

**Understanding City Expansion into Larger City-Regions: The Case of the
Yangtze River Delta**

Yifei Chen

A doctoral thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

Abstract

Global economic integration and urbanisation are two of the main processes which characterise contemporary globalisation. Urbanisation is so pervasive that urban landscapes now stretch far beyond the traditional city limits such that ‘the city’ may no longer be the most appropriate unit to reflect how contemporary urban life is organised. Today, city-regions – even mega city-regions – are considered by some to be the primary spatial scale at which competing political and economic agendas are convened. Moreover, proponents of the ‘new regionalism’ believe that decentralisation of state power is producing new forms of political-economic regulation at supranational and subnational levels which are more appropriate for effective governance. However, it is argued that the geoeconomic logic for city-regionalism is focused too narrowly on the functional economic side of regional development, thereby overlooking how city-regions represent geopolitical constructions both of, and inside, the state. This thesis therefore aims to explore the constitutive role of politics in the construction of *mega* city-regions. The starting point is to complement North Atlantic accounts of city-regionalism by focusing on the geopolitics of city-regionalism in China. Using the Yangtze River Delta mega city-region as its case study, this thesis stresses that theories of ‘new city-regionalism’ must increasingly be derived from, rather than applied to, the Chinese case. It is revealed how the unprecedented rate of city expansion, scale of urbanisation, and context of a highly centralised, one-party state, produces a distinctly Chinese city-regionalism that requires a combination of new conceptualisation, alongside refinement and modification of existing theories on mega city-regions.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
List of Figures	8
List of Tables	9
Acknowledgements	10
Chapter 1: Introduction	11
1.1 City expansion into larger city-regions	11
1.2 Introducing the new city-regionalism.....	13
1.3 Introducing the Yangtze River Delta	19
1.4 Research aim and objectives.....	21
1.5 Thesis structure	22
Chapter 2: The Geopolitics of City-Regionalism	25
2.1 Introduction: the politics of constructing city-regions	25
2.2 Three distinct perspectives on conceptualising city-regions	30
2.2.1 Model 1: form dominant approaches to <i>mega</i> city-regionalism.....	30
2.2.2 Model 2: the geoeconomics of <i>mega</i> city-regionalism	34
2.2.3 Model 3: the geopolitics of <i>mega</i> city-regionalism	37
2.3 State power and the political construction of city-regions	41
2.4 Political city-regionalism shall be context-sensitive.....	45
2.5 Coda: City-regionalisation is an economic-political conflicted process	47
Chapter 3: Chinese <i>Mega</i> City-Regionalism in Continuity: A Critical Review ..	50
3.1. Introduction: the under-researched Chinese historical-geographic context ...	50
3.2. The historic path of Chinese state spatiality.....	54

3.2.1. State centralism and egalitarian-focused urban and regional governance in the pre-reform period (1950s -1970s).....	55
3.2.2. Economic decentralisation and urban jurisdiction’s dominion in the reform period (1980s – 1990s)	61
3.2.3. Challenging mega city-regionalism and cross-jurisdictional governance since 2000.....	65
3.2.4 Mega city-regional construction in PRD, YRD and JJJ	70
3.3. The strategic importance of the Yangtze River Delta (YRD).....	84
3.3.1. The comprehensive YRD regional plan.....	87
3.3.2. The city network construction for Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou (SWC)	89
3.4. Conclusion.....	92
Chapter 4: Research Methodology	95
4.1 Introduction	95
4.2 Researching (mega) city-regions	97
4.3 Semi-structured interviews.....	99
4.3.1 Recruiting interviewees.....	102
4.3.2 Interview structure	107
4.3.3 Conducting elite interviews in Chinese context.....	109
4.3.4 Reading between the lines in the interviews.....	112
4.3.5 Data analysis.....	112
4.4 Positionality.....	115
4.5 Research ethics	118
4.6 Secondary data collection.....	120
4.6.1 Making use of statistical data	120
4.6.2 Utilising documentary records	121

4.7 Conclusion	121
Chapter 5: Rethinking Mega City-Regionalism as a Geopolitical Outcome: The Transformation of the YRD as a State Space	124
5.1 Introduction	124
5.2 Historic realisation of YRD's mega city-regionalism.....	125
5.3 Expanding mega city-regional space by considering territorial politics	130
5.3.1 The Narrow sense of YRD	130
5.3.2 The broad sense of YRD.....	135
5.3.3 The dynamic territorial politics within the YRD's mega city-regionalism.	138
5.3.4 The expanding YRD in accordance with the spatial restructuring of manufacturing industries	141
5.4 Conclusion: Enlarged mega city-region as a contingent geopolitical outcome	151
Chapter 6: Ongoing Geopolitical Dynamics: A Case Study of the YRD's Collective Governance and Sustained Competitiveness.....	156
6.1 Introduction	156
6.2 The emergence of the YRD's mega city-regional governance framework	159
6.2.1 The decision-making level (<i>Juececeng</i>)	160
6.2.2 The coordination level (<i>Xietiaoceng</i>)	160
6.2.3 The execution level (<i>Zhixingceng</i>).....	160
6.2.4 The ongoing geopolitical mega city-regionalism.....	164
6.2.5 The institutionalised interaction for collectively adapting to various challenges.....	168
6.3 The YRD regional plan reflects the political consensus among local authorities	170
6.3.1 The mixed participants in the regional plan's formulation process	172
6.3.2 The coordinated planning provisions.....	174

6.3.3 The role of the YRD regional plan	177
6.4 The three-level governance framework: confronting the regional challenges under the changing territorial politics	180
6.5 Conclusion: Geopolitical mega city-regionalism as an ongoing and conflicted process	183
Chapter 7: Tensions Faced by the Mega City-Region: Conflicts between Geoeconomic and Geopolitical Processes	186
7.1 Introduction	186
7.2 Locally orchestrated regionalism in China	188
7.3 The mismatch between mega city-regional functional space and networked administrative jurisdictions	190
7.3.1 Lack of enforcing mechanism in the trans-jurisdictional planning and governance	191
7.4 Geopolitical over-intervention in the socio-economic development	193
7.4.1 Politically-controlled Yixing Environmental Science and Technology Industrial Park (Yixing ES and TP).....	196
7.4.2 The vertical and horizontal nature of geopolitics at the city-regional level	206
7.5 Conclusion: Conflicted economic-political considerations in the mega city-regionalism	210
Chapter 8: Conclusion	214
8.1 Thesis summary	214
8.2 Contribution to the theory of 'new city-regionalism'.....	220
References	230
Appendix 1: Interviewee details	256
Appendix 2: Interview Guide	260
Appendix 3: List of Codes	264

List of Figures

Figure 1: A theoretical city-region	32
Figure 2: The Pearl River Delta (PRD)	73
Figure 3: The Jing-Jin-Ji (JJJ)	78
Figure 4: The broad sense of YRD	82
Figure 5: The rise of Chinese mega city-regions	85
Figure 6: Alignments between research objectives and methodology	98
Figure 7: The physical YRD	126
Figure 8: The narrow sense of YRD	132

List of Tables

Table 1: The transition of Chinese urban and regional policies since 1949	55
Table 2: Regional administrations from 1949 to 1978	57
Table 3: State spatial selectivity in the pre-reform China	60
Table 4: State spatial selectivity in the reformed China during 1980s and 1990s	65
Table 5: State spatial selectivity in China since 2000	69
Table 6: A summary of mega city-regional plans for PRD, YD and JJJ	71
Table 7: PRD component members' attributes (2012)	77
Table 8: JJJ component cities' attributes (2012)	80
Table 9: YRD component cities' attributes (2012)	84
Table 10: Key economic indicators in 2005	133
Table 11: The relocation of core YRD's investments to northern Jiangsu	143
Table 12: Wuxi's GDP for the year 2007, 2009 and 2012	148
Table 13: The State Department Members of Each Task Group (2009)	161
Table 14: YRD Economic Coordination Association (YRD CAUE)	163
Table 15: The Important Achievements by the YRD's Governance Framework	179
Table 16: The Reduction Command from the Central State Council's Announcement	199
Table 17: Framing North American, European and Chinese city-regionalism	228

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors John Harrison and Michael Hoyler. Without the time, energy and faith they invested in my doctoral research, producing this PhD thesis would have become a task I would never have completed, at least, during this early stage of my life. I would also like to thank all the staff in the Geography Department for their support and for always being there, in particular, Darren Smith, Ed Brown, Paul Wood, Susan Clark and everyone in the postgraduate research office. Special thanks go to Mark Szegner for his GIS and mapping support. In addition, I wish to extend my thanks to the Geography Department and Research Student Office for all the funding and my studentship during this PhD research.

Thanks also go to the 32 interviewees who kindly spent their time in sharing their data with me through face-to-face meetings during the summer of 2013. Their knowledge and working experiences provide invaluable aid to the debate in the thesis. Relating to the operation in the field, I am extremely grateful for all the support from my girlfriend's parents in Wuxi. Their help made my settlement and life so much easier in the Yangtze River Delta which used to be a completely unfamiliar environment to me before the summer of 2013.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank many other friends for being there with me and generating so much happiness during the rest time of my life. The next round of drinks is on me!

Finally, my families, including my parents and girlfriend, have sacrificed so much for supporting and staying around me through the entire PhD stage. It is them reminding me that I own so much in my life, and I am fully capable of always moving forward without fear. I am forever in your debt, and can never repay you. Two years ago, my girlfriend chose to return to the UK from China for me. It was an extremely tough decision which forever changed her life path. It was also a sad decision which was going to force her away from her parents during the most part of the rest of her life. You are my love forever.

Chapter 1: Introduction

“... the significant impact of global economic change is at the regional scale where we are asked now to imagine core cities as economic drivers linked in regional clusters that dominate global networks” (Herrschel and Newman, 2002: 15).

“... bigger and more competitive economic units – megaregions – have superseded cities as the real engines of the global economy” (Florida, 2008: 38).

“The scale and pace of China's urbanization promises to continue at an unprecedented rate. If current trends hold, China's urban population will expand from 572 million in 2005 to 926 million in 2025 and hit the one billion mark by 2030. In 20 years, China's cities will have added 350 million people – more than the entire population of the United States today. By 2025, China will have 219 cities with more than one million inhabitants – compared with 35 in Europe today – and 24 cities with more than five million people” (McKinsey Global Institute, 2008: 1).

1.1 City expansion into larger city-regions

According to UN-Habitat's *State of the World's Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities* report, cities are merging into new spatial configurations – namely city-regions, megaregions, and urban corridors – which are acting as nodes where:

“global and regional flows of people, capital, goods and information combine and commingle, resulting in faster growth, both demographic and economic, than that of the countries where they are located” (UN-Habitat, 2013: 34).

This is not the first time UN-Habitat has highlighted a trend towards large-scale urban regions or their significance in terms of economic prosperity, demography and environment (see also UN-Habitat, 2006, 2008, 2010). UN-Habitat posits that these new spatial units will become more and more important for locating urban

development around the globe. But is this really happening? And has this phenomenon been widely recognised in this globalising world?

UN-Habitat (2013: 26) recommends that:

“Growing cities are located in growing regions – cities and the surrounding regions are typically interdependent economically and tend to share similar socioeconomic and demographic trends. In most North American cities, growing cities correspond to the most dynamic regions and those experiencing population losses are located in less dynamic regions.”

This thesis can borrow the logic here and extend it to our approach of identifying the emerging system of global city-regions, though not admittedly adequate, as “simply to assimilate it into the worldwide network of large metropolitan areas” (Scott, 2001a: 1). Although this is not an adequate approach for defining city-regions around the world, it may generate an easy starting point for picturing the accelerating birth trend for city-regions.

Even more importantly, the global urban landscape is shifting. To be explicit, McKinsey Global Institute (2011: 1) boldly predicts how:

“Over the next 15 years, the centre of gravity of the urban world moves south and, even more decisively, east. One of every three developed market cities will no longer make the top 600 [world cities]. ... By 2025, we expect 136 new cities to enter the top 600, all of them from the developing world and overwhelmingly (100 new cities) from China.”

We have already witnessed initial signs of the rise of Chinese mega city-regions around their main world-class cities – Pearl River Delta (PRD) around Hong Kong, Yangtze River Delta (YRD) around Shanghai, and Jing(Beijing)-Jin(Tianjin)-Ji(Hebei) (JJJ) around Beijing. According to the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Network’s 2012 categorisation of world cities, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing are Alpha+ cities, meaning they are highly integrated cities within the global economy and rank alongside the cities of London and New York in the top tier (GaWC, 2012).

1.2 Introducing the new city-regionalism

In his seminal edited collection, Allen Scott (2001b: 814) introduced the concept of the 'global city-region'. He identified global city-regions as “constitute[ing] dense polarized masses of capital, labour, and social life that are bound up in intricate ways in intensifying and far-flung extra-national relationship”, places where globalisation was crystallising out on the ground at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Scott's (2001a, 2001b) work opened up the vision of the increasing functional importance of major urban regions to national and even global performance. It is an intellectual argument which has been exported to conceptualise and identify cases of widespread urbanisation across the world. At its centre, the so-called 'new city-regionalism' (Ward and Jonas, 2004) is underpinned by the dual processes of increased global economic integration and rapid urbanisation meaning cities are expanding beyond their traditional city limits and in some cases merging to form larger networks of globalising city-regions. These trends have served to activate city-regions as “bases of all forms of productive activity, no matter whether in manufacturing or services, in high-technology or low-technology sectors” (Scott, 2001a: 11).

Scott is not alone in advancing this argument. According to Michael Porter, one of the world's most influential thinkers on management and competitiveness, “many of the most important levers for competitiveness arise at the regional level, and reside in clusters that are geographically concentrated” (Porter, 2010: 156). Likewise, Richard Florida, a leading public intellectual and urbanist, has emphasised the need to improve regional competitiveness through increased productivity and innovation by establishing the industrial clusters at the scale of metropolitan regions:

“[Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Lucas] identifies the underlying economic power of the clustering force – the clustering of people and productivity, creative skills and talents that powers economic growth. That's why cities and megaregions are the true economic units that drive the world forward. These organized geographic production systems and markets... offer social and economic advantages that other places simply can't” (Florida, 2008: 57).

Saskia Sassen, author of *The Global City* (Sassen, 1991), goes on to suggest that global city-regions provide a more “encompassing economic base” because they offer both “global finance and the leading specialized services catering to global firms and markets - law, accounting, credit rating, telecommunications” from the global city *and* “large manufacturing complexes” in its surrounding larger regional scale (Sassen, 2001: 80-81). Moreover, Peter Hall and Kathy Pain’s (2006) attempt to specify their spatial structure led them towards the concept of “polycentric mega-city regions”. In their book, *The Polycentric Metropolis*, Hall and Pain (2006) argue that service industries are experiencing “concentrated de-concentration”, which they suggests sees a complex of different but interconnected clusters replacing the previous single cluster within the main global city and its adjacent regional space for concentrating the service industries even more specifically on the basis of cheaper and stronger public transport links, while manufacturing industries are dispersing and moving into lower hierarchical cities (see also Hoyler et al., 2008c).

And finally, more recently, there appears to be enhanced interest in contributing to debates over the new city-regionalism across both Global North and South (e.g. Coombes, 2014; Jonas, 2013; Kanai, 2014; Kantor et al., 2012; Lee and Shin, 2012; Li and Wu, 2013; Yeh, Yang and Wang, 2014). Overall, there is a large amount of work contributing to expand the understanding of agglomeration economies and the significance that this is giving to the concept of globalising city-regions. What we have experienced is the increased discussion generated based on a growth in the number of city-regions or, at least, a surging interest in the city-region concept for describing, analysing and understanding the spatial configuration of urban economies around the world.

Given all of these contributions, there has appeared to be increasing recognition of the primary role of city-regions in relation to more places, settings, topics, issues and contexts over the past decade. As Scott (2001a: 28) initially noted:

“because these city-regions constitute the basic motors of a rapidly globalizing economy, much is at stake as they steadily sharpen their political identities and institutional presence.”

One of the most pressing issues posed by the on-going geoeconomic logic for city expansion in globalisation is that increasingly these urban processes are happening

beyond the traditional city boundary, and across the traditional urban and rural divide. Nevertheless, planning and governance arrangement are typically still administered by, and configured around, the long-existing and now lagging structures, frameworks and supports, considered by many to be inappropriate for how city-regionalism operates in an era of globalisation (Harrison and Hoyler, 2014; Herrschel and Newman, 2002; Jones and MacLeod, 2004; MacLeod and Jones, 2007; Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). Emerging circumstances associated with globalising cities expanding into large global city-regions, such as a growing population, enhanced commuting flows and commodity exchange, integrating markets across traditional jurisdictional boundaries, are all challenging the functioning and appropriateness of localised and fragmented governance structures.

Hence what is insufficient is the collective action which shall be organised by a well-established framework for the aim of promoting city-regional competitive synergy at the city-regional level. Therefore, “what main governance task do global city-regions face as they seek to preserve and enhance their wealth and well-being” (Scott, 2001a: 12) has become one of the critical concerns for contemporary city-regional research (see also Harrison, 2012c; Harrison and Hoyler, 2014).

