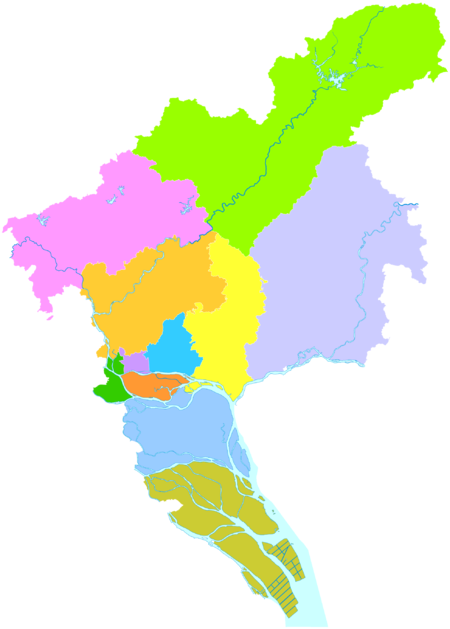
Introduction

*Guangzhou folks do not have the strange "French Concession syndrome" of Shanghainese. Guangdong had contacts with Western culture earlier than anywhere else in the country; Guangdong has the greatest number of overseas Chinese in the country. But Guangzhou folks do not particularly admire Western culture. Old Guangzhou folks will not talk to you about jazz music or coffee houses in the former foreign settlements; they only remember melodies from courtesan boats, great banyan trees, teahouses, and wooden shoes that had all disappeared along with the sailboats on the Pearl River*

– Ye Shunming, 2008: 140; translated in Liang, 2014: 211-212

Currently, Guangzhou Municipality covers 7343 km2 from which there is 3834 km2 urban land. According to the 2010 census, Guangzhou had a population of approximately 12.7 million, of which a little more than half were people with local *hukou* (household register). Currently, Guangzhou comprises of 11 city districts. There have been several changes in administrative districts since 2000. Panyu and Huadu were merged under the municipal government as city districts in 2000 and Conghua and Zengcheng changed their county-level districts status to city district status in 2014. In 2005 the urban district of Dongshan was merged with Yuexiu district and Fangcun with Liwan. The historical city of Guangzhou consists of parts of Yuexiu, Liwan and Haizhu districts. Currently, Liwan, Yuexiu, Haizhu and Tianhe districts are forming the urban core area.

Figure 1: Guangzhou City Districts



Source: Wikipedia

Zengcheng

Baiyun

Liwan

Yuexiu

Haizhu

Tianhe

Huangpu

Conghua

Huadu

Panyu

Nansha

Guangzhou was once one of the major port cities in the world in a global trading network, which covered most part of Asia, Southern Europe and the East coast of Africa. This first wave of economic globalisation ended with the European colonialization and the two world wars. China was cut out from the trade with the Western countries since the early 1950s when the Korean War set trading embargos on China and later in 1960s when the Sino-Soviet relations cooled down. After launching the 1978 Open Door Policy China has increasingly become part of the current global economy.

As the capital of Guangdong province, Guangzhou was one of the first Chinese cities to benefit from the reform policies

Periodisation used in this research – discussion:

McGee et al. through their case studies note three major phases in China’s urbanisation process. The first phase which covers the years from 1978 to 1988 can be described as urbanisation outside the core areas, where the major driving force was the growth of township and village enterprises. The second phase from 1988 to 1998 was dominated by the large-scale development of economic and technological development zones, high-tech parks and free trade zones. These zones which often are located on the outskirts of the city were mainly designed to attract foreign capital. Characteristic for this phase is the rapid redevelopment of city cores. The last phase, from 1998 onwards has seen accelerating competition between different regions in China. Increasing production costs in the older city cores, such as Shanghai and Guangdong have driven the labour-intensive production to move to Chinese interiors or West. It has become a necessity for these older city cores of China to upgrade their investment and living environment as well as find ways to develop higher order services sector, especially research and development (McGee et al. 189)

Sassen sees studying major cities important because they allow us to see the multiplicity of economies and work cultures in which the global information economy is embedded. They also allow us to recover the concrete, localised processes through which globalisation takes shape and to argue that much of the multiculturalism in large cities is as much a part of globalisation as is international finance. Finally, focusing on cities allows us to specify geography of strategic places at the global scale, places bound to one another by the dynamics of economic globalisation. (Sassen, 2007, 98).

