

JOINT RESEARCH SEMINAR

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT &
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HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF ASIA-PACIFIC STUDIES, THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

The Regional Infrastructured State in Territorializing the Greater Bay Area in China Through the Cultural Facility Boom

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This paper examines the role of the regional state in infrastructure development in China and analyzes the relationships between state power, regional cultural facility boom, and territorialization. We develop a new theoretical model to explain China's cultural facilities, drawing on the recent 'state entrepreneurialism' concept, the 'infrastructure' approach and China's regional integration perspectives. We periodize three waves of cultural facility construction from 1990 to the present and argue that the regional infrastructured states in China have utilized cultural facilities for power consolidation in the form of entrepreneurial practices. Cultural facilities have been serving the 'monopolized' role of the state as one of its urban 'commodification' instruments. They are working in material-ideological capacities to renew state-society relations by combining public services and socialist moral education and placing a heightened emphasis on 'cultural security.' Cultural facilities also work to tackle external challenges for the state. The West Kowloon Cultural District in Hong Kong, for example, symbolically and materially grounds the power of the central state, which signals a territorialization process.

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