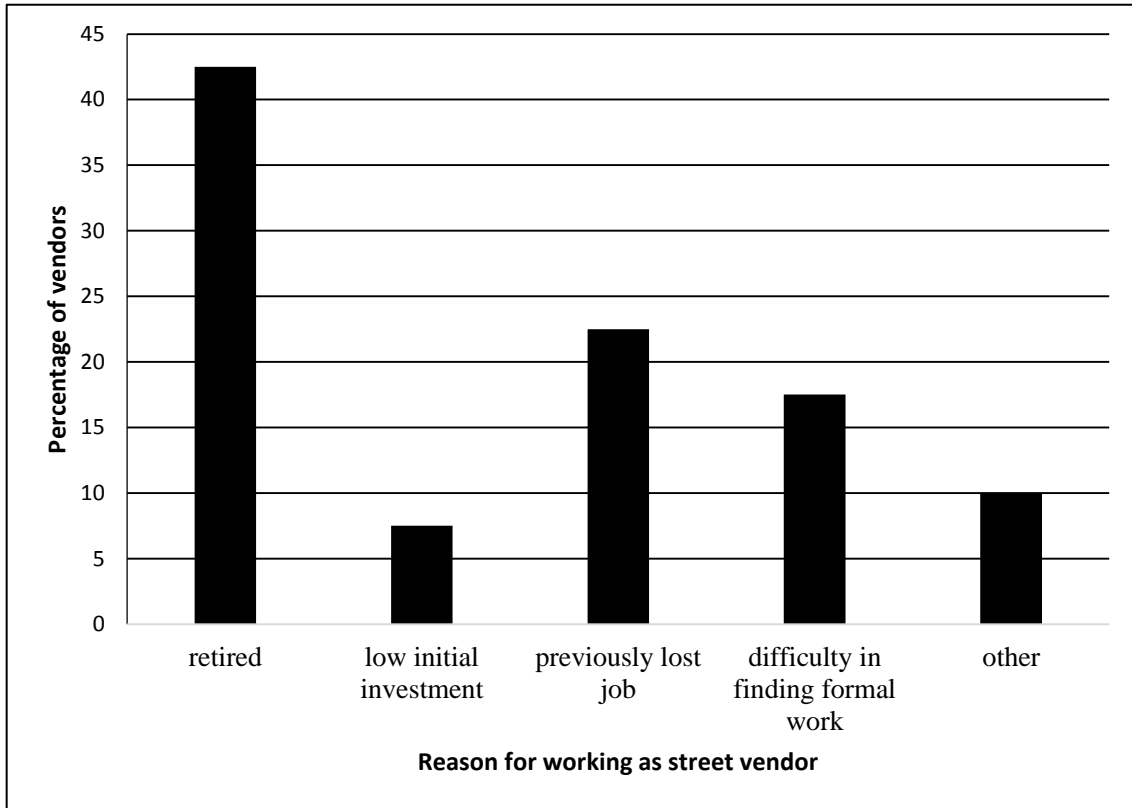
5.2 Reasons for Selling in the Streets

Looking at the figure below, it is clear that there were certain reasons that motivated vendors to work in the streets informally: 42.5% worked as informal street vendors because they had time to do so as retired pensioners; only 7.5% of the vendors engaged in informal vending because of the low startup capital needed to sell in the streets; 22.5 % made clear that they had worked as vendors because of losing a job in the formal sector, while 17.5% was due to the

difficulty in attaining a formal job. Finally, another 10% was due to other reasons such as having a disability or doing so not out of survival but because of the need for flexibility.

Table 8. Street vendors' reasons for working as street vendors in Sanjingwuwei.

Source: Author.



While the largest percentage of Sanjingwuwei's vendors sell informally because of having a flexible work schedule due to retirement, nearly half of participants who mentioned retirement as a reason to work informally also mentioned that they had been previously laid off because of government policies during the 1990s. Therefore, in the context of urban China, some workers continue to receive a minimal stipend or pension despite being laid off a decade or so prior from their work unit (*danwei*). Therefore, the participants who work informally because of being retired and those who do so because of losing their job is somewhat blurred. For the sake of clarity,

however, I involved participants in the ‘previously lost job’ column if they had been without employment within the last few years. Since the retirement age for female workers in China is between 50 and 55 years of age for civil servants and employees in state-owned industries, this may further explain why 60% of Sanjingwuwei's vendors were female.

When taking the vendors from the sample of 40 conversed with who work because of being recently unemployed and those who have had difficulty in finding formal work, this means at least 40% of Sanjingwuwei's vendors do so out of survival. In reality, this number is probably much higher. Despite many vendors working informally due to retirement, nearly half of these participants lost their jobs during the shift to capitalism. If these were included, this means that around 60% of Sanjingwuwei's vendors from the sample of 40 do so out of necessity. While few studies on China's informal street vendors exist, none have seriously investigated the reasons why individual street vendors choose to work informally. In the case of Sanjingwuwei, the majority of interviewed vendors worked informally due to push factors more so than pull factors. This means, most vendors pursued street vending as an employment option because they had few other employment options. In this sense, lack of employment, underemployment, and the inability of pensions to sustain retirees were greater reasons for working as street vendors than reasons tied to residing close to areas with customers, having spare time to earn some spare money, the low amounts of capital to begin vending, or the profit-earning potential of working in the streets as a vendor.

5.3 Mobility

Lei was in his early forties when he first started street vending in Nanchang. After being laid off in the early 1990s during China’s shift from a planned communist economy to a free market

capitalist economy, he began working in the streets in order to get by. A gentleman in his early 60s, Lei was selling numerous types of fruit underneath a colorful umbrella attached to his push-cart that was parked on the side of the road. As is frequently the case in Nanchang during the summer months, it was hot and humid with a light rain falling. Away from the heavy traffic of major thoroughfares a couple of blocks over, Lei and a few other street vendors were working along Aiguo, or "Patriotic," Street.

Working at Lei's left, was a man selling baked corn from an oven made out of an old steel drum attached to the back of a rickety wooden push-cart. On Lei's right, a woman used a *biandan*, a traditional carrying pole with two large wooden buckets full of tofu hanging from a rope on each side, to sell cups of tofu to passersby. Both the woman's and man's methods of street vending allowed them to easily transport the goods they sold from street to street. Being mobile was also essential for eluding *chengguan* when they were spotted.

When I asked Lei if it was difficult being a street vendor, after taking a puff from his cigarette, he sternly replied: "*dui, dui, dui*" or "yes, yes, yes." Because Lei and others like him working in Nanchang's streets are technically doing so illegally, they are prone to ad hoc inspections by *chengguan*. In addition, Lei emphasized the challenge of street vending in a single location for too long a time in Nanchang. In order to sustain a living, avoid fines, or the confiscation of his goods, he argued street vendors need to be continuously on the move. As Lei pointed out, in Nanchang, working on major avenues was even riskier, as street vendors run the risk of being immediately told to leave and a higher chance of receiving a fine — a reason why many vendors, including Lei, choose to work in mundane neighborhoods like Sanjingwuwei. Lei, however, made clear that encounters with *chengguan* are also frequent here in Sanjingwuwei. "I have to be constantly moving," Lei said. "Yangming Avenue is not worth the risk" and here on

Aiguo Street, I need to be quick in order to avoid getting in trouble." For Lei, being mobile was not only essential for business, but avoiding fines and the confiscation of his goods from *chengguan*.

Since it has become more difficult being a street vendor in the city, Lei lamented, "I have to work in the streets everyday now to make a living! Windy days, rainy days, every day, no matter what the weather or how hot it is." After taking another puff from his cigarette, Lei loudly exclaimed as people passed by: "fresh fruit!, fresh fruit!, I've got peaches, cherries, plums, and dragon fruit, very affordable!" As the flow of pedestrians ceased for a few seconds, another street vendor working directly across the street from where Lei and I were standing, a man slightly younger than Lei, who was selling a variety of local kinds of fried snacks from a push-cart, joined our conversation stating "when *chengguan* come, I leave right away! But, I quickly return after they're out of sight. When they come through again, hah! I go to the next street over. But I've got to be quick!" After shouting another advertisement about the fruit he was selling, Lei laughed at the other street vendor's statement, gently tapped me on the shoulder and uttered "it's like guerilla warfare when you're street vending!"

What did Lei mean by this statement? Was earning a living in the streets equivalent to doing battle against the state and its plans on maintaining the profitability of urban space through order and a good city image? In an analytical sense, "guerilla warfare" seems a fitting metaphor for informal street vendors' work as their livelihood strategy involves quickly occupying and withdrawing from public space so as not only to elude a larger more powerful foe, but also to cover larger amounts of territory in order to achieve a certain objective, that is, survival. For Lei, mobility was essential to survival as a street vendor in Nanchang. As Chapter 4 revealed, 95% of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors relied on a mobile form of street vending.

Continuing my discussion with Lei revealed more about his reliance on mobility. Lei didn't only work along Aigu Street. He, like many vendors went from street to street trying to sell his produce. However, if an area already had too many vendors, he had to move on. "Nanchang has a lot of vendors like me, but there are enough places to try and make a sale" Lei said. Through the use of a push-cart, Lei could cover a lot of ground throughout Sanjingwuwei. However, as Chapter Five showed, there were peak times in the mornings, afternoons, and evenings when street vendors had a chance to make a sale. "I have to get here early" Lei claimed. "There are more and more street vendors around here, hah! So I need to claim my spot [along the street] before somebody gets it."

"I've been street vending part-time for many years" said Wang, a man in his early 60s selling shoes beneath the Bayi Bridge underpass. With throngs of motorbikes going by, loud cheers from old folks sitting around folding tables gambling a few meters away, and a group of men smoking cigarettes while unloading crates of watermelons, Wang was organizing the leather shoes he sells along the pavement six days a week. It was around 7:15 PM and many street vendors, including Wang, were closing up shop. Wang, like many vendors beneath the underpass arrived around 4:00 PM but began to leave after 7:00 PM. Despite having a retirement pension, Wang sold shoes as an additional means of income. "*Chengguan* don't make too much trouble for me" said Wang. Like a lot of vendors working beneath the underpass, *chengguan* were rarely a problem because of the peripheral and hidden places that they occupied.

While Wang and Lei had different experiences with *chengguan*, Wang also relied on mobility to earn a living in the streets. "Business is difficult" Wang said. "People now buy things online or don't have much money to purchase many things" he argued. "When business is slow I go to other areas to sell my shoes. But, business is usually not very good in other places either."

Wang made clear that "it isn't easy work," but it was what he relied on to earn extra money in an increasingly expensive city. Wang is one of many folks selling items beneath the underpass who rely on mobile forms of vending. However, unlike most, Wang used the sidewalk to sell goods instead of using a push-cart, electric loader, or table. When it was time to sell in another area of Sanjingwuwei, he placed his boxes of shoes in the back of a cart he pulled behind his bicycle. While Lei was the only vendor selling shoes in the area, the limited income of such a practice forced him to go from street to street in search of customers.

What did Wang's and Lei's comments reveal about the importance of being mobile for Nanchang's street vendors? First, in Lei's case, being mobile was essential to avoid *chengguan*. A vendor's ability to quickly gather his or her goods after being told by *chengguan* to leave the area was also important to avoiding conflict. Second, the use of push-carts, bicycles, or electric loaders allows vendors to cover larger areas in search of customers. As was often the case, an individual street vendor was seen on one street at a certain time and on another street later in the day or in the week. Mobility, for vendors in Sanjingwuwei, was vital to making their work in the streets pay off. Third, mobile forms of working in the streets allowed vendors to keep up with the flows of everyday life in the neighborhood. Repeating the process of working in the streets, seeking out customers, and closing up shop could only be done through a mobile form of street vending. However, these were not the only reasons mobility was important for Sanjingwuwei's street vendors.

Watermelon vendor Yisha was excited that sales would most likely improve "because after a few weeks the weather in Nanchang will be very warm" and "everybody will want to eat watermelon." Like many of the watermelon vendors who park their three-wheeled loaders on the sides of streets, Yisha came from the outskirts of the city where Nanchang's expanding suburbs

meet villages and farmland. Her vehicle, piled in the back with a small mountain of watermelons, was parked at a vacant corner of the street where the 791 art district meets Wuwei Street. When I asked if she comes into the city to sell every day, Yisha said:

"Yes, I come into Nanchang every day, except for when it rains heavy...It takes about an hour to get here, then, at about 5:00 PM, I sell watermelons to a few local markets around here, after that, I come here to Wuwei Street to sell what I can...This location isn't bad, and I have a few daily customers. I usually go home around 7:30, but if business is bad I leave earlier than that."

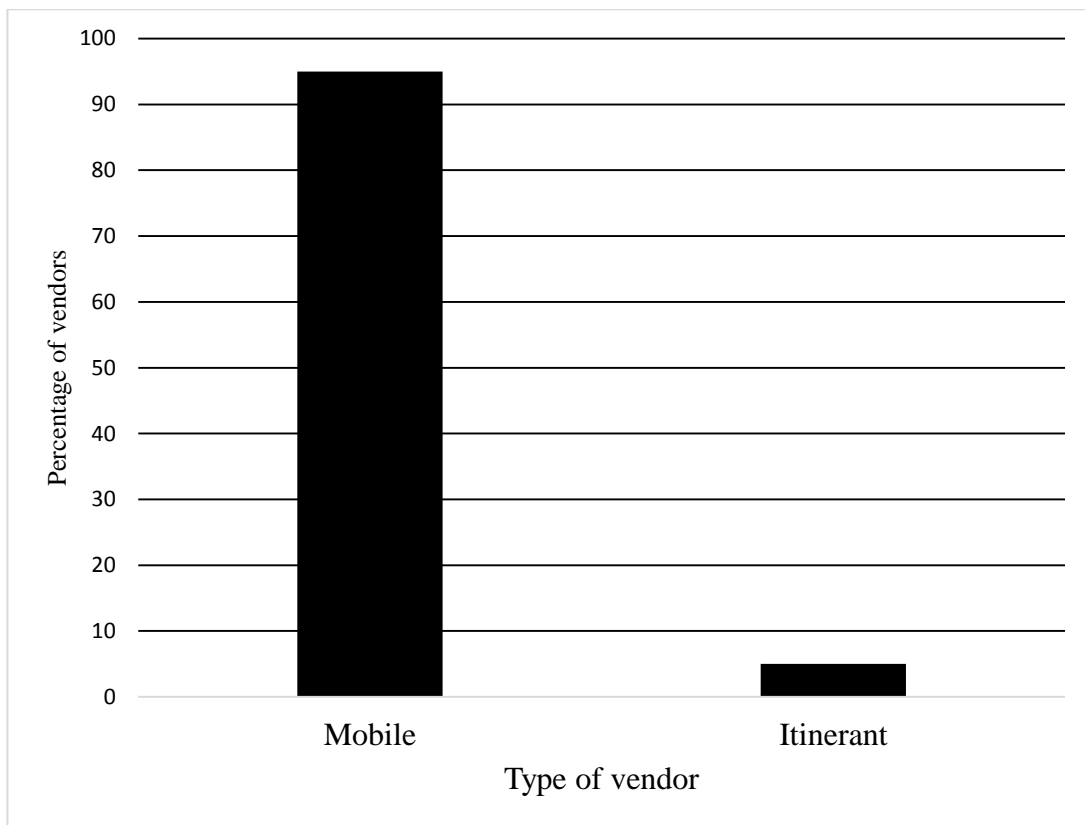
For Yisha, mobility allowed her to connect her produce to markets and people in the city. Through the use of her three-wheeled loader, Yisha was able to bring many watermelons in a single drive into the city. She could then sell to formal businesses which she had been doing for more than 6 years, and afterwards, sell to passersby informally what she had left over before returning home. "Import fruits are expensive in Nanchang" claimed Yisha. Putting her hand on a watermelon, "These are local fruits from our garden north of the city,...so it's all fresh! A few were picked yesterday, but most were picked today" Yisha said as she patted her hand on a pile of watermelon she was chopping for a customer. Being mobile for Yisha meant accessibility to different customers. For Lei, it meant being able to elude *chengguan*, while Wang noted that being mobile was essential to finding more customers when business was slow.

5.4 Modes of Street Vending

Street vendors in Sanjingwuwei used a variety of street vending techniques to transport and display their goods. Two modes of street vending were observed in Sanjingwuwei; mobile or itinerant vendors, and fixed vendors whose vending set up was stationary in a single place. The overwhelming majority of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors (94.80%) relied on a highly mobile form

of working in the streets. This was done for two primary reasons. First, perhaps most obviously, a mobile mode of street vending lets vendors cover more ground in an attempt to find more customers. Secondly, remaining mobile was essential for street vendors in evading *chengguan* and security who tell them to leave or seek to confiscate their goods. Itinerant vendors mostly sold fruit, produce, and other food stuffs like snacks, and on occasion, clothing. Fixed modes of street vending, while only 5.20% of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors, sold food, but rarely produce. These fixed vendors used tables and even large racks situated within alleyways that were used on a daily basis.

Table 9. Percentage of mobile and itinerant vendors in Sanjingwuwei.



There were five techniques Sanjingwuwei's itinerant street vendors used while working along the streets. First, more than half (52.64%) of Sanjingwuwei's vendors used push-carts to sell and display their goods. This was the most common form used by vendors who resided in

Sanjingwuwei. Push-cart styles ranged from simple wooden tables with four small iron wheels to larger wooden carts with three large wheels that could be also be pushed. Some push-carts used by snack vendors were fitted with propane tanks and giant pans for stir frying snacks situated on top. Other vendors who used wooden push-carts filled the tops of their carts with produce or were also fitted with homemade ovens constructed from steel drums. Inside of the drums, hot coals and bricks were placed to quickly bake corn, breads, or potatoes. Mobile vendors using push-carts were found throughout Sanjingwuwei, but were not as prevalent underneath Bayi Bridge.

The second most common mode of street vending was three-wheeled electric loaders (18.22%). Street vendors using these loaders resembling three-wheeled motorbikes with large beds in the back were primarily entering the city from the surrounding countryside. These loaders help bring large amounts of produce into the city. Sometimes, local farmers bring produce into the city and sell to small supermarkets. What is left over, they often try to sell while they are in the city. The usage of three-wheeled loaders was widely seen throughout the study area and was normally situated on the side of roads and underneath the shade. The loaders tended to be about twice as large as push-carts.

In Sanjingwuwei, 17.18% of street vendors used blankets or tarps to display their items. While this was not observed along Aiguo Street, it was most common underneath the Bayi Bridge underpass where vendors displayed new and second-hand items they sought to sell. The use of blankets and tarps was also observed along Wuwei Street and the smaller adjoining streets that connect to it. Some vendors who sold their wares on the ground transported what they were selling through other means, usually a push-cart or a three-wheeled loader. Choosing to sell goods on the ground, however, seemed to help with the bargaining process as many passersby, even if not looking to buy anything, often came over to see what was being displayed.

The fourth mode of displaying and transporting items was by bicycle. While only comprising 5.20% of street vendors in Sanjingwuwei, street vendors using bicycles hauled their goods, often vegetables, in two different ways. First, bicycles were either fitted on each side with baskets containing things like fresh corn, peaches, or dragon fruit. Secondly, some bicycle street vendors attached a small trailer full of goods that they pulled behind the bicycle. As was often the case, bicycle street vendors, normally announced what they were selling as they passed through a lane or street by loudly repeating pre-recorded advertisements from a speaker attached to their trailers. Bicycle vendors were the most mobile of vendors in Sanjingwuwei. When not riding through the neighborhood, bicycle vendors, often stopped in an area for a few minutes at a time where crowds of people were gathered. This type of tactic easily allowed them to go to crowds of passersby so as to tempt them in buying what they were selling which was often fresh produce.

Table 10. Modes of street vending in Sanjingwuwei

Mode of selling	Percentage
Push-carts	52.64%
Driven loaders	18.22%
Blankets	17.18%
Bicycles	5.20%
Tables	5.20%
Vans	1.56%

Lastly, only 1.56% of vendors used vans to haul and display their goods. The most common place where these types of vendors were found was underneath the Bayi Bridge Underpass. However, like vendors using other modes of transporting their goods, vendors selling from vans often drove

from place to place trying to make a sale. A significant difference, perhaps obviously, between vans and other types of vendors is the large size of the vehicle used to display items, often fruit. Vendors using vans often parked in locations that took up large portions of the road so as to display in an eye-catching way the goods they were selling. These types of vendors are rare throughout Nanchang given that most of the city's streets are narrow and already full of slow-moving traffic. The few vendors who relied on vans to display their goods often had baskets of fruit that could be taken out and displayed at the back of the vehicle. Aside from mobile street vendors, a variety of stationary modes of vending were observed. Always selling cooked or prepared food near to or in residential complexes, these street vendors comprised 5.20% of observed vendors in the area.



