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Innovating China: governance and mobility in China's new economy

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Chapter Eight Conclusion: "Innovating China" in the Domestic and Global Political Economy

What is special about innovation in late-socialist agenda? How do we understand China's innovation movement in the context of the worldwide innovation discourse? What does "Innovating China" mean for other emerging economies?

The Chinese innovation movement is not the same as the "disruptive innovation" of recent years mainly driven by digital technology in the European and North American contexts (Guttentag 2015; Blasutig 2019). The state still plays a very salient role in innovation. This is not only because the form of government in China's authoritarian state dictates that the state must be present. It is also because the state invests and needs the social and economic system to provide a constant demand for innovation to unleash the dynamism of development.

In describing the versatile role of the state and the concrete realization of the mobilization, this thesis has used three terms: "society-making", "subject-making" and "space-making." As explained in the introduction, these three makings have been utilized in local government policies that attempt to formalize the informal creative industries, and to re-organize new associations for mass entrepreneurship and innovation. The concept formalization indicates that the state is attempting to create a society that could be governed. This leads to "society-making" which entailed a multitude of new social associations having been manufactured and encouraged to perform as liberal but managing brokers of local state in the new economy. In addition, the recognition of individuality and the promotion of mass entrepreneurship encouraged "subject-making." Young professionals and graduates are driven to effect innovation by policy schemes, family and peer pressures. This realization is self-achievement is considered essential and highlight a creative subjectivity in the new economy. The new subject-making incorporates the younger generation moving away from traditional labor in urban China and instead developing a new flexible ye esteemed self-identity. This leads to the party-state changing its tactics of governance. These tactics can include taming aspiring tech-entrepreneurs by targeting, training and managing them into "innovative" citizens who can be molded into the state political and development agenda. Lastly, society-making and subject-making require "space-making" in which the new generation of dream catchers invent housing strategies and aspirations of mobile life.

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of the state's role in socio-economic transformation and its governance model in innovation activities. This thesis discusses the state-market-society relationship not merely from an institutionalist perspective that focuses on the interplay between the state, the market, and society. I discovered that the state creates a range of government institutions to regulate and shape

the society. Further, in recent years the state has been an important producer of the emergence of China's new civil society that drives innovations and entrepreneurship which are massively treated as mechanism of social mobility. These findings run counter to the general thrust of the existing thinking that argues that the strong involvement of the Chinese state in innovation-driven market economy and civil society may harm the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of Chinese society, or that an overemphasis on the commercial value chain and commercial success may overshadow technological innovation in China. Furthermore, the transformative role of the state would be an idea that China's innovation movement could offer to understand other emerging economies.

This thesis also argues that "Innovating China" is not merely a practice through which the late-socialist economy redefines its position on the global ladder of innovation, but a pragmatic policy process through which the Chinese state endeavors to deal with domestic dilemmas of economic development by mobilizing tools inherited from its Leninist legacy. The combination of new technologies and professionals are seen as an advanced workforce. "Innovating China" created a strong mobilizing power in Chinese society. In this way, this thesis also contributes ideas to development studies. Shenzhen's innovation implies local concretization and appropriation of central macroeconomic policies. This is rooted in the tension apparent between the central and local governments in China since the mid-1990s.

In this concluding chapter, I begin by explaining the findings and answers to the research questions in this thesis, while clarifying my arguments and academic contributions. Firstly, I re-examine the role of local state in mobilizing "innovating China". In the second section, the academic implications for understanding the "society-making", "subject-making" and "space-making" in the governance of China's new economy are discussed. I then explore how social associations are produced and function as societies of statist infrastructural power in the new economy. The "subject-making" agenda involved in the individualistic pursuit and social movement of innovation will be articulated. Following this, an explanation of how "space-making" has been rationalized by local government as a policy to promote innovative city building is given, including the extent "place-making" is understood and appropriated by young professionals as a strategy to complete their social mobility. In section three, I offer some self-reflections and discuss the contributions possible from this research paper.

