

Underlying Concepts

Governance

We use governance as an analytical category for investigating how a city is governed. In the case of high-tech development and redevelopment of old industry districts, governance is investigated by analyzing the relationship between different actors and stakeholders (governing relations), the way decisions are taken (governing logic), the importance of key decision-makers, and the fundamental political objectives.

Clusters

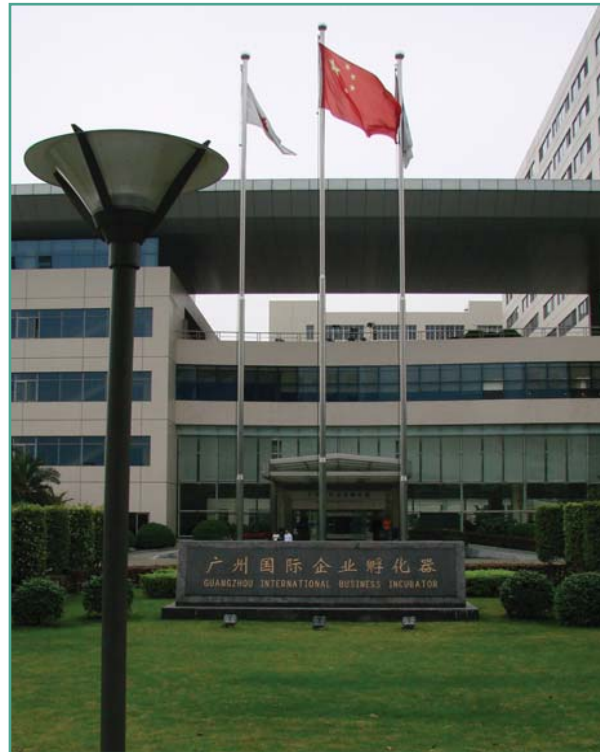
Clusters are understood to be geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field. Cooperation and networking, often building on informal ties, are essential for the success of these clusters. China has a very long tradition of clustered industries. Therefore, one of our main questions is how long-established clusters – i.e., more labour-intensive manufacturing areas, such as the drapery district of Guangzhou – are redeveloped. We will also enquire how high-tech clusters aiming at advancement along the value chain are developed.

Creativity

Creation and innovation have become major themes in economic growth and urban development. According to sociologist Richard Florida, the so-called 'creative class' is regarded as a key group in generating innovation, attracting high-technology industries, and creating higher regional incomes.



New wholesale mall in GZ Drapery District (2009)



Guangzhou International Business Incubator within GZ Science City (2009)

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Research Project

Governance over Time

Spatial Differentiation & Temporal Change of
Urban Development and Redevelopment
Strategies in the Pearl River Delta


megacities
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Informal Dynamics
of Global Change

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Megacities - Megachallenge
Informal Dynamics of Global Change

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Introduction

Our project on governance over time has a focus on the investigation of urban development and redevelopment strategies in the Pearl River Delta (PRD), China. It is part of a research programme on “Megacities – Megachallenge: Informal Dynamics of Global Change” funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The project team from the University of Hamburg, Germany cooperates closely with the Department of Building and Real Estate at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and with the Centre for Urban Studies at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China.

Within the PRD, there are differences between the various regions in terms of their respective starting points and the speed of their economic transition: While some are at the forefront of experimental reforms, others are former provincial backwaters that are still catching up with the process of economic development. Competition is pushing the cities to foster creativity and innovation.

Overall objectives

We focus on the governance of urban development and redevelopment strategies aimed at advancement along the economic value chain. Increasing global-local competition requires constant adaptation of urban development strategies on the part of the Chinese metropolis. From an analytical governance perspective, we are investigating how economic clusters in the PRD, especially in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, are either newly developed or restructured over time.

Results

The findings will contribute to a more specific understanding of the governance of urban development and redevelopment strategies in megacities. Furthermore, they will facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the general issue of governability in mega-urban regions as well as concerning the role of economic restructuring policies in the field of urban development.

Key Research Questions

- 1) How do strategies of urban development and redevelopment evolve over time and space?
- 2) Which stakeholders are involved in the governance of urban development and redevelopment strategies?
- 3) Which role does formal and informal communication play in the governance of the clusters investigated, and in which way can urban informality be considered a success factor for these developments?
- 4) What can we learn from the investigation of governance over time in terms of the governability of a highly dynamic mega-urban region?

Case Studies

Our case studies focus on development and adaptation strategies that allow spatial economic clusters to continue to be attractive for companies and the workforce on one hand, and on the role of local authorities, businesses, and other micro-level stakeholders in decisionmaking on development and redevelopment strategies on the other. The investigation of stakeholders involved and the comparison of specific decisionmaking patterns with those in areas of the PRD that are supposedly more advanced, such as Shenzhen, will result in a broader picture of urban governance of this mega-urban region. Our main case studies focus on economic restructuring strategies within two distinct spatial entities.

Guangzhou Science City



Flagship architecture in GZ Science City (2009)

In the case of Guangzhou Science City, we investigate the governance of new high-tech development in a showcase project of Guangzhou municipality. We consider this to be a top-down urban development approach that has been planned as comprehensive urban environment, much in contrast to earlier developments, which had been erected as rather mono-functional spaces.

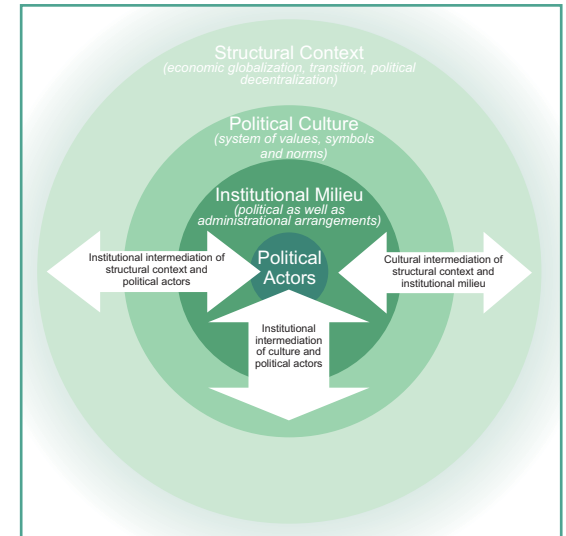
Guangzhou Drapery District



New wholesale mall under construction in GZ Drapery District (2007)

In the case of the drapery district of Guangzhou, we investigate the governance of the ongoing restructuring process in a comparatively established industry. Due to increasing global and local competition, local stakeholders have initiated a massive shift from traditional knitting and assembling towards the erection of huge wholesale malls combined with new housing.

Integrated Framework of Urban Governance



(according to a model by DIGAETANO/STROM 2003; modified)