Figure 28. Push-carts allow vendors to be highly mobile. Source: Author.



Figure 29. A watermelon vendor takes a rest in the shade on his three-wheeled loader. Source: Author



Figure 30. A vendor displays produce on blankets on the ground. Source: Author.



Figure 31. A bicycle vendor selling snacks along Yangming Avenue. Source: Author.



Table 32. A street vendor uses a table to display hand-made shoe insoles. Source: Author.



Figure 33. A truck full of watermelons parked in the bicycle lane. Source: Author.

5.5 Product Diversity

While a great diversity of products and services were sold by street vendors in Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei area, fruit and produce was the most common, being sold by 57.81% of vendors. Fruit and produce vendors sold a myriad of local goods, from locally grown peaches, dragon fruit, pineapples, and watermelons being the most common fruits sold, to delicacies like sweet tasting lotus pods that grew in the wetlands outside of Nanchang. Different types of cabbage, tubers, leafy greens, tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants were some of the most common vegetables sold in the neighborhood. These types of products were easy for passersby to immediately purchase and take home to cook, and fruit and produce vendors were widespread throughout the study area.

In addition to fruit and produce, certain types of prepared food and snacks like on-the-spot fried spicy noodles, tofu and lotus root, dumplings (*jiaozi*), buns (*baozi*), and *chadan* (tea-soaked hard-boiled eggs) were also common items. As was often the case, these types of prepared snacks were homemade or quickly made in-front of customers in the streets. On one occasion, a team of

five women were seen making dumplings every afternoon along Aiguo Street. The money made from selling during the day was split between them. A specific system of preparing and selling the dumplings was coordinated while one woman sold the dumplings as she stood over a large pan frying them, two others rolled and kneaded the dough while the other two prepared and filled the dumplings with stuffing.

Table 11. Specific products and services as percentage of observed street vendors in Sanjingwuwei. Source: Author.

Product or Service Sold	Product or Service as Percentage of Observed Vendors	Number of Street Vendors Selling Product or Service
Fruit and produce	57.81%	111
Prepared food and snacks	11.97%	23
Clothing	9.89%	19
Foot massage	4.65%	9
Shoes	2.60%	5
Sewing	2.60%	5
Handicrafts	2.08%	4
Haircutting	1.56%	3
Plants	1.04%	2
Cooking items	1.04%	2
Furniture	1.04%	2
Electronics	1.04%	2
Bicycle repair	0.52%	1
Shoe shining	0.52%	1
CDs	0.52%	1

A few vendors sold other items such as clothing, shoes, handicrafts and toys, but these types of street vendors were relatively few when compared to fruit and produce vendors who catered to the culinary needs of Sanjingwuwei’s residents. A number of services were also provided by street vendors in Sanjingwuwei. Haircutting, foot massages, bicycle repair and shoe shining took place underneath the Bayi Bridge underpass, whereas old women perched along the sidewalks of Wuwei Street mended local residents’ garments with their sewing machines placed on the uneven and potholed sidewalk. For the most part, these types of services were not offered along Aiguo Street. Here, fruit and snack vendors were most frequent. What is interesting is that different types of street vendors in the area had particular areas from which they could appeal to local residents. As was often the case, fruit and produce vendors were often located outside of residential gates along Aiguo and Wuwei Streets.

Table 12. Products and services by category as percentage of observed street vendors in Sanjingwuwei. Source: Author.

Product or service sold (category)	Percentage
Produce	58%
Household items	20%
Prepared food	12%
Services	10%

There were also some links between the types of goods and services sold by Sanjingwuwei’s street vendors and the places to which they were connected. As was generally the case, Sanjingwuwei’s fruit and produce vendors typically came from suburban and peri-urban areas outside the city. Here, Sanjingwuwei had been influenced by a specific linkage between urban and rural. Fruit and produce vending, determined by observation, was not dominated by a single gender.

Sanjingwuwei's snack vendors, however, who rarely came from outside of the study area, were usually women. Finally, as most clearly demonstrated underneath the informal market that took shape beneath the Bayi Bridge overpass, the men and women selling clothing nearly always came from neighborhoods adjacent to Sanjingwuwei.

5.6 Choice of Products

For clothing street vendor, Hanqin, working across the street from the hospital is the most convenient place to earn some money. For five years she has been street vending along Aiguo Street. In her experience, selling t-shirts, slippers, and pajamas near the hospital has been a challenge, but recognizing the needs of both patients and the family members of patients in the hospital has allowed her to fine tune her street vending practices. Like many street vendors in the area, Hanqin carefully selects what she sells so as to maximize the chance of making a sale. In her case, the goods she sells outside of the hospital not only allow her to earn a living but provide much needed and convenient items for those in the hospital.

Like Yisha above, Hanqin comes from outside the city. However, waking up early to ride her three-wheeled loader into the city, Hanqin goes to a local shopping center to purchase the items she sells later on. All along Aiguo Street, numerous vendors like Hanqin, catered to specific needs of those who live in the area and work in the hospital. Hanqin chose carefully the types of items she sells in front of the hospital, because "the elderly in the hospital will only wear certain kinds of pajamas." By 10:00 AM she is parked across the street from the hospital on Aiguo Street and will go home before nightfall. With clothes hanging from wires tied to poles on the back of her loader, Hanqin sells a variety of goods for those who stay the night in the hospital. "Hospital patients often have their caregivers and family stay with them overnight at the hospital" Hanqin

said. "Many of them come from far outside the city." At 39, Hanqin was one of the younger vendors in Sanjingwuwei; however, she was able to identify a local need from which she could earn an income:

"Sometimes their [hospital patients] caregivers stay with them for weeks or even months in the hospital. So, family members always make the decision to buy a set of pajamas to use. Sometimes, the caregivers need new pajamas or slippers as well. Also, the hospitalized elderly prefer to wear soft clothes to sleep, which their sons and daughters buy for them."

Hanqin argued that the items she sold made life convenient for those sleeping in the hospital:

In their hospital rooms it's not easy to dry clothes on the window terrace and there are no places to buy clothes in the hospital. Washing clothes is not easy to do either. So, many people select to buy extra sets of pajamas that are easy to clean, cool and comfortable to wear."

Having worked in front of the hospital for a few years, Hanqin knew what types of clothing and other items sold near the hospital and which did not. While Hanqin's business practices were heavily reliant on purchasing goods from formal businesses to sell, vendors in Sanjingwuwei determined what products to sell based on other demands in the neighborhood. Another woman, selling spicy tofu not far from Hanqin also relied on selling items that were useful to those in the hospital. "Elderly patients in the hospital like to eat the soft silken tofu I make. It tastes much better than what they get in there!"

When I met Junxiao, he was kneeling over a blue tarp on the ground that was covered in a pile of green lotus pods whose sweet tasting seeds were a popular, but rare, snack that Nanchang locals like to eat during summertime. At 55, Junxiao had been vending like this along Wangjiazhuang Street, a very narrow street which connects to Wuwei Street nearby, every afternoon for nearly 10 years. Buying wholesale from a seller he knows who comes from one of Jiangxi's southern counties and makes deliveries of produce at a nearby truck stop every week, Junxiao then comes into the city to sell what he can. "Really sweet, really sweet lotus pods" Junxiao

continuously voiced as he advertised his items. Handing the grape-sized pods for passersby to try, most took the snack and went on while a few others mumbled "too expensive" before popping the pod in their mouth.

At 20 *yuan* (\$2.92) per *jin* (1.32 lbs), what Junxiao sold wasn't cheap in terms of produce in Nanchang. However, as Junxiao stated: "Lotus pods come from Jiangxi but they are difficult to find in supermarkets. I know people like to snack on them when it is hot outside. I sell other fruits, but lotus pods are easy to transport, light, and I only need to make a few sales to be happy." During the time he had worked as a street vendor he had come to realize which products are easiest to handle and which fetch a better price. Junxiao also reminded me that the pods were local, and he personally knew the farmer whom he buys from and he himself comes from the town where they are grown. In this sense, Junxiao was aware not only of a certain produce that was sellable in the area, but that people increasingly wanted to know where the produce was from.

Some vendors' choice of products to sell stemmed from their skills in selling homemade snacks. 16 out of 18, or 89% of snack vendors interviewed sold homemade food. Many of these vendors said they bought ingredients from formal businesses, and the homemade dumplings, cakes, tofu, candy, and sausages they sold were intended for sale to the flows of people who walk through the neighborhood each morning and in the evenings. These flows came in a few different forms and were a major reason vendors along Aiguo Street sold homemade snacks. First, Aiguo and Yuzhang Streets have a middle-school and a high-school from which students buy snacks during lunch and during their walks home after school. As one vendor stated, "students really love to eat the spicy snacks I make and they are very affordable." Another exclaimed, "students are loyal and daily customers, and they like to buy a lot when they're hungry!" One woman working along Aiguo

Street mentioned: "young people are hungry after school. When food is not prepared yet at home, they look to buy a bag of dumplings to fill their empty stomachs."

Second, Aiguo Street serves as a lane connecting Yangming Avenue to many other smaller residential streets to Sanjingwuwei's east. From early morning to late at night, Aiguo Street is typified by people walking and bicycling through it. Street vendors attempting to sell to the flows of public life in Sanjingwuwei gave a few reasons why they chose to work here. "People like to go for walks around here in the evening, when they buy some fruit from me, they can eat while walking!" stated one man selling fresh produce. One female fruit vendor said: "couples at night go shopping around here, and they often want a snack to share when they walk through the neighborhood." This meant that street vendors made use of both the streets and sidewalks to situate themselves close to people walking through Sanjingwuwei.

Although rare, street vendors at times worked directly outside of formal businesses. As was often the case, a relationship between the vendors and store owners was established previously. Both the street vendors and store owners realized the mutual benefit of attracting the attention of passersby when working in close proximity to each other. A woman selling snacks near a supermarket on Aiguo Street pointed out: "often, people are thirsty and hungry after shopping for a while in the supermarkets and they commonly want a snack they cannot find in the supermarket." Linkages between street vendors and formal business owners in the area were also reasons for street vendors to sell snacks near certain places. As one male snack vendor said: "Along Aiguo Street there are several teahouses whose proprietors like to buy tofu or dumplings from me for them to serve to customers or eat themselves with afternoon tea."

What these examples show concerning the choice of products sold by Sanjingwuwei's vendors is that they were aware of what kinds of goods could be sold in different places of the

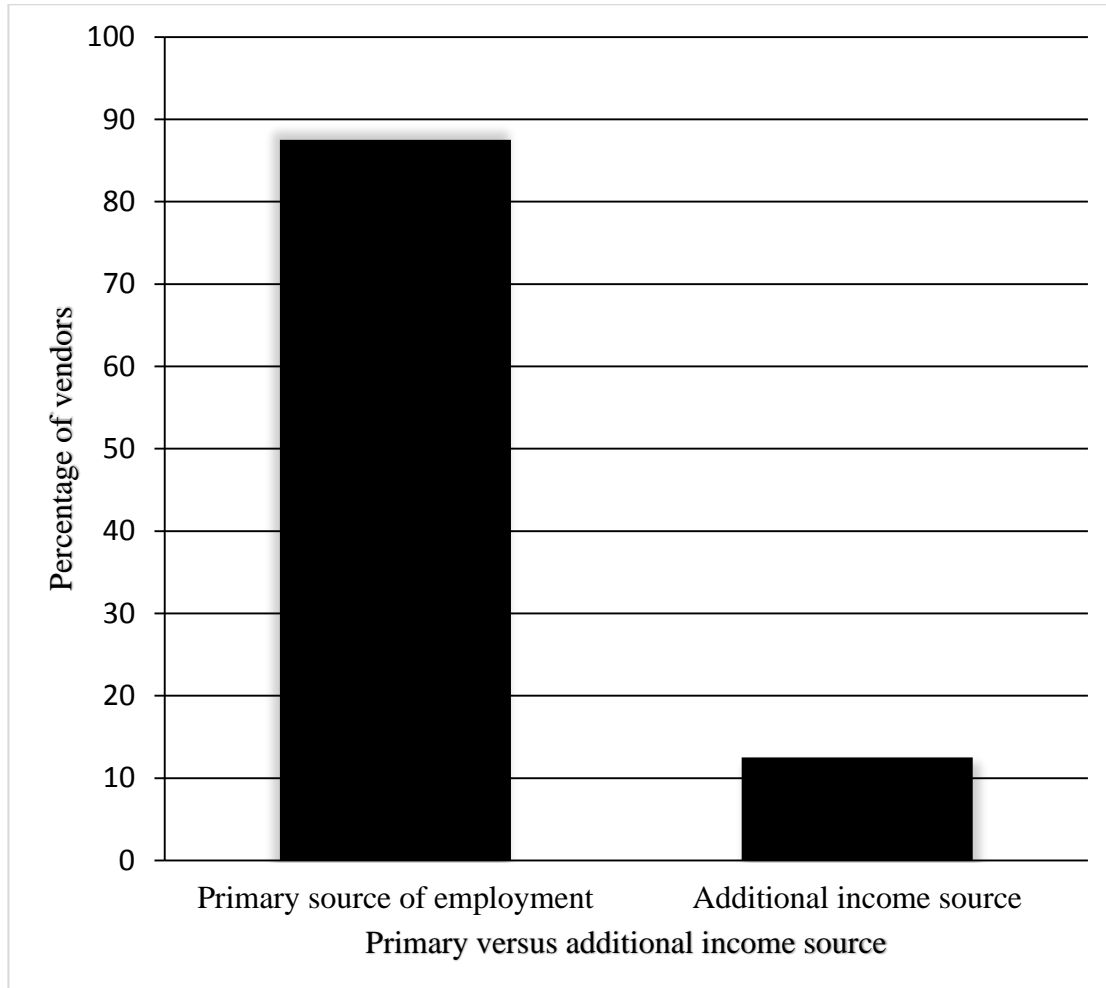
neighborhood. While making the sale, certain products placed certain demands on vendors due to customer behavior. One woman selling clothing commented "customers like to keep bargaining because they are interested in getting a good deal, so my profits become lower and lower. Nanchang people are smart and know how to drive a hard bargain." Lin, a snack vendor in his early 40s working along Aiguo Street mentioned: "Customers always ask 'is it hot?, rice is not cold right?' or, 'is it fresh? Clean?' Customers always need to be reassured that you are not giving them unclean food. They ask this every day and all the time." "Sometimes customers really rush you" said Juan, a noodle vendor in her late 50s working along Wuwei Street. "Faster, faster, they say, I am in a rush and really hungry. My noodles take time to prepare. Sometimes they leave and go somewhere else to get food, but I can only serve so fast."

5.7 Working Hours and Conditions

Numerous studies on informal street vendors throughout the Global South commonly identify the diverse and labor-intensive characteristics of finding customers in the streets. This usually involves working long hours during the day (Crossa, 2009; Bhowmik, 2005; Cukier and Wall, 1994). As Crossa (2009) points out in his study on Mexico City's street vendors, "aside from the difficulties of having to be on constant lookout for police and thieves, or of having to deal with the burden of harsh weather (sun, heat, rain and cold), street vendors' daily life entails long and far from ideal working conditions" (p. 53). This was also the case of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors. While no vendors made claims about the presence of thieves, the challenge of working in inclement weather and keeping a sharp-eye for *chengguan* was part of their daily work routine. For Sanjingwuwei's street vendors, there were differences in the range and average number of hours

worked based on vendors' place of origin. However, no significant difference between female and male street vendors in the amount of hours worked was discovered.

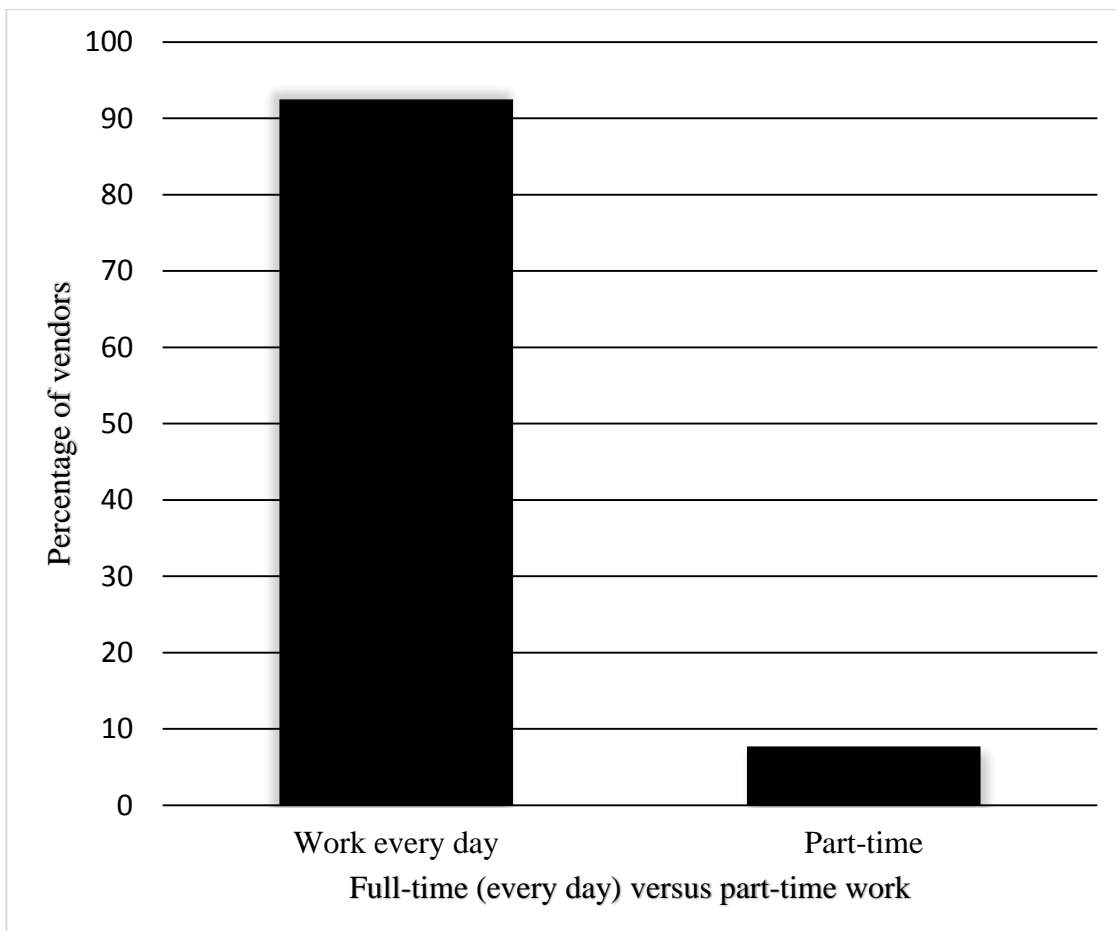
Table 13. Street vending as primary versus additional income source in Sanjingwuwei.



For street vendors who reside outside of the city, the daily work hours ranged between 8 and 15 hours per day with an average of 11.5 hours per day. These vendors came from both outer suburbs that were physically detached from the central city as well as villages that exist outside and adjacent to Nanchang's built-up area. Most of these vendors from outside of the city used electrically-powered loaders to haul the fruit and other types of produce greater distances into the

city from their home areas. The number of hours worked in the streets by street vendors who reside in Sanjingwuwei was significantly less. For these vendors, their workdays ranged between 1 and 10 hours per day with the average being 7.2 hours per day. However, whereas 87.5% of vendors made clear that street vending was their primary income and employment source, 92.5% of vendors said that they worked in the streets every day but did not do so when it rains. However, on multiple occasions, street vendors in Sanjingwuwei were seen working in rainy conditions during peak times of potential customers.

Table 14. Street vending as full-time versus part-time work in Sanjingwuwei



In general, Sanjingwuwei's street vendors work long days filled with uncertainty. Cross' (1998) description that street vendors around the globe "deal with 'exposure to the weather, fluctuating income, boredom, long working hours, and long and inconvenient trips to purchase merchandise'" all add up to a long day in the streets of the city (p.103). In Sanjingwuwei, vendors' negotiation of public space meant that time was spent avoiding *chengguan*, searching customers, resting, purchasing goods and materials, and dealing with weather conditions, which, in Nanchang's summer months, are hot, humid, and rainy. In short, the working conditions and long working hours of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are consistent with many researchers' descriptions of informal vendors' experiences in cities around the world.