8.1 What does "innovation" mean for China? —— The "New Walking on Two Legs"

How is *chuangxin*, innovation or creativity in Chinese, shaped by the political economy of late-socialist China? What does *chuangxin* mean in understanding the current political-economic transitions in China? In this doctoral dissertation, I argue that to answer these questions, we first need to look at what has happened to the development

and governance model launched by the Chinese government, especially at the local government level.

The market reform drew academic attention to post-socialist entrepreneurship in China. Scholars of China studies weighed in on academic debates about whether entrepreneurs gained status in the post-socialist political agenda (Nee 1989, 1996), and whether market forces would gradually weaken the power of state socialism (Rona-Tas 1994). Carolyn Hsu (2007) offers a distinct viewpoint and argues that the socialist entrepreneurship-driven market economy is actually co-produced by the Chinese party-state and the post-socialist mass (大众 *dazhong*) collective discourse. In her analysis, entrepreneurship building is a social production of status in the emerging marketization. However, Hsu misses the point that entrepreneurship building is not only the social-political production of entrepreneurs in the socialist regime and the social legitimization of the occupation of entrepreneurship (Hsu 2007: 123), but a way for the Chinese state to re-invent itself. Based on a 1992 field study of how Shanghai citizens influenced and responded to the takeoff and crash of the Shanghai stock market, Ellen Hertz (1998) identifies the changing roles of the state and citizens during the reform period. By mobilizing the public into the emerging stock market, the role of the state changed from that of a "regulator" to a "manager" of the market. In the process of transforming the stock market into a Chinese financial system, the state and the people constructed their beliefs and intentions about each other. In this sense, both Hertz and Hsu argue that the market does not destroy the power of the state. On the basis of their claims and my own ethnographic findings in Shenzhen, I further argue that market is not only metaphorically mirrored by society, but also created by the state's policy tools. It solidifies the state-society.

Under Xi Jinping's regime, when economic development is not robust, the state attempts to explore new models of governance to trigger economic development and maintain social stability. The current modeling of China's economic development on "innovation" is conducted through what I have called "new walking on two legs."

"Walking on two legs" is a metaphor that was used in the 1950s to illustrate the party-state's mass-line policies advocating both the formal incentives (central state-led relocation) and informal desires (sheer subjective wishes of the masses) to achieve economic growth in China. In the 1980s, this strategy was revived in the Reform and Opening-up context, when the tension between state and market institutions became dominant in shaping China's political economy. Since this time, the Chinese government initiated a new development model that combines government policies and planning with market forces (Naughton 2018: 61-62).

However, the state's economic and social governance must alternate from campaign-style governance and conventional governance to balance the tension that exists between the central and local governments. I argue that the new walking on two legs in innovating China today connotates that the tension between central and local governments and between the state and the market could be abated by a series of policy inventions and social transition. In this change, governments, especially local

governments, justify their new governance model in the social transition and promote social mobility through policy schemes. In this thesis, I examined the policy process of "innovation China." The governance in the new policy agenda gradually replaced the previous model of governance on market economy. In parallel to the central government's call to "seek innovation," local government adopts the strategy of "Made in China 2025" - "mass entrepreneurship and innovation" policies to mobilize and internationalize the new workforce, new sense of class, organizations, and capitals - in a collective effort for local interest. In addition, as shown in this thesis, the practices entailed in the economic development and institutional change agenda are embedded in the grass-root movement for innovation. On their own initiative, a new generation of highly-skilled labor from China and overseas has moved to Shenzhen to work and start businesses in the high-tech industry. Government agencies, universities, research institutes, investors, and professional service providers were mobilized by innovation policy incentives.

In recent years, policy researchers have noted the shift in China's innovation policy and innovation governance model. They acknowledge the fact that innovation policymaking in China has embraced a portfolio of institutional innovation in science and technology sectors, launching new industrial policies, liberating financial regulations, and reforming fiscal policies (Liu, Simon, Sun and Cao 2011; Liu, Schwaag Serger, Tagscherer and Chang 2017).