Following Scott (2001a) and the rise of new city-regionalism we have witnessed a rush by policy elites to construct city-regions as “a strategic and political level and administration and policy-making, extending beyond the administrative boundaries of single urban local government authorities to include urban and/or semi-urban hinterlands” (Tewdwr-Jones and McNeill, 2000: 131). Some people argue that the result has been unsatisfactory institutional arrangements, often based on “centrally orchestrated national planning” (Harrison, 2015b: 46) imposed top-down rather than in response to autonomous local action from below. Many such institutional arrangements simply construct a brand new consolidated or allied administrative space to cover several different urban and rural jurisdictional areas without carefully considering the process of how this new scale of governance shall fit into the extant state scalar organisation (Harrison, 2012c; Luo and Shen, 2008; Ward and Jonas, 2004). This is happening in the absence of seriously researching and understanding the “constitutive role of politics” in constructing the city-regional administrative space (Jonas and Ward, 2007: 171).

From this perspective, geopolitical city-regionalism “is best understood as representing an ongoing, dynamic and conflict-ridden politics of and in space (which, in turn, is ‘scaled’ in a variety of ways) rather than a smooth switch to a new post-national era of capitalist territoriality” (Ward and Jonas, 2004: 2134). In short, it is important to treat the geopolitical city-regionalising as an ongoing changing process rather than a perceived outcome on the basis of recognised functional significance of any particular city-centric regional space. This is one of the fundamental reasons for conducting this research and, through doing so, contributing to theoretical debates over ‘new city-regionalism’.

Drawing on the argument of Andy Jonas (2012: 6) that “there has been too much emphasis in recent research on a functional economic view of city-regions and too little on how city-regions represent geopolitical constructions of/inside the state” this thesis focuses on the issue of designing more appropriate planning and governance arrangements at the scale of city-regions. The purpose of the research is to examine the constitutive role of politics in the process of city expansion into larger city-regions process through the case study of the Yangtze River Delta in China (see next section). My aim is to contribute to current city-regional debates by explaining how new governance frameworks for city-regionalism have evolved in the Yangtze River Delta and are integrating and aligning with other forms of state scalar organisation, both of which are usually highly supervised by the central state in administering the cross-jurisdictional activities at the city-regional level.

Before this section ends, it shall be mentioned that there is another important principle underlying this thesis. According to Brenner (1998: 27), “our understanding of how this [spatial re-scaling process] takes place in distinct historical-geographical contexts remains underdeveloped.” Hence city-regional research should be context sensitive, or as Jonas (2013: 284) reminds us, the researcher must recognise how city-regionalism takes on a diversity of “national and sub-national forms” which cannot be attributed solely on “economic development considerations”. Following Ward and Jonas (2004), Herrschel reveals the similarities and differences between North American (especially US) and European city-regionalisms. He points out how specific contexts ‘on the ground’ matter “to people and policy makers when seeking answers to the challenges of a globalised, rapidly changing world” (Herrschel, 2014: 1). Being more specific, Herrschel (2014) primarily focuses on city-regional

governance in North Atlantic contexts, and then demonstrates both European and North American city-regionalism's multi-scalar nature by investigating how they are rooted in nationally and regionally shaped cultures and political-institutional structures, practices and values while responding to the ongoing pressure of globalisation. But critically, Herrschel goes on to argue that:

“although both have been following neo-liberal arguments and paradigms for three decades now, there is still an inherently more statist, protectionist ‘streak’ in Europe, compared with more business oriented, entrepreneurial, but also more self-reliant tradition in the USA” (Herrschel, 2014: 49).

More recently, and in the context of mega city-regionalism, Harrison and Hoyler (2015a) account for differences between North American and European approaches to engaging with megaregions. The former, they argue, take rapid urbanisation – urban form – as their starting point for considering megaregions; in contrast, the latter, take global economic integration – city functions – as the basis for identifying megaregions and megaregionality. Harrison and Hoyler (2015a) also go on, albeit briefly, to identify an Asian approach to megaregions. Referring to work conducted in the 1990s, this Asian approach, they suggest, derives from work on mega-cities and rapid population growth. Despite this, their focus and that of the other chapters in the book *Megaregions: Globalization's New Urban Form?* (Harrison and Hoyler, 2015c) remains largely concentrated on North American and European examples.

In recent years there have been a growing number of accounts documenting city-regionalism in the Asian context, and especially China. Many of the accounts apply Western notions of city-regionalism to the Asian/Chinese context, but arguably there is scope to do this in a more critical way. For example, can we put Chinese city-regionalism into conversation with other city-regionalisms? Would a deeper understanding of Chinese city-regionalism impact understanding – by confirming, refining or rejecting – other models of city-regionalism? These and other questions are central to this thesis.

In this way the research also connects to wider debates in urban studies. Over the past 25 years we have seen how the global cities idea (Sassen, 1991) has been criticised, most clearly by Jennifer Robinson (2002), for presenting a Northern perspective on cities in globalisation as a ‘global’ urban theory. Robinson (2006,

2015; Robinson and Roy, 2015) and others (e.g. Roy, 2009, 2015; Vainer, 2014) writing from a Southern perspective have argued the need to consider 'ordinary' cities and distinctive local characteristics. Today, there is a strong agenda to provincialise urban theory (Leitner and Sheppard, 2015; Sheppard et al., 2013, 2015), with particular emphasis on how to put Northern and Southern perspectives into conversation. Accounts of city-regionalism arguably have much to gain by pursuing a similar agenda. Yet, despite some literature on city-regionalisms beyond Europe and North America over the past decade (e.g. Segbers, 2007), there remains very little integration. When there is, the approach is to apply North American and European frameworks onto the Chinese case.

Although this thesis focused on the Chinese context, two important points need to be made at the outset. On the one hand, the Chinese context is very specific and therefore should not be read as an Asian, or even South East Asian, model of city-regionalism. There is little published work on city-regionalism in India, Japan, South Korea or other Asian countries, meaning it would be easy to misappropriate Chinese city-regionalism as Asian city-regionalism (in the same way that US city-regionalism is often seen to represent North American city-regionalism; or the UK, Germany are indicative of European city-regionalism). On the other hand, there are other examples where city-regionalism in transitional economies is markedly different – especially politically – to North America and Europe. Perhaps most significant for this research are the post-socialist countries that up to 1989/90 were behind the so-called Iron Curtain. Although beyond the scope of this research, they provide an important link between North American-European city-regionalisms and the Chinese city-regionalism which is the focus of my thesis.

China is therefore not alone in this, but it is the most notable absentee given the work being published over the past 5 years accounting for the rapid urbanisation and economic expansion that has been underway. It has been noticed that there is increasing research attention towards the mega-scaled urbanisation and regional governance in newly industrialising countries, such as India and South Korea in Asia, and Mexico and Brazil in Latin America (e.g. Derudder et al., 2012; Lee and Shin, 2012; Park, 2013; Phadke, 2014; Samara et al., 2013); and particularly in former communist or post-socialist states which have experienced political transformation

(e.g. Golubchikov and Phelps, 2011; Herrschel, 2011; Libman and Vinokurov, 2012; Scott, 2009; Ubarevičienė, Burneika and Kriauciūnas, 2011).

Therefore, we have seen the 'new city-regionalism' theory was received widely in the global arena. However, in comparison with established debates in relation to the North Atlantic city-regionalism, Chinese city-regionalism is comparatively under-researched. This is perhaps surprising because city expansion into larger city-regions is nowhere more evident than in China, especially in its three main economic engines – the Pearl River Delta (PRD) in south China, the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) in southeast China and the Jing(Beijing)-Jin(Tianjin)-Ji(Hebei) (JJJ) in north-eastern China. Of these three, the YRD is the research location for this thesis.

1.3 Introducing the Yangtze River Delta

Yangtze River Delta (YRD) is widely considered to be a mega-city region crossing three provincial-level jurisdictions - Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang (Hall and Pain, 2006; Zhang and Wu, 2006; Xu and Yeh, 2011). Provincial-level government lies between central and municipal governments and thus becomes the authority which holds greatest regulatory power in the subnational agenda. There are four main reasons for explaining why it is important and urgent to conduct a case study of the YRD for advancing research on Chinese city-regionalism. First of all, the YRD is the region around Shanghai which is currently considered as China's mainland financial centre. In terms of global economic integration, Shanghai is China's second-highest ranked city according to GaWC's ranking list for global cities, meaning Shanghai is China's most connected city in the world city network after Hong Kong (Derudder et al., 2010, 2013; Derudder et al., 2012). Shanghai is the gateway between its larger expanding regional and even national scale and the global market; it is better connected to the major global cities London and New York than Beijing (Taylor et al., 2014).

Additionally, as one of China's main economic engines, YRD is experiencing the transforming of industrial structure from manufacturing centre to service economy (Chinahourly, 2001; Xinhuanet, 2015). To be explicit, at the moment YRD is growing high-technological manufacturing and service industries, meanwhile shifting the

traditional mass manufacturing industries towards surrounding peripheral areas. This is significantly improving the intra-regional linkages. According to Florida (2008), the leading global regions concentrate population, talents, productivity and innovation, comparative advantages, economic capability, large scale markets and huge volume of economic output. Referring to this perspective, high technology industries, which usually require a mix of specialised skills and resources, are an important element of concentration in metropolitan-scaled clusters of economic activity (Scott, 2001). Furthermore, for many western and some Asian developed regions, service industries are already replacing manufacturing as the pillar of the regional and even national economy. For instance, by the early 21st century, the United States had 75 percent of its workforce in services; and in Japan this figure was 67 percent (Ohmae, 2001). According to the MOHRSS's (the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China) official statistics, the most recent figure in China is 40.6 percent for 2014 (MOHRSS, 2014), up from 27.7 percent in 2001 (MOHRSS, 2001).

The third point is the YRD is, in comparative terms, a new rising area and it is still under-researched in comparison to the PRD. Relating to the PRD, we have seen emergent debates over different concerns, such as city-regional planning and governance arrangement (e.g. Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2010; 2011; Ma, 2008); the establishment of state-led metropolitan governance (Ye, 2014), and cross-boundary governance in the Greater PRD (Shen, 2004; Yang and Li, 2013). Compared to the publications in relation to the city-regional governance arrangement in the mega city-region of PRD, the YRD remains comparatively under-researched.

But perhaps the most interesting point is the YRD was issued official strategic 'city-region' planning guidance by the central State Council in May 2010. This is important because it is the first time the national level has issued a guide for a regional space which crosses different provincial jurisdictions in relation to economic and social development. The issuing of the YRD regional plan reflects the importance of the YRD within national interests and developmental objectives. Relating to this perspective, YRD has been recognised as a key development coastal region in East China by a continuous series of national 'Five-Year' plans which begins with the ninth version (1996-2000). Given the aforementioned reasons, this thesis will be produced around the case study of the YRD.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

Following Andrew Jonas and Kevin Ward's (2007: 171) initial call for debate and empirical studies about the "constitutive role of politics" in the governing of city-regional functional economic space, particularly at a moment in which there were many state-led attempts for establishing city-regional spaces, usually in the belief that this shall bring about competitiveness in the national and global economy, this thesis is situated within the strand of research examining the geopolitics of city-regionalism (Harrison and Hoyler, 2014; Herrschel, 2014; Jonas, 2013). More specifically, it is John Harrison's (2012) paper stating that there is no blank space out there waiting for the rescaling arrangement of state power to take place that is particularly central to this research. It is problematic to mobilise the local administrative territory as a passive policy container. Therefore, the conflictual 'layering' process reported in the literature, in which it is argued that emergent urban and regional governance arrangements have to be made to fit extant landscapes of state scalar organisation, will be the empirical focus of my research. **The overall aim of my thesis is to investigate the 'constitutive role of politics' in the spatial construction of the Yangtze River Delta (mega) city-region.**

By following this aim, there are **three main research objectives**, which are,

1. **To account for the transformation of the YRD as a new state space:** The YRD is defined from a variety of perspectives during various time periods since the beginning of this century. Each time, the attempt for defining the megaregional space is serving either a geoeconomic or geopolitical purpose. By exploring the rationale behind each definition, the research seeks to illustrate the transformation between functional economic area and state-involved administrative space at the megaregional scale of YRD.
2. **To analyse how new (mega) city-regional governance and institutional arrangements can enhance the YRD's competitive capabilities in the global economy:** Regional economic competitive synergy is one of the critical elements which improve the linkage between cities and their surrounding larger areas. This research objective is searching for how the new megaregional scale of governance is improving the YRD's functional

competitiveness as an integrated entity. For achieving this, the historical path and contemporary structure of the governance framework is investigated.

- 3. To analyse the struggles and tensions around (mega) city-regional governance and the barriers to regional integration:** To remain context sensitive, this last research objective looks into the issues accompanying the operation of the YRD's current governance framework in relation to the specific Chinese context. Therefore, how they are going to affect the appropriateness of the current framework shall be analysed in this section.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis is composed of eight chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two explains the research rationale in detail. To be more specific, it is important and urgent to reinforce the realisation of the role of politics within the construction of megaregions at this particular moment when the megaregion as an economic functional mind-set is in vogue with those who aim to improve city-regional competitiveness. Referring to this geopolitical debate, the thesis chose to focus on local governments' reaction towards city-regionalised functional activities and horizontal connections among local authorities. Furthermore, we have witnessed the development of the discourse of the 'new megaregionalism' on the basis of North Atlantic megaregions during the past decade. Hence, by following Brenner's (2004) methodological suggestion of researching locational specifications, thus China's megaregion of Yangtze River Delta is chosen to be the case study in order to further extend the current theories surrounding (mega) city-regionalism.

Chapter Three then focuses on the Chinese context in relation to the regional governance and the research location of the YRD before unpacking the research questions. The historic path of Chinese (mega) city-regional governance after the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949 is firstly reviewed to illustrate the strong hierarchical state organisation which is controlled by the central state even in today's China. The chapter then explains why locational decision-making has become more important than ever in the globalisation of China's economy, politics and society. Finally, chapter three justifies why it is important to choose the YRD as

the research location for understanding China's city expansion into larger (mega) city-regions.

Chapter Four, the research methodology, justifies the employment of semi-structured interviews in the YRD and the use of mixed data source for this research project. Particular attention is given to explain how the participants who live and work in a Chinese context affect the interview process. Furthermore, this chapter answers some other questions, such as: How were the interviewees recruited? How were the asymmetric power-relation between interviewee and interviewer assessed and managed? How did self-reflection facilitate the meetings with a range of different interviewees, i.e. official planners, university professors, business leaders and governmental officers? How was the ethical consideration defined in relation to this particular research?

Chapter Five investigates how state-led governance seeks to engage with the functional activities across the traditional administrative jurisdictions by examining the YRD's transformation from megaregional functional geography to state-coordinated administrative space. The case study of the relocation of chemical manufacturing industry from Wuxi to peripheral YRD's space is included to explain the transformation from market-led to state-promoted megaregionalism. This chapter will shed light on the changing relation between market forces and politics during the megaregionalism which is currently under-researched. It is important not to see any one of these two actors become subsidiary to another.

Chapter Six explains why it is unlikely for the most appropriate city-regional governance framework which aims to improve the city-regional competitiveness as an integrated entity to be accomplished in one-step. The YRD's three-level governance framework and the YRD regional plan were reviewed to illustrate that the governance framework may be operated and then continuously modified by the extant local state organisation on the basis of updated and changing social-economic context. The ongoing interaction among framework's component governments enables the modification to happen.

Chapter Seven reveals the tensions which the current three-level governance framework is facing. The appropriateness of the megaregional governance framework is often compromised due to the imbalance between geoeconomic and

geopolitical forces. However and for the case of YRD in particular, potential modification applies to the current governance framework for the aim of minimising the tension on the basis of inter-local government interaction.

Finally, Chapter Eight links all the research findings, and generates a critical conclusion for the research aim. This research does not only mobilise the new megaregionalism theory to explain and guide what is happening to the Chinese megaregions, but is also extending the extant theory by looking into the Chinese context. The thesis concludes by stressing that new theories of city-regionalism must increasingly be derived from, rather than applied to, the Chinese case.

Chapter 2: The Geopolitics of City-Regionalism

2.1 Introduction: the politics of constructing city-regions

There is no denying that the world is currently experiencing an era known as 'globalisation'. Global economic integration and urbanisation are two of the main processes which characterise globalisation and have seen the role of cities become even more pivotal in this era (Derudder et al., 2012; Hoyler and Taylor, 2013; Taylor et al., 2007, 2011). Part of this globalising process has seen urbanisation result in cities expanding far beyond their traditional geographic boundaries (the 'city limits'), such that the city may no longer be the most appropriate unit to "reflect ... how urban life is being organised in globalisation" (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Harrison, 2015b; Wachsmuth, 2014). For many researchers there is a new spatial unit which could be considered "as the primary spatial scale at which competing political and economic agendas are convened [in globalisation]" (Harrison, 2015b: 20). This unit is the city-region (Ellingsen and Leknes, 2012; Herrschel, 2014; Neuman and Hull, 2009; Parr, 2005; Rodriguez-Pose, 2008; Scott, 2001a/b; Turok, 2009), or *mega* city-region (Hall and Pain, 2006; Hall, 2009; Xu and Yeh, 2011; Hoyler et al., 2008b; Harrison and Hoyler, 2015c).