5.8 Economic Dynamics and Value Chain

Sanjingwuwei's street vendors mentioned reduced earnings over the past few years. Inflation was a serious economic problem. Lower earnings were connected to a shrinking customer base compared to the previous years and to increased competition from both supermarkets and other street vendors. The gentrification of the area and the increased cost of housing in Nanchang was a major reason for the loss of customers. Additionally, produce and snack vendors made clear that the increasing cost of materials was a major problem in making street vending profitable.

Sanjingwuwei's informal street vendors were integrated with the formal sector in regards to both customers and the purchasing of products that were sold. The largest market for Sanjingwuwei's street vendors were pedestrians who walked along the neighborhood's streets and those who resided in the neighborhood itself. Vendors selling snacks made clear that many of the ingredients used to make their products came from local supermarkets. However, each snack vendor referred to his or her goods as 'homemade.' As was often the case, the snacks were prepared on the street and in-front of the customers. It was found that the primary customers of Sanjingwuwei's

street vendors were elderly residents who came to buy fruit or vegetables. While the option to purchase produce from one of the many small supermarkets in the neighborhood was always an option, some street vendors noted that their customers came on a daily basis because relationships and friendships had been built with Sanjingwuwei's residents. Additionally, workers from the hospital and school children walking through the neighborhood also offered a consistent customer base.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter provided some basic details concerning the study subjects in Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood. It also described some basic details concerning who Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are, what they sell, where, when, and how they work in the neighborhood. Street vendors in Sanjingwuwei rely on a handful of tactics to seek out customers including (1) highly mobile forms of transporting goods; (2) using approaches that seek to attract customers through the senses, including colorful signage and audio recordings; and (3) working long hours in public space with the aim of earning an income.

Sales made by Sanjingwuwei's street vendors revolve around the rhythms, flows, and needs of everyday life at street-level. In addition, street vendors sold a myriad of different products. While most street vendors in the neighborhood resided in Sanjingwuwei, a significant portion came from outside the city. Most street vendors in Sanjingwuwei are itinerant, going from place to place; some using creative means to carve out a permanent space to sell. This included being highly mobile, and reappropriating different kinds of spaces from unused spaces like alleyways and undeveloped land to street corners and residential entrances with a lot of passersby. In regard

to different means of selling, a wide variety of methods existed involving push-carts, bicycles, driven loaders, blankets, and even vans.

While a variety of different mobile street vending techniques were used by vendors, Sanjingwuwei's street vendors face numerous work-related difficulties when attempting to make a sale in the streets. However, street vendors' biggest challenges come from the presence of *chengguan* and the loss of urban space through on-going gentrification in the neighborhood.

CHAPTER SIX

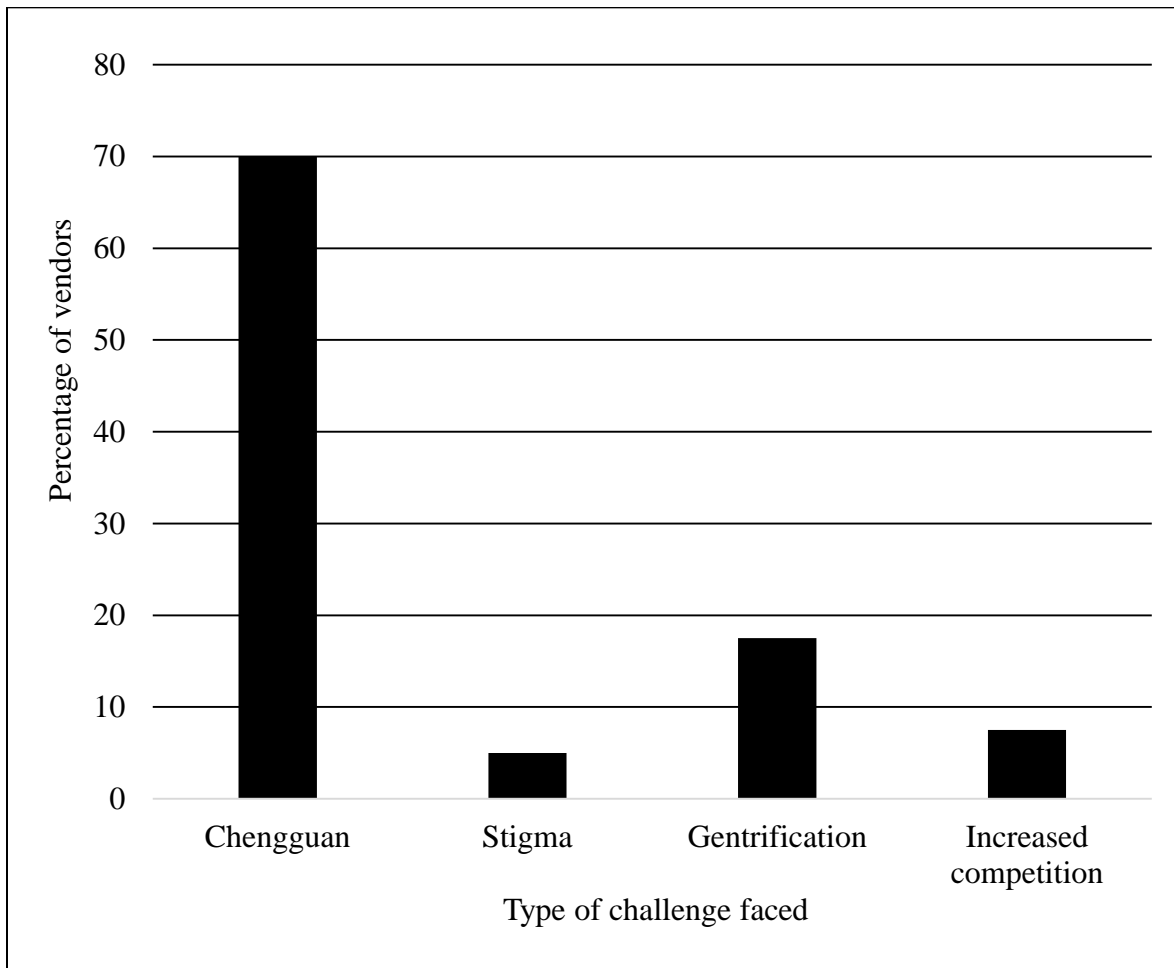
NARRATIVES OF STRUGGLE AMONG SANJINGWUWEI'S STREET VENDORS

This chapter explores the narratives of struggle among Sanjingwuwei's street vendors when working in public space and trying to earn a living. While the struggle to access public space to earn a living featured prominently in vendors' narratives, three major challenges were mentioned by vendors in regards to making a sale. First, street vendors whom I talked with commented on the diminished advantages to vending in the area due to an increase in the number of street vendors over recent years. This has not only lowered the monetary returns of vendors who work in the streets of Sanjingwuwei but also given vendors more of a presence since a clustering of vendors warrants unwanted attention from *chengguan* who force them to disperse. Secondly, some vendors made clear that a stigma labelling their practices as dirty or unsafe has brought challenges to their income earning potential. This was most clearly a concern for street vendors whose primary clientele were students who walked through the neighborhood before and after a school day. Third, the ongoing gentrification process in Sanjingwuwei has led to not only the loss of space for street vendors but also a loss of customers to whom to sell. In some instances, street vendors themselves were at a loss where they would be living as their homes were marked to be razed in the upcoming months.

While not all street vendors have the same experiences working in Sanjingwuwei, the majority were impacted negatively by the presence of *chengguan* in the area. As urban management officers tasked with the job of removing street vendors from public space, *chengguan*

are the most significant challenge urban China's vendors face when working in the streets. The constant fear of avoiding *chengguan* makes street vendors' work precarious, dangerous, and sometimes costly if they are given fines or their goods are confiscated. While each street vendor attested to having different experiences while working in Sanjingwuwei's streets, the right to work in public space featured prominently in their narratives regarding the challenges of street vending in Nanchang.

Table 15. Types of challenges faced by Sanjingwuwei's street vendors. Source: Author.



When street vendors were asked about the most significant challenge they faced when working in public space, 70% of Sanjingwuwei's vendors mentioned the influence *chengguan* had

on their livelihood strategies. The impact gentrification had on street vendors was significant, but only 17.5% mentioned that the changes to Sanjingwuwei were the biggest challenge they faced. Additionally, only 5% of vendors mentioned a negative stigma towards street vending as the main challenge they face, and 7.5% asserted increased competition as the largest challenge.

After describing the narratives of Sanjingwuwei's vendors in relation to the challenges of making a sale and the right to work in the streets, this chapter seeks to contextualize these vendors' challenges through two theoretical lenses driving the challenges they face: first, China's increasing social polarization, and second, the commodification of urban space as a consequence of globalization. Additionally, there is a need for researchers to better interpret what China's informal workers have to say about working in the streets. Such investigations could shed light on what public space means in the China context and how China's vendors experiences compare to vendors from other regions of the world. This chapter is an attempt to contribute to this need.

6.1 Struggles in Making the Sale

When discussing with Sanjingwuwei's street vendors about the challenges they faced while working in the streets, a handful of specific issues were present from street vendors' responses. Each vendor made specific reference to their ability to work in public space. Street vendors' responses ranged from their physical ability to access public space to the negative image of street vendors in local media which street vendors made clear falsely represented them as a group. Nearly all of the 40 street vendors interviewed mentioned more than one challenge they faced on a daily-basis in Sanjingwuwei. However, when asked what the most significant challenge to their lives as street vendors in the neighborhood was, four specific themes emerged from their narratives. This chapter highlights the voices of street vendors in reference to the four most significant challenge

they faced in the streets. As mentioned above, these four challenges were the increased competition of other street vendors, the negative stigma media had portrayed regarding street vendors, the ongoing gentrification of Sanjingwuwei, and most significantly, the presence of *chengguan* which challenged their ability to access, use, and earn a living in the public spaces of Sanjingwuwei.

The goal of this chapter is to represent street vendors in their own words. Few studies on street vendors around the world use the narratives of vendors (as well other informal workers) as they are told while working in public space. This chapter is an attempt to render such an omission in informality literature by showcasing the voices of a handful of street vendors from Sanjingwuwei. In this chapter, narratives were chosen which best represented general themes found within the voices of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors. While not every vendor's narrative is portrayed in this chapter, general themes from selected passages are were chosen as representation regarding vendors' concerns and challenges. Below is a description, using street vendors' voices about the major challenges they face. This description begins with the smallest concerns of street vendors and ends with the most significant challenge voiced by Sanjingwuwei's street vendors, the presence of *chengguan* in the neighborhood.

6.1.1 Increased Competition

One theme from their responses concerning the challenges faced in their lives while working in public space was the increasing number of vendors working in Sanjingwuwei. While on 2 of 40 vendors, or 5% of the sample, mentioned increased competition as the most significant challenge faced in the public spaces of Sanjingwuwei, a few of other vendors had voiced their concerns about the increasing presence of vendors in the neighborhood. In this section, the voices of both groups of vendors are used to represent such concerns of a growing informal economy in

the study area. As becomes clear, the growing presence of vendors made vending more difficult for some vendors because of the increased competition from other vendors. While no vendor spoke negatively about the increase in number of street vendors working in Sanjingwuwei, many vendors acknowledged it had decreased their income earning potential. For some vendors, this meant going in search of customers outside of the areas they normally worked. For Tao, a 57-year-old man who sold fruit, being more mobile was an essential way of seeking out clientele over the last two years:

There are many vendors selling similar things [fresh fruit] in the area. I've been selling here for a few years and business has been OK. Lately, though, business has been tough. There are more and more people doing what I do. Many vendors selling fruit come from outside the city. They sell what they grow. I get my fruit from a family member. But, more vendors mean fewer customers. But what can I do? I go throughout a few neighborhoods now trying to sell. I do this more than I used to. Ay Oh!...not easy doing this.

Guo, a 61-year-old woman who sells snacks in Sanjingwuwei said:

I've been working here for nearly 10 years. I live in the area. I used to only sell outside the hospital [along Aiguo Street]. But now I search for areas where there aren't as many vendors around. I'm old now. Getting around the city isn't easy.

When I asked Guo why she thought there were more vendors in the area, she said:

Things are not cheap. People need to work. I don't curse at them. Some of them I have known for a while but they had only recently become street vendors to earn some extra cash.

Another vendor, Lizhe, a 48-year-old man selling fruit from his electric three-wheeled loader next to a construction site along Sanjing Street attributed increase in vending to the activity being attractive for the elderly in Nanchang:

Around here a lot of elderly work as vendors. The job is not too difficult. These peaches are from my village outside the city. Most vendors here sell snacks, you know, *Nanchang fan* (Nanchang local snacks). I think there are more vendors recently because a lot of older people have time on their hands and need money too. But most don't sell peaches and fruit so it doesn't bother me too much.

Some vendors commented on the general difficulty of attracting customers in Nanchang in general, and how the growth of informal vending in the area made making money more difficult.

Yao, a 58-year-old woman who sold cakes along Aiguo Street for almost five years commented:

It's a difficult business environment! Students and local people only have a little bit of money to spend on snacks. I can sell to teachers who come out at noon to eat lunch. Selling fried rice to teachers from the school is most common for me but it is difficult. Nanchang people don't have much money so they have less to spend and more of us [vendors] work on Aiguo Street because we need money. Over the last four years, there have been more vendors around here. Since then, I've earned less than I used to.

For those who saw growing competition from other vendors in the area as a major problem for their income earning potential, it was directly related to vendors offering or selling similar goods in similar areas. This cancelled out the perceived advantages vendors had when they were the sole vendor selling a particular good or item. Selling different kinds of snacks along Aiguo Street for more than a decade, Ziru began vending when she was 48. In regards to increased competition, she stated:

Now, on this street and outside the school there are seven or eight vendors. A few years ago there was only her [pointing to street vendor down the street] and I on Yuzhang Street. It has become oh so hard to sell snacks around here. There are a few of us selling snacks by this school. It used to be only me and her [pointing to another woman down the sidewalk].

When asked if this had lessened the number of customers she had today in comparison with a decade ago, Ziru said, "Yes, I have a good position along the street here. But my earnings have decreased since a few years ago. There are too many of us on this street, but where can I go?"

While vendors acknowledged that the increased competition and the growth in the number of vendors was detrimental to the money they earned as street vendors, Hui, a 54-year-old male fruit vendor working by the Bayi Bridge underpass made clear that more vendors brought unwanted attention from *chengguan*:

This is a popular place for us [vendors] to work. But there are more and more vendors setting up over here. It's getting crowded I think. I can sell things, but, the more vendors there are, the more *chengguan* will come to inspect. Lately, I have lost sales because of the increase [in street vendors]. I can use this [touching his three-wheeled loader] to go sell where I need before I go home.

In general, most vendors said little about the presence of other vendors in the area. In a few cases, vendors acknowledged that street vending in Sanjingwuwei and Nanchang as a whole was a basic part of city life. Many vendors, while not happy about increased competition, took on a "it is, what it is" attitude towards other street vendors in the city. "There have always been a lot of street vendors in Nanchang" said Zhiguo, a 50-year-old snack vendor who has worked in Sanjingwuwei for almost 5 years. For Zhiguo, it was expected that more vendors would work in a place that was convenient to attracting customers:

This is a popular place to work because there is a steady movement of people. But there are more [vendors] than there used to be. I sell snacks and she [pointing to another vendor] sells fruit. We sell things that people need. If *chengguan* leave me alone, it works out OK for me.

Aside from the increased competition, some vendors made clear the relationships they had fostered with other vendors in the area while working in the streets. For 53-year-old female snack vendor Junjun:

I know most of the people selling here [on Wuwei Street]. We have been doing this a long time. It is a good place to sell. That is why all of us vendors come here to sell when people come home from work or go for a walk. I used to work along Yangming Avenue. I work here now because it's safer. But so do they [pointing to vendors across the street].

Similarly, for Chuanren, a 50-year-old man who had been selling snacks beneath Bayi Bridge for 3 years:

Working here [underneath Bayi Bridge] isn't too tough. I come from outside the city. I see some other vendors I know around here. We talk about where we can sell things and when we will head back home. I make sure to go somewhere he [pointing to another fruit vendor] doesn't go, but space is limited and we have to work together sometimes. In certain times of the day, it is good for business.

Meng, who sold hand-sewn shoe insoles outside her building at the age of 67 acknowledged how work and community went hand in hand while out on the streets:

I live here [pointing up to her apartment]. In the afternoons I come out to try and sell what I can. We come outside to sell, but we often start talking about things. Business is not too good, but, a lot of them [other vendors] live in this building with me. It is a daily thing to do this. We come out every day, except when it rains.

While no street vendors spoke negatively towards other street vendors, it was clear that the increase in presence of street vendors in the study area was a concern and even a challenge for some vendors in Sanjingwuwei. A few key themes arose out of street vendors' narratives concerning the growing presence of vendors. Firstly, some vendors mention how they need to be more mobile and find new places to sell in the area. Here, the limited space became a concern which lowers the profitability of selling and raises the possibility of attracting *chengguan* in the area. Secondly, others made clear that they needed to sell for longer periods of time. This meant using more time and energy to find new spaces to sell. Lastly, and perhaps the most pressing general concern was the overall drop in profitability due to the increasing number of street vendors in the area. In this sense, the competitive advantage was due to more competition in a certain alleyway, street corner, or sidewalk. However, what is clear is that many vendors acknowledged the other vendors were trying to survive just as they were trying to do. Furthermore, in some cases, vendors had known each other for long periods of time and understood their reasons for working in close proximity. The next section investigates street vendors' perception that a negative stigma towards them brought challenges to making a sale in the streets.

6.1.2 Stigma

In the eyes of local residents, the city's street vendors exist in a gray area concerning their place in the city. In a 2013 article run by the *Nanchang Daily* (July, 18, 2013) titled “People love to hate street markets,” it was made clear that “local residents maintained a love-hate relationship” with the countless informal street vending sites that exist in Nanchang. While the article emphasized that such informal street markets brought convenient services and local food stuffs to city residents, it also claimed that such activities impeded traffic, “affected local residents’ way of life,” and led to disorder and trash in neighborhood environments.

For three vendors interviewed, or 7.5% of the sample, a perceived negative stigma towards them was a significant challenge they faced. This was a concern for snack vendors in particular who often catered or sold snacks to students. Vendors made clear that some parents did not approve of them selling snacks so close to the school. For Hua, a 57-year-old woman who resided in Sanjingwuwei and sold a variety of snacks along Yuzhang Street:

The parents of students always objected that I sell snacks by the school. They say I sell food that is not clean and has too salty a taste,...ah! They also argue my ingredients are not fresh. But what am I to do, not work? The things we sell are affordable and the students like them.

Similarly, Sujian, a 42-year-old snack vendor argued: Parents say that eating my food is bad for their children’s health. They also say that our [street vendors’] food is very dirty. One vendor, Junjun, a 53-year-old woman concerned with the negative stigma sought to argue against such allegations of being “dirty” or providing “unclean” food. For Junjun, the goods she sold were no different from those at a restaurant or supermarket since she bought her ingredients from local markets and shops. For her,

I buy my products from the store across the street. I make these dumplings by hand while customers come to talk. It is a good and busy atmosphere around here so people like to purchase things to go. But, some see us as dirty. *Chengguan* and the

news really look down on us. But, what we sell is popular. Some do not like us in the streets.

In a similar sense, both Jiang, a 54-year-old female snack vendor and, Shizhe, a 40-year-old female snack vendor commented how they felt that some people looked down on them. For Jiang:

The news talks badly about us. What I sell is fresh. I made this [pointing to a pile of steamed buns] this morning. Some vendors' stalls are dirty, but we work hard. I keep my area clean. There is no problem what I sell. It is all talk!

For Shizhe:

Some people look at us as if we are not people. Many of us vendors have been doing this a long time. We know what we are doing. A lot of people don't approve of us working in the streets. But, I think a lot like to buy from us when they want something to eat.

While relatively few street vendors in Sanjingwuwei mentioned that either stigma or increased competition were the most significant challenges in their lives as vendors, for some, it was a critical concern. The vendors who argued that the media's and people's allegations that vendors are dirty was powerful enough to affect their business. This was especially important for the vendors who sold snacks near to or outside of the schools in Sanjingwuwei. These vendors, selling popular snacks for both teachers and students alike before, during lunch break, and after school let out voiced their concerns about a negative perception of their work most vigorously. However, no vendors selling produce voiced their concerns about a negative stigma towards their presence in the streets. The remaining two sections portray the voices of street vendors' concerns concerning the gentrification of Sanjingwuwei and the presence of *chengguan* in the area; the latter being by far the most important concern voiced by Sanjingwuwei's informal vendors.