However, this thesis demonstrates that innovation policy is more than an industrial policy implemented by a limited number of government sectors, such as the Science and Technology Bureau. In Shenzhen, innovation policy has overflowed into the framework of industrial policy and increasing numbers of government agencies have become the reproducers and drivers of innovation policy. For example, because the promotion of technological innovation involves the mobility of a highly skilled workforce, the Human Resources and Social Security Bureau is also involved in the implementation of social policy to promote local entrepreneurship and innovation. Furthermore, in the eyes of local governments, innovation does not only mean industrial upgrading and technological innovation, but also institutional innovation. Local government agencies outsource innovation and entrepreneurship services to non-government sectors such as associations and professional service providers. Chapter three describes how inno-associations have grown to be one of major drivers of local innovation in China, and in this transition, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation is identified as a public service in the policy discourse and for the inno-associations.

It should be noted here that this model in Shenzhen is also being followed by various other local governments in China. As I described in Chapter three, when I was an intern at the Science and Technology Bureau (now renamed the Science and Technology Innovation Bureau), there were many *guazhi ganbu* (挂职干部 officials coming from other local governments to gain more administrative experience) from other provinces and cities working in the same office as me. I know that during that

period of time, they all had the task of learning how to carry out industrial upgrading and technological innovation from Shenzhen's example. The Shenzhen experience taught them to what extent they are able to articulate the bottom line of the national policy and practice it according to local interests. I have seen how they have transferred Shenzhen's policy practices to their own cities, increasing local financial investment in areas such as innovation space planning, talent policies, and incentive training/competition programs. They also know, however, that they cannot simply copy and paste Shenzhen's innovation policies and governance models.

A new tension, acknowledged and framed by the central government, required new policies that considered the tension between the global and the national. This is rooted both in the "catch-up" mindset of the developmental state, and is manifested by the Chinese strategy to find an alternative development model by engaging in the global economy. To deal with the tension between "the global" and "the national," the central government of China launched a series of policies to upgrade industries and innovate the economic development model. This recognition of horizontal tensions has sometimes obscured the fact that vertical tensions between the central and the local have defined China's actual route of reform and development for a long time. My thesis also argues that the internationalization of innovation in China is driven by local governments. Through a series of policies that encourage foreigners, overseas Chinese, and returned overseas Chinese students to start their own businesses, local governments have slowly built up an international entrepreneurial infrastructure.

Overall, this thesis shows how "the local" deals with the central and the global in practicing and formalizing policy agendas into local development logic. As depicted in chapters four and seven, the Shenzhen story shows that local government is the key promoter of, and investor in, urban tech-innovation in China. The ambition coming from local authorities is to internationalize China's innovation and create new approaches to partner with developed economies on a global scale. This thesis argues that to understand how innovation and new industrial upgrading translate into specific regions, the localized social implications of upgrading, citizens' life strategies, and social organizations involved in the new makings of society, space, and subject should be key research points in any discussion of innovation in the political economy. Rethinking the transformation of the role of the state, especially the local state, would be an idea that China's innovation movement could offer to other emerging economies.

8.2 The Making of New Society, New Subject, and New Space in "Seeking Innovation"

In the story of Shenzhen, "seeking innovation" was a strong discourse and organizing power appropriated by local authorities to restructure social networks, produce new

space, and to create a workforce of new subjects to engage with the central-state's promotion of innovation-driven economy.

The first major characteristic of "innovation China" is society-making. As noted in chapters one and two, following China's promotion of mass entrepreneurship and innovation, we have seen growing numbers of social enterprises, public service organizations and private non-enterprises registered with local governments. In Shenzhen, these so-called emerging inno-associations have received outsourced services from local authorities and, together with a number of service companies, created incubators providing entrepreneurial services and organized social training to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of young professionals. I argue that the rising role and extension of Chinese civil society organizations is rooted in the transitional logic of local governance of the new market, changing regulations to answer the call of the central government, and the invention of new local authority patterns. Correspondingly, the public expect a more "innovative society." These factors drive local government to invest more effort in renovating its image of governance and to create space for the institution of civil societies to extract further economic forces through institutional innovation.