The city-region has emerged to become one of the most important spatial scales for organising human activities during the past two decades (Herrschel, 2014; OECD, 2007). More importantly, city-regions appear as localised and functionally concentrated complexes, which is counter to previous accounts of the extinction of geography arguing in favour of a borderless space of flows across the globe in the post-Keynesian age (cf. Friedman, 2006). According to the dominant 'new regionalist' discourse of the past two decades, the city-region's capability for concentrating economic activities at this sub-national scale has been much admired amid the literature on globalised economic development (e.g. Hall and Pain, 2006; Herrschel, 2014; Hoyler et al., 2008a; Porter, 1998; Scott, 2001a; Scott and Storper 2003). Consequently, considerable attention has been drawn to this spatial unit.

However, being an advocate of the new city-regionalism is not easy. Even agreeing to a definition for the city-region concept has proved challenging. It is not the case

that no one is trying to define it; rather there have been many different conceptions of city-regions, and other competing spatial imaginaries, over the past ten years (cf. Knox and Taylor, 2005; Harrison, 2015b). The problem is that few 'city-regional' accounts, both in academic and policy circles, can avoid the criticism of failing to adequately define – empirically or conceptually – what they actually mean when they use the term city-region. Critics argue that as a result, the city-region has “remained an ‘object of mystery’ in many accounts pertaining to a new city-regionalism” (Harrison, 2015b: 22).

To make the situation even more complicated, as Allen et al. (1998: 2) suggest, we must always remember how:

“Regional studies are always done for a purpose, with a specific view. Whether territorial, political, cultural or whatever, there is always a specific focus. One cannot study everything, and there are multiple ways of seeing a place: there is no complete ‘portray of a region’. Moreover, ‘regions’ only exist in relation to particular criteria. They are not ‘out there’ waiting to be discovered, they are our (and others’) constructions.”

This statement provides the essential mind-set for understanding the conceptualisation of regions/city-regions. In short, how the ‘city-region’ is constructed is a deeply political act. It serves an actor’s (or actors’) purpose, often at the expense of (an)other actor(s). One inherent tension within regional debates is how city-regions derived from an economic logic are rarely coterminous with city-regions derived from a political logic (see Jones and MacLeod (2004) on ‘new regional *economic* spaces’ vs. ‘new spaces of *political* regionalism’). In particular, the mismatch between administrative jurisdiction and functional geography is a common problem for constructing city-regional frameworks, policies and supports (cf. Coombes, 2014). So more than one decade since Allen Scott’s (2001a) edited collection *Global City-Regions – Trends, Theory, Policy* proved the cornerstone for realising the new city-regionalism, plenty of current empirical evidence reveals that we are still not able to make the perfect design of governance framework for managing agglomerated functional activities at a definitive city-regional scale (Harrison, 2012c).

To start to make sense of what we mean by the term city-region, the literature on city-regionalism, broadly speaking, can be divided into three distinct approaches to the study of city-regions. These are: (1) *city-regional form*, which shows an interest in the theoretical and practical shape of the city-region, often visible in the urban landscape (e.g. Parr, 2005; Lang and Knox, 2009; Florida et al., 2008); (2) *geoeconomic* studies, most evident in the work of agglomeration economists, such as Allen Scott and Michael Storper (Scott, 2001a; 2001b; 2012; Storper, 1997, 2013; Scott and Storper, 2003); and (3) *geopolitical studies*, where particular focus is on the role of state scalar organisation within a broader process of rescaling (e.g. Herrschel and Newman, 2002; Herrschel, 2014; Jonas, 2013; Jonas and Ward, 2007; Jones et al., 2015; Harrison and Hoyler, 2014).

Relating to the last topic, Neil Brenner is one of the prominent authors in debates relating to the rescaling of state power. Brenner's (2004b) framework of 'new state spaces' (NSS) illustrates the transformation of state scalar formation in favour of sub-national spatiality during the period known as post-Fordism. The framework is constructed in the context of European political-economic change. The NSS framework provides an essential conceptual basis for researching new city-regional governance, consisting of highlighting the interdependent relationship between economic and political processes, and the embedding of emerging spatial governance in the continuous historical path of locational economic-political context.

Furthermore, Jonas and Ward (2007) state that the city-regional scale is the accomplishment of the global and local restructuring processes through economic-political struggles rather than a necessary outcome which follows particular political or other agencies' interests. Their understanding of city-regional development is to theorise the city-region concept by recognising both of the processes of "down-scaling from the global scale to the level of conditions within the communities and neighbourhoods of city-regions and up-scaling from the local geographies of competition and conflict across the city-region in order to make sense of the production of larger geographic processes and territorial structures" (Jonas and Ward, 2007: 172).

The construction of the city-regional geography shall be full of interplays among a range of stakeholders across different spatial scales (Agnew, 2013; Allen and

Cochrane, 2007; Cox, 2010, 2013; Dickinson, 1967; Keating, 2014; MacLeod and Jones, 2007; Mackinnon, 2011; McGuirk, 2004, 2007; Purcell, 2007). Consequently, more attention and empirical research is needed for the consideration of the internal coherence within the new spaces and the response of extant state scalar organisation towards the emergence of this new spatiality. It is also Jonas and Ward's (2007: 175) expectation that it is now the appropriate moment to conduct locational research about the "constitutive role of politics in the brave new world of 'city-region'".

Brenner's NNS framework focuses on illustrating the broad trend of the transformation of state governance towards the emerging city-regional scale. On the other hand, the explicit interplay among stakeholders in the subnational context only received some attention; in particular there is limited knowledge about the dynamism of territorial politics which is relevant to existing state scalar organisation. It has been too simple to only state the general importance of place-specific administrative strategy for economic development at sub-national scale.

Therefore, following Brenner's NSS framework, this chapter aims to employ the concept of territory in order to enrich the understanding of new spatial governance by searching for the constitutive role of politics within the construction of city-regional geographies. Similar to what MacKinnon and Shaw (2010) suggest for combining the frameworks of 'politics of scale' with a post-structural approach, the intention of this chapter is not to see territory as a pre-given spatial geography for containing social relations and processes. Instead, tracing the interplay among stakeholders and their respective interests entrenched in the territory in relation to the wider economic-political change is essential. They, not the territory per se, are the actors which are constitutive to the construction of new state spaces (Keating, 2014; McGuirk, 2004, 2007; Park, 2008, 2013; Smith, 2013). As Mayer (2008: 416) remarks:

"it is never the spatial form that acts, but rather social actors who, embedded in particular (multidimensional) spatial forms and making use of particular (multidimensional) spatial forms, act."

As such it appears important to focus on "questions of agency (*who* is involved), process (*how* they are involved), and specific interests (*why* they are involved)" when

examining how new state spaces in general, and city-regions in particular, are constructed politically (Harrison and Grove, 2014b: 2337).

Referring to methodological considerations, it is important to stress the locational methodological principle for the aim of disclosing underlying power relations among stakeholders in any emerging spatial unit. The raised attention towards many different prominent city-regions across the map over the past decade reveals the shift of sights from general conception of city-regionalism to locational specification study for current new city-regionalism research. For example, the famous European 'blue banana' (Brunet, 1989) covers a group of city-regions which have been frequently focused on in past literatures, including Brenner's (2004b) diversified regional governance policy across the European major regional spaces; Peter Hall and Kathy Pain's (2006) leading research on functionally connected networks within eight European mega-city regions (Hoyler et al., 2008b; Halbert et al., 2006); and Harrison's (2012a, 2012c) critical analysis of Labour's previous governance institutional arrangement for a group of England's city-regions over the past two decades.

What becomes crucial from these recent spatial re-scaling researches is the prioritisation of localised 'exceptional' development in favour of pursuing the local characteristics at the city-regional territorial scale. It means it is now the right moment for undertaking a closer look at this locational scale by separately dealing with each unique localised city-regional circumstance. The broad and general principle and definition relating to city-regional identification will no longer satisfy our realisation of current spatial rescaling process; as Brenner (2004b, 2009) suggests, locational specifications will be needed for better understanding the new city-regionalism. Thus to begin with the geopolitical city-regionalism research, it is crucial to bear in mind that we need to turn our major attention to the explicit locational dynamics within our targeted city-regional space in order to well understand this particular scale.

To achieve this, the chapter aims to explain the significance of understanding the constitutive role of politics in the construction of the city-region. City-regions, and arguably now mega city-regions, have been recognised as a primary spatial scale in terms of economic success, political significance and social development for North

Atlantic geographical research. These will be introduced here, before Chapter 3 examines their potential applicability in the Chinese context. Essential theories and arguments in relation to the rise of large scale city-regions will be included in Section 2.2 and 2.3.

2.2 Three distinct perspectives on conceptualising city-regions

This section will look at the theoretical development of three various city-regionalisms with referencing to the work of prominent scholar's in each subsection. The aim of the section is to locate knowledge gaps by critically reviewing the existing Western-dominated literatures before moving on to consider their applicability for understanding Chinese (mega) city-regionalism.

2.2.1 Model 1: form dominant approaches to *mega* city-regionalism

City-regionalism is evidence itself of how in the last century we have seen continuous urban expansion of cities into larger city-regions, and even mega city-regions in this century. One of the first approaches to conceptualising city-regions by looking at urban form was put forward by Sir Patrick Geddes. A pioneering Scottish town planner, Geddes (1915) suggested that the term 'conurbation' would be appropriate for highlighting the structure of Glasgow, a city which he saw as expanding outwards to capture surrounding villages. Two decade later, McKenzie (1933) emphasised the wider economic and social influence of a large city over its surrounding area, and thus used the term 'metropolitan community'.

Another term to emerge in the early decades of the last century was 'megalopolis'. Usually associated with the work of Jean Gottmann (1961), 'megalopolis' was a term used by Geddes (1915), and later by Lewis Mumford (1938). Geddes and Mumford were both concerned by city-expansion and argued that large scale city-expansion to form 'megalopoli' was the limit of urban expansion. After that Geddes argued cities would become too large and experience a period of decline towards a more manageable size, while Mumford predicted a terminal decline for that city.

This changed in the 1960s when in North America, John Friedmann and John Miller (1965) became more concerned with the newly enlarged urbanised areas in the spatial organisation in the post-war era, employing the notion of 'urban field' (Parr, 2005: 556). Moreover, Jean Gottmann's (1961) idea of 'the megalopolis' identified the giant industrial and urbanised regional clusters on the north-eastern seaboard of the United States as being the urban future. Unlike Geddes and Mumford, Gottmann saw large scale urban areas (megalopolis) as bringing about a positive urban future, not a sign of concern (Hesse, 2015).

As early as the beginning of the 20th century, Geddes (1915) and Herbert George Wells (1902) anticipated that big cities would sprawl over their traditional boundaries or merge with adjacent settlements to make much larger urbanised aggregates in Europe (Dickinson, 1967). Robert Dickinson (1967), who is seen by many as the founding father of the city-region concept (Harrison, 2015b), stressed that Geddes and Wells' successful prediction was related to the regional urbanisation which was supposed to happen at the larger geographical scope than city and town, and more specifically, "a single urbanised area, with a compact core and a wide periphery" (Dickinson, 1967: 13). In the previous moment at which city was dominating the functional networked map as the core node, these pioneering views truly show some advanced foresight. They proposed an adequate description of the trend of our expanded urbanisation over large geographical spaces which happened since the post-war era.

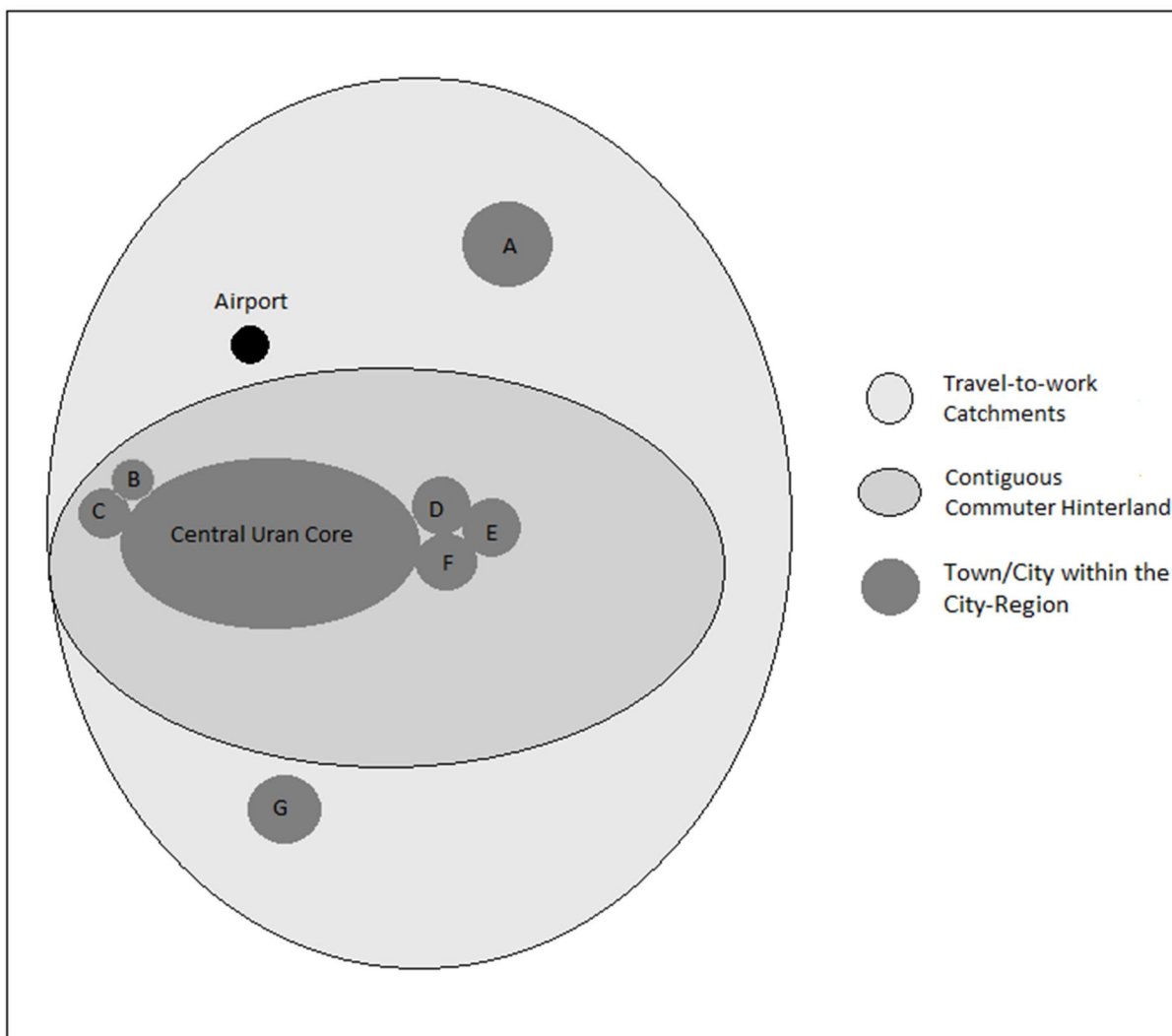
Moreover, Friedmann and Miller's (1965) 'urban field' and Gottmann's (1961) 'Megalopolis' identified extended urbanisation from the existing metropolitan core into the periphery. More importantly, it was Friedmann and Miller's (1965: 313) expectation that their term would "constitute the new ecological unit of ... post-industrial society [and] replace traditional concepts of the city and metropolis" that was important for getting people to think about city-regions more than just cities.

This raised the question of how to define the urban form when cities expand beyond their traditional 'city limits' and into their regional hinterland. Terms such as 'megalopolis' and 'urban field' were used, but more generally it is the term 'city-region' which has had the widest use.

There has never been a lack of voices calling for a precise definition for the term city-region. As mentioned, there are many different definitions. There is, however, one generally agreed upon definition for the theoretical structure of the city-region. This particular city-regional form definition was produced by an urban studies scholar, John Parr, who states that a city-region should be thought of as:

“an area comprised of two distinct but interrelated elements: the city (sometimes a regional or national metropolis), possessing some specified set of functions or economic activities; and a surrounding territory, which is exclusive to the city in question” (Parr, 2005: 556).