6.1.3 Gentrification

Some of Sanjingwuwei's vendors associated the on-going gentrification process in the area as a major challenge to earning a living. This group, was represented by 7 of the 40 street vendors interviewed in the study area, or 17.5% of the sample. Due to gentrification of many low-income neighborhoods where street vendors work and often live, the urban poor who rely on street vending lose potential clients, a place where they can earn a living, and in some instances their homes. After gentrification, the neighborhood becomes a place not only unwelcoming for street vendors to work, but often one devoid of potential customers. Street vendors are forced by these processes into areas less suitable to attracting customers, thus constraining their already limited income earning opportunities. Each vendor who mentioned the impact of gentrification in the area made clear that the gentrification process lessened the number of people who lived along certain streets. This meant fewer customers and spaces in which to sell. For He, 49-years-old, who sold fried snacks from a push-cart, fewer people on the streets in parts of Sanjingwuwei had a damaging impact on the amount of money she made. He said:

With less and less people here in Sanjingwuwei I sell less and less. When business is bad I sell only a few things per day! There are more new buildings but less people around. I have lost a lot of old customers I used to know. Usually, I stay out longer in order to try and sell what I can.

The impact of gentrification was felt by vendors throughout different areas of Sanjingwuwei. The heaviest urban redevelopment had been taking place along Sanjing Street as well as the smaller Siwei and Sanwei streets which were now characterized by towering apartment complexes and redeveloped homes fashioned in the style representative of what could have been found in the area during the Republican era. This also brought in upper-middle class residents who parked their cars along the narrow streets that were walled on each side, thus, extending the people-less streetscape that followed gentrification. Vendors working under the Bayi Bridge underpass also noted the

influence gentrification had on their earnings. For, Yeliang, a fruit vendor from outside the city who said he had relied on selling fruit in the area for more than a decade, the impact of gentrification was tough to deal with:

Now that these buildings have been knocked down, I lost almost half of my customers. I need to cover more ground now in order to make some money to buy daily goods. *Chengguan* are not as strict here as they are in Beijing. The life of a street vendor in Nanchang is becoming more and more difficult. I'm not sure what these new developments around here will do for us (street vendors). It has been more difficult to sell around here since these changes (to the neighborhood) began a few years ago.

Similar to He above, Yeliang was not only impacted economically by gentrification of the area but in two other significant ways. First, both He and Yeliang's comments show the increasing uncertainty of earning a living through street vending in the area. This made their precarious work even more precarious. Secondly, both vendors pointed out that they needed to try and cover more ground during the day or work longer hours in search of customers. Echoing He and Liang's comments, Hui, a 54-year-old man selling fruit commented:

There are areas in the city I cannot go to sell. *Chengguan*. Security. Traffic. Fewer people to sell too. There used to be a lot of people around here [pointing down Sanwei Street]. Now, not too many. I tend to work in places I never have before. It gets crowded with other vendors in the area. They built these buildings quick. But the people haven't followed. I go try and sell in a few other neighborhoods now.

Hui's comments showed how due to gentrification, he had to work in areas that were already occupied by other vendors. This, obviously, brings conflict and increased competition for all vendors involved. However, for Huanglei, a 50-year-old man selling corn along Aigu Street who resided in the area, the impact of gentrification was even more worrisome. For Huanglei:

Business is not very good because half of the people have been forced out of Sanjingwuwei and the new buildings don't have any people in them because they are too expensive for most Nanchang people. Nobody can afford those apartment prices and the people forced out now live in apartments far away from here. My home is about to be razed as well and I don't know where I'll be living or working. I can't afford to live in one of those newer buildings.

The gentrification process in Sanjingwuwei had specific impacts on vendors who worked in the area. While only 17.5% of interviewed vendors saw gentrification as the biggest challenge they face, the ongoing changes brought fewer numbers of customers. This was the first impact of gentrification. Combined with fewer customers were also a lessening of spaces to work in. This happened in certain streets, most notably Siwei, Sanwei, Erwei and portions of Aiguo Street that made street vending increasingly difficult due to the lack of people and at times streets being nearly devoid of street life.

When street vendors sought out new areas to work, this at times brought them into increased competition with other vendors. When searching for new locations to sell their goods, vendors argued that the amount of time working on the streets increased in the attempt to make up for lost income due to gentrification. Despite being able to somewhat cope with the negative impact of gentrification, these vendors' narratives still portray a significant uncertainty about their income earning potential. For one vendor, the gentrification process was also threatening his place of residence.

6.2 "If you're too slow you'll be caught!"

The most significant challenge to street vendors in Sanjingwuwei were *chengguan*. As Chapter Three described, *chengguan* in China's cities have a contentious relationship with vendors who rely on public space. While none of Sanjingwuwei's vendors reported violent confrontation with *chengguan*, there have been numerous instances of such conflicts across China. Data collection in Sanjingwuwei found that 70% of vendors, or 28 of 40 vendors from the sample, voiced that *chengguan* were the biggest challenge to their work in the streets. Vendors' frustration with *chengguan*, who seek to remove and fine vendors as well as confiscate their goods, could be

categorized in four distinct themes; (1) the right to public space, (2) *Chengguan's* impediment to earning a living, (3) narratives involving the ways *chengguan* punished vendors for working in the streets, and (4) vendors' reappropriation of space because they had few other options.

Firstly, some of Sanjingwuwei's vendors argued that public space (i.e., streets, sidewalks) should belong to everybody. In this sense, street vendors argued that they should be allowed to access the streets if needed in order to contribute to both their well-being and the neighborhood. This is directly related to Lefebvre's idea of a right to the city. While notions of public space in the theoretical sense were not present in vendors' narratives, the core idea was that they too should be allowed to use space in ways that were essential to them. Hence, they supported and argued for the right to reappropriate public space and turn abstract space into the concrete.

When I met Yingqian, a 48-year-old fruit vendor, she was parked on the side of a narrow part of Aiguo Street not far from the Bayi Bridge underpass. Her three-wheeled loader, that so many fruit vendors preferred to use, was parked under a shady spot where many people walked past. After she had finished putting some peaches into a plastic bag and handing it to a customer, I walked up to her and asked how business was during the day. Politely offering me a peach to try, Yingqian said that business was slow but acceptable on that particular morning. Since Aiguo Street was the place where I began my walks through Sanjingwuwei every morning, I mentioned to her that each morning I saw *chengguan* quickly coming through, sometimes evicting vendors from their positions along the street, while other times, not doing anything to them. When I asked Yingqian if *chengguan* were a problem for her, she quickly retorted "Yes, *chengguan* are always a problem for me," exhaling, she went on, "I have been fined by them more than once." After asking if American cities had people like *chengguan*, she went on to say:

Chengguan and the city look down on street vendors. We occupy a little bit of the road and maybe block traffic for a moment, but they look down on us so much as

if we are pests. They are privileged and have money, they don't know what it's like to have to live like us. We street vendors say the road belongs to everybody! The city made room for parking [pointing finger down Aiguo Street] and making money from that but we only occupy a small space in the neighborhood. The parked cars occupy the street, the whole lane. The government is making a lot of money changing this neighborhood, but the lane belongs to everybody.

Clearly, Yingqian saw she had a right to occupy a small area of the street to conduct her business.

Similarly, Fei, a 25-year-old man selling rice snacks along Wuwei Street commented:

They [*chengguan*] don't treat us good at all. I only work out here for a few hours a day. It shouldn't be a problem to use the street. I live in Nanchang, why can't I use the street to make some money on the side. The city is not just for the wealthy, we need to use it too, just like everybody uses streets or sidewalks.

A similar position to Yingqian and Fei, was also held by other vendors in the area. For Yan, a 59-year-old male vendor, his experience and amount of time selling along Wuwei Street gave him the right to reappropriate public space for selling the toys and snacks. As Yan said:

I have been working here [Wuwei Street] for almost 10 years. A lot of us vendors have been selling for a long time around here. This street is where we make a living, talk, and gossip. Those *chengguan* have good jobs. I think they should let us work here because this street does not only belong to rich people but us too!

For Yan, his comment that "this street does not only belong to rich people" related to the on-going redevelopment of the area. However, for other vendors, *chengguan* impeded their ability to access and work in the few spaces safe for vendors to work. Since many vendors commented that when working along the larger avenues just outside the study area they were more likely to encounter *chengguan*, their reasons for working in places like Sanjingwuwei were challenged by *chengguan*. While *chengguan* exist in Sanjingwuwei, their presence is much more visible along major avenues of the area and Nanchang as a whole. Therefore, despite the presence of *chengguan* in Sanjingwuwei, it was calculated as less risk of getting into trouble in Sanjingwuwei than was the case working along larger and more commercial avenues. Ren, a 58-year-old woman who sold fruit along Aiguo Street from a push-cart for 6 years commented:

There are few places safe to do this work around here [street vending]. This street is popular with vendors and customers. We don't cause any trouble when selling. The sidewalks are supposed to be for everyone to enjoy. But they tell us we are in the way. The things I sell are popular and it helps me make some money. Aiguo Street is used by many people, both us and walkers. But *chengguan* tell us this place should not be used for that type of thing [street vending]. But, I come here every day to work anyways!

Another vendor, Ping, who at the age of 34 had been selling vegetables in the city for the past two years, mentioned how his reappropriation of public space was challenged at times by *chengguan* who did not allow him to rest atop his three-wheeled loader in between peak selling times. As a vendor who resides in a village outside the city, Ping commented that he "spends a lot of hours in the city selling vegetables" but "needed to regain his energy" when he could as "it is a long trip back home at the end of the day." For Ping:

I work in the city all day; sometimes, for more than 10 or 12 hours. Those *chengguan* don't allow us to sleep next to our carts when we need to rest, or when there are few customers around. I'm never in the way as you can see. I don't block traffic. I only block a little bit of the sidewalk but they [*chengguan*] make a big deal. It is harmful to city appearance they say! Then, *chengguan* tell me to leave. I just like to get a little sleep before I go somewhere else to sell watermelons.

As the narratives about public space and *chengguan* show, vendors saw their right to use public space being impeded by *chengguan*. In a different sense, some vendors in Sanjingwuwei commented that *chengguan* were a direct threat not only to their right to public space but to earning a living. This was the second theme concerning vendors' narratives of struggle with *chengguan*. "Chengguan always catch me" said Hui, the 54-year-old fruit vendor said. While loudly announcing the kinds of fruit he sold to passersby, Tao, a 57-year-old man who had been selling produce for 15 years went on saying:

I have to close up my stall and push my cart home. I sell things to support my family. Telling me to go home is like telling me to stop working. How are we to survive? These *chengguan* don't understand why it is we work in the streets. We need to make money too!

For Li, a 51-year-old man who came from outside the city and sold handicrafts near the 791 Art District, the ability of *chengguan* to surprise him and quickly arrive was as much a problem as the frequency with which it occurred.

The difficulty is that they [*chengguan*] just don't want you to work on the sidewalks. Now that the *chengguan* use a car, I need to stop selling tofu immediately and push my cart to escape. I lose money and business when this happens. This is frustrating to deal with nearly every day.

Similarly, a few other vendors commented on their individual experiences with *chengguan* and the frequency of encountering them. For Hanqin and Yao, this was an issue to deal with. "When *chengguan* come, I have to leave quickly!" stated Hanqin, who sold clothes outside the hospital for nearly 6 years. For her:

I don't stick around otherwise I run the risk of them confiscating my things. Sometimes, hospital security will catch me selling and tell me to leave. So I have to work further away from the hospital, which means further away from customers going in and out of the building.

For Yao, a 58-year-old woman who sold snacks from a push-cart, *chengguan* attempts to kick her out would be like removing an important aspect of the public space itself:

Chengguan always tell me to go away. They say my working at the intersection interferes with traffic and I am in the way of pedestrians. But, pedestrians like to stop and buy biscuits from me in the morning. I have regular customers. They like to get a snack on their way to work. I do this every day. I don't see a problem with this and they never complain about me working here.

One 39-year-old man, named Shan, who sold toys from a wooden push-cart along Wuwei Street, commented that being told to leave was normal for vendors here. But it no doubt impacted his ability to sell.

When *chengguan* expel me from the area, I wrap up my things and move to another place. This is just part of being a street vendor in Nanchang. But it limits the time I have to sell. Ay oh! They really get in the way.

In addition to vendors' comments that *chengguan* "get in the way" of making sales, one 54-year-old female vendor named Zhang who sold tofu along Aiguo Street for 23 years made clear that *chengguan* force her to distance herself from her potential customer base. For Zhang, this limited the amount of money she could make in the day since she was pushed further away from customers in the area and into a more marginal space for earning money and selling tofu. For Zhang:

Chengguan are always on my back! *Chengguan* are not as bad here as in other cities, but they get in the way of earning a living. A few years ago I could sell two buckets of tofu every morning, now, because I'm always told to go away, I can sell only one. *Chengguan* make things harder to sell. Before, I could work right in front of the hospital. Now, I need to work a block away. When I worked in front of the hospital I could sell snacks much easier and faster. Now I need to spend more time on the street and with less profit. Oh!, the life of a vendor is not so easy!

Like many studies on street vendors from different places around the world have shown, some vendors in Sanjingwuwei worked in the streets since they had no other employment options. *Chengguan* were seen by some of these vendors as a major impediment to doing the only type of work available to them at the time. This concern was demonstrated by three vendors in the area who had been without work. For Tao, the fruit vendor:

What does the government want us to do if we cannot work on the street? I make a little bit to buy some daily things, but have no money to open a big business. Not everyone can go to school and find a job. Not everyone has those opportunities as they may have had. We street vendors use the street to earn a living; it is who we are and what we rely upon. They have to let us work!

Working in an alleyway along Aiguo Street and selling clothes from a rack, Zhou, who is now 80-years-old, said:

I haven't had much work since I was laid off. Many of us from the same work unit [*danwei*] work around here because there is no more work in the factory. The work isn't too stressful but sometimes *chengguan* come through...sometimes they tell us to leave. But when I leave I can't make any money. I don't have a job and there aren't many places that will hire an older person like me. What would they have me do if I can't work here? We all have to work, right?

Similarly to Zhou, Qiang, who had only worked as a street vendor selling tofu snacks for 2 years, commented that *chengguan* add to the problems of earning a living for those who can't find work. For Qiang, street vending was seen as a temporary work arrangement until he could find formal work. In his view, *chengguan* should not harass people who do this only for necessity:

There are few jobs for people like me [without a college degree] here in the city now. I don't do this to make trouble. I just sell what I can when I am able. *Chengguan* have a job to earn money. This [street vending] is my job. I don't want to do this forever, but hey, we have to make money and eat. I hope to not do this type of work for too long. Until I can find some work I will have to continue.

While some vendors' narratives of struggle made clear that *chengguan* challenged their right to the city by either pushing them further from potential customers, the ways *chengguan* get in the way of making sales, and why *chengguan* tell them to leave when they have no other employment choices, showed how they perceived *chengguan* as punishing them when caught illegally selling goods and services on the streets. Most vendors were reluctant to give details about what occurred when they were caught. However, a handful of vendors described what happened to them in the past when *chengguan* sought to "punish" them for street vending. Ziru, who used a folding table to sell snacks and seaweed salad claimed:

Chengguan give me a lot of trouble, and sometimes I need to give them bribes to stay and work where I am. It can be costly and not very good for business. There aren't many places to hide when working. I have to work here to find customers and those who always like to come to me. *Chengguan* are trouble sometimes, ay oh!

34-year-old Luqi who sold watermelons in the area had similar experiences. Living in Sanjingwuwei, he had only been working as a vendor for a year. However, like Ziru, Luqi had also experienced a form of "punishment" by *chengguan* in the past. For Luqi:

There aren't too many *chengguan* around here because I work underneath the bridge where it is not an important space. But, when *chengguan* come through they will tell me to leave. If you don't comply, you'll be punished somehow. I've been

given a few fines in this year alone. If you are too slow, you'll be caught and given a fine!

Similarly, Weishan, a 48-year-old watermelon vendor who comes into the city almost daily for 12 years to sell produce, also experienced forms of punishment from *chengguan*. As Weishan claimed:

They usually don't confiscate my watermelons but they will take my scale as punishment. Then, I can no longer do business. When you approach them and plead your case for working on the street, they will just ignore you and tell you to go. If I give them a pack of cigarettes, then they may let me stay and sell watermelons in the street for a little while longer. But, you don't know if or when they are going to tell you to leave.

Lastly, for a few vendors, the fear of being fined by *chengguan* led to unique tactics they used in eluding or lessening the chance of encountering *chengguan* when working in public space. These tactics ranged from using time and even the weather to their advantage while others relied on personal connections (*guanxi*) to ensure a certain amount of safety when street vending. Tao, who had been selling for 15 years made clear that in his experience, there were certain times of the day to work in the streets that were less likely to lead to run-ins with *chengguan*. According to Tao:

There aren't too many *chengguan* in the afternoon. But sometimes they come through here. In the mornings they come through frequently. I almost always see them come through in the early morning. There are even less on the weekends though. But, not as many customers as on the weekdays. I tend to stay out longer trying to sell during the weekends. We [street vendors] need to remember these things if we're are not to be caught or fined.

For Chuanren, the usage of time was also important in avoiding *chengguan*:

Chengguan say the smell of my snacks are too strong and the smoke pollutes the city's air!. Hah, that can't be so. Sometimes *chengguan* catch me while I'm working. But, I return around noon when I know they are taking a nap. Hah!,...you have to be cunning in this type of work.

While vendors made clear that they choose not to work when it rains, He, a 49-year-old snack vendor, mentioned that she sometimes uses rainy days to her advantage in order to avoid *chengguan*. For He:

When it rains it isn't easy to sell. But, when it rains *chengguan* don't come through as often. If the rain isn't too heavy I stay out and try to sell if possible because there are fewer *chengguan*. It isn't easy, but, I can still sell something because even when it rains, people around here still need to eat.

Interestingly, two vendors mentioned the use of *guanxi*, a system based on social networks for business and other needs in order to establish a safe place to work in the streets. Selling local produce only meters away from the revolving doors of the mall, Junxiao made clear that familial connections allowed him to work without fear from both *chengguan* and mall security: "I have a family member who oversees security at the mall. I have to let him know when I'll be coming around here to sell, but when I do, it's no problem for me." For Xiaoying, who at 61 had been selling in the streets for 12 years, the safety of selling toys, handicrafts, and snacks inside of her residential complex, since she knew those in charge well, let her sell without any trouble. "I've lived here for a long-time" said Xiaoying. "Every day in the afternoon when school is out I come out to sell." "*Chengguan* don't give me any trouble because I am able to work inside of the yard (*yuanzi*)" She said. While the frequency of *guanxi* may have been more widespread than these three vendors, they were the only ones to mention it as a factor in their ability to avoid conflicts with *chengguan*.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter used the narratives of street vendors in Sanjingwuwei to represent the struggles they face on a daily basis while working in the streets. Street vendors' narratives concerning their ability to earn an income by street vending discussed being challenged by the

increasing presence of vendors in the area which results in increased competition; a stigma towards vendors as being dirty; the gentrification process in the area which has brought challenges in terms of access to customers and space in the neighborhood, and lastly, the presence of *chengguan* who often remove and even fine or confiscate vendors' goods. These last two challenges connect closely to Lefebvre's idea of a right to the city in two specific ways. First is the right to reappropriate public space on the grounds of survival and basic needs. The presence of *chengguan* and the gentrification of Sanjingwuwei are limiting the availability of space in the area for vendors to earn a living. Secondly, the city as *oeuvre*, or a collective work created by all urban inhabitants, is suppressed and priority is given solely to the influences of commodification and redevelopment.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WHAT DO SANJINGWUWEI'S STREET VENDORS TELL US ABOUT URBAN SPACE IN CHINA?

What the previous chapters have shown is that Nanchang's street vendors face a difficult, uncertain, and sometimes dangerous life on the streets. Their diverse narratives act as a testament to the struggles they face in accessing public space with the goal of improving themselves, earning a living, and seeking to adjust to difficult and unfair economic situations in the city. Studies on street vendors from around the world have shown how, similarly, informal vendors not only work hard to earn a living, but must both evade authorities and become part of urban space at the same time. In the case of Nanchang, and many other Chinese cities, the lack of a street vendor association means street vendors work without any formal protection that an association may provide. They work in the streets by themselves, alone, alert and, at best, through the support other vendors around can give to them. Therefore, while the previous chapters have empirically highlighted the practices, backgrounds, and experiences of street vendors, certain themes arise concerning urban space and informal street vendors' right to work in public spaces in Nanchang, urban China, and the Global South.