In addition, the way in which "seeking innovation" can play out is the subject-making and space-making for spatially renewing the urban space and the industrial supply-chain. As depicted in chapters three and five, the process of innovation is also a process by which new workforce agents rediscover their place in the supply-chain. The burgeoning market space for IT startups and flexible professional-worker-turned-entrepreneur labor patterns are processed by both global capitalized supply chains and by state-led supply-sided economic reforms in which "innovation" is treated as a key dynamism to be practiced in the political-economic system in Shenzhen. Anthropological thinking on supply chains was developed by the anthropologist Anna Tsing. She argued that the difference and flexibility, which was manipulated by tropes of management, consumption, and entrepreneurship-in-workers within global capitalized supply chains, shaped new power patterns and new labor subject-making in the production process (Tsing 2009: 158-159). While in the context of Shenzhen, the domestic making of an innovation-economy drives "the upgrading" project that excludes "the less upgraded" factories and shapes the role of the flexible startups in the global supply chain of "innovation commodities." This echoes to the findings of other global supply chain researchers that upgrading is always a process of exclusion, particularly in developing countries (Bair 2005: 171). The making of innovation accelerates and legitimates the state-sponsored industrial upgrading and changes the city's orientation towards the global supply chain.

In chapters two, five and seven, by conceptualizing "urban renewal" in the general trend of strategies to navigate policy reforms on urban space I explain how the industrial upgrading driven by innovation policies has given rise to a new round of "urban renewal" and social mobility in Shenzhen. This has seen former industrial areas turned into innovation clusters. Informal living spaces such as urban villages have been

cognitively marginalized, and either demolished or redeveloped into neighborhoods that meet middle-class standards of living by real estate companies and local governments. Among the new generation of young graduates and professionals, the spatial mobility of people becomes a prerequisite for subject-making. The choice of where to work and live becomes an important mechanism to shape one's self. In chapters two, five and seven, I specifically articulate how citizens, local authorities, real estate developers and high-tech companies push the transition to "upgraded innovation economy" and drive their own mobility through aspiration, anxiety, and policy instruments.

It is worth noting that I am not trying to overemphasize the manipulation created by the state and civil society organizations in the rise of start-up innovation in China. Neither do I intend to extend Foucauldian analysis that over-interprets society as a panopticon and ignores the "agency" of social actors. However, I do strive to articulate the social and cultural production of innovation and institutional change in this thesis, to gain a better understanding of the governance of contemporary China's 40-year state-led marketization reform.

8.2.1 The Infrastructural Power of State on Society-making: Seeking Like a State, Performing Like an Investor

In 2015, in order to increase economic development, the Chinese government launched a national innovation campaign on mass entrepreneurship and innovation to re-draw the development model. This campaign used and appraised the rich technological and organizational innovations in the society. The promotion of mass entrepreneurship and innovation has material consequence for production and also influences the restructuring of state-society relations. Massive civil society associations (CSOs) were mobilized to join in the promotion of mass entrepreneurship and innovation. This echoes some of the agenda of institutional innovation at the beginning of the 2000s. To manage the state-society relations in the market economy, the Chinese central government launched a social management agenda to formalize the development of private companies, the emblems of the Chinese market economy, and regulate *minyin fei qiye* (民营非企业 civil non-enterprise units) and *shehui tuanti* (社会团体 social groups), the defining forms of Chinese civil society. In Chapters three and four I describe the process and connotations of outsourcing services from local governments to CSOs. Unlike the public-private partnership (PPP) model in neoliberal contexts, civil societies in contemporary China take on many of the roles and obligations of the government's social management. However, it remains to be seen whether the CSOs of the moment will, as Yan (2012) speculates, simply take on complementary roles when government provides service provisions and maintain their symbiotic relationships with the local authorities. That being said, new research has explained the active role of

NGOs in local governance. CSOs act as a proactive player and try to establish reciprocal participation with local governments (Farid and Li 2021).