Economic globalisation, then, needs to be understood in its multiple localisations rather than only in terms of the broad, overarching macro-level processes that dominate the mainstream account (118). Large cities around the world are the terrain on which a multiplicity of globalisation processes assume concrete, localised forms. These forms are in good part what globalisation is about. (126).

The city is far more concrete space for politics than the nation. It becomes a place where nonformal political actors can be part of the political scene in a way that is more difficult, though not impossible, at the national level (for example, Williamson, Alperovitz, and Imbroscio 2002).

Concentrating only certain cities and thinking that the city experiences can be then generalised does not show all the different experiences and development paths cities have. It also leads to the idea of cities having a similar path which all the cities are following. (Amin and Graham, 1997: 417).

Shanghai really only began to grow economically and begin the policies of annexing the adjacent counties from 1988 on, once again actively encouraged by the national government. The combined efforts of the Shanghai government and national government to make Shanghai the “dragon head” of the regional economy of the Yangzi basin and one of the main global gateways to China have proved remarkably successful and are now reflected in the rapid development of the peripheral areas of the municipality (McGee et al., 2007: 190).

Guangzhou’s external orientation makes it an interesting and illustrative case of the impact of globalisation and along with it, the growing competition between cities and regions affects the urban economy and spatial formation of a city (McGee, 2007: 84).

1 Introduction

~~Once upon a time, there was a state named Chu which established its capital along with a river. The land was barren and calamities devastated people who lived there. One day when the farmers were working in their fields, they could see five immortals riding with the rams descending from the sky. These immortals, dressed in red, orange, yellow, green and purple brought along rice sheaves. After blessing the city, they flew away leaving the five rams behind. From this day on, this city of five rams has been the prosperous and populous place. Today, it is still possible to see the footprints of the five immortals in a temple dedicated to them. This city is also known to be Guangzhou (Jin and Liang, 2007, 121-122; TravelChinaGuide.com).~~

~~Guangzhou has been one of the world’s famous port cities since the Tang dynasty (618 – 907). It was the eastern starting point for the maritime silk route. During the Qing dynasty, when Chinese government sealed off the Chinese coast for fear of pirates, Guangzhou was the only port still open. It was also the first city to be involved in sea trade with Western countries in the 16~~~~th~~ ~~century. And it was among the first to open its doors to the outside world when China re-entered the global economy in the late 1970s. In fact, Guangzhou was the home-city of many early migrants who settled in the West. Until recently, “Chinese culture” as seen and known in the West has actually been predominantly Cantonese culture.~~

~~When China opened up in the late 1970s, none of the Chinese cities was global in the same sense as in the rest of the world. During the Maoist era, Guangzhou had remained China’s window to the outside world. Since 1956, Guangzhou has been hosting the bi-annual China Import and Export Commodity Fair, which until 1978 was the only channel for China’s international trade. All through history, Guangzhou has been an important port city and a connecting node to the outside world.~~

In recent years, the Guangdong Province, with its greatest share of China’s export, is regarded as one of the biggest manufacturing hubs in the global economy. It is the province that has played a crucial role in the early years of China’s opening up. Guangzhou’s position as the provincial capital further consolidates the importance of the city in the area. In the late 1990s, Guangdong provincial government has adopted a set of policies to help Guangzhou to become an international metropolis. They have started programs to develop Guangzhou as the transportation hub of the Pearl River Delta area. The city limits have been expanded and emphasis has been placed on the development of designated industries (Yang, 2006, p. 137). Whether the image of Guangzhou has changed because of these developments is an important subject to study, a unique example of place promotion, in the context of contemporary China.