Firstly, the theme of whether informal, and often unlicensed street vendors, should be allowed access to urban space becomes central. Put another way, do the urban poor or rural-urban migrants deserve space in the streets to subsist? Because many of the individuals conversed with in this study who worked as street vendors in Nanchang did so due to a lack of formal employment and as a way to relieve an economic burden, I argue that street vendors should be allowed to use the

streets in order to survive. Of course, neoliberal elites are sure to challenge such a position since vendors themselves shape the city, most notably at street-level, as opposed to the typical developments perceived to stir "growth" in the city.

Secondly, what role does street vending serve for both individuals and the community as a whole? As this study has shown, street vending in Nanchang acts as an employment option for those without any formal options. However, vendors in Sanjingwuwei contributed to the community in which they worked in a number of other ways. These included the providing of essential services and goods for those who lived and passed through Sanjingwuwei. Most notably was the selling of local foodstuffs and snacks that many locals prefer to eat. Further contributions by Sanjingwuwei's vendors also involved making the community a vibrant and lively place. Therefore vendors contributed to a sense of place and the urban vibrancy that is essential to the social-life of countless neighborhoods in Nanchang. Finally, vendors in this study also remind us that the streets and public spaces of the city hold an important role for human interaction and social life. While my observations of Sanjingwuwei's vendors highlighted their practices and experiences in the streets, their presence and contributions go beyond employment and they should be viewed as an integral element of urban social life in Nanchang. This leads us to the last theme, an inherently geographical one, concerning Nanchang's street vendors and urban space which is covered in section 7.2.

Despite being a marginalized group, what agency do informal street vendors hold in altering the places that they work? Since vendors work at the community and neighborhood-level, in what ways do they (re)shape the streetscapes they work in? Whereas a handful of studies throughout the Global South have investigated such questions, few have done so in the context of urban China and none have viewed street vendors as a de-globalizing force in the city as this study does. In this sense, street vendors' presence at the neighborhood-level becomes important for three

interconnected reasons. First, the rescaling of urban space is made possible through the presence of vendors and others who use spaces in the neighborhood on an everyday basis. If so, can this be seen as a down-scaling of urban space by informal workers? Second, street vendors work around the schedules of the community, the presence of people, and the flows of the community's residents. Does this mean vendors aid in the slowing down of time-space? Lastly, through the lens of deglobalization, does street vendors' usage of public space act as a source of decommodifying the city? This chapter seeks to introduce and briefly answer these questions in the place-specific context of Nanchang and urban China.

7.1 Do Nanchang's Street Vendors Deserve Urban Space?

Street vendors are an important element of the informal economy. They are also an inescapable element of everyday street life in many Chinese cities. Yet, as cities in China continue to be rapidly and radically transformed through the increasing commodification of urban space, street vendors, like in many places around the globe, are seen as taking up valuable space and hindering the attractiveness of cities. This position is most clearly held by local elites for whom the profitability of urban space can help boost a city into world city status. While little research has been conducted on the public's opinions and perceptions of informal vendors in China, my experience in Nanchang has yielded three overarching viewpoints concerning the public's view towards street vendors.

Firstly, and most commonly, was the public's perception that street vendors are not only a basic aspect of life in Nanchang but an important and even crucial element in the city. Many Nanchang residents whom I briefly spoke with, both in and outside of Sanjingwuwei, mentioned that Nanchang people love to buy snacks from the city's street vendors. They noted that the presence

of street vendors was convenient in that vendors offered easily accessible snacks when on-the-go, offered foodstuffs and produce close to one's neighborhood, provided local Nanchang delicacies and traditional snacks at almost all hours of the day, and after dark, urban walkers were given the chance to purchase late-night snacks locally known as *xiaomai*. Many people mentioned that they personally know somebody who is a street vendor in the city. While this study's emphasis was not on the perceptions of informal street vendors, conversations with local residents were generally positive about the presence of vendors in their neighborhoods.

Secondly, some residents did not have much of an opinion concerning the vendors and sometimes saw it to be a silly question. Most people in this category simply saw it as a basic element of life in Nanchang and something that perhaps makes Nanchang the city that it is. Third, only a handful of people spoke negatively about street vendors. In this sense, vendors were labelled as the main cause of trash on the streets, blocked entrance ways, and were scolded for being the primary cause of traffic and congestion. However, as this researcher has explored numerous neighborhoods in Nanchang by foot, it is clear that there are dozens of factors leading to the gridlock found in the city's exceptionally narrow streets and lanes. Clearly, different opinions concerning Nanchang's street vendors exist, but the question concerning street vendors' right to work in public space exists and how they are to work amid the busyness of the city and its flows. Before discussing the agency of street vendors in Nanchang, the questions of whether street vendors deserve urban space in the city and what role street vending plays at both the scales of the individual and community are investigated. Below, six themes are discussed in support of street vendors' contributions to urban space in Nanchang.

7.1.1 Employment

Perhaps most notably, street vending offers an employment strategy for those without any formal work. As Chapter 3 described, street vending in urban China boomed in the late 1970s and early 1980s as many of the country's workers in state-owned industries found themselves without work. This was not only in the case of China, but in many places around the Global South, where street vending today still "serves as a social safety-net." (Bromely 2000, p. 5). Put simply, as Bromley (2000) aptly states, "If they could not sell on the streets, some street vendors would be unemployed, many street vendors and their dependents would be destitute, and some might turn to crime, rioting or revolution" (p.5). In a different light, street vending also acts as an entrepreneurial strategy for large swaths of people who cannot afford to purchase or rent fixed rate formal space. These important contributions of informal work in enabling the urban poor to achieve some level of self-support and subsistence for themselves and their families was evident in the case of Sanjingwuwei.

In the case of Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood, as Chapter 5 has shown, street vending provided an important employment option for two prominent groups. First, were the elderly and most notably elderly women, who often lined the streets in groups chatting while waiting to make a sale. When discussing with them why they chose to work in the streets it was often because of convenience and due to a lack of consistent formal work since the 1980s or 1990s. Secondly, rural-urban migrants also reverted to selling in the streets. This offered an income strategy for those living both in the city on a long-term basis, temporarily, and for those from the surrounding countryside. Other groups reliant on informal vending, as chapter 3 had mentioned, are minorities from western and southwestern China and students who live in the city. While Uighur migrants from Xinjiang Province and Hui migrants from Gansu Province in China's west can be found in certain

streets of Nanchang selling snacks and other goods, neither they nor students were present in the streets of Sanjingwuwei and maintain a marginal presence in Nanchang's public spaces.

Without street vending, many of the elderly working along Sanjingwuwei's streets would not have an income. While some receive pensions from their former employers many suggested that street vending was a key source of income for them. Because of this, street vending acts as an important employment strategy for people with few options to rely upon.

7.1.2 Not Competition, But Reliance

The second theme supporting street vendors' claim to accessing urban space is related to their role in the functioning of everyday economic spaces in the city. Two clear examples from my findings in Sanjingwuwei help to support the presence of street vendors in China's cities. First, street vendors in Sanjingwuwei situated themselves in the friendliest manner possible when among pedestrians. While rarely adjacent to formal shops and even less so selling the same goods as nearby shops, Sanjingwuwei's vendors easily became a part of the urban space in which they were working. Why? Because the goods and items they sold were important to many who lived in the local community. They also knew the kinds of things people liked to purchase as they passed through the neighborhood. As this study has shown, students, local residents, passersby, and friends of street vendors found their presence convenient and timely. Workers and students on their way home or on lunch break could easily buy snacks or meals. Elderly women could come directly downstairs and purchase produce from the same vendor on an almost daily-basis. Friends of street vendors while purchasing snacks used their vending area as a social space too. Clearly, what was witnessed by this researcher was both economic and social links between vendors and the pedestrians who walked Sanjingwuwei's streets.

Of course, not all residents have the same opinions of the street vendors. What was clear though was that street vendors in Sanjingwuwei offered convenient services to the community. As chapter 5 points out, nearly half of Sanjingwuwei's vendors resided in the neighborhood itself. This second facet of street vendors' importance to the local community makes clear that some street vendors are supporting and contributing to the local neighborhood's economy as well as providing much needed services to their fellow residents. Little research has been conducted on informal street vendors and their role in supporting their communities at neighborhood-level. This makes the origins of street vendors and their place of residence an important consideration not only for acquiring greater empirical knowledge on street vendors, but also to ensure that researchers simply don't treat vendors as solely existing out on the street but being a member of some community in or adjacent to the city. As the case of Sanjingwuwei has shown, vendors coming from within the neighborhood were the largest population group who worked on Sanjingwuwei's streets.

Thirdly, beside the importance of vendors offering convenient goods and often being able to support the economies of their own communities, street vendors in Nanchang, and many other cities in the Global South, are an important lynchpin in certain informal-to-formal flows and linkages. Such linkages can be found in many ways. One of those is an employment linkage between vendor and supplier. Chen (2005), for instance comments that an ambiguous relationship sometimes exists between "street vendors who depend on a single supplier for goods or sell goods on commission for a distributor" (p. 8). While the street vendors interviewed in Sanjingwuwei did not mention working on a commission, a few "ambiguous" relationships between vendor and supplier were revealed. While the majority of vendors sold goods that they grew or prepared, three male produce vendors made clear that they purchased the goods they sold through formal suppliers who came from a good distance outside the city. Two others, a man and a woman, purchased watermelons

from family members who were farmers in a Nanchang suburb. Additionally, however, a handful of produce vendors made clear that they also sold their goods to formal businesses in Sanjingwuwei and other parts of the city. While the formal-informal linkages were not focused upon at great length in this study, it was clear that in regards to employment, and in supplying goods to formal businesses, economic connections between informal vendors and the formal sector did exist. Thus, for some businesses and vendors, there was a mutual reliance between informal practices and those recognized as formal.

In addition to employment and goods distribution, many vendors contributed to their local economies by purchasing goods from formal businesses. A woman selling tofu along Sanjingwuwei's Aiguo Street made clear that she purchased ingredients and spices to add to her product from a small shop before setting out to work on the street each morning. A toy vendor admitted that he purchased his items from a mall in a different part of the city. And, a handful of snack vendors all purchased their ingredients needed to prepare their snacks every morning from the local supermarket. What these types of linkages suggest is that many informal workers are reliant on goods purchased from formal businesses; and some formal businesses benefit from informal vendors' purchasing from them. Thus, even in this small neighborhood of a single Chinese city, the dichotomy and relationship between formal and informal businesses is sometimes blurred.

Going beyond economic linkages, I believe that this study has also demonstrated the linkages between informal vendors and formal public life. Much debate in planning on the topic of street vendors has to do with offering pedestrians access to spaces deemed for pedestrian use. Certainly, in many instances, street vendors do cause increased congestion and at times block sidewalks. But their strength and ability in contributing to their communities should also be considered in discussions concerning public space in cities of the Global South. Discussions should

not solely revolve around aesthetic or design purposes, but the people and community-oriented functionality of particular streetscapes. Street vendors are not in the streets to cause trouble. They are there to earn a living, and to best do that, vendors have to know which places in the city are the most useful to making a sale. This point is highly relatable to the four remaining themes I use to support vendors right to access public space in the city.

7.1.3 Urban-Rural Intersections

Informal street vendors selling fruit, vegetables, fish, and other foodstuffs are perhaps one of the clearest examples of urban and rural spaces overlapping with one another. As the section above pointed out, some vendors have direct connections to formal businesses and the formal economy. However, Sanjingwuwei's street vendors provide a small and localized example of the intersecting of rural and urban spaces in China today. These rural-urban linkages are most clearly seen through three specific aspects that took place in Sanjingwuwei. First was street vending's role as employment opportunities for many from the surrounding countryside. While the largest proportion of Sanjingwuwei's vendors resided in the neighborhood, nearly one-third came from outside of the city itself. People from the surrounding countryside who worked as vendors contributed to the general liveliness and social interaction that occurred on the streets of Sanjingwuwei as well as other streets in Nanchang. Some vendors from the countryside sold both on the streets and to small formal businesses, and thus strengthened the linkages between Nanchang and its hinterland through street vending as an employment source. While temporarily bringing villagers from outside the city into Nanchang's streets, these street vendors also contributed to better distributing fresh food that was grown outside of the city. This is the second rural-urban linkage contributed to by street vendors in Sanjingwuwei.

As was often the case, those who sold fresh produce came directly from outside the city. Many of these vendors used electric or gas-powered three-wheeled loaders filled with an assortment of different locally grown vegetables. These included corn, greens, cherries, mushrooms, peaches, and watermelons to name a few. Street vendors, in their own way, contributed to both the food security and general food systems of this part of the city. Street vendors conveniently offered affordable foodstuffs and produce in streets and areas sometimes devoid of any. They offered seasonal varieties and delicacies like lotus pods which were harvested at some distance from the city. Also, street vendors contributed to the diversity of produce found in Sanjingwuwei. By offering these affordable and convenient fruits and vegetables, the work of street vendors also strengthened the flows of money and capital between city and countryside.

While inquiries into the profitability of street vending for Sanjingwuwei's street vendors were not given priority in this study, since many of the vendors has come from villages outside of the city, most notably from the north and west of Nanchang, it is reasonable to think that much money goes back to the households of vendors. Additionally, questions concerning vendor's usage of earned profits were not asked, but, as one male produce vendor made clear, he was able to purchase a second three-wheeled loader for his wife to use instead of using a motor bike to sell goods in the city. Few studies on urban China have investigated the lives of vendors and relatively little data exists on the spending of money once China's informal street vendors have earned it from selling in the streets.

While only briefly discussed here, informal vendors in Sanjingwuwei are an important component linking city to countryside in the form of capital flows, food systems, and labor. However, should such linkages between city and countryside be seen as a form of localization in a time of increasingly globalized markets? As other studies, including this one have shown, the goods

that informal vendors in Sanjingwuwei often provide were locally produced and consumed, and the decisions of where to sell in the city were made by the vendors themselves. In essence, vendors are moving away from wholesale globalization and onto a more localized economy fueled through urban and rural interaction. While these types of debates are discussed further in section 7.2, it is clear that street vendors exist in spaces where the city and countryside overlap one another. Thus, to subdue, remove, or penalize informal street vendors for taking up space in the city is asking them not to work, not to use human capital to its full advantages, and to separate both rural and urban economies from each other.

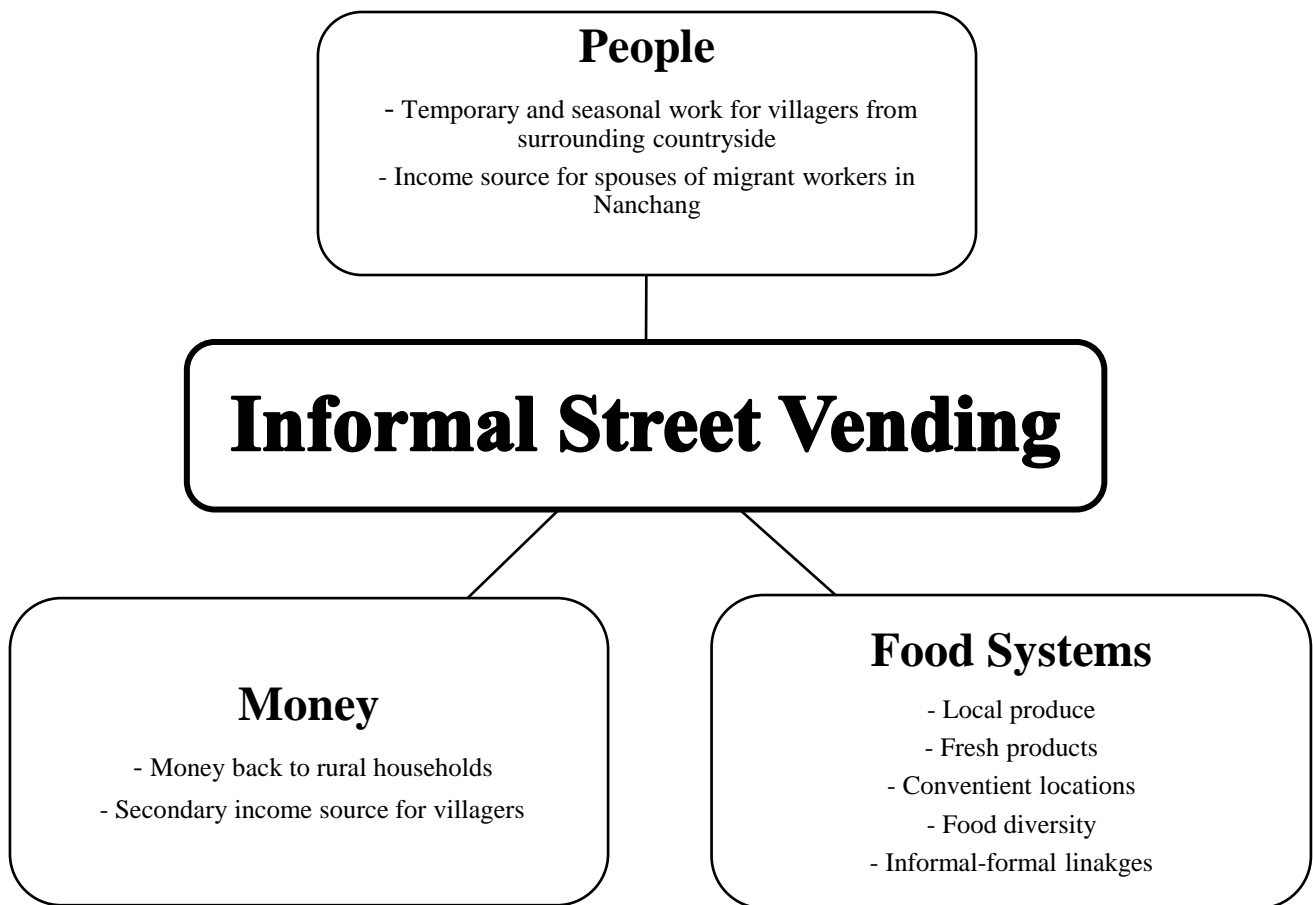


Figure 34. Informal street vending and urban-rural linkages. Source: Author.

7.1.4 Street Vending Continues to Grow

In many cities around the Global South there is a perception held by local leaders that street vending is a rapidly increasing phenomenon in their cities. As Bromely (2000) points out, this idea of a rapid increase in street vending “is attributed to such causes as “the economic crisis,” “mass underemployment,” “excessive migration from rural areas,” and “the growth of the informal sector” (p.10). While each of these factors no doubt bring the urban and rural poor into the streets of the city, once working in the streets, authorities often chastise vendors in with negative epithets. As the previous sections outlined, vendors can contribute to the communities they work while also serving an important role in poverty alleviation. However, as Bromely (2000) notes:

In most African, Asian and Latin American countries, urban authorities and elites have long complained that street vending is a major problem in their cities. Street vendors are described like locusts, coming in “plagues,” “droves,” and “deluges,” and the city is depicted as being both invaded and asphyxiated. Both the arguments for street vending and the arguments against it have considerable validity. There is no clear, simple and absolute way of determining which set of arguments is correct (p.10).

These types of arguments are made repeatedly by local authorities of cities today, “even though little historical information is available on how many street vendors there were in earlier periods, and very few censuses of street vendors have been completed anywhere in the world” (Bromley, 2000, p. 10). In the end, “we have little idea” in numerous cities and countries “whether the number of street vendors is growing faster than the urban population as a whole,” or, “whether their numbers grow faster in periods of economic boom or crisis” (Bromely, 2000, p.10). While every city has their own unique history of street vending, Bhowmik (2005) reminds us that “street vending survives not merely because it is an important source of employment but also because of the services it provides to the urban population” (p.2256).

Bhowmik (2005) has argued that “there is a substantial increase in the number of street vendors in the major Asian cities” (p. 2256). For Bhowmik (2005), “the reality is” not that there are too many street vendors working in the public spaces and streets of Asian cities, but, that road space is “not sufficient to accommodate the growing number of private vehicles and that is what causes traffic problems” (p.2259). “Public sympathies” for street vendors in many cities throughout the Global South “change significantly” writes Bromley (2000); “with periods of tolerance and growing congestion leading to new pressures for control, and periods of repression generating outrage about brutality and victimization” (p.16).