Figure 1: A theoretical city-region



Source: Based on ODPM (2006)

Parr's city-region definition is a useful starting point, and is illustrated by Figure 1. To make a simple explanation, the central urban core, or the traditional city limit, is sitting in the centre of the diagram (or the biggest light blue area); and now what has happened in globalisation is the city has expanded as a result of urbanisation beyond the traditional city limit to capture other urban settlements (B, C, D, E and F) and has expanded its functional economic role. However, this idea may be considered too simple and if you look at the academic literature on city-regions from the past century, it would be difficult to believe there was a single and simple definition of what a city-region is. Even Parr himself admitted that:

“the term ‘city-region’ is used to refer to a variety of spatial structures, involving substantially different territorial scales, and there appears to be no commonly accepted definition of the term” (Parr, 2005: 556).

Illustrating the problem, there are numerous examples in the literature expressing difficulty in locating the city-region's boundaries. Perhaps the most striking example in the context of this study is Peter Hall and Kathy Pain's attempt, in *The Polycentric Metropolis: Learning from Mega City-Regions in Europe*, to show the geography of the South East England mega-city region (Hall and Pain, 2006: 38). This map shows how London has expanded beyond the traditional city-limit (London's 32 boroughs) to capture urban settlements in the surrounding hinterland, the functional economic area has also expanded as far as Peterborough to the north, Margate to the east, Swindon to the west, and the south coast (from Bournemouth in the south west to Hastings in the south east). This map also shows the extent of the connections between London and other cities, and between regional cities themselves. For instance, Cambridge is shown spreading its influence within this (mega) city-region as a dominant educational centre and connects to the rest of the world through London as a global city. In this, as in other cases, it is extremely difficult to define the accurate extent of London's functional hinterland (see also Taylor et al., 2009; Reades and Smith, 2014).

Supplementing the current variety of theoretical city-regional forms, Harrison (2015b: 22) suggests a long list of even more terminologies which emerged over the past decade. Similar to the previous experience of conceptual diversifications in the last

century, those various terms are created for diversified purposes. Hall and Pain's (2006) 'polycentric mega-city region', for example, focused on the region's internal networked functional economic relations and intra-regional urban hierarchy. Florida's (2008) 'mega region' regards the concentration of factors such as population, productivity and innovation capability as crucial for recognising this sub-national scale. Xu and Yeh's (2010) 'mega-city region' emphasises the new spatial scale for administration purpose as a result of its privileged position in the global economy. Other examples in Harrison's list include global city-region (Scott, 2001); world city-region (Kunzmann, 1998); metro region (OECD, 2007); metropolitan region (Brenner, 2002); polycentric metropolis (Hall and Pain, 2006); mega urban region (Douglass, 2000); poly-nuclear urban region (Turok and Bailey, 2004); super urban area (Harrison, 2015a); mega-urban region (Douglass, 2000); cross-border metropolitan region (Harrison and Growe, 2014a); new megalopolis (Lang and Knox, 2009); and megapolitan region (Lang and Dhavale, 2005; Lang and Nelson, 2007).

Again I am not going to produce judgment over the rationality for each term mentioned above. The key point here is although these concepts appear very different, they all attempt to define similar geographical patterns which are, broadly defined, city-regional in appearance. Moreover, they are all heavily influenced by the economic arguments for city expansion into larger city-regions making the latter increasingly important locations for economic and social life.

2.2.2 Model 2: the geoeconomics of *mega* city-regionalism

To discuss the geoeconomic importance of large scale urban regions, there is no way of neglecting Allen Scott's (2001a) concept of the 'global city-region' which he explored in his book *Global City-Regions – Trends, Theory, Policy*. In this book, Scott and a group of other notable scholars (e.g. Peter Hall, Saskia Sassen, Kenichi Ohmae, and Michael Storper) stated their understandings about the realisation of the important role for global city-regions within contemporary globalisation.

There are three reasons why Scott's work is important. Firstly, by following the pioneers' efforts, he developed the concept of 'global city-region' in recognition of the increasing functional role of cities (Sassen, 1991) *and* regions (Scott, 1998) in

globalisation. Scott (2001) admitted in his book the concept of global city-regions can be traced back to the idea of 'world cities' and 'global cities' which comes from Hall (1966), Friedmann and Wolff (1982) and Sassen (1991) respectively. Scott's conceptual contribution is to replace global cities and recognise global city-regions as the newly functional nodes in global networks. Secondly, his work extends the 1990s 'global city' research, which focused on the importance of cities' external relations, to focus on the external *global* and internal *regional* linkages of cities (Hall, 2001). And thirdly, Scott and others suggested that city-regions might be superseding the nation-state as the primary spatial scale for organising economic and social life (cf. Barber, 2013).

This last point cannot be understood alone without relating to his agglomeration model; and this proposal earns appreciation as much as the criticism which is incurred. In favour of recognising the primary role of city-regions in functional development and policy decision-making, Ohmae (2001) stated that the nation-state was no longer the unit of prosperity; and even further, Storper (1997) mentioned that the globe was stepping into a '*regional world*' where major urban regions (e.g. Silicon Valley) were the fundamental bases of economic and social life as we entered the twenty-first century. Referring to the agglomeration modelling of geographical economists, Scott's (2001b: 814) 'global city-regions':

“constitute dense polarised masses of capital, labour, and social life that are bound up in intricate ways in intensifying and far-flung extra-national relationships. As such, they represent an outgrowth of large metropolitan areas – or contiguous sets of metropolitan areas – together with surrounding hinterlands of variable extent which may themselves be sites of scattered urban settlements.”

Scott then adds that the agglomeration of everything means to reduce the location-dependent transaction costs, and meanwhile produce 'synergistic outcomes', such as “the collaborative relationships that occasionally set in when firms work together in social divisions of labour, or the knowledge spillovers that occur in day-to-day business dealings” (Scott, 2001b: 818).

More examples include Porter's (1998) inter-firm cooperation, such as outsourcing and sub-contracting, and Hall and Pain's (2006) focus on advanced producer service

firms (i.e. accounting, law, advertising and consultancy) where high spatial costs are raised for face-to-face information exchange. Thus it turns out to generate economic efficiency and effectiveness as a result of collective functional activities, and more importantly build competitive economic giants within a limited extent of area. Plenty of existing empirical regions illustrate that these areas are recognised as the economic growth poles within the larger geographical scope based on their clustered economic power. Thus localised functional concentration is leading to concerns about how geographical distance affects socio-economic behaviours, particular in view of the current increasing pace of technological advancement in telecommunication and transportation around the globe.

Agglomeration models are the essential principle for many others to engage with the construction of their various city-regional terms. For example, Florida's (2008: p42) idea of 'megaregions' is derived from a simple upscaling of the agglomeration model, because he argues that bigger economic units (i.e. larger urban economies) are more competitive economic units. This can also be seen in the UK through the work of Henry Overman and others (Nathan and Overman, 2013). Likewise, all eight of Hall and Pain's (2006) European polycentric mega city-regions are the respective major economic engines within their own nations. Xu and Yeh's (2010) Pearl River Delta (PRD) and Yangtze River Delta (YRD) are currently the two most developed regions on the basis of industrial agglomeration in China. Harrison's (2015a) 'super-urban area' is the combination of global cities and global city-regions in order to construct the contemporary competitive territories. All in all, despite a variety of city-regional terms, these terms share the common recognition of the capability of concentrating capital, labour and social life at a variously defined city-regional scale. There is no denying that the agglomeration model promotes the city-regional unit to become the motor of the contemporary globalised economy (cf. Scott, 2001a). As a consequence, it is important to remember the functional significance of the agglomeration model because it is this idea that provoked the increased realisation of city-regionalism in the first place.

However, for the critics, Scott and others' geofunctional conclusion is pushing too hard with overoptimistic attitudes towards the all-round role of global city-regions and thus underplays the role of state forces in and through processes of rescaling (see Brenner, 2009; Jonas and Ward, 2007; Lovering, 1999; Harrison, 2015b).

Furthermore, the researcher finds it hard to believe that the governance task which city-regions are currently facing is simply appending 'the' new governance framework to existing political administrative systems, whatever the configuration is like now. Moreover, in order to be clear of this difficult situation, it is necessary to trace the specific state dynamics which exist in any particular city-region. Thus it is this geopolitical conflict that inspires the main discussion in the following sections; and more crucially, this is why the thesis is going to step in while bearing in mind the importance of paying attention to the locational specific context which is stressed by Neil Brenner (2004), one of the prominent leaders in the debates relating to state rescaling. This chapter will focus on this economic-political conflict in the next geopolitical section.

2.2.3 Model 3: the geopolitics of *mega* city-regionalism

As the last section states, Scott's (2001a) notion of the 'global city-region' is fascinating and successfully generated significant interest in the city-region concept, even pushing it to a new level of intrigue among academics. However, some political geographers critique this, arguing that:

“there has been too much emphasis in recent research on a functional economic view of city-regions and too little on how city-regions represent geopolitical constructions of/inside the state” (Jonas, 2012; 6).

Jonas and others, notably Kevin Ward, argue that policy elites have become seduced by Scott's argument and have set about constructing city-regions in the belief this will bring about competitiveness in the global economy (Jonas and Ward, 2007a; Ward and Jonas, 2004). The result is a rush to create a city-region level of governance, and an alternative definition of city-region as

“a strategic and political level and administration and policy-making, extending beyond the administrative boundaries of single urban local government authorities to include urban and/or semi-urban hinterlands” (Tewdwr-Jones and McNeill, 2000; 131).

There is one particular Chinese empirical case reflecting this concern. Xiangming Ma is the chief official planner in Guangdong Urban and Rural Planning and Design Institute. He (2012) defined the Greater Pearl River Delta which covers Guangdong's Pearl River Delta (PRD) and two special administrative zones – Hong Kong and Macao - as global city-regions by referencing Scott's definition. This then underpinned the Guangdong Provincial Government's 2009 'Five Integration Plan (The Integration of Infrastructure Plan, The Integration of Industry Plan, The Integration of Public Service Plan, The Integration of Urban and Rural Development Plan and The Integration of Environmental Protection Plan) which aimed to promote integration of the PRD in various aspects, arguing it was "crucial to enhance city competitiveness" (Ma, 2012: 103). There is nothing wrong about recognising the functional linkage between PRD and two special administrative zones with the aim of enhancing the competitiveness of PRD and enlarged Greater PRD. The concern here is that Guangdong provincial government is treating the Greater PRD as a passive policy 'container' which shall be filled with a provincially-orchestrated city-regional plan in the belief that this will improve the competitiveness of the entire city-regional unit. For this section, what this thesis is presenting here does not mean to undermine the significance of improving city-regional competitiveness. What this thesis is trying to achieve is to shift attention from a narrow focus on the economic importance of global city-regions to the dynamics of how city-regions are constructed politically in the belief that this will make *their* (global) city-region more economically important on a national and international scale.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Geddes had already realised that cities may no longer be an appropriate unit for organising human behaviour and thus it became vital to figure out a common treatment for solving the larger, city-regional issues such as sanitation, transport and government (Dickinson, 1967). His view was then followed by Dickinson half a century later. Dickinson stressed that those city-regional issues had remained and thus been aggravated by the fact that "any one area includes literally hundreds of administrative and ad hoc division" (Dickinson, 1967: 13). More recently, at the time Scott was writing about global city-regions, Alan Harding questioned whether the city-region – not the administrative region – was a more appropriate scale at which to organise subnational development (Harding, 2000). In a European context, Tassilo Herrschel and Peter Newman (2002) argued

that the construction of city-regional governance shall be spatially varied in accordance with differing institutional contexts and specific local cultural-political legacies.

Going further Harrison (2015b: 42) argued that “little thought is given to the coherence of these large urban complexes” in the face of continuing identification of different types of city-regions. With city-regions increasing in size, especially in China, it becomes even more urgent to consider the construction of these large-scale *mega* city-regions and attempts to reorganise state power at local, regional and national levels to plan and govern at this extended urban scale. However and unfortunately, this urgent issue still remains unsolved even today. Many prominent city-regions are still facing administrative divisions and even inter-/intra-state competition inside their valid functional areas. Simply appending a brand new city-regional strategic governance framework into the long-existing political configuration may find it difficult to deal with this fragmented administrative issue because the researcher cannot afford to overlook the role and function of long-existing local political actors.

Furthermore, there is another important concern relating to the scale of the city-region’s jurisdiction which in many cases does not properly reflect the rapid pace of the city-regional functional economic expansion (Harrison, 2012c). Saying that the fast-pace urbanisation and economic restructuring is outgrowing the re-organisation process of the state power in many cases is the supplement to this issue. To borrow Scott’s prominent global city-region of Greater London and Harrison’s (2012c: 314) critical words:

“while London has the greatest powers and most closely maps onto Scott’s concept of the global city-region, it is noteworthy how even here the institutions of city-regional governance only have jurisdiction over Greater London. Noteworthy is how the boundary of Greater London has remained fixed since 1963, and thus the new governance arrangements only have jurisdiction over an area of 1579km² and a population of 7.6 million ... not the global city-region and its population of 21 million that Scott identifies.”

The question here is how this comparatively static city-regional governance framework is going to govern this city-regional area over many affairs, such as transportation, construction and inter-state competition, when the framework does

not even expand to fully cover the functional geography? Thus assessing the overlap between the city-region's extended functional scope and local governmental boundaries becomes crucial for judging the appropriateness of the city-regional administrative arrangement as the geopolitical response to the local functional development. Referring to this perspective, it is hard to believe that the geographical mismatch concern could be solved instantly in the face of fast-paced urbanisation and economic restructuring processes. Thus as Robert J. Bennett (1997) suggested fifteen years ago, constructing the city-regional governance framework shall not be seen as a one-off task; instead, it is an on-going process. Administrative re-organisation is not static, so it is important for us to constantly track and study the geopolitical dynamics inside the city-regional formation in order to assess whether administrative configuration and coverage at the city-regional level is 'fit for purpose'.

The researcher can clearly see evidence for this in the move towards *mega* city-regionalism. As globalising cities expanded into global city-regions, so too this chapter argues that globalising city-regions are being considered in the context of expanded *mega* urban regions comprising two or more global city-regions (Harrison and Hoyler, 2015a). Once again, the initial focus of recent work in this area was on the geoeconomic logic for mega urban regions (see Chapter 1) but attention is increasingly shifting towards the question of designing, planning and governance arrangements that are 'fit for purpose', not only for global city-regions but ever larger metropolitan areas. This raises a series of concerns, for as Wheeler (2015: 99) recently remarked, "we can hardly plan at the regional scale, let alone for megaregions". For sure, the geopolitics of mega city-regionalism is even more important today in the transition from city-regionalism to mega city-regionalism.

To conclude for this section, the researcher deeply appreciates the success of Scott and others' agglomeration model in the study of new city-regionalism. As Jonas and Ward (2007: 173) highlight, "it is no coincidence that the resurgence of city-regions as economic spaces has been accompanied by their re-emergence as political spaces". Nevertheless, administrative arrangements for city-regions rarely correspond to the functional economic geography of city-regions; and this issue is important to study. The criticism is that we have previously experienced considerable efforts devoted to rushing into centrally-orchestrated plans for governance and planning at the city-regional level in the belief that this enforced institutional

arrangement will improve city-regional competitiveness – something which is highly debated. The concern here is the lack of consideration for the dynamics of extant state scalar organisation within the current spatial rescaling process. Although we have long discovered the issues of locational administrative division and inter-state conflict at the city-regional level, they have not been fully considered or central to a lot of city-regional accounts over the past fifteen years. To sum up, there is no way for the geopolitical dynamics to be overlooked within the contemporary city-regionalising process. The next section is going to dig deeper for this geopolitical consideration.

2.3 State power and the political construction of city-regions

“The [current] world economy is ... based on economic, social, cultural, and informational flows that straddle the boundary-making and territory-protecting activities of states” (Scott, 2001a: 27).

It would be wrong to say that the geopolitics of city-regionalism was absent from Scott’s account of global city-regions. It is more appropriate to say that it was often hidden behind the geoeconomic arguments for global city-regions, or its importance underplayed. Central to Scott’s understanding of global city-regions is a belief in their increasing autonomy within the global era. Together with firstly the current pervasive promotion of spatially rescaling to more functionally connected subnational agglomerations, and secondly calling for re-organisation of governance frameworks at the city-regional level, which seems to act in response to the emergence of city-regional functional geography, they lead Scott and others to conclude that:

“the geographic structure of these networks tends more and more to override purely political boundaries so that they are increasingly free from regulatory supervision on the part of national states” (Scott, 2001a: 4)

For this statement, city-region is considered by Scott and his proponents to become the primary scale for organising economic, social and political life. To reach their expectation, the extant scalar state system which is controlled by nation states to exert administration power within national boundaries will need to be somehow

dismantled to be replaced by new governance structures in order to 'free' city-regions to better compete globally.

However, it is rather a big issue to think of the city-region as an autonomous force within global economic and political change. In the words of Jonas and Ward (2007: 172):

“there are very great dangers in reading agency into city-regional institution developments un-problematically from dis-embedded logics of globalisation, spatial competition, or the immanent logic of post-Fordist state restructuring. Such a view amounts in effect to a reification of the city-region as a discrete ‘actor-scale’”.