## Research Question

This research will concentrate on the external image of Guangzhou. Mainly through analysing foreign newspapers, it will study how Guangzhou’s global image has changed from the early days of China’s open door policy until 2010 when Guangzhou hosted the 16th Asian Games. ~~The image that city officials are producing through urban planning and policy making is another aspect of this study. This study will analyse the contrasts and interactions of these two images. In the end, it will show how the policymaking of a city is affected by the outside stakeholders but also how the policies and development plans affect to the image of a city.~~

Studying one city only always raises questions about generalizability. There are no two cities in the world that are exactly the same. Gugler concludes a study of twelve non-western world cities that each of these cities has had a different history, varying economic and political circumstances as well as demographic dynamics. This diversity, Gugler notes, has impacts on policymaking. Cities cannot just copy policies from other places but implementing them needs to take into consideration the specific circumstances of the city. However, at the same time, globalisation has had a similar impact on many cities, for example when the local economies of the cities have become more closely intertwined with the global economy, the inequalities and social injustice have increased (Gugler, 2004: 22).

Ikels (1996) considers in her study about the city of Guangzhou the generalizability issue of the research findings in the Chinese context. Although Guangzhou has many special features that make it someway unique within China, is it possible to say that Guangzhou is some ways more unique than any other Chinese city? Guangzhou, like all the other Chinese cities, has been subjected to national policies, such as one child policy, household registration (*hukou*) system and economic reform policies (Ikels, 1996: 4-5). Considering the above mentioned it seems clear that it is necessary to be careful when making any generalisations when studying any city in any parts of the world. However, it is also very likely that the city Of Guangzhou shares at least some certain features or policy outcomes and when comparing the results with other cities. Thus, the findings that are made in this study should be as generalizable as the findings of any other Chinese city.

Gugler points out, how most of the studies are focusing on North American and Western European cities, with special emphasis on the three core global cities, London, New York, and Tokyo. Many analyses of cities are based on assumptions about Western cultural, social and economic life (Gugler, 2004: 1; see also Bridge and Watson, 2000: Introduction, 2). This research aims at broadening the perspective by studying a transforming city for a relatively long period of time. The aim is not to study the city as opposed to Western norms, not as a Westernisation process of a city, but to study the impact of globalisation process to the political economy of this one Chinese city (see Wu, 2006: 3) and how it is represented in some international and Hong Kong newspapers. As Wu notes, the globalisation materialises in each city in different ways depending on historically and institutionally conditioned differences (Wu, 2006: 3). From this point of view, my study will contribute to the accumulation of knowledge about Chinese cities but also about world cities in general.

Everyone experiences the city from their own time-space perspective. This, according to Amin and Graham, creates a multiplex city, a heterogeneous urbanism, where cultural, political, economic and social aspects are intermingled with each other creating multiple rationalities of subjectivities and time-spaces (Amin and Graham, 1997: 419-420). Cities are places where people with even opposite values and opinions live at the same time and are interacting with each other. Certainly, in many cities, there are groups who try to have more power in saying how the city should be understood. However, in recent years, for example in New York, there have emerged groups that question the powerful public-private coalitions now determining the city (Harvey, 2006: lecture). Short notes that the important question is not who is doing the actual planning but to ask who has the right to the city, who is in control and how this control is executed (Short, 2000: 20; see also Harvey, 2006: lecture). For the city image, this means that it is not a product of one group of like-minded people, but it is a creation and recreation of multiple participants each having diverse ways of understanding the city. No one has the monopoly for the representations or the interpretations of a city. ~~This fact, as Amin and Graham note, makes it difficult to make any generalisation about one particular city~~ (Amin and Graham, 1997: 419).

