

How Africans pursue low-end globalization in Hong Kong and mainland China.

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How Africans Pursue Low-End Globalization in Hong Kong and Mainland China

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Abstract

This article looks at the livelihoods and lives of African traders coming to Hong Kong and Guangzhou. These traders are practising “low-end globalization”, involving small amounts of capital, and semi-legal or illegal transactions under the radar of the law. The article first considers who these traders are, portraying them as, typically, members of the upper crust of their home societies. It then considers these traders in Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong, a building that is an entrepôt between China and the developing world. Finally, it looks at traders’ livelihoods and lives in Guangzhou, South China, and traders’ efforts to succeed in mainland China. The article argues that one essential economic role China plays today is in manufacturing the cheap, sometimes counterfeit goods that enable Africa and other developing-world regions to experience globalization; the African traders who come to China help make this possible.

Keywords

China; Africa; low-end globalization

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