Perhaps the most useful way of understanding whether an increase in the number of vendors in a city has taken place is to ask the vendors themselves. A perception of the increase in number of other street vendors in Sanjingwuwei was the focus of section 6.1.1 of this study. For many street vendors, clearly, there was an increase in the number of street vendors working in the neighborhood. This, for them, created the challenge of increased competition. As limited data exists on the number of street vendors in China’s cities specifically, it would be safe to assume that street vending will remain an important safety net for those in need of one in the years to come. Therefore, local authorities should not try to subdue and remove street vendors from the city but to accommodate and make full use of their abilities. After China’s opening to capitalism, many urban authorities were faced with the dilemma of seeking to block the flow of rural-urban migration or to seek an alternative way of dealing with it (winter, 2012). Today, China’s urban authorities face a similar situation concerning public space. However, whereas in the past, China’s urban authorities faced the situation of restricting urbanization for the sake of maintaining cities as a well-oiled industrial machine, they are now facing contestations of public space and the production of urban space at street-level (Flock and Breitung, 2015).

7.1.5 Alternative Spaces to Work?

The fourth theme arguing that urban China's street vendors be allowed to access and use public space has to do with the fact that, in Nanchang, vendors are not provided alternative spaces to work. Unlike Thailand's capital Bangkok, which in 1992 began installing hundreds of small public spaces designated solely for street vendors to work, Nanchang's vendors, like most throughout urban China, access spaces seen as problematic for local authorities. While the majority of Bangkok's vendors choose to work in more optimal non-demarcated public spaces, the government-provided option at least exists for an alternative space for vendors to work. Such demarcated sites for vending have helped some vendors work safely in the city. However, as Bhowmik (2005) has commented, "the most observable fact about Bangkok is its street vendors" (p.2258). Because of this, the demarcated zones are undoubtedly "not sufficient for accommodating all street vendors" in Bangkok, nor do they "cover all sections of the city and hence the customers are not catered to" (Bhowmik, 2005, p.2258). While clearly the demarcated zones in Bangkok have their shortcomings, Bangkok has at least attempted to provide an alternative for vendors to use in the city.

Would such demarcated vending zones work in Nanchang or other Chinese cities? This researcher believes Nanchang would face similar issues like Bangkok, where any designated vending zones are usually too far removed from the demand for the goods and services vendors offer on a daily basis. However, without such attempts to provide spaces for some vendors to use, Nanchang's vendors will continue to use a host of spaces like streets, sidewalks, and residential gates throughout the city. As seen throughout Nanchang, as well as other cities throughout China including larger urban centers like Beijing, Tianjin, and Wuhan, placards along walls of buildings

make clear that street vending is prohibited in the area. Despite these placards making clear that vending is not allowed in that space, it was aparent on numerous occassions in Nanchang that vendors simply disregarded such warnings and reappropriated the street or sidewalk that was supposed to be off limits.



Figure 35. A placard on a building in Nanchang warns street vendors. Source: Author.

In short, street vendors occupy a lot of space throughout Nanchang. However, there are relatively few spaces that allow for street vendors to earn a living. Street corners, outside of buildings such as malls, hospitals, and schools, as well as busy public areas like intersections and

public squares are vital for vendors to sell their items. However, as numerous studies have shown, and as this dissertation has described in the case of Nanchang, and more specifically, Sanjingwuwei, vendors seem to be losing spaces to work when many continue to rely on vending as a primary income source. If China's cities are to accommodate their urban poor, and those who rely on public spaces to sell items, novel approaches like street vending zones should be encouraged while at the same time enforcing a relaxed stance on people who often have few other choices to earn a living for themselves and their families in a constantly and radically changing capitalist China.

7.1.6 Vendors Know Where Demand is!

Put simply, street vendors know where the demand for the products and services they offer is located. This reasoning is often why street vendors repeatedly reappropriate public spaces. In Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood, this has meant spaces outside of a local hospital, along certain alleyways and street corners, beneath underpasses, and even along some sidewalks. In Sanjingwuwei, certain rhythmic patterns of street vendors' presence in public spaces waxed and waned with the presence of pedestrians and potential clientele. Therefore, street vendors in Sanjingwuwei, and countless other places seek out certain public spaces with the hope of making money, yes, but also because of their knowledge of the street-specific demand for their goods and services. While the choices to reappropriate such spaces are obviously to earn an income, as this study and McGee's (1974) work in Hong Kong described, street vendors worked in public spaces not only because there was a demand for their products, but because it allowed them greater flexibility and freedom to seek out clientele when convenient.

If street vendors are removed from public spaces, then the city will be deprived not only of an important employment source for the urban poor, but of the availability of certain goods at the

community-level. The loss of street vendors means the loss of certain fresh fruits and produce brought into the city. The loss of street vendors means a decline in the sociability of urban streetscapes. The loss of street vendors means the loss of an important element of many cities that has been around for centuries. In the case of Nanchang, street vendors help shape the small neighborhoods that make up the city. I hold the view that street vendors are what is great about Nanchang and allow for not only easy access to goods but a vital link to Nanchang's social world.

7.1.7 The Need for Space

In answering the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, "do Nanchang's street vendors deserve urban space," this study argues that they do. First, in Nanchang and many other places throughout China, street vending provides a crucial employment strategy for people without formal work. Second, street vendors working in the cities often have important linkages to formal businesses and socioeconomic functioning of communities at the neighborhood-level. Thirdly, street vendors act as an important link between the city and the countryside. This allows the flows of people, goods, and money to cross the urban rural boundaries of an area. Fourth, while little research has been conducted on the topic in China, no proof exists suggesting that a decline in the number of informal street vendors in cities like Nanchang has taken place. As this study has shown in the case of street vendors' narratives of work and struggle, many vendors felt that more street vendors had come to work on the streets of the city in recent years. The fifth reason in support of street vendors right to access space in the city lies with the fact that, in Nanchang, vendors are not provided alternative spaces to work. Without such spaces, street vendors will continue to rely on the streets and sidewalks they currently occupy. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Nanchang's street vendors provide convenient services to local communities. Vendors in Nanchang often were situated

in areas of heavy traffic because they knew there was a demand for the things they sold. Vendors often serve poorer communities and indeed serve the communities which they call home.

Going further beyond the question of whether Nanchang's street vendors deserve urban space, this study also suggests that vendors not only have the right to public space, but when in the streets, serve an integral role in a fully functioning city for people as opposed to profit. This can be understood through two different but interconnected roles street vendors play when present in public space. First, the everyday interactions between vendors and locals emphasize a working city at the scale of the neighborhood. Second, the informal street vendors studied in Sanjingwuwei were not only users of urban spaces but also generators of urban space. While street vendors are undoubtedly in public space seeking to earn a living, their reappropriation of public space while serving the needs of the communities contribute to the use value of public space. In this sense, the writings of Lefebvre become important. As discussed in chapter 2, Lefebvre's idea of the right to the city mentions that cities must be understood as an *oeuvre*, or, a place in which all people contribute to the production of city space.

These two viewpoints have direct relevance to the argument that vendors working in public space should be viewed as an unintentional element of deglobalizing city space today. The remainder of this chapter argues that street vendors' actions and presence in public space reterritorialize the city in three specific ways that represent a partial deglobalization of urban space.

7.2 Street Vendors and the Deglobalization of Urban Space?

This section adds to the literature on informal livelihoods by making a theoretical contribution concerning the agency of informal street vendors working in public space. Using the case of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors as evidence, this section argues that informal street vendors

contribute to the deglobalization of urban space through the ways they use, reappropriate, and change the meaning of public space in the neighborhoods they work. In short, I argue that vendors contribute to the deglobalization of urban space in three distinct yet interconnected ways. First, by rescaling, or downscaling, the spaces they work. Second, by slowing down the time-space rhythms and everyday life in the places they work. Third, by unintentionally decommodifying the public spaces they work in. While street vendors are using the public spaces for commercial reasons, they are doing so out of survival. What these three factors contribute to is a deglobalization of city space from below which emphasizes and takes place at the neighborhood-scale which is important for the livelihoods of the urban poor and the individual residents of neighborhood communities in cities of China and abroad.

7.2.1 Rescaling Urban Space

Some urban scholars and geographers have argued that a certain reterritorialization of cities is occurring in our current global era (Brenner et al. 2008). These arguments contend that globalization should be seen as a reterritorialization which simultaneously superimposes certain socioeconomic and political-institutional spaces upon each other at different scales. Brenner (1999) identifies "that struggles over the territorial organization of the urbanization process express the dual character of spatial scales under capitalism— i.e. their role at once as framings for everyday social relations and as productive forces for successive rounds of world-scale capital accumulation" (p.447). This position echoes the dialectical forces of space making in urban arenas (Brenner, 2009). Hence, for Brenner (1999), "each scale on which the urbanization process unfolds simultaneously bounds social relations within determinate geographical arenas, hierarchizes places and territories within broader configurations of uneven geographical development" (p.447). This suggests new avenues are needed to understand the role of scale in cities. As social relations in the city become

closely tied to and, in some instances, resistant to geographical organization in the current neoliberal age of capitalism, it is important to pay closer attention to how spatial strategies of resistance take place not only in global cities but in the ordinary cities and spaces throughout the world as well.

I contend that the presence of street vendors allows a unique lens on the everyday rescaling of urban space in cities today. By focusing on what was observed and learned about Sanjingwuwei's street vendors in this dissertation, a few points can be taken away from informal street vendors' ability to rescale urban space. First, is the fact that street vendors serve the needs of local communities. In this sense, it is often the community serving itself; as in the case of Sanjingwuwei, nearly half of the vendors resided in the neighborhood of Sanjingwuwei. Additionally, many of the street vendors provided local goods, which allowed for the selling and consumption of locally produced items. This is important because street vendors are not completely reliant on an export-oriented economy, but an economy of the street, the neighborhood, and the community.

Street vendors working in the neighborhoods of Nanchang represent a down-scaling of urban space as the thriving, functioning, and vibrancy of communities is emphasized at the neighborhood and community scale. In our present era of global capitalism, cities have now been thrust into the formation of city regions in order to properly compete and be ready to attract capital investment. Street vendors, however, maintain a localized, neighborhood-oriented form of urban economies, in which the community and the vendors engage closely with each other. In this sense, street vendors' down-scaling of urban space is, in fact, a resistant force to the commodification of city life that is so often the result of globalization's up-scaling of city space.

Understandings of a "globalization from below" has identified numerous facets, including the role of city regeneration in the hopes of attracting capital (Henry et al., 2002), the role of immigrant communities in world cities (Benton-Short et al., 2005), and the role of protest and

solidarity among world workers and protest organizers with the goal of steering urban development for all (Brecher et al., 2000). However, this dissertation holds that street vendors are not an aspect of a globalization from below but of a certain type of (de)globalization from below reliant upon the informal types of urbanism that exist in China's cities today. Whereas state downscaling has led to "the devolution or decentralization of regulatory tasks to subnational administrative tiers," street vendors impact on the downscaling of city spaces takes on the form of a type of resistance to the globalization and urbanization that capital seeks to enforce (Brenner, 2004, p.447). How did this type of downscaling take place in the case of Sanjingwuwei? A few observations are noteworthy.

Firstly, serving the community through their labor, goods, and services, street vendors allow for the community to be self-serving in at least some regards. By offering useful and convenient goods in Sanjingwuwei, vendors allowed for a city within a city to exist. The informal market place that exists beneath the Bayi Bridge underpass and the countless alleyways that connect to Aiguo and Wuwei Streets served as sites of commerce and interpersonal relationships. Secondly, vendors' reliance on informal and personal relationships with the community emphasized an interpersonal politics of place. Street vendors, when not on the lookout for roaming *chengguan*, were relaxed and always welcoming to potential customers who often bargained with them to save a few cents. Thirdly, street vendors are not reliant on export-oriented development which is so central to China's cities and their connection to global markets. As evidenced in Sanjingwuwei, vendors daily presence in the streets took place because of the demand and need for the goods they offered. Lastly, by working in the street, vendors help preserve the vibrancy and

uniqueness of the neighborhoods they work. This can be seen as a form of resistance to the unifying forces that the on-going gentrification process brings.

Taken as a whole, these elements of daily life that street vendors contribute to in Sanjingwuwei should be seen not solely as an attempt to earn a living, but also as unintentional resistance to the on-going up-scaling of urban space in the city. Gentrification, redevelopment, and the needs of foreign and global markets have rearranged Nanchang. With these influences now starting to be seen in Sanjingwuwei, street vendors, and the residents who interact with them are emphasizing a down-scaling of urban space through their everyday lives.

7.2.2 The Slowing Down of Time-Space

Human and urban geographers have argued that individual and social practices of urban life often take place in rhythmic and recursive patterns. These patterns develop and contribute to the sense of place found in urban locales and especially a city's public spaces (Seamon, 1980). Knox (2005) reminds us that these certain time-space routines are not only influential in shaping the materiality of city spaces, but also the speed at which everyday urban life exists. Henri Lefebvre (2004), whose writings have been central to understanding the production of space through city dwellers' relationship to time, has referred to these influences as an entirely new type of human science, what he called *rhythmanalysis*. But what does this have to do with the street vendors which this dissertation has focused upon? What this section introduces is the idea that street vendors in Sanjingwuwei, and presumably in other cities across China and the world, have influence on the speed of life that exists not in the city as a whole, but at the neighborhood and street-level which this study emphasizes.

Street vendors hold agency in the deglobalization of urban space is their role in slowing down time-space in the city. In the case of Sanjingwuwei, this was most clearly demonstrated at street-level. But how do vendors contribute to the slowing down of time-space in Sanjingwuwei? To introduce this idea, I emphasize two specific factors that slow down the speed of life in the city. Each one of these factors is closely related to public life and the many types of informal interactions that take place in Sanjingwuwei. While Sanjingwuwei is a seemingly busy and at times chaotic place, to spend time walking the streets there shows that many urban walkers and vendors are carrying out their activities and rhythms of pedestrians in the public spaces and those who live in or pass through the neighborhood.

When street vendors were present in Sanjingwuwei's streets, they often followed the rhythms of public life as chapter 4 has shown. Whereas people coming to and from work follow the daily rhythms of the work day, the school day, or the bus schedules, street vendors followed the rhythms of the people who lived and traversed Sanjingwuwei. This contributes greatly to the first way that street vendors slow down time-space in the streets of Sanjingwuwei. While vendors are certainly out in the streets to earn a living, they are following, and reliant upon, the speed of everyday life and ordinary people, not global capital. There are a few specific factors that can be mentioned that more clearly demonstrate how vendors slow down time-space in this fashion. Firstly, Sanjingwuwei's street vendors rely on the informal relationships that are so clearly witnessed in the streets. Secondly, the slowing of time-space via informal street vendors' reliance on daily rhythms came through in what was previously referred to as 'third places,' a place that is somewhere between work and the home and acts as a temporary leisurely space that allows ordinary people to talk, grab a snack, gossip, people watch, or simply take a rest while chatting and purchasing goods.

The second general way that I argue street vendors contribute to a slowing down of time-space in the city is through an informal form of urban development. As street vendors work in the public spaces, they support the complicated and sensitive interdependencies between communities and work. Hence, street vendors while offering useful goods and service also provided a type of development from below which slowed down the neighborhood and contributed to social equity. Whereas the on-going gentrification of Sanjingwuwei is thrusting the neighborhood towards the needs of mobile capital and general urban development, vendors slow down the city as a place of dwelling and employment for those who live there. Additionally, street vendors working in public space offer an alternative form of urban development. This form is focused on the needs of humans, the community, and the demand for goods at certain times of the day, not corporate and capital forms of development intent on re-shaping and commodifying city space. In resisting such forms of redevelopment, vendors offer a slowing down of city space. Interestingly, these factors identified by Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are reminiscent of the Slow Cities movement whose "underlying assumptions are rooted in local sustainability and address the interdependencies between the environment, the economy, and equity" as well as improving "urban livability and quality of life," thus offering planning practitioners an alternative development strategy to follow (Mayer and Knox, 2006, pp. 321-322).

7.2.3 Decommodifying Public Space

The third and final way that Sanjingwuwei's street vendors act as an element of deglobalization in the city comes from their role as actors in the decommodification of urban space. This decommodification took place in the realm of public space and is closely attuned to the competing forces of both abstract—the planned and bureaucratic space of capital and order— and concrete space—that which is made up everyday life and routines of ordinary citizens in the public

realm. As a concrete space, street vendors' unintentional decommodification of public space can be understood in three specific but interrelated ways.

Firstly, Lefebvre's idea of the city as an oeuvre becomes important. In seeing that all people and elements contribute to establish a city's character and sense of place, street vendors also hold a similar role in decommodifying streetscapes at the neighborhood-level by being part of the city as an oeuvre. Relevant to Lefebvre's idea of the city as oeuvre, Sanjingwuwei's street vendors enhance social interaction in the neighborhood. The gathering around street vendors' push carts and the interaction between vendor and customer acts as a social space that exists between the workplace and the home. Street vendors' presence in the streets contributes to and is reliant upon ordinary and everyday human interaction. Additionally, street vendors act as a hinge or focal point around which practices of labor and everyday life meet. The overlapping of these two spaces helps contribute to a finished product that builds Sanjingwuwei's busy sense of place.

In using the city as oeuvre as a lens to identify how street vendors aid in the decommodification of public life and the public realm, we can also see how the creative capacity of people in Sanjingwuwei, who are otherwise generally quite poor, exerts a place-making force oriented around human needs. As vendors rely on a myriad of ways, strategies, and locales within Sanjingwuwei to make a sale, they are able to use the skills and talents they have, that is, their human capital, in an attempt to earn a living. This, ultimately, helps shape the neighborhood and the people who use Sanjingwuwei's streets on a daily basis.

Why Lefebvre's idea of a city as an oeuvre comes together so interestingly with the street vendors of Sanjingwuwei lies in his criticism of private property and the bureaucratization of urban space which subdues the creative capacity of many who live in the city. But, emphasizing the creative capacity of people in Nanchang's public spaces means that the streets and sidewalks have

been given more purpose by the people who use them than were originally intended. Street vendors and the people who buy from them emphasize the use value of public spaces in the city. This means, as globalization demands the commodification of many urban spaces tied to consumption, ordinary people and the streets and sidewalks they use act as a force in decommodifying the city; what Lefebvre might see as a finished product. This is what is happening in the case of Sanjingwuwei.

Walking down the narrow streets of Sanjingwuwei, one of many hidden neighborhoods in Nanchang, you will certainly run into and see street vendors. The interactions between street vendors, pedestrians and the busy traffic under the hot sun creates a finished product that differs from that found along Nanchang's major avenues. There, globalization has brought on a fervent commodification of urban life. Down the main streets of Sanjingwuwei, a different way of life exists that represents a different time. This wouldn't be possible without Sanjingwuwei's street vendors. In my opinion, Sanjingwuwei's street vendors cater to more than the needs of people living in the community, who walk through the neighborhood, and students and workers in the neighborhood. They also cater to preserving the urban environment in Nanchang that is fast disappearing due to rampant gentrification. In Sanjingwuwei, informal street vendors help preserve a sense of place that is essential to understanding the city of Nanchang but challenged by the increasing commodification of urban life and public space in this city.

7.3 Conclusion

In showing the importance of informal street vending in Nanchang and the case of Sanjingwuwei, this chapter has argued that China's informal street vendors deserve urban space to work. Since many are without formal employment options, street vending, particularly for the elderly, acts as a vital income source. Additionally, using the case of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors, this chapter has argued that street vendors are not passive agents in the space-making process.

Through their work and presence in the public spaces of the city, I have situated Sanjingwuwei's street vendors as individuals who foster a deglobalization of urban space at the community level. In the simplest sense, street vendors re-scale urban space to the community and neighborhood level, serving, and sometimes living in, the neighborhood itself. At the same time, the vendors slow-down time-space by emphasizing the human dimensions and social interaction that comes from day-to-day contact with Sanjingwuwei's residents. Perhaps, at the most extreme end, Sanjingwuwei's street vendors decommodify urban space by representing public space as use value.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

In Nanchang, the streets and sidewalks filled with pedestrians not only walking, but hanging out and socializing. Street vendors, most certainly, added to the place-specific vibrancy found in Nanchang and were even essential to the functioning of certain spaces in the city. Their presence added to the mixture of home and work spaces found in Nanchang's residential neighborhoods like Sanjingwuwei.