In Shenzhen's innovation discourse, "creating entrepreneurial ecosystems" is a policy practice that is constantly talked about. This political-economic rationale was appropriated by anxious Chinese local developers in Shenzhen. Through "society-making," the policy objectives of local governments and the mass expectations for innovation are increasingly merging in Shenzhen. As long as the interests of these institutions are increasingly aligned, the state's push for innovation does not necessarily lead to a loss of incentive for innovation in the market and society.

In order to enact the broad plan which underpins the development of entrepreneurial ecosystem, spatial and economic infrastructure in Shenzhen, local government bureaus, such as the Science and Technology Bureau and the Bureau of Housing and Construction, take on more responsibility. Social associations, such as professional associations and alumni associations, influence the urban renovation and branding agenda and re-define mobility in Shenzhen. State-owned-service-sectors-turned-NPOs, non-profit foundations, and state-owned service sectors were re-organized into new associations, or "communities of innovation" in their words. However, the importance of such infrastructure lies primarily in welcoming new people who fit into the new development agenda. As depicted in chapter three, in addition to exhibiting a facade of innovation in the city, the local government also launched policies to create partnership with civil societies, such as NGOs and social associations, to help absorb the new population and create new mentalities appropriate to the technology-driven market society in Shenzhen.

In chapters three and four, I have tried not to focus too much on the function of state power or "state capacity" (Acemoglu, García-Jimeno and Robinson 2015), which political scientists generally cover, but to explore the infrastructuralization of state capacity via different organizations, agents, and individuals to see how an entrepreneurial ecosystem was built and negotiated to strengthen the state's infrastructural power in the new economy.

Enlightened by discussions of contemporary "*guanxi*-making" (a term to define social networking between the Chinese state and market regimes) in China studies, I argue that "the extended power relations" are key to understanding the infrastructural power building involved in reviving "mass entrepreneurship and innovation" as a developmental project in China. More specifically, the power relations woven by local governments, social groups for accelerating youth tech-entrepreneurship, local and international social associations, financial investors, and startup runners are the arena to explore the infrastructuralization of state power and the transformation of the local state's role in the current situation. Through investing economic capital in establishing the networked "entrepreneurial ecosystem," the local state strengthens itself via outsourcing its public services to quasi-civil society. I call this process the marketization of infrastructural power in chapter three. In a number of new studies of Chinese civil society, a growing number of researchers have focused on the relationship

and tension between local governments and the construction of local civil society (Hsu and Hasmath 2014; Yuen 2018; Gao and Teets 2020).

The establishment and marketization of entrepreneurial ecosystems are strategies for the local government to benefit from the IT-driven new economy, which is the largest informal economy in contemporary China. The privatized IT-driven startup entrepreneurships, including their supply chains, involving links such as the smart electronic industry and the logistic industry, are dominated by informal economy. As discussed in chapter two in the context of early industrialization in Shenzhen, this informal economy is supported by the state's de-regulation of economic development. The governing logic behind the local state's support of informal economy is sustained in the new economy, especially after 2008 when IT-driven private enterprises started to boom in Shenzhen. As far as I am aware, the newly emerging startups pay little taxes and receive little direct supervision from the local state.

This situation creates a puzzle for some political scientists: since the local state extracts relatively little in taxes in the new economy, how can it benefit from the local developmental agenda that is enabling IT-driven industries? Unlike the local government in the 1980s, when local officials became board members of township-village enterprises (TVEs) and fueled the local economy through personal involvement, the current local government earns a lot by acting as an investor and spatial developer in establishing and marketizing entrepreneurial ecosystem in Shenzhen. As depicted in chapters, local government offers subsidiary policies for entrepreneurship, encourages financial sectors to invest in startups, and outsources local universities, social associations and giant IT companies to conduct a series of training projects for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. Besides, the industrial up-grading for innovation underpins the local government's redevelopment of space that drives mobility and meaning-making for mobility within the city.