Thus the re-arrangement of governance scales is no longer seen to be independent from state power but a deliberate political strategy on behalf of the state (Brenner, 2004b). Referring to the logic of state restructuring, this section is saying that the functional importance does not earn city-regions the privilege to underplay the regulatory control from the state scalar system. The rest of this section is going to explain two arguments in favour of this proposal.

First of all, it is very hard to believe that there is one blank space waiting out there for city-regional governance arrangements to fill. According to Brenner (2009: 134):

“the rescaling of state power never entails the creation of a ‘blank slate’ on which totally new scalar arrangements could be established, but occurs through a conflictual ‘layering’ process in which emergent rescaling strategies collide with, and only partially rework inherited landscapes of state scalar organisation.”

He means that there is no way for the construction of a city-regional governance framework to prevent the extant scalar state system which is controlled by the nation state from carrying on exercising regulatory control over city-regions. The city-regional transformation cannot be fully understood if the political economy and the dynamics of extant state scalar organisation are not considered. To be more explicit, the re-scaling process does not generate a discontinued timeline for the past governance model and lead to a fresh start for the newly emerging arrangement.

From this perspective, both Bennett (1997) and Harrison (2012c) illustrate that it is too hard for the spatial rescaling of state power to reach its ideal modelling with only one-step fast change. What we have witnessed over recent years is a continuous mismatch between functional geography and administrative boundaries, where governance structures evolve slowly to fit the new demands for more appropriately scaled political arrangements (e.g. Freytag et al., 2006; Hoyler et al., 2006). This echoes Brenner's (2004: 75) statement of state spatiality being "a process rather than a container, a platform or a thing". Thus logic suggests that the combination between the recently emerged city-regional governance arrangement and long-existing state organisation shall not be realised easily and is an on-going process which is capable to generate conflict. To reach a conclusion by borrowing Jonas and Ward's (2007: 172) phrase, geopolitical city-regionalising cannot be considered as a 'discrete actor-scale'.

Secondly, the recent facts reveal that city-regions are currently not stepping away from the long-existing state scalar organisation's regulatory control. Scott (2001b) thought of the governance arrangement at the city-regional tier as a necessary tool for improving a city-region's functional competitiveness in both the short term, i.e. policy making in favour of increasing the economic return effects, and the long term, i.e. achieving social fairness and preserving economic wellbeing. The reason for Scott to affirm the importance of city-regional governance arrangements is he believes that markets alone can never fully secure local levels of efficiency, productivity and competitiveness (Scott, 2001b). Central to his city-regional governance arrangement is the 'social democratic politics' which is associated with collective social forces in the administrative agenda. Thus Scott is encouraging the complete participation of economic, political and social actors in favour of democratic administration.

This is a brief summary of Scott's design for a city-regional governance framework. We admire his theoretical recognition of the relations between functional importance and administrative requirement within certain city-regional functional geographies at this micro or sub-national level. However, what this thesis doubts is how we are going to count on the social democratic politics and its social infrastructures on its own to effectively govern over the most appropriate scale when we are not even certain about how to define the accurate geographical scope of the inclusive city-

regional functional area; not mentioning the contemporary fast-paced urbanisation and continuous economic restructuring. We do not have a perfect solution to answer for this dilemma in a real case yet. A few recent geopolitical research projects relating to prominent European and Chinese city-regions reveal that it is challenging for all national, regional and local forces to construct the 'ideal' city-regional governance framework (cf. Harrison, 2012c; Xu and Yeh, 2011; Vogel, 2010). Thus by corresponding to Harrison's (2015b: 40) conclusive finding, what we have witnessed in most recent cases is "the city-region concept being bent and shaped to fit particular political agendas", often under the central state's orchestration.

Referring to this conclusive statement, this thesis appreciates Harrison's (2010) term of 'compromised city-regionalism' for precisely commenting on this difficult situation. As a result, the delegation of the political power from the central state to the regional and urban scale should not be seen as the decay of the national power. The nation state is still bearing substantial regulatory responsibilities of orchestrating strategy to promote the regional and urban development (Harrison, 2015b). It is therefore difficult to see city-regions become largely free from state organisation's regulatory control at least at this stage.

To conclude for this section, this chapter appreciates city-region's functional agglomerating capacity, and the resulting external functional relations between the city-region and other parts of the globalised economic network. However, the globalised functional relations, which exist mostly beyond the long-established national administrative boundaries, shall not be over-referenced to evidence the quasi-autonomous existence of city-regions. Current empirical data illustrates that many administrative institutional arrangements at the city-regional level have to deal with the extant state scalar system which already functions as the administrative entity within the inclusive functional geography. More importantly, the design work of city-regional governance framework is still relying on central state power rather than the collective social forces in favour of democratic politics, which many would like us to believe, although many of the centrally-orchestrated arrangements are critiqued for not being 'ideal'. Based on the current discussion, state power shall not be overstated as retreating from city-regional construction when it is relating to geopolitical agenda at least at this stage.

2.4 Political city-regionalism shall be context-sensitive

The agglomeration model underpinning contemporary urban economics has been much admired across the world and underpins arguments recognising the functional importance of large scale city-regions within the global economy. While much of the prevailing focus has been on European and American city-regions (Hall and Pain, 2006; Herrschel, 2014; Herrschel and Newman, 2002; Kantor et al., 2012), there is increasing realisation of East Asian, but in particular, Chinese mega city-regions over the past decade (e.g. Xu and Li, 1990; Hall, 1999; Yeh, 2001; Vogel, 2010; Yeh and Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2011).

Following this geoeconomic discovery that unprecedented urbanisation places China's large urban areas at the forefront of arguments in favour of agglomeration being critical to global urban competitiveness, there is a rising interest in studying how to construct an 'ideal' governance framework for covering the functional geography of the rapidly expanded city-regional scale. We have seen geopolitical research over a range of diversified governmental models across Europe; however, much of this is difficult to translate into the Chinese context – not least because of the rapid pace of urbanisation, the larger scale of city-regions, and the very different political-economic conditions. The new geopolitical city-regionalism which we are facing now no longer means to construct a static policy 'container' in the form of city-regional geography. On the contrary, administrative institutional arrangement for city-regions largely depend on dynamics among a group of various actors, such as relations between functional development and city-regional governance, horizontal relations among local governments, and hierarchical relations among national, regional and local governments.

There are a large number of different locational variables involved in the creation of city-regional administrative arrangements for each unique circumstance. However, "our understanding of how this [spatial re-scaling process] takes place in distinct historical-geographical contexts remains underdeveloped (Brenner, 1998: 27)." Thus for the geopolitical research to be more global, this thesis needs to relate our broader debate – the new city-regionalism – to specific geographical contexts. More importantly, we need to see if our current theory is still compatible with other specific

city-regional contexts; and if not, how we are going to fill the research gap. At last, this section is not going to discuss whether current city-regionalism is able to provide reference to any other particular case. Instead, this chapter focuses on digging deeper into the importance of researching the differences of localised context in city-regionalism theory development.

Neil Brenner's (2004) book *'New State Spaces – Urban Governance and the Transformation of Statehood'* highlights the importance of researching locational transformation within the current trend of spatially re-scaling state power across the world. For this aim, Brenner made explicit statements about the historical background of the transformation from nationalised to localised spatial development in the post-war decades. For the former, national space participated in the world economy as a single entity; and for the latter, sub-national space becomes primary for agglomerating economic activities and then competing with other economic entities in globalisation.

To correspond with this functional spatial transformation, state intervention's aim has been undergoing a change from even geographical development across the national jurisdiction to the promotion of localised territorial competitiveness, which is apparently uneven within global economic network. This is leading the previous state intervention to be spatially rescaled in order to cope with the emergence of new functional space, although we are still lacking a generally-agreed solution for constructing the new scaled governance framework. This is why he suggests we are facing the production of 'new state spaces'. The emergence of these new state spaces is important because according to Jones (1997: 951), "spatial selectivity refers to the processes of 'spatial privileging and articulation' through which state policies are differentiated across territorial space in order to target particular geographical zones and scales". Relating this to my research, any decision to prioritise the competitiveness of city-regions is not apolitical. We therefore need to understand the geopolitics of city-regionalism, especially the extent to which political decisions around investment, infrastructure, governance and planning prioritise growth in some areas over others. This can be prioritising growth and investment in city-regions rather than non-city-regions, but increasingly research is looking within city-regions to see whether city-regionalism benefits some interests more than others.

Furthermore, as discussed in section 2.3, the re-organisation of state spatial administration has not appeared out of nowhere, instead it is a conflictual 'layering' process, which tends to embed a new spatial scale into its entrenched locational system. Brenner (2004: 110) suggests:

“the evolution of state spatiality is strongly path-dependent insofar as many of its fundamental characteristics may be reproduced, reinforced, and even locked in during the process of historical development”.

Discussion relating to the current emergence of new state spaces should not be split from the extant local system which already experienced historical evolution. As a consequence, there is likely to be differentiation among the arrangements for governance frameworks at the new scale over the past decades. Thus researching and amplifying the context-oriented differentiation of the state re-scaling process within any particular geographic area becomes the key task for furthering geopolitical city-regionalism research.

To summarise, context sensitivity is the main element of consideration for tailoring the city-regional governance model across different geographies. Again, as Brenner (2004) recommends in his book, 'state spatial projects' and 'state spatial strategies' are two main inclusions in the geopolitical re-organisation process. The former arrangement “intended to establish customised, place-specific regulatory capacities in major cities, city-regions, and industrial districts and, more generally, to decentralise key aspects of economic regulation to subnational (regional or local) institutional levels”; and the latter strategies “intended to re-concentrate socioeconomic assets and advanced infrastructural investments within the most globally competitive city-regions and, more generally, to enhance the territorial competitiveness of major local and regional economies” (Brenner, 2004b: 176).

2.5 Coda: City-regionalisation is an economic-political conflicted process

This thesis appreciates the arguments for city-regions becoming the new primary scale for agglomerating economic activities amid the contemporary globalising economy. Together with the recognition of increasingly global processes and flows of capital, knowledge, and people, which mostly happen beyond the traditional

jurisdictional boundaries, the city-region is identified as an important unit politically, economically and socially within the era of globalisation. The first half of this chapter has explained city-regionalism from three various perspectives with reference to past city-regionalist literatures. They are city-regional spatial form, geoeconomic and geopolitical city-regionalisms. The non-stoppable trend of creating new definitions and terms for city-regional units did not successfully guide us to understand our conceptual space; instead, even more issues have been generated. Among these issues, there is one relating to economic-political conflict inspiring us to produce the main discussion in the second half of this chapter.

There is no denying about the economic importance of city-regions in the current globalised economy, and this is the initial idea provoking us to engage with this new spatial scale at an accelerated pace. This thesis also understands it is crucial and necessary to establish a governance framework in order to “preserve and enhance their wealth and wellbeing” (Scott, 2001a: 12) since we can never rely on the market itself to exercise governance over its inclusive functional area. Referring to this point, how we are going to make this happen becomes a difficult task. And here is the issue we chose to focus on in this chapter, which is there is no way to underplay the role of politics within the potential construction of city-regional governance models. This political task shall not be seen as subsidiary to functional development. We have seen many centrally-orchestrated institutional arrangements which have aimed to create socio-economic prosperity at a new spatial scale in the pursuit of Scott’s description of city-regional success. However, many of these arrangements are not being constructed within an effective city-regional functional space, or fail to cover the inclusive functional geography.

What is largely missing from the past realisation of city-regionalism is a consideration over the dynamics of the extant state scalar organisation within the current construction of city-regional governance frameworks. More importantly, this research is supposed to be context sensitive. It is problematic to see state regulatory power as retreating from the emergence of this city-regional scale. The emergence of the new spatial scale shall not be seen as independent from extant state scalar organisation; rather, it is a new layer which is trying to fit itself in the long-existing state scalar organisation. This ‘layering’ process shall be the focus of our empirical research. This is an extremely difficult combining process, and we do not have a perfect

solution for this city-regional governance task yet. Harrison's (2010) 'compromised city-regionalism' is a good characterisation of the current dilemma. Furthermore, on the way looking for an effective design for city-regional governance frameworks, we need to be careful in dealing with the dynamics of state actors within each different city-regional context according to Brenner's (2004) methodological suggestion about locational research. Distinct locational economic-political contexts could lead us to a diversified structure of our expected 'ideal' city-regional governance framework.

Chapter 3: Chinese *Mega City-Regionalism* in Continuity: A Critical Review

3.1. Introduction: the under-researched Chinese historical-geographic context

As chapter 2 explains, in the prevailing Western discourses on contemporary city-regionalism, theorising the new enlarging urban areas as spatial, economic and political units in response to global urbanisation and economic integration is nothing new (e.g. Brenner, 2004a, 2004b; Florida, 2008; Harrison, 2012b; Harrison and Hoyler, 2015a, 2015b; Jonas and Ward, 2007; Lang and Knox, 2009; Scott, 2001a, 2001b). Among many of their discussions, there is no one denying the functional importance of city-regional or their derivative scales within the networked global economy. Instead, one central focus for the debate is whether the new spatial spaces shall become the contingent outcome of function-based relational processes as a response to external economic-political change as the relational approach suggests; or new state spaces which involves the mobilisation of state spatial projects and strategies and more importantly the realisation of locally dependent territorial politics. The relational approach sees new spatial scales as the product of flows, networks and connectivity. Relating to this perspective, there is the danger of disconnecting the new spaces from extant social relations and state scalar systems.

On the other hand, and based on the framework of 'new state spaces', Brenner (2004b) brought us a novel line of thinking for the construction of new state spaces. He suggests that we pay continuous attention to the restructuring process of state spatial formation rather than its outcome, in particular the subnational governance arrangement per se. Besides the realisation of an ongoing rescaling process, what this thesis shall also become alert to is continuity and historical-geographical contexts. Hence this chapter is inspired by Brenner's (1998: 27) question of "how this [state rescaling process] takes place in distinct historical-geographical contexts".

Following on from this and relating it to my research it is crucial to investigate the historical continuity of Chinese city-regionalism, which is comparatively under-researched. Borrowing the statement from Park (2013: 1115) who focuses on spatial transformation in South Korea:

“the existing literature is limited in its conceptualization of the diverse and concrete ways in which the spatial and scalar restructuring of capitalist state takes place in different historical, political and social contexts beyond North America and Western Europe.”

Hence for geopolitical research into city-regionalism to become more global, it is urgent for us to relate our terms and conceptions, which are largely raised on the basis of North Atlantic cities and regions, to a wider range of diversified economic-political contexts, and Asian regions in particular given the rapid pace of urbanisation. In particular, the research opportunity in relation to the Chinese historical-geographical context shall be valuable for extending the current understanding of city expansion into larger city-regions and the production of new non-Western state spaces.

For South East Asia in general, and China in particular, city-regionalism is a much more recent phenomenon than in Western contexts; and similarly there is lack of clear conception of the constructing process for new city and regional spaces since the 1978 Chinese economic reform. The transitional stage from centralised regulatory system to decentralisation of economic decision-making rights during the post-reform period attracted comparatively much attention for studying the governance over new state spaces, including cross-boundary governance (Yang and Li, 2013; Shen, 2004), reorganisation of local state spatiality (Shen, 2007; Zhang and Wu, 2006), and regional strategic planning (Luo and Shen, 2008; Wu and Zhang, 2007; Xu, 2008). Nevertheless, the constituted role of interaction among political-economic actors in the realisation of enlarging city-regional spaces is largely under-researched.

Furthermore, even fewer analyses have been generated to explain the continuous linkage between the historical path of Chinese regional governance from city expansion into larger city-regions and the current trend towards mega city-regionalism. Prior to 1949, hundreds of years of chaos caused by war and semi-colonial national territories as a result of foreign domination led the previous state organisation to lose its full control over national space (Zhang, 2015). The resulting historical gap for state spatial governance was then closed by the establishment of the People's Republic of China (hereafter, P.R. China). Consequently, the historical

transition of Chinese state spatiality experienced three main stages since the P.R. China was founded in 1949.

First among many who focus on Chinese mega city-regionalism is Jiang Xu, a Chinese urban and regional specialist, who has taken to arguing that the renewal of regional governance arrangements in China, in the period since market reform and characterised by deepening globalisation, and accelerated urbanisation in the past two decades, is a result of a number of negative externalities such as intense inter-city competition (Chien and Gordon, 2008; Wu and Zhang, 2007; Xu and Yeh, 2011) and local political fragmentation (Xu, 2008). That the re-making of Chinese mega city-regions has drawn significant attention of late (e.g. Luo and Shen, 2009; Vogel, 2010; Wu and Zhang, 2007; Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2011) suggests studying and analysing China's newly rising and path-dependent mega city-regions may be important for injecting new insights into the city-regionalism debate nationally (in China), regionally (in south East Asia), and globally to complement and challenge Western accounts.

