

**Project:**  
**BORDER-DRAWING AND SPATIAL DIFFERENTIATION OF URBAN GOVERNANCE MODES IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO INFORMAL DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-ORGANIZATION**

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**Introduction**

Our project on borders and urban governance is part of the DFG 1233 programme “Megacities - Megachallenge: Informal Dynamics of Global Change”. It is a co-operation of the University of Kassel, the University of Hamburg (both Germany) and the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou (China).

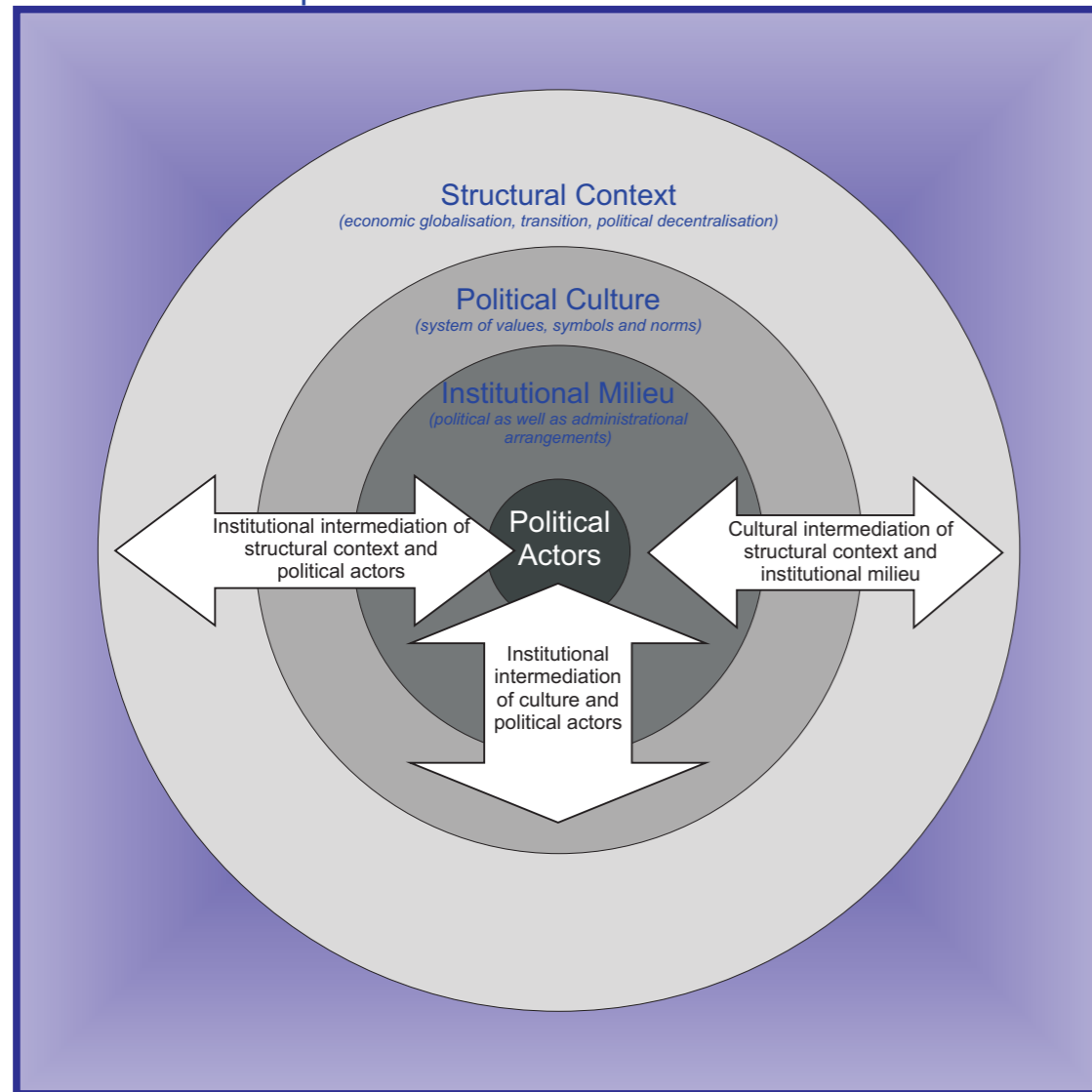
**Study Region**

We focus on the spatially differentiated use of governance modes in the Pearl River Delta mega-urban region, in particular: Guangzhou, Dongguan, Shenzhen, Zhongshan and Zhuhai. Our research will also consider Hong Kong and Macau.

**Project Duration**

The first research phase from January 2007 until December 2008 is currently being implemented. In total, three two-year phases are envisaged.