8.2.2 "Innovating China" As a Practice of Subject-making: Expectations of Mobilities from Individuals

If we say, as canonical sociologists and anthropologists often do, that the rise of entrepreneurship building in Western economic history always comes with the rise of individualism, religious ethics, mercantile capitalism, nation-states' imperialism, and consumer demand for exotic goods (Sahlins 1988: 415-416), then we might also say that the current rise of techno-entrepreneurial fever in China was created in a milieu that combined personal anxieties, a sense of crisis, and national expectations for a more developed future.

After the Reform and Opening-up in 1978, as analyzed in chapter four, subject-making became a mobilization agenda for the state to make and search for people with

"quality."[117] The subject-making of "qualified" people in the marketization period is abstract, yet detailed with the official discourse about cadre education, job training, and compulsory schooling: "quality" became characterized into "profession" and "market capability" to fit the concrete targets of these trainings and educational organizations. In the current situation, as shown in chapter four, subject-making has been processed into talent policies and talent recruitment agendas by the local government. Imitating the Leninist style of cadre training, the making of new subjects in the tech-drive new economy is actualized into pragmatic and transformative trainings for entrepreneurial spirit, masculine physicality, and ambition for social mobility.

In chapters five and six, I uncover expectations for mobility have been manifested by young, urban, educated generation's subject-making of an innovative self, an entrepreneurial self, and a professional self. These identities can be used to differentiate themselves from older generations and less-innovative workers in labor-intensive industries. My investigation revealed that the making of a successful "self" is not just a story about competing for "success" or "higher status," but also for "self-fulfillment" and "self-esteem." In this sense, the meaning of recognition in organizations (family, market-oriented communities, social associations, etc.) that are outside of industrial organizations is key to understanding the entrepreneurial subject-making in urban China's mobility pattern. Most of these people were based on alumni ties, professional networks, and inno-associations. This indicates that the existing local power pattern, woven through the long-term Reform and Opening-up period, is being restructured by the newcomers. The newcomers are diverse in their nationalities, expertise, and life-goals. However, these Chinese and non-Chinese young professional workers collectively join in the invention of innovation and entrepreneurship codes in Shenzhen.

When the local government-led innovation campaign and urban renewal plan was implemented by the new associations, common sense was re-established: new values and individualistic performances that are considered inconsistent with capitalist systems, accelerate the socio-economic transitions in China today. The majority of people I met in Shenzhen admitted that innovation-driven upgrading has changed their life and work so quickly that they easily felt *jiaolü* (焦虑 anxious), but for them, taking a riskier life when they are still young is a strategy for prolonging their experience and capability "to adapt to a more mobile life in the future."[118] These people were unlike people involved in dot.com bubbles who tried to manage risks by calculating the opportunity costs in a late-capitalist context (Neff 2012). They are also unlike the people who travel back and forth between metropolis and hometown to maintain economic achievements (Ong 1999; Saxenian 2007). I analyzed how the anxieties about "risk" and the expectations for "opportunities" are mutually constructive emotions that

[117] The subject-making is the measure of China's state-making agenda as it stems from May 4, 1919. In the socialistic period, subject-making was engineered into class politics. This class politics strengthened the hierarchy of subjectivities. In this new discourse of subject-making, the exploited working-class subject comes before the exploiting entrepreneurial class, peasants, and intellectual professionals.
[118] My male roommate Qing, Shenzhen, 2015.

have shaped the ambitions of these young people for social and spatial mobility. I further argue that "Innovating China" is a socio-economic construction of a future and constitutes the methodology of a common life-choice based on a fear of falling behind in the quick transition of the new economy.