During my time in Nanchang, my research on street vendors investigated an aspect of China's urban geography that has been around for thousands of years but has seen ongoing repression from authorities who view them as not modern, chaotic, and out of place. As the literature review of this study has shown, this situation is not specific to China alone, but, exists throughout the Global South. The battle over public space is one of ordinary people versus the power of capital. Taken further, it is one concerning ordinary livelihoods, or concrete space, against the increasing commodification of urban and public space, or what could be referred to as, abstract space. While the challenges faced by vendors over the right to the city and their ability to access public space to earn a living are place-specific, what remains clear is that commodification of urban space has not made life easier for the urban poor and migrants who use vending as a way to get by and support their families. The question of the public nature of public space becomes an essential question that must be answered in places-specific contexts.

This research has described the everyday practices, narratives, and the agency of informal street vendors in Nanchang, China. The importance of street vending in Nanchang has highlighted the centrality of public space for the urban poor and migrants for earning a living. Through the context of Nanchang, and urban China more broadly, this research has demonstrated a few factors underlining the presence of street vendors in China's cities today. First, a growth in street vending has resulted from China's turn to free market capitalism after 1978. In addition to street vending, the development of an informal economy in China's cities has become quite prominent since the transition. Second, while street vending in China's cities has exploded as a survival strategy for many negatively affected by the turn to capitalism, the presence of street vendors in China's cities has been a long tradition. Street vendors were important aspects of China's urban geographies during many periods of the country's dynastic era.

While street vendors were present on rare occasions during the pre-reform era (1949-1978), their presence was largely restricted as any form of private commerce was deemed illegal and contradictory to Mao Zedong's ideological vision for a communist China. Third, China's street vendors maintain a precarious relationship with urban authorities in China today. For neoliberal elites and authorities, public space is essential to upholding a good business climate, meeting state development goals, and striving for modern or world city status. For the majority of people living in China's cities, public spaces such as sidewalks, alleyways, and streets serve as important arenas of social interaction, relaxation, and public life. Deviating from these elite notions of space, China's street vendors embed themselves into the vibrant public life of China's cities in order to earn a living in what is often times the only way available to them. Fourth, there has been an expansion of the informal economy and a continued reliance on informal street vending for many in China. There are no signs that this will not remain the case. Therefore, street vending is most likely here

to stay as long as the class polarization of China's cities continues to take place. On the one hand, there is the rise of skyscrapers and mega-developments. On the other, there are ordinary people, many of whom are poor, and who rely on their own creativity to survive. Last, this research has described who uses street vending as an income earning strategy in post-reform China using Sanjingwuwei as a case study which included the urban poor, rural-urban migrants, villagers who come from the peri-urban areas, the unemployed, and the elderly.

The specific case study used in this research explores the experiences, practices, and narratives of informal street vendors working in an ordinary neighborhood of the southeastern Chinese city of Nanchang. Additionally, this research shed light on the ways street vendors temporarily reappropriate public space in Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood and the daily rhythms street vendors rely on to earn a living. Through empirical and observational data gathered during fieldwork in Sanjingwuwei, street vendors in the neighborhood work an uncertain existence on a daily basis. What this means is that they run the risk of being fined or having their goods confiscated by authorities. This exacerbates already difficult livelihoods for many of these vendors. Their relationship with *chengguan* force street vendors to live a highly mobile existence in the streets of Sanjingwuwei and Nanchang. As the narratives of the vendors have shown, being increasingly mobile was essential, yet, also brought certain hindrances and obstacles to overcome. For the street vendors who were fifty years and older, the need to be mobile was a common concern.

This study utilized both non-participant observation and interviewing methods to describe the everyday lives and challenges faced by Nanchang's street vendors. The empirical data provided detailed descriptions of who Sanjingwuwei's street vendors are; where they come from; what they sell; how long they have been vending; how old they are, and the modes of selling that they use. There is a lack of data on these topics concerning urban China's street vendors. Using interviews

allowed for a narrative-driven approach concerning the struggles street vendors face and any other concerns they wanted to share about their everyday lives. Overall, combining both observational and interviewing methods allowed an ethnographic description concerning street vendors and everyday life in Nanchang to emerge. Of most importance in this research was to let the street vendors speak for themselves whenever possible and to replace a statistical representation of street vendors with a narrative and experiential form of representation.

Differing from most works on informal street vendors around the world, this study delves into the worlds of Nanchang's street vendors by collecting their personal narratives of life working in the streets. Few studies on street vendors seek to hear the struggles they encounter directly from them. Here, the voices of Sanjingwuwei's street vendors provide a humanistic way of investigating the lives of China's informal street vendors. It is my hope that more research on street vendors around the world will adopt a narrative-driven approach. These narratives offer insights into the challenges of faced by those who seek alternative ways to utilize public space in cities of the Global South.

As this research has shown, there were many economic and historical reasons why Sanjingwuwei's street vendors chose to work in the streets to earn a living. However, in the case of Sanjingwuwei, two prominent reasons existed to rely on street vending. First, after the turn to free market capitalism, many people found themselves without work. This explains why many elderly relied on street vending to earn some extra income. While some still earn some sort of pension, for most it is not enough to live on. For many more without pensions, street vending remains their primary income earning source. Secondly, many living on the outside of the city make daily trips to sell their wares at key locations, like Sanjingwuwei in Nanchang. These individuals rely on urban street vending because of the demand and market for the products they

sell. In the case of Sanjingwuwei, most vendors who came from outside of the city sold fruit and other types of local produce. These vendor typically sold produce in areas and streets which were devoid of supermarkets, or, were convenient for pedestrians.

In the case of Sanjingwuwei, many of the street vendors who come from outside the city were men. The majority of female street vendors in the study area resided in Sanjingwuwei and other adjoining neighborhoods. Additionally, what was interesting, was a lack of younger vendors in Sanjingwuwei. However, had this research taken place in other neighborhoods of Nanchang, and most certainly popular commercial districts, the demographic of street vendors would have changed.

Interestingly, each vendor had their own perceptions regarding the challenges of being a street vendor in Sanjingwuwei. However, when street vendors in Sanjingwuwei were asked about the biggest challenge they faced while working in the streets, four specific themes arose. A general increase in competition and a perception of more street vendors on the streets of Sanjingwuwei was a general concern for some of the vendors. Second, there was a stigma felt by vendors towards their presence in the city. In this sense, vendors felt like they were seen as dirty by the media and city residents. However, the majority admitted that the things and services they provided were usually popular. Third, as the commodification of urban space was most clearly seen in the form of gentrification, Sanjingwuwei's vendors made clear that the gentrification process reduced both the space they had to reappropriate and the number of customers available to sell to in the area. In some instances, streets were completely remade, and were devoid of street life. Lastly, and supported by the vast majority of street vendors interviewed, the precarious relationship between vendors and *chengguan* dominated their concerns. The ad hoc sweeps of *chengguan* caused great anxiety among many of Sanjingwuwei's vendors. Many claimed that they had to spend more time

eluding *chengguan* officers, and, thus lost time trying to sell. Overall, the vendors argued that they should be allowed to work in Sanjingwuwei's public spaces. Many vendors took the opportunity to make the argument that the streets of the neighborhood belong to all. Some made clear that *chengguan* have good paying jobs and should leave them alone. Others argued that all the cars in the street took up more space than they did. Here, vendors emphasized the small-scale of their activities, and the big contributions they make to the area and the importance of street vending in their lives. Others, asserted that the city is not only for the rich, but for street vendors too!

The contributions of this study have to do with the ways street vending serves as a spatial strategy in China's cities. First, it acts as an important employment strategy reliant on reappropriating public space. Second, using Nanchang's Sanjingwuwei neighborhood as a case study, how street vendors' usage of public space takes place and differs in the context of specific locations is emphasized. While general themes concerning vendors' reappropriation of Sanjingwuwei apply to the city as a whole, certain strategies will occur in a neighborhood-specific context. Third, this study approaches street vending in urban China as more than just a survival strategy, and as an alternative reaction to the increasing globalization of their city. While certainly not mobilizing as anti-capitalist or anti-globalization, vendors' reappropriation of public space should be seen as a form of deglobalization from below and ultimately a decommodification of urban space at the scale of the neighborhood.

The participants of this study were observed and interviewed while they were working in public space. In the end, the results of this work may have differed had I focused on a different area of Nanchang. However, since the primary goal of this study was to record the narratives of vendors, their practices, and their agency while they were present in public space, the amount of interviews gathered was the result of seeking to connect with the vendors of Sanjingwuwei on a

human level rather than a statistically-driven one. The participants in this study were recruited through informal conversations and in terms of whether or not they themselves wished to discuss their everyday lives. Ultimately?, through the case of Sanjingwuwei, a clearer picture of street vendors' reappropriation of public space in an ordinary residential neighborhood was prioritized as many works on street vending in the urban Global South emphasize dynamic market areas, commercial districts and streets, or tourist hot spots. How informal street vending unfolded in the mundane spaces of Nanchang was the primary focus of this research.

There are certain limitations to this study. First, a relatively short span of time was devoted to fieldwork, though multiple visits were made across many years. The formal collection of data occurred over four weeks of intensive engagement through residing in and conversing with Sanjingwuwei's street vendors. In the end, however, an ethnographic immersion was made possible through intensive walking and "hanging out" in the streets where Sanjingwuwei's vendors worked. Second, during fieldwork, extensive flooding of the Gan River left certain areas of the city inaccessible. An original goal was to collect data on street vendors in two very different neighborhoods of Nanchang. However, the newer areas of the city which could have offered a differing perspective of Nanchang's street vendors as they were seen in Sanjingwuwei and the older parts of the city could not be studied.

While the results and contributions of this study are most likely relevant to much of urban China, they are more firmly applicable to the case of Sanjingwuwei, and Nanchang more broadly. The neighborhood of Sanjingwuwei was chosen as it is highly reflective of much of Nanchang and its many ordinary residential neighborhoods. The observational and ethnographic approach of this study revealed and shed light on how informal street vendors view public space from their personal perspectives.

In closing, there is a need to further our knowledge of China's informal street vendors for many reasons. First, as a large number continue to rely on informal livelihoods, the role of street vending in China today is as important as ever. Second, as the commodification of urban space continues to disrupt the local needs of the urban poor in cities across China and the Global South, comparative literature on the street vending phenomenon and its importance and role in the city must not omit the experiences of vendors working in China. Finally, following Robinson's (2002, p.546) call to include the diverse experiences of cities "that are hidden from view" in urban studies, this research provides a much needed look at street vendors' everyday lives in a little-researched city of southeastern China, and also a unique glimpse of Nanchang's urban geography at neighborhood-level.

REFERENCES

- Agadjanian, V. (2002). Men doing "women's work": masculinity and gender relations among street vendors in Maputo, Mozambique. *The journal of men's studies*, 10(3), 329-342.
- AlSayyad, N. (Ed.). (2004). *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Anjaria, J. S. (2006). Street hawkers and public space in Mumbai. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2140-2146.
- Austin, R. (1993). Honest Living: Street Vendors, Municipal Regulation, and the Black Public Sphere, An. *Yale Law Journal*, 103(8), 2119-2131.
- Ayyagari, M., Demirgüç-Kunt, A., & Maksimovic, V. (2010). Formal versus informal finance: Evidence from China. *Review of Financial Studies*, 23(8), 3048-3097.
- Bai, C. E., Lu, J., & Tao, Z. (2009). How does privatization work in China?. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 37(3), 453-470.
- Banerjee, T. (2001). The future of public space: beyond invented streets and reinvented places. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 67(1), 9-24.
- Bao, Y. (2008). Shanghai Weekly: globalization, consumerism, and Shanghai popular culture. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 9(4), 557-567.
- Beardson, T. (2013). *Stumbling Giant: The Threats to China's Future*. Padstow, Cornwall: Yale University Press.
- Beck, U. (2015). *What is globalization?*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Bell, J. S., & Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2014). Sidewalk Informality: An Examination of Street Vending Regulation in China. *International Planning Studies*, 1-23.
- Bello, W. F. (2003a). *De-Globalization: ideas for a new world economy*. London: Zed.
- Bello, W.F. (2003b). *The Paradigm: Deglobalisation*. Focus on the Global South.
- Bello, W. (2009). The virtues of deglobalization. *Foreign Policy in Focus*.

- Benería, L. (2001). Shifting the risk: New employment patterns, informalization, and women's work. *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 15(1), 27-53.
- Benn, C. D. (2002). *Daily life in traditional China: the Tang dynasty*. Westport, CT: Greenwood publishing group.
- Benton-Short, L., Price, M. D., & Friedman, S. (2005). Globalization from below: the ranking of global immigrant cities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29(4), 945-959.
- Bhowmik, S. K. (2005). Street vendors in Asia: a review. *Economic and political weekly*, 2256-2264.
- Biles, J.J. (2008). Informal Work and Livelihoods in Mexico: Getting By or Getting Ahead? *The Professional Geographer*, 60(4), 541-555.
- Biles, J.J. (2009). Informal work in Latin America: Competing perspectives and recent debates.
- Birkbeck, C. (1978). Self-employed proletarians in an informal factory: the case of Cali's garbage dump. *World Development*, 6(9), 1173-1185.
- Bond, P. (2005). Globalisation/commodification or deglobalisation/decommodification in urban South Africa. *Policy Studies*, 26(3-4), 337-358.
- Boyd, R. (2006). Labour's Response to the Informalization of Work in the current Restructuring of Global Capitalism: China, South Korea, and South Africa. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 27(4), 486-502.
- Brecher, J., Costello, T., and Smith, M. (2000). *Globalization from below: The power of solidarity*. New York: South End Press.
- Breman, J. ed. *Footloose Labour: working in India's informal economy*. Vol. 2. Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Brenner, N. (1999). Globalisation as reterritorialisation: the re-scaling of urban governance in the European Union. *Urban studies*, 36(3), 431-451.
- Brenner, N. (2004). Urban governance and the production of new state spaces in Western Europe, 1960–2000. *Review of international political economy*, 11(3), 447-488.
- Brenner, N. (2009). What is critical urban theory?. *City*, 13(2-3), 198-207.
- Brenner, N., Marcuse, P., & Mayer, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Cities for people, not for profit: critical urban theory and the right to the city*. Routledge.
- Brenner, N., Jessop, B., Jones, M., & Macleod, G. (Eds.). (2008). *State/space: a reader*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

- Bromley, R. (2000). Street vending and public policy: a global review. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 20(1/2), 1-28.
- Brown, A. (2010). The 'Right to the City': from Paris 1968 to Rio 2010. In *ponencia presentada en la 11th N-AERUS Conference*.
- Castells, M., & Portes, A. (1989). *World underneath: The origins, dynamics, and effects of the informal economy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chan, K. W. (1996). Post-Mao China: A Two-Class Urban Society in the Making. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 20(1), 134-150.
- Chan, K. W., & Zhang, L. (1999). The hukou system and rural-urban migration in China: Processes and changes. *The China Quarterly*, 160, 818-855.
- Chance, N. A. (1984). *China's urban villagers: life in a Beijing commune*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Chant, S. (1999). Informal sector activity in the third world city. *Applied Geography*, 509-527.
- Chen, R. (2004). Impacts of Globalization on the Trade Union Movement. All-China Federation of Trade Unions. <http://www.acftu.org.cn/template/10002/file.jsp?aid=105&keyword=informal>
- Chen, M. A. (2005). Rethinking the informal economy: Linkages with the formal economy and the formal regulatory environment. United Nations University, World Institute for Development Economics Research.
- Chen, M., Sebstad, J., & O'Connell, L. (1999). Counting the invisible workforce: the case of homebased workers. *World development*, 27(3), 603-610.
- Cheng, L. L., & Gereffi, G. (1994). The Informal Economy in East Asian Development. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 18(2), 194-219.
- Chi, X., Streicher-Porte, M., Wang, M. Y., & Reuter, M. A. (2011). Informal electronic waste recycling: a sector review with special focus on China. *Waste Management*, 31(4), 731-742.
- Coletto, D. (2010). *The informal economy and employment in Brazil: Latin America, modernization, and social changes*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cooke, F. L. (2006). Informal employment and gender implications in China: the nature of work and employment relations in the community services sector. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 17(8), 1471-1487.
- Cross, J. (2000). Street vendors, and postmodernity: conflict and compromise in the global economy. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 20 (1/2), 29-51.

- Cross, J. C. (1998). *Informal politics: Street vendors and the state in Mexico City*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Crossa, V. (2009). Resisting the entrepreneurial city: street vendors' struggle in Mexico City's historic center. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 33(1), 43-63.
- Cukier, J., & Wall, G. (1994). Informal tourism employment: vendors in Bali, Indonesia. *Tourism Management*, 15(6), 464-467.
- Davis, M. (2006). *Planet of slums*. London: Verso.
- De Certeau, M. (1984). *Walking in the City*.
- De Soto, H. (1989). *The Other Path. The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Devroe, E. (2008). The policy approach of nuisance problems in public space in Belgium and the Netherlands. *Governance of Security in the Netherlands and Belgium*, 149-175.
- Donovan, M. G. (2008). Informal Cities and the Contestation of Public Space: The Case of Bogotá's Street Vendors, 1988—2003. *Urban Studies*, 45(1), 29-51.
- Doorne, S., Ateljevic, I., & Bai, Z. (2003). Representing identities through tourism: Encounters of ethnic minorities in Dali, Yunnan Province, People's Republic of China. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 5(1), 1-11.
- Douglass, M. (2002). From global intercity competition to cooperation for livable cities and economic resilience in Pacific Asia. *Environment and Urbanization*, 14(1), 53-68.
- Dovey, K. (2012). Informal urbanism and complex adaptive assemblage. *International Development Planning Review*, 34(4), 349-368.
- Ellickson, R. C. (1996). Controlling chronic misconduct in city spaces: of panhandlers, skid rows, and public-space zoning. *Yale Law Journal*, 1165-1248.
- Estrada, E., & Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2011). Intersectional dignities: Latino immigrant street vendor youth in Los Angeles. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 40(1), 102-131.
- Fan, Y., Chen, N., & Kirby, D. A. (1996). Chinese peasant entrepreneurs: An examination of township and village enterprises in rural China. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 34(4), 72-76.
- Fan, C. C. (2011). Settlement intention and split households: Findings from a survey of migrants in Beijing's urban villages. *China Review*, 11-41.

- Feige, E. L. (1990). Defining and estimating underground and informal economies: The new institutional economics approach. *World development*, 18(7), 989-1002.
- Feng, Z.W. and An, B.J. (2013, July 21). *Chengguan* accused of brutal attack. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/sunday/2013-07/21/content_16806678.htm.
- Ferlanti, F. (2013). City-building, new life and the 'making of the citizen' in 1930s Nanchang. (45-64).
- Flock, R., & Breitung, W. (2015). Migrant Street Vendors in Urban China and the Social Production of Public Space. *Population, Space and Place*.
- Friedmann, J. (2005). *China's urban transition*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gehl, J. (2011). *Life between buildings: using public space*. Island Press.
- Gerry, C. (1987). Developing economies and the informal sector in historical perspective. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 493(1), 100-119.
- Guillermaz, J. (1962). The Nanchang Uprising. *The China Quarterly*, 11, 161-168.
- Hart, K. (1973). Informal income opportunities and urban employment in Ghana. *The journal of modern African studies*, 11(01), 61-89.
- Harvey, D. (1985). *The Urbanization of Capital*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (1987). Flexible accumulation through urbanization: reflections on 'post-modernism' in the American city. *Antipode*, 19(3), 260-286.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The urban experience*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2006). *Spaces of global capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Harvey, D. (2008). The right to the city. *The City Reader*, 6, 23-40.
- Henry, N., McEwan, C., & Pollard, J. (2002). Globalization from below: Birmingham—postcolonial workshop of the world?. *Area*, 34(2), 117-127.
- Horn, Z. E. (2009). No Cushion to Fall Back On: The global economic crisis and informal workers. *Inclusive Cities project, Cambridge, MA: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)*.
- Hou, L.Q. and Wang S.J. (2014, August 12). 72 newsstands hauled away in Chaoyang district. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-08/12/content_18290118.htm.

Hoyman, M. (1987). Female participation in the informal economy: A neglected issue. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 493(1), 64-82.

Huang, G., Xue, D., & Li, Z. (2014). From revanchism to ambivalence: The changing politics of street vending in Guangzhou. *Antipode*, 46(1), 170-189.

Huang, P. C. (2009). China's Neglected Informal Economy Reality and Theory. *Modern China*, 35(4), 405-438.

Huang, X.Y. (2011, April 15). *Chengguan* making our streets safe from vendors. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2011-04/15/content_12334877.html.

Hubei Daily, (2014). "Wuhan, the self-employed taxpayers still less than 2%".
News.163.com/14/1014/07/A8GGH7KU00014AED.html.

