Unraveling Urban Malaise: Activity Space, Socio-Spatial Segregation, and Mental Well-being in Metropolitan China

The escalating unhappiness and mental health problems in megacities amidst rapid global urbanization raises concerns about how urban environments shape individuals' life experiences. Nonetheless, current research primarily focuses on residential neighborhoods, ignoring the exposure to various spatial contexts individuals encounter in their daily activities beyond their homes and the temporal fluctuations in individual feelings when traveling across these activity spaces. By shifting from a static residence-based framework to a dynamic people-based framework and utilizing individual-level panel data collected in (or near) real time, this project aims to investigate how urban spaces and people's daily mobility across these spaces contribute to socio-spatial segregation and inequalities in mental well-being in metropolitan China. We have successfully developed a smartphone-based App, GoFeel, that integrates features of Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) and Day Reconstruction Method (DRM) to collect continuous space-time data on urban residents' emotions, surroundings and activities. We will use this App to track respondents' travel paths over a week, prompt them to answer questions about their immediate psychosocial responses to contexts (stress and loneliness), assist them to recall their feelings, activities and social interactions at different locations throughout the day, and collect longitudinal information on their mental health (anxiety, depression) and subjective well-being (life satisfaction and happiness). Data will be gathered from around 1,000 adults, recruited from an existing large-scale representative urban survey in Guangzhou.