8.2.3 The Spatial Politics of Innovation: Space-making as a Strategy

Innovation is considered as the Achilles heel of China's socio-economic development by the central government, as well as a policy theme to renovate local socio-economic space for the local government. This influences the remaking of capital and human mobilities in cities and regions which in turn will define the hierarchy of industry and the ranking of Chinese cities and regions. The new trend of economic modeling encapsulated by "innovating China" is embedded in the state's new space-making agenda. The spatial transition in China's current context has a symbiotic relationship with issues such as the middle class, civil society, and urbanism, which are hot topics in the field of research on modernity in contemporary China (Zhang 2012; Tang 2017). In this thesis, I analyzed how the pre-existing human-capital mobility and consumption-driven modernity in Shenzhen are re-embedded into the great transformation and contribute to a new development and governance model through the urbanized innovation economy.

However, the grand narrative of the political economy of urban planning cannot ignore the fact that spatial renovation has brought about an exponential increase in China's GDP. Local governments have further freed up space for commercialization through urban renewal programs (Lin, Li, Yang and Hu 2015). The urban spatial transition increased mobility in Shenzhen. This phenomenon should also be viewed historically. This spatial transition is academically positioned in the state-socialism to late-socialism storyline. Urban expert John Friedmann (2005) argues, a collective consciousness of citizenship and class was cultivated after late 1990s when China witnessed rapid commercialization of urban space and the sprawl of cities in the eastern and coastal regions. The urbanized region was imagined to be a "modern and developed space," while the non-urbanized regions were considered "less-developed provincial areas." The speed of this urbanization is significantly more rapid than in European or American contexts.

The ethnographic data in the chapters shows that the Chinese state's promotion of innovation-driven development tends to recognize individuality, niches, grassroots entrepreneurship, and diversity in order to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. In this sense, the transition to "innovating China" brings about collective and local practices of "making difference" and creates differentiated comparative advantages in Shenzhen's *chengshi gengxin* (城市更新 urban renovation).

Space-making is a process of infrastructuralization of state power, with local state sectors extending their reach through urban renovation programs such as "the

production of Silicon Valley in South China." For the local government in Shenzhen, policies and development practices to promote mass entrepreneurship and innovation, especially to attract a new highly skilled workforce, must be achieved through the local government's infrastructural construction. Shenzhen's urban regeneration is similar to the brownfield regeneration in Europe and North America: the government has joined forces with developers to turn abandoned industrial areas into innovation economy clusters. Rebranding the "world factory" of Shenzhen to an "innovation hub" is the direct outcome of this agenda. Shenzhen is being modified into a new powerhouse of innovation. From this perspective, innovation also implies a spatial transformation of social and economic relations.

Further, space-making in Shenzhen today is a process that every migrant wave physically and mentally challenges and negotiates in terms of urban administration on mobility under the setting of urban renovation. Amidst the current wave of trans-local migration, Shenzhen acts as a working site for middle-class jobs and a mobile-living site. The young generation of urban migrants seem ambiguous to this round of space-making. I had numerous interviews with informants who complained that housing prices were expensive and the cost of living high due to urban renovation, yet at the same time they were enjoying the renewed way of living and working in metropolitan cities. Like the rural migrant workers in the late 1990s and contracted migrant expatriates (Driessen 2015) and overseas Chinese in 2000s (Chu 2010), they even return to their hometowns to buy apartments, which are treated more as investments to show to parents and relatives proof of their abilities. Such tensions emerge in the current relations between space, class consciousness, and social mobilization. The existing highly diversified global supply chain makes workers highly "mobile" and always "on-the-road" to gain the things that meet their expectations (Tsing 2009). The coming of highly-mobile trans-local life manifests the spatial transition in China. The meaning of a house, the meaning of relocation, the meaning of work, the meaning of mobility, all change in the discourse of urban renovation.

8.3 "Sample Bias" and the Dilemma of "Structure/Agency Relationship": Some Self-reflections

At a conference in Leiden, a fellow participant commented that my research followed a majority of male informants and that the data focused on the work and lives of professional young men. As such, she asked: "Are they all men? Is there any data showing the aspirations and activities of female entrepreneurship in innovation economy?" I had also been surprised about this gender bias when I started my research in Shenzhen. Unlike the export-processing manufacturing regime that is dominated by female workers, the mainstream workforce in innovation-driven enterprises is comprised of young male professionals.