Across Chinese national territory, nowhere have these fresh insights been more obviously available than that in the Pearl River Delta (PRD), which since the early-2000s has become one of the key research locations for studying mega city-regionalism in China. Using the PRD as a case study, this thesis has seen, for example, Wu and Zhang's (2007) analysis of the strategic planning for regional places in order to cope with the fragmented economic and political landscape; Xu's (2008) review of the Chinese regional planning system and governance; Xu and Yeh's (2010) argument about the mismatch between political administrative jurisdiction and functional economic space in the emerging mega city-regional plan; Xu and Yeh's (2013) examination of path dependencies in the inter-jurisdictional cooperation; Ye's (2014) investigation into the state-led cross-territorial governance; and Li, Wu and Hay's (2015) exploration of cross-territorial conflicts embedded in the intra-regional integration.

Nevertheless and in comparison to the PRD, much less research has been conducted over the development of the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) mega city-region. This is potentially a significant oversight because interestingly, YRD's political structure and economic context are arguably more complex than the PRD since it is

a trans-provincial territorial mega-city region composed of three entire different provinces, including Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. In short, the involvement of more jurisdictional administrations even exacerbates the potential for political fragmentation and economic competition across the mega city-regional space – certainly when compared to the PRD.

This chapter introduces the YRD as a prime location for enunciating new understanding of political spatial re-organisation at the scale of mega city-regions in China. Besides this, this chapter is going to investigate the political-economic legacy which was inherited by contemporary mega city-regionalism as a result of the historical transition of Chinese state spatiality. Following this introductory section, section 3.2 briefly examines the transitional trajectory of regional policies starting with the 1950s. This section will analyse the historical elements raised in past Chinese regional development - what I refer to as the historical legacy - which may affect the current regional planning and governance. Then at the end of this part, brief summaries about the regional planning and governance in three of the most crucial Chinese mega-city regions will be stated for the intention of making introductory comparisons for the study of YRD. The case studies will include the Pearl River Delta (PRD), Yangtze River Delta (YRD) and Jing-Jin-Ji (JJJ). The unique economic-political context in which Chinese mega city-regions are sitting, and the current Chinese regional planning and governance arrangements will be the main aspects covered in this chapter.

Section 3.3 will explain the research background of YRD through highlighting its strategic importance, examine the YRD regional plan in planning details and finally illustrate one of the key intra-regional city network constructions - the Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou project, which was initiated by the Jiangsu provincial government. The purpose of explaining this intra-regional construction project is in order to read through it the conflicts inherent within current Chinese regional planning and governance. Finally, a concluding section will link sections 3.2 and 3.3 to reveal the underlying economic-political consistency which this chapter is able to distract from the historical path of changing Chinese state spatiality.

3.2. The historic path of Chinese state spatiality

This section presents the historical transformation of Chinese spatial governance after the P.R. China was founded in 1949. This chapter responds to Brenner's call for collecting the historical-geographical specifications for understanding the contemporary geopolitical restructuring processes. The centrally planned economic regulation (Unger, 1987; Zhang, 2002) and administrative regional division (Solinger 1978; Liu and Feng, 2008) become two essential characteristics for state spatial governance during the pre-reform stage. After the 1978 Chinese economic reform, political administrative division remains as the main obstacle for cross-territorial economic connection even in the context of decentralisation of economic decision-making rights. Specifically, territory-dependent political interest and economic development constitute the historical transformation of Chinese state spatiality and the emergence of new state spaces.

To make a brief summary, table 1 outlines the transition of Chinese urban and regional policies since P.R. China was founded in 1949. The transitional path gives special attention to the changing primary administrative scale at the subnational level and the role of urban jurisdiction within its locating political administrative regions. As table 1 illustrates below, the transitional path experiences three main stages during the last six decades.

The first stage is the pre-market reform period between 1950s and 1970s. Under the centrally-commanded regulation at that time, spatial equality was prioritised and hence city expansion was largely restricted. To begin with, in the 1980s, China experienced economic reform in favour of regulatory decentralisation and more importantly constructing market socialism. The city once again became the primary space for organising developmental activities and this is the second stage. Finally and since the 2000s, Chinese urban and regional policy swings to favour the regional construction which this time focuses on the spatial scale which is deployed around the functionally developed cities. The Chinese historical path of regional governance will be reviewed on the basis of this transitional thread.

Table 1: The transition of Chinese urban and regional policies since 1949

	Period	National Governmental Arrangement	National Aim	Planning Authority	Plan Names	Central-Local State Relationship	Centrally-conducted Urban Policy
Stage 1	1950s	1. Centralised regulatory system;	National capital accumulation;	National Planning Commission (NPC)	Five-Year Social and Economic Development Plan (Five-Year Plan)	Top-down command and control;	Specialised development of city planning;
	1960s – 1970s	2. Centrally-planned economy;	1. Cross-regional equality; 2. Self-sufficient city and region for industrial production;				1. Aborting the previous specialised planning of land use; 2. Constructing producer cities in favour of heavy industrialisation; 3. Anti-urbanism in terms of limiting urban growth rate;
Stage 2	1980s – 1990s	1. Decentralisation of economic decision-making and fiscal rights; 2. Promoting market-oriented policies in favour of local economic development;	Transforming to market socialism in favour of market principles and collectivisation of means of production;	Chinese urban planning bureaucracies	Urban System Plan	1. Relaxed vertical hierarchical state control; 2. Fierce inter-jurisdictional competition, especially for inward investment;	1. Growing specialisation of cities; 2. Promoting the comparative advantages of each cities' own localities; 3. No longer restricting the sprawl of urban space to cities' periphery;
Stage 3	2000s – Present	1. Construction of mega city-regional planning; 2. Promoting coordinated development across local jurisdictions;	Administrative efficiency and economic rationality at regional and national scale;	A multi-scalar central planning system	Many different versions of cross-jurisdictional plans which are high likely overlapping;	1. Central state-led plan is difficult to be directly enforced in the local agenda; 2. Mega city-regional identity becomes strong in YRD and PRD after 2005;	Promoting mega city-regional synergy by coordinating inter-city relationship;

Source: Compiled from Leaf (1998) and Xu (2008)

3.2.1. State centralism and egalitarian-focused urban and regional governance in the pre-reform period (1950s -1970s)

The first three decades after the founding of the P.R. China in 1949 were characterised by a centrally-commanded administrative system and the national

strategy of self-reliance. Top-down hierarchical regulation dominated the operation of local urban and rural activities, including the distribution of production resources. Regional and local level governments acted as the central branches which were responsible for enforcing vertical commands. In particular, the implementation of central authority's strategic plan became the statutory duty of local governments. During the pre-reform stage before the 1978 economic reform, Chinese central authority mainly built a centralised regulatory system by maintaining the vertical administrative relationship within the state scalar organisation.

Relating to this vertical regulatory system, firstly there was one particular comprehensive plan, named the national Five-Year Social and Economic Development Plan (Five-Year Plan), which was prepared by the National Planning Commission (NPC and known as National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) later). The plan was renewed consistently every five years while providing specific planning provisions, for example it specified the location of particular state-controlled enterprises. Therefore, the Five-Year Plan was widely considered to be 'tooled' to govern the industrial location and production capacity at the local, regional and national level, and more importantly redistribute resources among administrative regions in order to achieve spatial equality which is related to our latter discussion (Li and Wu, 2012a).

Secondly, the entire national territory was divided by the central authority into several trans-provincial mega administrative regions which each were regulated by a regional consolidated government in order to improve the execution of central command and planning tasks within local and regional administrative territories (also see Solinger, 1978; Liu and Feng, 2008). Each regional consolidated government was equipped with a regional bureau and a regional economic planning office.

As table 2 illustrates, Six Great Administrative Regions (*daxingzhengqu*) were initially constructed and then replaced by different numbers of Economic Cooperation Regions (*jingjixiezuoku*) at different decades. Each of these mega administrative regions constituted several different but contiguous provinces, such as North China which included Beijing, Tianjin and four other adjacent provinces. Beijing and Tianjin have been the municipalities or provincial-level urban jurisdictions which are under the direct control of central government all the time. Besides these

two exceptions, the provinces were the lower level administrative regions which included a number of prefectures and counties. Before the 1980s, territories at the prefecture and county level were largely rural, and the number of cities was fewer than 200 across the entire nation (Cartier, 2015). In other words, unlike the prefecture and county-level cities which we have seen after the 1980s, the majority of prefecture and county level areas in that period were not cities.

Table 2: Regional administrations from 1949 to 1978

Period	Regional administration	Regional constitution	Institutional settings	Intention and task
1949 - 1954	Great Administrative Regions (<i>da xingzhengqu</i>)	Six regions, including the Northeast, North China, the Northwest, the Southeast, the Central South, and the Southwest	The regions housed the military, Party and complete governmental departments	To strengthen central regulation, and facilitate sending down mandatory orders
1958-1961	Economic Cooperation Regions (<i>jingji xiezuoku</i>)	Seven regions, including North China, the Northeast, East China, Central China, South China, the Southwest and the Northwest	The regions were equipped with coordinating commissions and regional economic planning offices	To function as self-reliant economic regions under central guidance
1961 – 1966	Economic Cooperation Regions (<i>jingji xiezuoku</i>)	Six regions, including North China, the Northeast, East China, the Central-South, the Southwest and the Northwest	The regions were equipped with Party Bureaus and regional economic planning offices	To function as self-reliant economic regions under central guidance
1970	Economic Cooperation Regions (<i>jingji xiezuoku</i>)	Ten regions including the Southwest, the Northwest, Central China, South China, North China, the Northeast, East China, the Mingan region, the Shandong region and the Xinjiang region	Not materialised	To function as self-reliant economic regions under central guidance

Source: Compiled from Li and Wu (2012: 61)

The regional plan was required to be subservient to the national Five-Year Plan; and similarly each provincial plan was enforced to correspond to the regional plan. It was these middle and local level governments' statutory duty to enforce the implementation of their plans at this early stage. During the pre-reform period, the Five-Year Plan was full of specific targets, including the specified production outputs and distribution of production resources and investment projects among administrative jurisdictions. Such commanded tasks would then be sent down through the vertical planning system, and finally divided and allocated to the 'work

units' (*danwei*) which was the sub-prefecture and sub-county administrative composition of each individual administrative division (Leaf, 1998). Knowing this historical context is important for understanding the dominating role of hierarchical state scalar organisation in planning and operating the strategic development of regional and urban jurisdictions during the pre-reform stage.

However, the aim of urban and regional policy did not remain fixed under the central command during the entire pre-reform stage. In the absence of local autonomy, the process of constructing the urban space towards various purposes was under the direct control of central authority. For the first decade of the 1950s, Chinese urban planning was highly shaped in favour of a Soviet-style planning approach, which was characterised by extended and more importantly specialised construction of cities, and furthermore infrastructural linkages among these urban spaces (see Xu, 2008; Leaf, 1998).

Similar to the contemporary urban policy of promoting local comparative advantages, the specialisation of urban development at that moment aimed to achieve a general picture of complementary display of industrial output. Hence, the city was still the primary scale for organising economic activities during the decade of the 1950s, the first half period in particular. Chinese cities only experienced a short honeymoon planning period on the constructing path of Chinese mega administrative regions. The end of this first period was triggered by the abortion of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty and the retreat of Soviet planning specialists in the late 1950s (Leaf, 1998: 146).

Afterwards, between the 1960s and 1970s, the main emphasis of central urban and regional policy shifted from the previous specialised construction to the self-sufficient productive capacity within each provincial and regional jurisdiction. Contrary to these two spatial scales, the city was no longer regarded as a substantial unit for containing functional activities (Wu, 2007). Enlarged urbanisation across city administrative boundaries, growth of urban population in particular, was dramatically suppressed by central command. It was Mao Zedong, the first president of the P.R. China, who instructed Chinese urban planners that "It's no good if cities are too big (*Chengshi taidale, buhao*)" (McGee et al., 2007: 33). One of the critical considerations of Chinese regulators at that time was to prioritise the development of

comparative under-developed rural areas instead of cities' advantageous economic growth. Relating to the cognition of 'anti-urbanism' (Leaf, 1998: 146) or 'pro-ruralism' (Kirkby, 1985: 4), state power not only restrained the number of migrants from rural to urban space, but also periodically forcefully transferred a certain number of urban residents to the countryside.

Firstly and for the former restriction, in 1958 the National People's Congress created the framework of 'permanent registration booklet' (*hukou bu*) which divided the entire Chinese population into two categories, 'urban residence' (*chengshi hukou*) and 'rural residence' (*nongcun hukou*) (Kirkby, 1985). Thereafter the unauthorised long-term resident exchange between city and countryside was monitored and restricted; people were thus settled into where they were registered for the following two decades until the 1980s reform.

Secondly and for the latter forcing arrangement, there was a continuous trend of state-led 'sending down' (*xiafang*) of urban residents from cities to rural areas during the 1960s and 1970s; and the population movements reached a peak twice, in the early 1960s and in the period between 1966 and 1976 (Kirkby, 1985). By making these relocating arrangements, the respective disparities between urban and rural demography, and industrial and agricultural development were expected to be reduced by the central decision-makers at that time. As a consequence, achieving spatial equality at the provincial, regional and national levels replaced economic growth as one of China's primary aims before the 1980s reform. Thus the city was no longer the primary scale within regional planning and governance.

For the aim of balancing the industrial distribution within each administrative region, the function of the city was identified as "self-reliant concentrated sites for industry, rather than centres promoting regional economic growth, trade and technological progress" (Wang, 1994: 257). The underlying intention of this central identification was to build 'producer cities' instead of 'consumer cities', which was seen as promoting capitalist and feudalist urbanism by Chinese socialist decision-makers at that moment (Leaf, 1998). There are two perspectives for introducing the process of constructing urban self-reliant productive sites.

Firstly, a limited extent of agricultural hinterlands was assigned to each prefecture government in order to feed the residents within their administrative base (Leaf,

1998). The second point was the growth of industrial outputs within each administrative jurisdiction outweighed the pre-existing condition of the selected production location under the centrally-controlled hierarchical planning authority (Kirkby, 1985). The most prominent example was that a large number of cities were keen to invest in constructing state-controlled steel plants regardless of their own condition and capability, and more importantly, the functionally complementary display of industrial productive capacity within the larger regional scale. Consequently, the development of each city became a part of the egalitarian-oriented layout within its located administrative regions.

Table 3: State spatial selectivity in the pre-reform China

	State Spatial Projects	State Spatial Strategies
Scalar Dimension	<p>Concentration</p> <p>Centralisation of state decision-making rights - central state-commanded regulatory system;</p>	<p>Singularity</p> <p>1. Nation was the primary scale for planning;</p> <p>2. Planned activities were allocated into a number of cross-provincial regions;</p>
Territorial Dimension	<p>Uniformity</p> <p>1. The nation consists of a number of regionally consolidated governments which each had a similar governmental structure;</p> <p>2. The city was greatly undermined within the regional construction;</p>	<p>Equalisation</p> <p>1. Promoting egalitarian and self-reliance at the cross-provincial administrative regional and national scale;</p> <p>2. Promoting both industrial and agricultural development in urban and rural places respectively;</p>

Source: Structure derived from Brenner (2004b: 97)

To summarise, the regional development was highly planned and administered by the centrally-controlled hierarchical state scalar organisation during the pre-reform stage. The strong cross-provincial consolidated governments at regional level were mobilised firstly to strengthen the central control over local and regional development through issuing a national plan, and secondly to construct regional balance in the form of even development between rural and urban areas within each mega administrative region. Under this circumstance, the role of cities was quickly transformed from an economic focus during the 1950s to becoming a part of the greater orchestration of achieving region-wide spatial equality and self-reliance. The previous urban specialised development had to give way to the regional egalitarian

approach, which applied to both urban and rural spaces under the central command. Overall, cities were only seen as parts of located mega administrative regions which aimed to become egalitarian regional spaces within its jurisdictional territory during most of the pre-reform stage.

3.2.2. Economic decentralisation and urban jurisdiction's dominion in the reform period (1980s – 1990s)

To begin with 1978, as a result of the transformation of primary national interest from political concentration to economic advancement under the command of the new central leadership, China experienced economic reform and the 'Open Door' policy. As a consequence, we saw weakened hierarchical control and decentralised economic decision-making rights toward prefecture and county level governments in China (Wu, 2002; Wu and Zhang, 2007; Wu and Zhang, 2010; Luo and Shen, 2009). The regulatory role of the former cross-provincial administrative regions in relation to economic affairs was soon significantly undermined as well as the relaxation of the central commanding plan, including the National 'Five-Year Plan' (Li and Wu, 2013: 139). The relaxation of central planning and control were argued to be triggered on the basis of considerations stated below.

Firstly, the market reform and decentralisation of economic decision-making rights made local authorities, such as the city halls and town halls, no longer a passive regulator, but rather a primary actor in local development (Wu and Zhang, 2007). That is, they are able to make their own decisions and pursue for their own good on the basis of their localised conditions. One particular example is the reformed fiscal system since the 1980s, which has changed from being dominated by the central state to a tax sharing system between central and local states. This has made local governments eager to expand their economic bases in their jurisdictions, for instance generating more GDP by making preferential policies for attracting inward investments.