Intermediation of political actors and their context



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

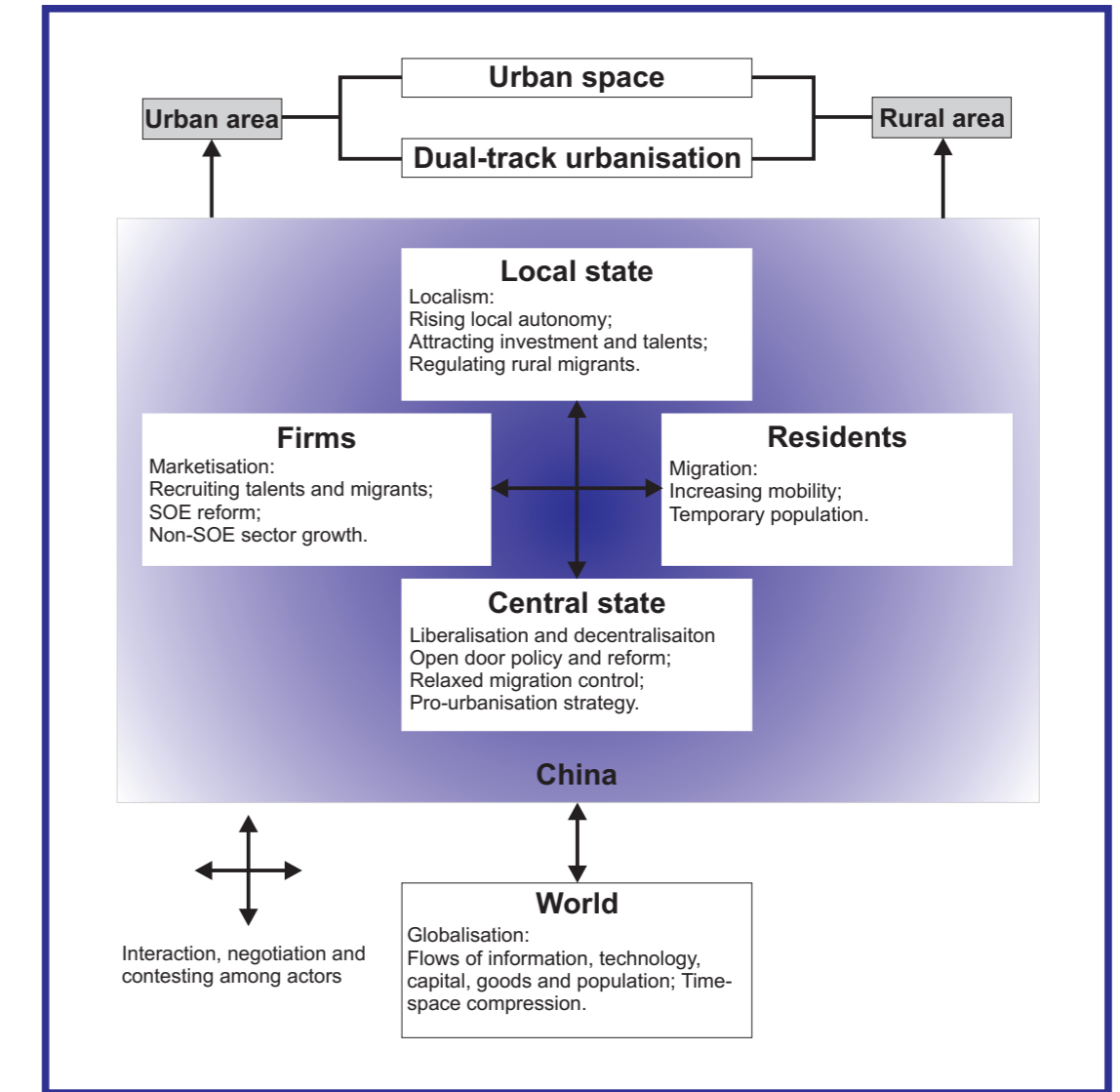
**Overall Objective :**

To identify different governance modes, to understand the role of self-organisation and informal processes for these modes and to link the practice of differentiated governance with the creation of bounded space

**Important Hypotheses:**

- 1) Distinct governance modes co-exist simultaneously in separated spatial units within the Pearl River Delta Region
- 2) Differentiated urban governance and the creation of borders can facilitate the governability of mega-urban regions
- 3) The drawing of borders establishes patterns of inclusion and exclusion, which have significant social impacts
- 4) Informal processes and self-organisation interact in different ways with the different governance modes

Background: Rescaling of political economy in post-reform China



(Shen 2005; modified)

**Expected Contributions to Theory Building**

- ➔ Identification and explanation of spatially-related governance modes
- ➔ Analysis of structural power of borders
- ➔ Explanation of changing formal-informal relationships and economic, political as well as urban development background

**Results**

The findings shall contribute to the understanding of governance in transitional China as well as to the general issue of governability of mega-urban regions.