This bias stems from the expansion of university enrollments, especially in China's polytechnical universities. The majors of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) absorbed more male than female students after 2000s and those students constructed the mainstream workforce and talent pool of China's innovation-driven industrial upgrading. Later, this bias is reinforced by the social and familial pressure on men in Chinese society, as shown in chapters five and seven. To gain recognition from family and peers, some of my informants pursue a busier work and riskier life in metropolitan cities. Their way of "enterprising self" signifies a production of dominant manhood in the development of China's innovation economy.

I am not saying that the role of female workers is no longer important. My focus in this paper is on the fact that the rise of the male subject is supplemented by the social production of the female subject in innovation and entrepreneurship. As depicted in chapter four, integral in the mindset of tech-entrepreneurs is that some new market and consumption techniques are created to target women as new social force of consumption rather than production, even though the inventors appropriate a "women for independence" feminist discourse for marketing.

Although seems that there is no agency for my informants to challenge the grand narratives of mass innovation and entrepreneurship in China, the question is to what extent are the dynamics between structure and agency relationships invented in the self-mobilization of Leninist agenda. At this point, I would like to respond a little to the ideas of the practice theory of "structure and agency." The complex and contingent relations between structure and agency are nicely outlined in Anthony Giddens', Sherry Ortner's, and Marshall Sahlins' work. Giddens emphasizes the importance of actors in constructing the rules of social structures. In his view, social structures are not external to individual action. Actors in everyday life purposefully use their knowledge to take appropriate action, testing and confirming the rules involved in their actions (Giddens 1979: 55). The contingent relations between structure and action are prioritized in Marshall Sahlins' work in order to establish links between structuralist anthropology and historical analysis. Based on a historical perspective, Sahlins emphasizes that the individual experiences and perceives the relationship between the individual and the collective in the context of historical events (1976). Ortner builds on Giddens' and Sahlins' arguments and further claims that the construction of social relations is the key to understanding the tension between subject and structure, and that social relations hold because the individual as agent is always "enmeshed within relations of power, inequality, and competition" (Ortner 2006: 130).

Rather than getting caught up in a theoretical discussion around the dichotomy of "structure and agency" and using the Chinese case to illustrate the feasibility of the practice theory from socio-anthropological scholarship, here I would like to admit that agency is embodied in the set of relationships that link individuals and further argue that agency is pluralistic. There is no single agency. Thus, the tensions of structure and agency can be multiply presented in social actors and as individuals with agency. These social actors try to invent different strategies to deal with the multiple tensions between

structures and agencies. This study illustrates social actors' attempts to balance different structural tensions to realize a self-empowered life and career. In chapters six and seven, I discuss a massive justification and self-empowerment of work-life imbalance in Shenzhen: individuals with high-mobile lives are re-inventing meanings of unstable work and volatile life by physically joining the manufacturing of entrepreneurship to gain recognition and rebranding Shenzhen as a city full of opportunities and freedom.

The current socio-anthropological concerns may be deeply involved in everyday politics and economy, with this discourse becoming a more influential part of the global dynamic (Herzfeld 2018). When I conducted my fieldwork research, I often reflected that the socio-anthropological anti-neoliberal considerations about empowering "selfness", "recognition", "marginality", and "diversity" offered a critical toolkit regarding the statist rhetoric of the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation in China. In the context of a Trumpian "Trade War" and Brexit, when contemporary developed nation-states move towards anti-globalization, the Chinese state promotes globalization by using these discourses and pragmatic policy reforms to strengthen its role in the global political economy of innovation. This ethnographic study also points out that the process of innovation does not necessarily entail technological innovation. This does not differ from the history of the social revolution under the aegis of innovation in Anglo-Saxon industrializations. China's innovation has revolutionized society, market, and everyday life, but such revolutionary stimuli go hand in hand with the incentives of the Leninist state.