Many studies about city image have shown how a spectacle, the creation of a temporary illusion, and the predominance of visualization (Lefebvre) becomes more important for the urban planners and the decision makers of a city because this is believed to be the way to attract investment, expert classes and high-end consumers to the city. These studies have shown how difference is never the source of urban renewal. Moreover, the entrepreneurial cities, when trying to provide investors possibilities to maximise their profits, often pay less attention to the larger social context. This has led to growing social injustices and strengthening social segregation within cities (Amin and Graham, 1997: 421-422; see also Harvey, 1989b: 14-16; Rutheiser, 1996, Keil, 1998, Greenberg, 2005, Broudehoux, 2004).

Most of the studies about city image are of Western cities, the few that has written about China are mainly about Beijing or Shanghai. Many of the studies about China concentrate on changing urban structure (see Wu, 2000; Wai, 2006) and some also discuss the social consequences of these changes within a city (see Broudehoux, 2004). The image of a city is created in the interaction of different stakeholders, the city officials, media or those who live in, invest in or visit in a city. Even though the cities put lots of effort to change or adjust the external image of the city, there seem to be no studies about the external image of a city. This an important topic to study because the image has such a tremendous impact on the urban planning and development processes. The image is important for the cities, as the image affects their ability to change their position in the national and global competition for all kinds of resources (Avraham, 2000: 363). Even though it cannot be known if Guangzhou will succeed in its goal to become one of the core cities in the globalised world, it is also important to study how this city endeavours to become one and how its transformation is perceived in the international newspapers.

Many studies which use content analysis as their primary methodology study mainly place promotion, especially concentrating on tourism. Uysal (2013), studies tourism materials related to the European Capitals of Culture nomination of Istanbul in 2010. Henderson (2006) studies the destination branding of Singapore and its role in the marketing of tourism. Grodach (2009) analyses the city, convention, and visitors bureau homepages in large and medium sizes US cities to identify the ways these homepages package the cities to communicate their brand identity. Similarly, Paganoni (2012) thinks city branding as a form of web governance. In her analysis of British city council websites, she discusses the websites’ role in promoting social inclusion through city branding. Maher and Carruthers (2014) discuss the institutional place promotion efforts in the city of Tijuana. They see that these efforts can shape the city from bottom-up both positively and negatively. Moreover, there are a few studies which have used newspapers and magazines as sources to study the city image of some other cities in the world. These studies seem to concentrate on the image of the residents of the city or national image by focusing on local or national news and stories about the city. For example, Greenberg (2000) analyses the branded image of New York, Los Angeles and Atlanta in three local urban lifestyle magazines, namely *New York Magazine, Los Angeles Magazine* and *Atlanta Magazine*. Similarly, Boland (2008), in his study of the images of people and place in Liverpool analyses the stereotypes and images focusing particularly on newspapers, news programmes, internet, comedies, dramas and documentaries. Garcia (2016) also does an extensive analysis of the media image of Liverpool and Glasgow. Despite of extensive literature search, no studies could be found that would study the external image of a city. This may be partly because only very large size cities with a rather significant position in the global market and cities with large variety of large-scale events have a chance to be covered in the news media (Avraham, 2000).

There is also the question of why Guangzhou and not some other Chinese city. Guangzhou’s position as the capital city of the Guangzhou province has benefited the city from the early days of China’s open door policies. Because of its relatively large overseas population, it was the city that could immediately create new connections with overseas investors and benefit from the inward investment. Guangzhou’s image as a trading city helped it to become an important player from the very beginning of China’s reform. Thinking of the city image, Beijing, as the capital would be a city that is always linked with the image of the nation. Capital cities always have a stronger role as representatives of their countries than other cities. It is, therefore, obvious that it would be difficult to differentiate the image of a city from that of the country. Shanghai, on the other hand, did not really start to develop into the economic powerhouse it currently is before the establishment of the Pudong New Area in the early 1990s. If these facts are considered, Guangzhou seems to be an obvious choice to study how a city that has been one of the global nodes in the global economy of the previous centuries once again builds its way to become one.