Therefore, due to the rising fiscal and administrative powers of local governments, the provincial authorities have only limited influence over local decision-making. In this circumstance, without regulatory legislations or solid regional institutions

enforcing the implementation of the central plans locally, it became extremely hard to expect the local governments to rigorously follow the central master plans when partial planning provisions were formulated against the growth of the local tax base.

Secondly, the content of central territorial or regional plans is criticised as inflexible and too broad without much detailed explanations (Mao and Fang, 2002). For instance, the territory planning (*guotu guihua*), which was first launched by the National Planning Commission (NPC), provides guidance for national and regional sustainable economic and social development through planning the administration of land and natural resources. However, it has been critiqued that the content of the territorial planning is too general and lacks a specific focus. That is, the territorial planning provides general guidance only and overlooks each region's unique background and path-dependent development (Mao and Fang, 2002: 270). The lack of flexibility leads the local development to be vulnerable to external changes, in particular amid the global economic integration.

With respect to the above-mentioned 1978 Chinese reform, firstly, local authorities, city states in particular, autonomy over the local administration was dramatically extended in comparison with their role of passive regulators in the pre-reform stage (see more details in Leaf, 1998; Ng and Xu, 2000); and secondly, growing specialisation of urban space dominated the Chinese regional and urban governance for the aim of economic growth in the reform period during the 1980s and 1990s, which was contrary to the earlier central-led uniform and standardised spatial arrangement in the form of large administrative regions in order to reinforce top-down hierarchical control (Leaf, 1998).

Therefore, achieving regional equality for administrative jurisdictions is replaced by promoting the comparative advantage of each city's unique localities due to the issues of enhancing production efficiency and addressing the state fiscal deficit as the primary strategic aims (Li and Wu, 2012a: 65). The reform enables the urban space to be filled by customised and place-specific governmental arrangements largely in favour of entrepreneurialism. Urban space supersedes administrative regional territory as the primary scale for organising human activities under the central orchestration. As a consequence, market-oriented commercial activities were

recognised by many to be concentrating in the city (e.g. Lei, 2014; Ng and Xu, 2000; Lin, 2002; Leaf, 2002; Zhao, Chan and Sit, 2003; Wu, 2008).

The debates about the re-rising of the cities, such as the functional importance of urban space and urban governance, appeared to be the focus in many Chinese literatures (e.g. Wu, 2003; Xu and Yeh, 2005; Zhang, 2002). Not only was the economic contribution of cities in the locating provinces improved, their administrative leading roles over adjacent regions was also formulated. In 1982, a new governmental relationship between cities and their adjacent counties was forged under central orchestration. The 'city-leading-county' (*shi guan xian*) framework expands cities' jurisdiction beyond their traditional governmental boundaries to include adjacent counties which were previously under the direct control of provincial governments (Chung, 2007). Contrary to the contemporary inter-city alliance or cooperation, this is a vertical controlling relationship. The city once again re-emerged as the prominent node within Chinese geographical space under central political support.

Here is the concern as a result of decentralised economic reform, of which the criticisms state that it is the growing autonomy of the local authorities and their market-oriented decision-making and governance policy that is responsible for the fragmented horizontal relationship among local administrative jurisdictions (Vogel, 2010; Luo and Shen, 2008). To make the situation even further complicated, many lower level cities, for example at the prefecture and county level, and even towns, which were formerly seen as peripheral or in rural areas, have developed into active economic centres linked to inward capital investments and external consumer markets (Xu and Yeh, 2011).

Hence in order to catch up or outbid the increased number of competitors in inter-city competition for inward investment and consumer market, urban governments, which are the primary local authorities, believe that it would not be enough to only pursue deregulation on the basis of the previous state-controlled economy (e.g. *laissez-faire*) without considering a strategy to enhance the economic competitiveness for local administrative jurisdictions (Jessop et al., 1999; Wu and Zhang, 2007). The fact is "working out a development strategy that can stimulate growth and expand the revenue base is an essential goal for local government" and thus "local government,

to a certain extent, has become a local developmentalist state with its own policy” (Wu, 2010: 23).

Relating to the cross-territorial conflict, firstly, due to the rising fiscal and administrative powers, urban governments chose to engage with similar projects of constructing or upgrading the infrastructures within their respective jurisdiction in order to improve their local competitiveness. Many places “had scrambled to construct airports and seaports without considering their own comparative advantages” (Chien, 2008: 279). For example, Wuxi airport in the Yangtze River Delta was constructed not far from Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport; and it has only six flights a day (Chien, 2008).

Secondly, there is no surprise to see the recognition of ‘localism’ as a severe issue in local bargaining (Xu, 2008; Liu, 2001; Vogel, 2010). In China, ‘localism’ is defined as “a special feature of economic organisation, in which market activities and economic development are normally organised on the basis of individual administrative units” (Xu, 2008: 164). Thus the national and regional trading market is artificially separated by local administrative boundaries. The division of administrative power exacerbates Chinese fragmented economy as a result of the accelerated local competition. This is especially happening at the local level, such as prefecture cities, county- and township-level units (Liu, 2001). To summarise, in the context of the weakening of top-down planning and governance system after the 1978 economic reform, the former hierarchical regulating control was loosened and intense horizontal competition among local urban jurisdictions increased.

However, Chinese geopolitical regionalism did not fully retreat from state governance during the first two decades of the reform stage. Cities and their neighbouring counties were politically linked through centrally orchestrated ‘city-leading-county’ arrangements since 1982. The expansion of cities’ jurisdictions represents a change of power relations between cities and rural counties towards administrative union (Chung, 2007). Such politically allied relationships enable urban political actors to play a dominant role in running regional affairs. Due to the pro-development decision making, city state forces extract a variety of resources, such as non-monetary categories which include raw materials, agricultural products and farmland, and

monetary items, such as levies, from subordinate counties under often unfair terms in order to support the development of city space (see Chung, 2007).

The result can still be seen in many Chinese cities' jurisdictions today, for instance the city state is keen to recruit the subordinate towns' enterprises into their directly controlled business zones in the name of industrial concentration. Overall, Chinese urban authorities became the dominant force which is able to manipulate the extended jurisdictional dynamics during the economic and political transformation stage. Hence urban administrative jurisdictions became the primary space for political actors organising and operating economic activities.

Table 4: State spatial selectivity in the reformed China during 1980s and 1990s

	State Spatial Projects	State Spatial Strategies
Scalar Dimension	<p>Decentralisation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic reform – de-centralisation of state's economic decision-making rights; 2. Local authority's, city state's in particular, administrative power was greatly enhanced; e.g. the establishment of 'city-leading-county' framework; 	<p>Re-rise of urban space</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City was recognised by the state for concentrating market-oriented commercial activities; 2. Counties were exploited by their superior urban authorities in terms of resources;
Territorial Dimension	<p>Customisation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Previous regional consolidated governments and rigorous hierarchical control was abandoned; 2. Promoting the specialised utilisation of urban space; 	<p>Concentration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promoting the comparative advantage of each cities' own localities in favour of economic growth through tailored path; 2. Inter-city competition for inward investment and consumer market;

Source: Structure derived from Brenner (2004b: 97)

3.2.3. Challenging mega city-regionalism and cross-jurisdictional governance since 2000

After experiencing two decades of continuous downscaling of economic-political governance towards local governments and insisting on overriding economic growth and accumulation, there has been rising attention towards the switch between previously achieving economic growth and resource distributing efficiencies entrenched in urban jurisdictions, and constructing administrative efficiency and economic rationality at larger cross-jurisdictional scales among the scholars and

government planners since the 2000s (e.g. Luo and Shen, 2009; Vogel, 2010; Wang, 2008; Wang, 2009; Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2011). To begin with the country's Ninth Five-Year Plan (1996-2000), the national guidance plan proposed constructing several trans-provincial mega economic regions, and indicated regionalisation as a national strategy. YRD and JJJ were two of the proposed projects at that time. Although most of the proposed trans-provincial regions were showing little progress or were even barely realised in the first decade of the 21st century, such as the North East Region and the North West Region, the message from the central state to support regional planning was clear and thus encouraged the rise of a few mega city-regions, including the PRD (Xu and Yeh, 2010).

There are a number of explanations for the motivations behind the promotion of constructing city-centric regional space by previous research. Xu (2008) summarises two primary reasons for why mega city-regions matter in China. Firstly, the cross-jurisdictional regional strategic planning is seen by many as the new way to overcome the negative effects of fragmented political and economic landscapes which emerged after the 1978 economic reform. Xu argues that the strategic plan will reduce the impact of negative externalities, such as the 'localism' and inter-city competition, and thus improve the regional competitiveness as one unit by prompting inter-city cooperation and regional integration.

Relating to this expectation, there is the hope that cross-jurisdictional mega city-regions are able to be re-positioned in the national and global economic landscapes through regional planning. Secondly, the strategic planning at the mega city-region level, which is supervised and approved by the central authority, is seen as a potential and effective way to "regain control and reassert functional importance of provincial and central governments in the growing complexity of local and regional economic governance" since the decentralisation of state regulation (Xu and Yeh, 2010: 18).

There are three points which can be extracted from Xu's statements above. Firstly, the rescaling of Chinese spatial governance is a process which is 'layering' into the existing state scalar organisation. It only happens on the basis of on-going territorial politics, such as central-local state bargaining and horizontal inter-government conflict. It emphasises the struggle over scales and analyses internal and external

factors and players within and beyond this targeted scale (Shen, 2007). Thus it is not independent from extant state organisation. Relating to the Chinese historical experience of strong state intervention in the social development and transformation, the state is still a critical actor in Chinese mega city-regionalism.

Secondly, contrary to the establishment of egalitarian mega administrative regions in the pre-reform stage and the rise of the city in the first two decades of the reform stage, it is the mega cities-centric regions that have come to scholar and policy makers' attention since 2000. It is expected that the synergy of regionalised neighbouring cities and their adjacent areas could improve the competitiveness of the identified mega city-regions.

Thirdly, the thesis should consider carefully to what extent the role of the central state is being undermined by the decentralisation of economic decision-making rights. At this stage, it is hard to reach the conclusion that local government is able to make a certain kind of achievement which could benefit local development, however at the expense of national overall strategy and aim.

However, relating to the Chinese state planning framework, the above-mentioned strategic intervention from the state is not easy to be transferred into practice. There is the argument that

“the institutional structure for state intervention is problematic because the functions of regional planning are highly fragmented among different ministries” (Xu and Yeh, 2010: 18).

According to Xu's (2008: 168) research, the functions of regional planning have been divided among several central ministries. It has been difficult to draw a clear line between the different parts of regional planning. The consequence is there are inter-ministerial conflicts on the basis of overlapping planning provisions.

To be more specific, there are three ministries in the central State Council responsible for the urban and regional strategic plans which all could choose to engage with spatial planning. For instance, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and its local branches are responsible for trans-provincial regional planning in favour of socioeconomic development. In particular, the guidance about the specific function of city within the larger regions has been

contained in their plan since the 1978 economic reform. The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MHURD) and its local subordinates, such as provincial construction commissions and municipal urban planning departments, are responsible for physical planning in terms of for example infrastructure construction, i.e. inter-city transportation, and specified use of urban space. The Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) and its local branches are responsible for the land-use plan, in which the farmland planning is always one of the main targets (Xu, 2008).

These are apparently generating overlaps among their respective planning provisions. First of all, all three departments realise the importance of planning at the cross-urban jurisdictional scale. Furthermore, NDRC provide guidance on the potential functional linkages among cities and specified usage of urban space which MHURD and MLR also choose to engage with. There is no direct statutory affiliation among NDRC, MHURD and MLR with the State Council. It is also a fact that “the NDRC is a central agency that is half-level higher than other ministries for historical reasons ... [and] therefore social-economic planning has the capacity to guide, coordinate, and constrain spatial plans made by other ministries” (Xu and Yeh, 2011: 225).

However, it has been argued that MHURD and MLR do not take NDRC’s guidance seriously when they plan for the spatial formation and land administration respectively since they do not like their rival ministries plans which could compete for the regional planning market (Xu, 2008). Considering the above-stated conflicting institutional structure, the central governments’ intervention over the mega city-regional administrative agenda is significantly undermined (Hu, 2006). Under this circumstance, the central planning framework is easily generating confusion about the development guidance for local authorities.

In the context of historically inherited inter-city competition, cities compete for financial and natural resources, state and private investment, and projects of infrastructure construction in order to maximise the economic generation within their administrative jurisdictions. Hence it is challenging to fully reach the diversified expectation of all included cities by the cross-jurisdictional regional plan. To remind us, although the Chinese central planning system and mega city-regional plan was inherited from the pre-reform stage, the plan is no longer statutory since the abolition

of top-down command-and-control and economic decentralisation in the 1980s. It means the central or provincial plan cannot be directly enforced over the local agenda when there are conflicting demands across local territorial authorities. Therefore unlike in the pre-reform stage, the implementation of the regional plan has never been easy during the reform stage.

Furthermore, there are currently too many efforts being wasted on rushing different versions of mega city-regional plans which are highly overlapping in the belief that a higher government-led cross-urban jurisdictional coordinated plan would improve the mega city-regional competitiveness. Analysing the difficulties of enforcing mega city-regional plans since 2000, the missing part from the current higher government-led mega city-regional arrangement is, as Luo and Shen (2009: 55) suggest, “more attention to the process of the planning, especially building trust and consensus among cities”. There is a lack of interaction not only between higher and lower levels of government, but also among local authorities. Without reaching a consensus, it is difficult to force local authorities to give their local interest away for the enlarged picture of regional development.

Table 5: State spatial selectivity in China since 2000

	State Spatial Projects	State Spatial Strategies
Scalar Dimension	<p>Central state returns to the local agenda</p> <p>Central authority attempts to generate impacts over local development by issuing guidance of mega city-regional plan;</p>	<p>Multiplicity</p> <p>1. Both the city and mega city-regions are realised as the important scales for concentrating socio-economic activities;</p> <p>2. Mega city-regional plan is 'tooled' to relieve the path-dependent issue of inter-city competition;</p>
Territorial Dimension	<p>Customisation</p> <p>1. Expansion of cities' administrative jurisdiction;</p> <p>2. Promoting local state-proposed inter-city governance network or association;</p> <p>3. Local mega city-regional governance framework is 'tailored' on the basis of local specific context;</p>	<p>Concentration</p> <p>1. Promoting urban agglomeration for the aim of enhancing mega city-regional synergy and competitiveness;</p> <p>2. Achieving functionally complementary display among regional component cities;</p> <p>3. Concentration of infrastructural construction within the mega city-regional scale, transportation network in particular;</p>

Source: Structure derived from Brenner (2004b: 97)

There is an overlap between Luo and Shen's (2009) argument and Brenner (2004b) in that they both agree with the conclusion that spatial rescaling of governance shall be realised as an on-going process which leads to a continuous evolution instead of a one-step outcome. Overall, this thesis borrows Xu's (2008: 181) words to make the conclusion for many state-orchestrated mega city-regional coordinated plans since 2000:

“rather than shifting territorial development trajectories and coordinating regional growth patterns, regional strategic planning can appear to be little more than a cosmetic makeover that hides the intensifying competition within major city-regions in China”.

3.2.4 Mega city-regional construction in PRD, YRD and JJJ

There are exceptions to the top-down orchestration of mega city-regional construction. According to the Ninth National Five-Year Plan (1996-2000), Yangtze River Delta (YRD), Pearl River Delta (PRD) and Jing (Beijing) – Jin (Tianjin) – Ji (Hebei) (JJJ) were three of such mega city-regional construction projects. These mega city-regions' regional identities have gradually become stronger since 2005, with clear support for increased intra-regional linkages. The intention of this section is to enable comparison for the research of YRD by looking at the regional governance and planning in PRD and JJJ since the 1990s.

Table 6: A summary of mega city-regional plans for PRD, YD and JJJ

City-region	Plan name	Issuing date of the plan	Planning area	Supervising mechanism over the plan's implementation	The content of the mega city-regional plan
PRD	Outline of the Plan for the Reform and Development of the PRD (2008 - 2020)	2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PRD is located within the Guangdong provincial jurisdiction; 2. Members, 9 prefecture-level cities; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provincial Leading Group; 2. Members: 50 top officials from the provincial governments; 9 mayors of the prefecture-level cities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan has 12 chapters; 2. The plan stresses the need for upgrading the regional economic structure from traditional mass manufacturing to service and high-technology industries; 3. The plan attempts to give a comprehensive guide to the regional coordinated development;
YRD	YRD Regional Plan (2009 – 2015, but providing expectation until 2020)	2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YRD is a trans-provincial region and made up by Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces; 2. Members: 1 municipality which is under the direct control of the nation state and 15 prefecture-level cities; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three provincial governments; 2. NDRC; 3. Not to be made specific; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plan has 12 chapter; 2. The plan gives particular attention to define the functional and infrastructural distribution of each delta city; 3. The plan attempts to give a comprehensive guide to the regional development;
JJJ	Waiting to be issued	To be confirmed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current draft proposed a trans-provincial region which is made up of Beijing, Tianjin and a large part of Hebei province; 2. Provincial Members: 2 municipalities which are under the direct control of nation state and 8 prefecture-level cities; 	To be confirmed	To be confirmed

Pearl River Delta (PRD)

PRD is one of the most frequently researched mega city-regions in China. Being a part of the first wave of re-rising economic entities after the 1978 economic reform has enabled the PRD to become one of the main economic engines in China. In terms of regional coordinated planning and networked governance, the PRD has often been referenced as a comparator for the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) and other Chinese regional areas (e.g. Zhang and Wu, 2006; Xu and Yeh, 2011; Yang and Li, 2013).

