

DOCTORAL THESIS

Residential mobility in the early years of the twenty-first century: the case of Guangzhou, China

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ABSTRACT

In the last few decades, China has experienced unprecedented economic growth and urban transformation. A large body of literature has examined urban restructuring and migration at different geographical scales. Intra-urban migration, or residential mobility, however, has received less attention, which has major implications for individuals' well-being, neighbourhood governance and urban transformation. This research tries to extend the literature on residential decisions and relocation in Chinese cities, focusing on the causes, patterns and effects of residential move, using data from a large-scale survey conducted at the end of 2012 in the City of Guangzhou. First, it analyses the time trend of residential mobility and factors underlying residential move in an event-history analysis framework, by explicitly incorporating cohort or generation differences. It is found that not only substantially higher mobility propensities for young adults than middle-aged individuals and senior citizens, but significant differential effects of major determinants such as *hukou*, educational attainment, birth of a child in the family and child rearing, on housing consumption and residential relocation across age cohorts. Second, it addresses the residential shifts within and between three distance zones – inner core, inner suburbs and outer suburbs – and reveals complex spatial mobility trends. Third, it explores how feelings like neighbourhood attachment are conditioned upon residential mobility and neighbourhood change. This thesis contributes to the study of residential relocation by incorporating cohort differences to address the complexities of residential mobility and providing a mapping of the spatial patterns for intra-urban migration with a case study. In addition, it highlights the importance of looking beyond traditional explanations of such as neighbourhood attachment, to include individual urbanites' past mobility experiences.

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