**Our approach**

We assume that border-drawing and differentiated governance are used to ensure the governability of this highly dynamic and very diverse mega-urban region. By analysing various types of bounded places of work and residence, we aim at building a typology of governance modes.

Conceptually, we focus on three categories of spatial entities: administrative, economic and residential units. For these entities, we identify mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, we analyse the significance of boundaries for their governance, and we explore the social implications.

**Three categories of spatial entities:**

**Administrative entities**

that were created besides the administrative structure in China and therefore promise to produce a certain amount of self-organization and autonomy (Special Administrative Regions, SAR, Special Economic Zones, SEZ)



Border between Hong Kong SAR and the Shenzhen SEZ

**Economic Entities**

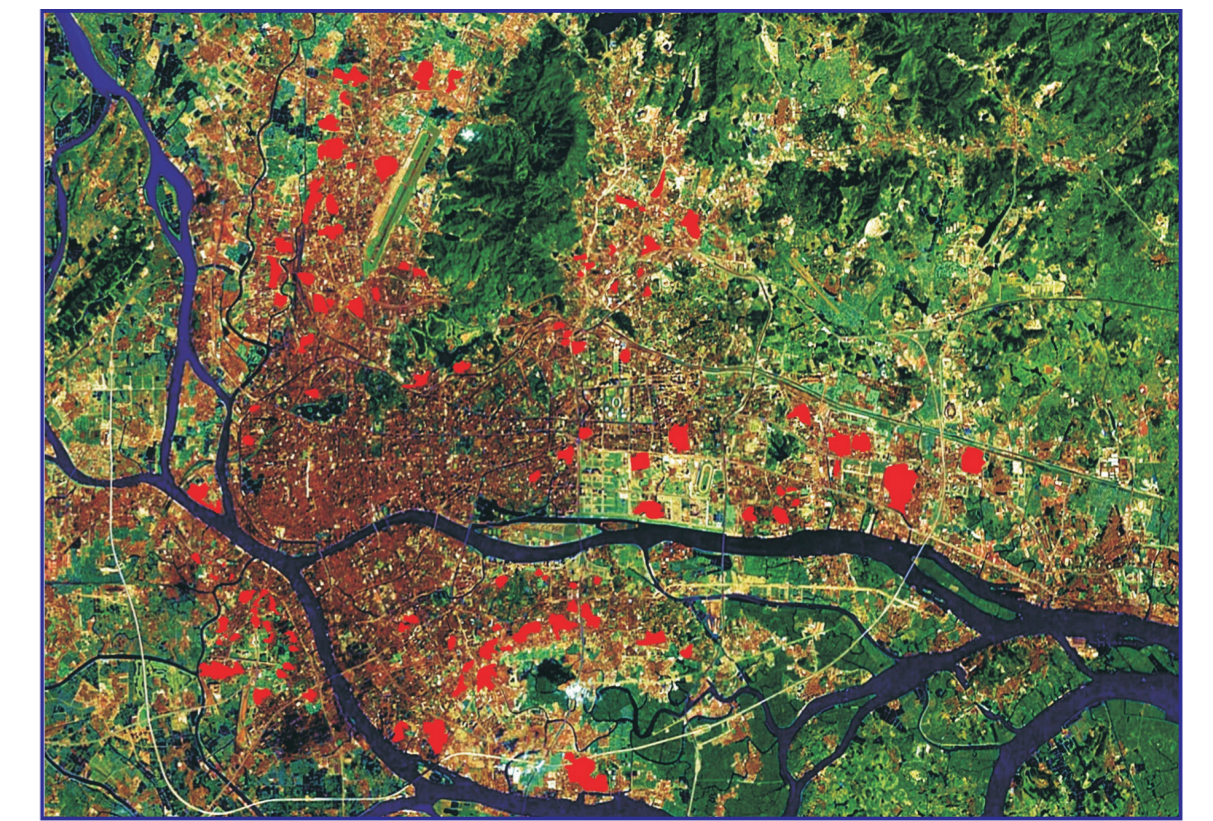
Bounded spaces that serve mainly as places of work and for economic development (Export Processing Zones, EPZ; factory compounds etc.)



Factory compound surrounded by a fence in Guangzhou

**Residential Entities**

of different social status and physical structure at the neighbourhood level (Urban villages, housing estates, gated communities)



Urban villages (red) in the heart of Guangzhou

**Methodical Approach**

The identification of urban governance modes is a challenge as decision-making in a highly-dynamic and diverse mega-urban region is a complex process.

In order to allow a manageable and reasonable preoccupation with our research objectives, we will mainly focus on:

- Case studies (investigating administrative, residential and economic entities - government authorities, companies, etc.);
- Conducting interviews with key decision-makers and experts (working in the administration, universities, planning bureaus, companies, etc.);
- Implementing surveys (addressing workers, residents, etc.);
- Collecting and analysing of documents.

**More Information:** <http://www.bordersandgovernance.gwdg.de>

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