Hui, S.Y. and Xia, C. (2013, August 16). 蚌埠二马路市场拆迁意见出炉, *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqgj/jryw/2013-08-16/content_9873986.html.

Hunt, S. (2009). Citizenship's place: the state's creation of public space and street vendors' culture of informality in Bogota, Colombia. *Environment and planning D: Society and Space*, 27(2), 331-351.

Ily, H. F. (1986). Regulation and evasion: Street-vendors in Manila. *Policy Sciences*, 19(1), 61-81.

Jimu, I. M. (2005). Negotiated economic opportunity and power: perspectives and perceptions of street vending in urban Malawi. *Africa Development*, 30(4).

Kang, Y. (2007, March, 2). Shanghai gives green light to street vendors. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-03/02/content_818211.htm.

Khandan, A., & Nili, M. (2014). Government interventions and the size of the informal economy. The case of Iran (1971–2007). *Journal of Economic Policy Reform*, 17(1), 71-90.

Knight, J., & Gunatilaka, R. (2010). Great expectations? The subjective well-being of rural–urban migrants in China. *World Development*, 38(1), 113-124.

Knox, P. L. (2005). Creating ordinary places: Slow cities in a fast world. *Journal of Urban Design*, 10(1), 1-11.

Kohn, M. (2004). *Brave new neighborhoods: The privatization of public space*. Psychology Press.

Kudva, N. (2009). The everyday and the episodic: the spatial and political impacts of urban informality. *Environment and Planning A*, 41(7), 1614-1628.

Kunnanatt, J. T. (2013). Globalization and Developing Countries: A Global Participation Model. *Economics, Management, and Financial Markets*, (4), 42-58.

- Lefebvre, H. (2004). *Rhythmanalysis: Space, time and everyday life*. London: A&C Black.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Lewinson, A. S. (1998). Reading modernity in urban space: politics, geography and the informal sector of downtown Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *City & Society*, 10(1), 205-222.
- Lewis, W. A. (1954). Economic development with unlimited supplies of labour. *The Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, 22(2), 139-191.
- Lie, M. (2014, April 1). Unlicensed vendor attacks *chengguan* with knife. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-04/01/content_17396434.htm.
- Lin, G. C. (2007). Reproducing spaces of Chinese urbanisation: new city-based and land-centred urban transformation. *Urban Studies*, 44(9), 1827-1855.
- Lloyd-Evans, S. (2008). Geographies of the contemporary informal sector in the global south: gender, employment relationships and social protection. *Geography compass*, 2(6), 1885-1906.
- Lloyd, K., & Auld, C. (2003). Leisure, public space and quality of life in the urban environment. *Urban Policy and Research*, 21(4), 339-356.
- Lin, J. Y. (1988). The household responsibility system in China's agricultural reform: a theoretical and empirical study. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 36(S3), S199-S224.
- Liu, K. (2013). *Street Vendors in Chinese Cities since Economic Reform: A Case Study of Guangzhou* (Doctoral Dissertation). Available from Hong Kong University's Scholar's Hub.
- Liu, Y., He, S., Wu, F., & Webster, C. (2010). Urban villages under China's rapid urbanization: unregulated assets and transitional neighborhoods. *Habitat International*, 34(2), 135-144.
- Lund, F. J., & Srinivas, S. (2000). *Learning from experience: A gendered approach to social protection for workers in the informal economy*. International Labour Organization.
- Maloney, W. F. (2004). Informality revisited. *World Development*, 32(7), 1159-1178.
- Maneepong, C., & Walsh, J. C. (2013). A new generation of Bangkok Street vendors: Economic crisis as opportunity and threat. *Cities*, 34, 37-43.
- Martine, G. (2012). *The new global frontier: urbanization, poverty and environment in the 21st century*. London: Earthscan.
- Mayer, H., & Knox, P. L. (2006). Slow cities: Sustainable places in a fast world. *Journal of urban affairs*, 28(4), 321-334.

- McLaren, J. (1998). Black markets and optimal evadable taxation. *The Economic Journal*, 108(448), 665-679.
- Mehta, V., & Bosson, J. K. (2010). Third places and the social life of streets. *Environment and Behavior*, 42(6), 779-805.
- Meng, X. (2001). The informal sector and rural-urban migration-A Chinese case study. *Asian Economic Journal*, 15(1), 71-89.
- McCann, E. J. (1999). Race, protest, and public space: Contextualizing Lefebvre in the US city. *Antipode*, 31(2), 163-184.
- McGee, T.G. (1973). Peasants in the cities: a paradox, a most ingenious paradox. *Human Organization*, 32(2), 135-142.
- McGee, T. G. (1974). *Hawkers in Hong Kong: A study of planning and policy in a third world city*. Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.
- McGee, T.G., 1996. On the utility of dualism: the informal sector and mega-urbanization in developing countries. *Regional Development Dialogue* 17(1), 1-15.
- Middleton, J. (2010). Sense and the city: exploring the embodied geographies of urban walking. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 11(6), 575-596.
- Miller, T., Birch, M., Mauthner, M., & Jessop, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research*. Sage.
- Ming, L. (2009, August 19). For more life and livelihood on the roads. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2009-08/19/content_8589117.htm.
- Mitchell, D. (1995). The end of public space? People's park, definitions of the public, and democracy. *Annals of the association of American geographers*, 85(1), 108-133.
- Mitchell, D. (1998). Anti-homeless laws and public space: I. Begging and the first amendment. *Urban Geography*, 19(1), 6-11.
- Mitchell, D. (2003). *The right to the city: Social justice and the fight for public space*. Guilford Press.
- Morales, A. (2000). Peddling policy: street vending in historical and contemporary contest. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 20(3/4), 76-98.
- Naughton, B. (1995a). Cities in the Chinese economic system: changing roles and conditions for autonomy. In D.S. Davis, R. Kraus, B. Naughton, & E.J. Perry (Eds.), *Urban Spaces in*

Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China (pp. 90-112). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oldenburg, R. (1989). *The great good place: Café, coffee shops, community centers, beauty parlors, general stores, bars, hangouts, and how they get you through the day*. New York: Paragon House Publishers.

Pahl, R. E. (1988). Some remarks on informal work, social polarization and the social structure. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 12(2), 247-267.

Peattie, L. R. (1980). Anthropological perspectives on the concepts of dualism, the informal sector, and marginality in developing urban economies. *International Regional Science Review*, 5(1), 1-31.

Perry, G. (Ed.). (2007). *Informality: Exit and exclusion*. World Bank Publications.

Pierce, J., & Lawhon, M. (2015). Walking as method: toward methodological forthrightness and comparability in urban geographical research. *The Professional Geographer*, 67(4), 655-662.

Portes, A. (1981). "Unequal Exchange and the Urban Informal Sector," in A. Portes & J. Walton, *Labor, Class, and the International System*. New York: Academic Press, 67-106.

Portes, A. (1983). The informal sector: definition, controversy, and relation to national development. *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center), 151-174.

Reid, D. M., Fram, E. H., & Chi, G.. (2010). A study of Chinese street vendors: How they operate. *Journal of Asia-Pacific Business*, 11(4), 244-257.

Robinson, J. (2002). Global and world cities: a view from off the map. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 26,(3), 531-554.

Rogerson, C. M. (1996). Urban poverty and the informal economy in South Africa's economic heartland. *Environment and urbanization*, 8(1), 167-179.

Roy, A. (2005). Urban informality: toward an epistemology of planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 71(2), 147-158.

Roy, A. (2009). Why India cannot plan its cities: informality, insurgence and the idiom of urbanization. *Planning theory*, 8(1), 76-87.

Roy, A. (2011). Slumdog cities: rethinking subaltern urbanism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(2), 223-238.

Sassen, S. (1994). The informal economy: Between new developments and old regulations. *Yale Law Journal*, 2289-2304.

Seamon, D. (1980). Body-subject, time-space routines, and place-ballets. *The human experience of space and place*, pp. 148-165.

Sethuraman, S. V. (1976). Urban Informal Sector: Concept, Measurement and Policy, *The International Labour Review*, 114(1), 69-81.

Shahid, Y. & Saich, A. (Eds.). (2008). *China urbanizes: consequences, strategies, and policies*. World Bank Publications.

Shue, V. (1995). State Sprawl: The regulatory state and social life in a small Chinese city. In D.S. Davis, R. Kraus, B. Naughton, & E.J. Perry (Eds.), *Urban Spaces in Contemporary China: The Potential for Autonomy and Community in Post-Mao China* (pp. 90-112). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smart, A. (1989). Forgotten obstacles, neglected forces: explaining the origins of Hong Kong public housing. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 7(2), 179-196.

Smith, N. (1996). *The new urban frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*. Psychology Press.

Solinger, Dorothy J. 1993. *China's Transition from Socialism: Statist Legacies and Market Reforms 1980-1990*. London: M. E. Sharpe.

Song, Y., Zenou, Y., & Ding, C. (2008). Let's not throw the baby out with the bath water: the role of urban villages in housing rural migrants in China. *Urban Studies*, 45(2), 313-330.

Swider, S. (2014). Reshaping China's Urban Citizenship: Street Vendors, *Chengguan* and Struggles over the Right to the City. *Critical Sociology*, 0896920514529676, 1-16.

Tripp, A. M. (1997). *Changing the rules: The politics of liberalization and the urban informal economy in Tanzania*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tsai, K. S. (2004). Imperfect substitutes: the local political economy of informal finance and microfinance in rural China and India. *World Development*, 32(9), 1487-1507.

United Nations Development Report, 2014.

Valodia, I. (2001). Economic policy and women's informal work in South Africa. *Development and Change*, 32(5), 871-892.

Wang, Di. 2003. *Street Culture in Chengdu: Public Space, Urban Commoners, and Local Politics, 1870-1930*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wang, Y. P., Wang, Y., & Wu, J. (2009). Urbanization and informal development in China: urban villages in Shenzhen. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(4), 957-973.

- Wang, X. R., Hui, E. C. M., Choguill, C., & Jia, S. H. (2015). The new urbanization policy in China: Which way forward?. *Habitat International*, 47, 279-284.
- Watson, V. (2009). Seeing from the South: Refocusing urban planning on the globe's central urban issues. *Urban Studies*, 46(11), 2259-2275.
- Watson, R. S. (1984). Women's property in Republican China: rights and practice. *Republican China*, 10(1), 1-12.
- Wilson, D. C., Velis, C., & Cheeseman, C. (2006). Role of informal sector recycling in waste management in developing countries. *Habitat international*, 30(4), 797-808.
- Williams, C.C., & J. Round. (2007). Re-thinking the nature of the informal economy: Some lessons from Ukraine. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31(2), 425-441.
- Williamson, J. G. (1999). Real wages, inequality and globalization in Latin America before 1940. *Revista de Historia Económica/Journal of Iberian and Latin American Economic History (Second Series)*, 17(S1), 101-142.
- Winter, B. (2012). Managing internal migration in modern China: Regional interests and forced removal, 1940s-2010s (unpublished master's thesis). University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX, USA.
- Wu, F. (2002). China's changing urban governance in the transition towards a more market-oriented economy. *Urban Studies*, 39(7), 1071-1093.
- Wu, F., Webster, C., He, S., & Liu, Y. (2010). *Urban poverty in China*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- WuDunn, S. (1986, November 16). China Taking a Hard Line with Vendors. *The New York Times*, p. A11.
- Wu, W., & Gaubatz, P. R. (2013). *The chinese city*. London: Routledge.
- Matos Wunderlich, F. I. L. I. P. A. (2008). Walking and rhythmicity: Sensing urban space. *Journal of Urban Design*, 13(1), 125-139.
- Xie, Y., & Wu, X. (2008). Danwei profitability and earnings inequality in urban China. *The China Quarterly*, 195, 558-581.
- Xue, D. S., & Huang, G. Z. (2008). Regulation beyond formal regulation: Spatial gathering and surviving situation of the informal sectors in urban village case study in Xiadu Village of Guangzhou City. *Geographical Research*, 6, 018.

- Xue, D., & Huang, G. (2015). Informality and the state's ambivalence in the regulation of street vending in transforming Guangzhou, China. *Geoforum*, 62, 156-165.
- Yang, J. and An, B.J. (2011, July 27). Crowd riots after death of vendor. *China Daily*, <http://topic.chinadaily.com.cn/index/cache?collection=cbsweb&source=China+Daily&title=Crowd+riots+after+death+of+vendor&aid=12989230>.
- Yasmeen, G. (2001). Stockbrokers turned sandwich vendors: the economic crisis and small-scale food retailing in Southeast Asia. *Geoforum*, 32(1), 91-102.
- Yatmo, Y. A. (2008). Street vendors as 'out of place' urban elements. *Journal of Urban Design*, 13(3), 387-402.
- Yeoh, B. S., & Huang, S. (1998). Negotiating public space: Strategies and styles of migrant female domestic workers in Singapore. *Urban studies*, 35(3), 583-602.
- Zhang, G. (2008). The choice of formal or informal finance: Evidence from Chengdu, China. *China Economic Review*, 19(4), 659-678.
- Zhang, L. S. X. B., Zhao, S. X., & Tian, J. P. (2003). Self-help in housing and chengzhongcun in China's urbanization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(4), 912-937.
- Zhang, Y. (2010, July 30). *Chengguan* and police should be separate bodies. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2010-07/30/content_11070417.htm.
- Zhang, Z. (1999). Rural industrialization in China: From backyard furnaces to township and village enterprises. *East Asia*, 17(3), 61-87.
- Zheng, X. (2013, May 14). Beijing cracking down on illegal barbecues. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-05/14/content_16496348.htm.
- Zheng, C. (2014, April 23). Survey: *chengguan* remain unpopular. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-04/23/content_17455860.htm.
- Zheng, C. (2014, July 15). Guangdong law would legalize street vendors. *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-07/15/content_17776370.htm.
- Zhou, X., & Hou, L. (1999). Children of the Cultural Revolution: The state and the life course in the People's Republic of China. *American Sociological Review*, 64(1), 12-36.

APPENDIX A
TABLE OF PARTICIPANTS

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Years Street Vending</i>	<i>Sanjingwuwei Resident?</i>	<i>Lives in City?</i>	<i>Product or Service Sold</i>	<i>Method of Vending</i>
1	Zhang	F	54	23	Yes	Yes	Bowls of Tofu	Tricycle with cart
2	Li	M	51	1	No	No	Handicrafts	Tented table
3	Junjun	F	53	5	Yes	Yes	Dumplings	Push cart
4	Hua	F	57	5	Yes	Yes	Homemade snacks	Tricycle with cart
5	Hanqin	F	39	5	Yes	Yes	Clothing	Electric Three-wheeled loader
6	Lin	M	42	1	Yes	Yes	Homemade snacks	Tricycle with cart
7	Chuanren	M	50	3	Yes	Yes	Homemade snacks	Small table
8	Sujian	M	42	3	Yes	Yes	Cakes, breads	Push-cart
9	Hongyin	M	51	5	No	No	Candy	Tricycle with cart
10	Shan	M	39	4	No	No	Toys	Blanket on sidewalk
11	Jiang	F	54	4	No	Yes	Cakes	Electric Three-wheeled loader
12	Shizhe	F	40	4	No	Yes	Soup, boiled tofu	Push-cart
13	Zhiguo	M	50	4	No	No	Biscuits	Tricycle with cart
14	Huanglei	M	50	3	Yes	Yes	Boiled corn	Tricycle with cart
15	Fei	M	25	1	No	Yes	Rice snacks	Push-cart
16	Guo	F	61	4	Yes	Yes	Porridge	Push-cart
17	Meng	F	67	5	Yes	Yes	Homemade shoe insoles	Small table
18	Yao	F	58	4	Yes	Yes	Cakes	Push-cart
19	Ziru	F	58	11	Yes	Yes	Seaweed salad	Small table

20	Tianhe	M	60	10	Yes	Yes	Bicycle repair	Sidewalk
21	Lu	M	45	10	No	No	Fruit	Electric Three-wheeled loader
22	Weifang	M	33	10	No	No	Haircutting	Chair/sidewalk
23	Juwen	M	50	10	No	No	Shoes	Sidewalk
24	Weishan	M	48	12	No	No	Watermelons	Van/ crates
25	Zhou	F	80	11	Yes	Yes	Clothing	Rack/ blanket
26	Luqi	M	34	1	Yes	Yes	Watermelons	Electric Three-wheeled loader
27	Yisha	F	54	6	No	No	Watermelons	Electric Three-wheeled loader
28	Hui	M	54	6	No	Yes	Fruit	Electric Three-wheeled loader
29	Lei	M	52	8	Yes	Yes	Fruit	Electric Three-wheeled loader
30	Xiaoying	F	61	12	Yes	Yes	Toys/ snacks	Table
31	Yan	M	59	9	Yes	Yes	Toys	Push-cart
32	Ping	M	34	2	No	No	Vegetables	Electric Three-wheeled loader
33	Qiang	M	34	2	No	Yes	Tofu	Push-cart
34	Tao	M	57	15	No	Yes	Fruit	Crates/sidewalk
35	Junxiao	M	55	8	No	No	Lotus pods	Blanket/sidewalk
36	Lizhe	M	42	8	No	No	Fruit	Electric three-wheeled loader
37	Yingqian	F	48	6	No	Yes	Fruit	Electric three-wheeled loader
38	Ren	F	58	6	Yes	Yes	Fruit	Push-cart
39	Yeliang	M	58	11	No	No	Fruit	Electric three-wheeled loader
40	He	F	49	6	No	Yes	Fried snacks	Push-cart

APPENDIX B

LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATION GUIDE

Interview Questions:

Vending as an Employment Strategy

- How old are you?
- How many hours per day do you street vend?
- When do you start the day?
- When does your day end?
- How frequently do you vend here?
- Do you vend at other places in Nanchang?
- How long have you been street vending?
- Where do you get/purchase the items you are selling?
- Can you make much money street vending?
- Why sell here?
- Are you from Nanchang?

Working in Public Space

- What are some drawbacks of street vending?
- What are some benefits of street vending?
- Do you get more customers at night or during the daytime?
- What is the biggest challenge you face when street vending in Nanchang?
- Are there any other thoughts you would like to share about being a street vendor in Nanchang?

Observation

Participant Basics via Observation: Who, Where, What, How?

- Gender
- Where they were vending (i.e. intersection, landmark, street name, etc.)
- What were they selling?
- Means of transporting items? (i.e. bicycle, push-cart, truck, etc.)
- Working solitarily or in a group?

Social Interaction

- How do customers interact with street vendors?
- Are street markets present?
- When do street vendors arrive/ leave the streets?
- Do street vendors influence the way people come together in the area?
- How does the interaction (or avoidance) of street vendors combine to create a larger sense of place?

Working in Public Space

- How do street vendors advertise themselves?
- Do they keep their work areas tidy?
- Are the same vendors seen on a daily basis?
- How is the presence of street vendors both supported and challenged by the physical environment?
- How do street vendors change the physical environment of the area?

Working and Public Life

- Do other activities take place near street markets?
- How do street vendors alter the tempo of public life in the area?
- To what extent? do street vendors (or street markets) alter the area as a place?
- Does it seem like street vendors are a part of the local community?

APPENDIX C

IRB# Pro00024809



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

May 16, 2016

Bryan Winter

School of Geosciences Tampa,
FL 33612

RE: **Exempt Certification**

IRB#: Pro00024809

Title: Reappropriating Public Space: A Study on the Lifeworlds and Agency of Informal Street Vendors in Nanchang, China

Dear Mr. Winter:

On 5/14/2016, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that your research meets criteria for exemption from the federal regulations as outlined by 45CFR46.101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

As the principal investigator for this study, it is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted as outlined in your application and consistent with the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and with USF HRPP policies and procedures.

Please note, as per USF HRPP Policy, once the Exempt determination is made, the application is closed in ARC. Any proposed or anticipated changes to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB review must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant an amendment or new application.

Given the determination of exemption, this application is being closed in ARC. This does not limit your ability to conduct your research project.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Schinka, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson

USF Institutional Review Board

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bryan Charles Winter was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1985. After moving to Las Cruces, New Mexico where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Geography from New Mexico State University he then earned a Master of Arts degree in History from the University of Texas at El Paso in El Paso, Texas. Following a handful of trips to China visiting family with his wife he was fascinated with the many forms of street life that exist in China's cities, and especially, the diversity of street vendors found there. Moving to Tampa, Florida in 2013 he pursued a Ph.D. in Geography and Environmental Science and Policy at the University of South Florida where he decided to research and explore the lives of the street vendors he encountered in China. Bryan, his wife, and their daughter now happily live in Littleton, Colorado.