According to NDRC's Outline Plan, the now well-known PRD consists of two sub-provincial level cities, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, and seven other prefecture-level cities as table 6 shows, Dongwan, Foshan, Huizhou, Jiangmen, Shaoqing, Zhongshan and Zhuhai. It means the entire delta area is currently located in the Guangdong province. According to each delta members' official statistical announcement, although the delta concentrates no more than 5% of the whole national population, it accounts for almost 10% of the total national GDP in 2012. This is the mega city-regional concept which has been officially recognised by the nation state and many scholars. Besides the term of PRD, the terms of Greater PRD and Pan PRD are also occasionally stated by recent research (e.g. Shen, 2004; Yeh and Xu, 2008; Yang and Li, 2013).

The Greater PRD comprises Hong Kong and Macao as well as the entire PRD. The conception was invented on the basis of the current intensifying economic connection among PRD, Hong Kong and Macao. The Greater PRD will not be a part of the discussion of this chapter. Because this regional scale relates to the concern of cross-(national) boundary governance which is politically distinct in comparison with the political-economic context in YRD and PRD due to the exceptional status of Hong Kong and Macao as Special Administrative Regions (see Shen 2004; Yang and Li 2013).

Figure 2: The Pearl River Delta (PRD)



Furthermore, the Pan PRD implies an even larger cross-provincial region. The concept was officially brought up by the former Guangdong provincial leader, Zhang Dejiang, and drew some attention from scholars around 2005 (e.g. Yeung, 2005; Xu and Yeh, 2008; Yeung and Shen, 2008). It consists of nine provinces in the mainland, including Fujian, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Hainan, Hunan, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangdong, and Hong Kong and Macao. Its physical size accounts for more than one fifth of the entire China. This mega scale was made for promoting the inter-provincial cooperation in terms of various regional issues, such as economic

competition, political fragmentation, environmental protection and constructing projects of cross-jurisdictional infrastructures. However only limited attention remains from both government officials and scholars due to the critique of the Pan PRD as lacking internal coherence. Therefore, the mega city-regional scale of PRD will be the target which this section chooses to engage with.

The entire PRD's regional area is located in the Guangdong provincial jurisdiction. Its regional identity remained vague before the 1980s since all city members were under the direct control of the provincial government and there was lack of a shared sense of belonging (Xu and Yeh, 2011). The missing element was lack of interdependent relationship among the subsequent regional components. To begin with the late 1970s, the PRD was initially designated as the first 'experiment field' by the Beijing central authority by following the 'Open Door' policy (Yang and Li, 2013). Consequently, the PRD became one of the earliest places which experienced the decentralisation of economic decision-making from central to local governments, economic privatisation and opening up to foreign capital inflow.

PRD's all nine prefecture level cities at that moment adopted the favourable policy for the aim of attracting overseas financial capital into the delta, which was authorised by China's central authority in the 1980s. As a result, during the 1980s, on the basis of the cheap labour and land expenditure and growth-oriented policy in favour of attracting inward investments, PRD became an attractive region for the establishment of manufacturing factories and mass production lines. PRD soon became a 'back factory' which was able to provide finished products to the 'front shop' of Hong Kong which was open to the global market (Xu and Yeh, 2011). Hence as one of the most developmental production bases in China, PRD becomes familiar to the external world as one of the most prominent Chinese mega city-regions (Yang and Li, 2013).

PRD's economic growth was indeed significant, but the issue of intra-regional economic competition was following. The delta cities were each investing heavily in expanding their own industrial outputs without considering the functional complementary layout at the larger regional scale. It was criticised that most delta cities were continuously making similar efforts to build similar industrial structures (Weng, 2006). For example, Xu and Yeh (2011: 221) explain how:

“municipalities on the eastern side (Guangzhou, Dongguan, Shenzhen, and Huizhou) present their strengths in electronics and telecommunication equipment, instruments, meters, cultural and office machinery, electric power, and heat power, whereas those on the western side (Foshan, Jiangmen, Zhongshan, Shaoqing, and Zhuhai) have put more focus on the textile-related industries and metal products, and electrical machinery and equipment”.

As a consequence, inter-city competition and economic fragmentation among the delta members intensified, and intra-regional networking was not much engaged.

Furthermore and before the Outline Plan, the proliferation of overseas capital-driven economic activities brought forth a ‘laissez faire’ culture in the delta during the 1980s (Xu and Yeh, 2011). Each of the delta cities spent their own financial revenues improving the investment environment, infrastructural construction in particular, in order to maximise inward investment within their jurisdiction. After the 1978 economic reform and decentralisation, the lack of sufficient fiscal resources resulted in the top-down coordination from the provincial government. Under this circumstance, The Outline Plan (Outline of the Plan of the Reform and Development of PRD) which is designated for the period of 2008-2020 is critiqued that the implementation of the regional Outline Plan shall face great challenges (e.g. Wu and Zhang, 2007; Ma, 2012). The criticism simply drives our attention to the outcome of this state-led vertical mega city-regional arrangement rather than how the arrangement shall be territorialised by considering the territorial politics.

In December 2008, the NDRC and Guangdong provincial government together published the Outline Plan for the expectation of promoting coordinated regional development in PRD. According to the Outline Plan, there is one particular arrangement of constructing a sub-region, named Guangzhou-Foshan city region, in the PRD on the basis of intercity functional connection. The governmental integration between Guangzhou and Foshan has significantly intensified since 2009 according to Ye’s (2014) report of administrative interaction between the two city governments. For instance, the establishment of a joint mayoral meeting between the two cities has enabled the inter-city policies and projects to become more enforceable. The joint mayoral meeting speeds up the progress of a range of key cross-jurisdictional projects in urban planning, infrastructure, social policy, economic cooperation and

environmental protection (Ye, 2014). For this case, the Guangdong provincial government is acting a role of facilitating inter-city cooperation within its jurisdiction.

However, what becomes even more crucial is the already agreed realisation of Guangzhou-Foshan cooperation before the outline plan. That was the process of building the consensus between two city governments before the formal establishment of sub-regional governance. The concept of Guangzhou-Foshan Metropolitan Area was previously proposed by Guangzhou city government in 2002 and then received a positive reaction from the Foshan city government (Ye, 2014). The more recent joint mayoral meeting was organised based on the previous experience of several years of inter-city forum. Therefore, this thesis needs to be very careful in dealing with the implementation performance of a mega city-regional plan since more attention is needed towards the locational political dynamics within the geopolitical mega city-regionalism. Hence the analysis around the governance arrangements for PRD should be able to shed light on the research of the mega city-regional planning and governance in the YRD.

It should also be noted that there is a difference between the YRD and PRD in terms of regional context. In the YRD, Shanghai is the only global city which is classified as Alpha+ according to GaWC's 2012 classification of cities. Other delta cities, such as Nanjing and Hangzhou which are provincial capitals, are not even defined as global cities. Shanghai has the highest economic output; and is leading the industrial transition to the service economy in the region. By contrast, all of the PRD component cities are much lower and similarly ranked in GaWC's classification. Guangzhou and Shenzhen may be slightly higher ranked than others, which are in the Beta+ and Beta- group respectively. There is no one particular city which is able to generate absolute advantages over others in terms of socio-economic agglomeration. For example, in 2012, there was no big difference between Guangzhou and Shenzhen's GDP, and Dongwan exported much more than Guangzhou as table 7 shows. Even the busiest and most important international airport which connects the region with the rest of the globe is located in Hong Kong. Based on this fact, the intense competition among the delta cities for the leading role in PRD's mega city-regional development may not be difficult to understand while Hong Kong which is an Alpha+ global city stands on the other side of the geopolitical border.

Table 7: PRD component members' attributes (2012)

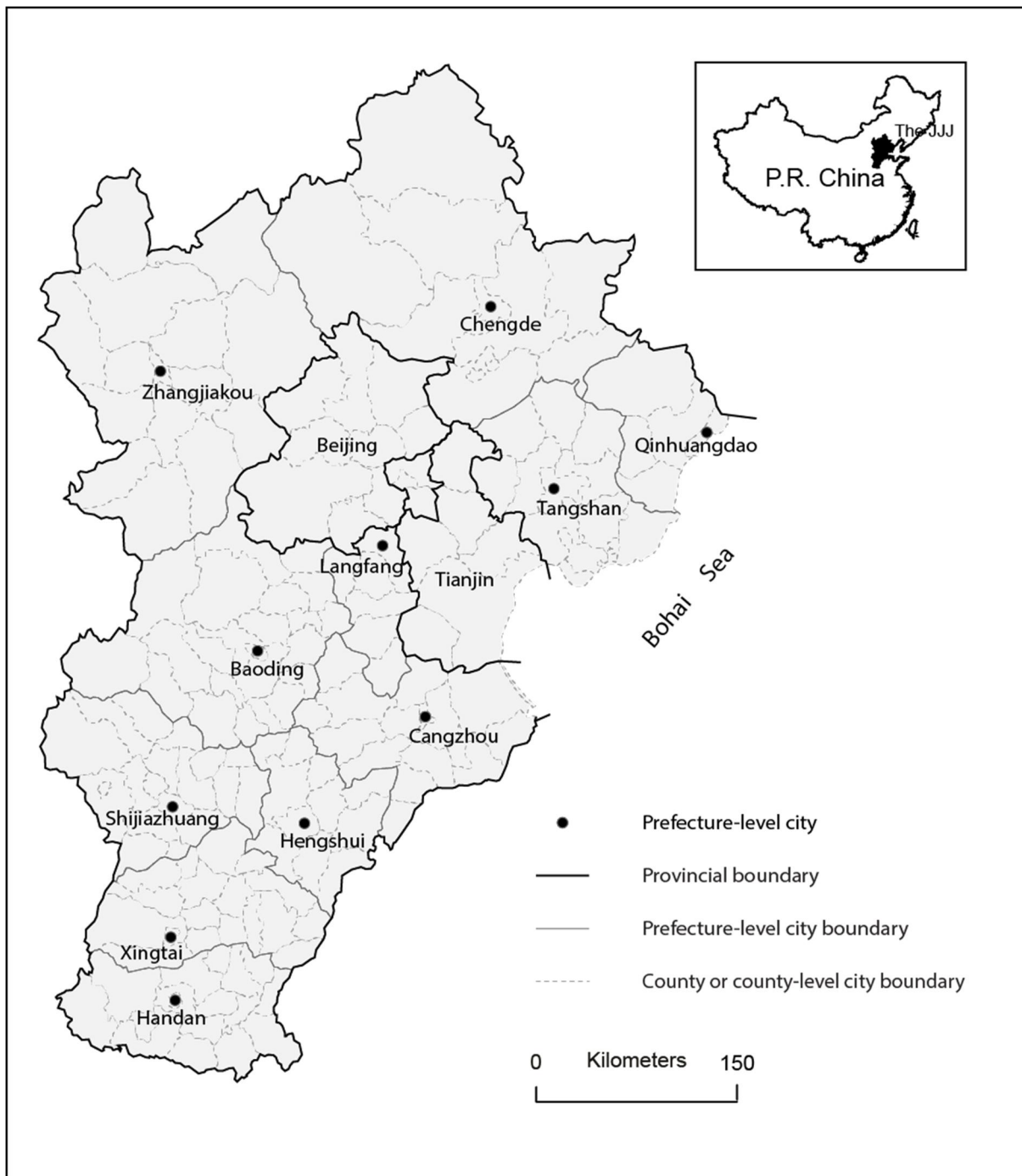
Cities	Permanent Resident Population (2010, million)	GDP (¥' billion)	Industries' proportion (%)			Open-up	
			Primary Industry	Secondary Industry	Tertiary Industry	New Contracted Inward Investment (\$' billion)	Export Volume (\$' billion)
Guangzhou	12.700	1355.121	1.63	34.78	63.59	6.802	58.912
Shenzhen	10.358	1295.008	<0.1	44.3	55.7	6.262	271.370
Dongwan	8.220	501.014	0.4	46.9	52.7	3.810	85.066
Foshan	7.194	670.902	1.9	62.5	35.6	3.305	40.150
Huizhou	4.597	236.800	5.39	58.08	36.53	2.650	20.3
Jiangmen	4.449	191.008	7.76	53.51	38.73	1.365	12.971
Shaoqing	3.918	145.384	16.69	45.21	38.10	2.913	3.781
Zhongshan	3.121	244.104	2.5	55.5	42	1.319	24.641
Zhuhai	1.560	150.381	2.6	52.9	44.5	2.190	21.631

Source: 2012 Statistical Communiqué of the National Economic and Social Development

(Bei)Jing-(Tian)Jin-Ji (JJJ)

Firstly, there is barely doubt about the functional importance of JJJ. NDRC's official speeches consistently reveal the central states' expectation of supporting the mega city-region of JJJ to become one of China's main economic engines. As early as late 20th century, the national Ninth Five-Year Plan (1996-2000) proposed to construct the region of Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei. By following this indication, there was the initiation of NDRC's proposed regional plan for JJJ in 2004. But the plan still remains with the State Council and is waiting for approval. Before the official papers are published, there is barely commonly agreed scope for the region of JJJ.

Figure 3: The Jing-Jin-Ji (JJJ)



The NDRC has disclosed that its draft regional planning scope for JJJ would be comprised of Beijing, Tianjin and a large part of Hebei province, which includes eight other prefecture-level cities within Hebei's jurisdiction as table 6 shows, i.e. Shijiazhuang which is the capital of Hebei province, Baoding, Qinhuangdao, Langfang, Cangzhou, Chengde, Zhangjiakou and Tangshan. This regional area

concentrates no more than 6% of the total national population, but is accounting for almost 10% of total national GDP in 2012. Among all of JJJ's regional members, the aggregated economic output from Beijing and Tianjin is more than the total of all other members'. Except the term of JJJ, there are other names such as Bohai Economic Rim or Bohai Rim (BER) to be used to regionalise this region in the literature (e.g. Cao, 1994). The concept of BER is stated to cover the Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Liaoning and Shandong provinces, which in fact enlarges JJJ's scope significantly. But only the region of JJJ as defined above will be discussed in this section.

Based on historical data, Hebei province consistently assisted Beijing and Tianjin's advancement. Beijing and Tianjin are municipalities directly under the central state and, even more importantly, Beijing is the national capital. Due to their special political status, Beijing and Tianjin's development was prioritised over Hebei by giving central policy support, such as Tianjin Harbour is authorised to play a more significant role than all of the big four deep-water ports in Hebei province, such as Qinhuangdao Harbour, Huanghua Port, Caofeidian Port and Jingtang Port, in terms of national and international economic transportation. In addition, from table 6, it is not difficult to see that most inward investment was attracted to Beijing and Tianjin. There is little interaction and coordination between Hebei and the two municipalities. Or in another words, the role of Hebei is not seen as important to Beijing and Tianjin as the YRD is to Shanghai and in particular the PRD to Hong Kong which are described as 'back factory' and 'front shop'. In terms of mega city-regional networking, Hebei was seen by many as the water supplier, agricultural products supplier and security guard only for Beijing and Tianjin.

Even further, there is one particular example, which is disclosed in Liu's (2011) report, partly reflecting Hebei's awkward position in the JJJ's past development. Before the 2008 Beijing Olympic game period, according to the Beijing central government's command, almost all of Hebei's manufacturing enterprises' daily operation which could cause potential damage to the regional environment had to be suspended for at least six months, not mentioning those new projects which remained in the planning process at that time. Relating to the command from the central government in Beijing, there is not much room for inter-government bargaining.

On the other hand, the central states' comparatively neglectful attitude towards Hebei's development can be partly shown by the slow regional planning process in comparison with PRD and YRD. The NDRC's proposed regional plan for JJJ still remains with the central State Council. As a result, there is no clear indication about the future regional development. However, it was suggested that the Hebei provincial government proposed two different development foci (Liu, 2011). One is to improve the inter-provincial networking by focusing on the development of areas which are close to Beijing and Tianjin. Another recommendation is to boost the regional area's economic output by enhancing the use of the deep-water wharfs in Hebei province.

Table 8: JJJ component cities' attributes (2012)

Cities	Permanent Resident Population (2010, million)	GDP (¥'billion)	Industries' proportion (%)			Open-up	
			Primary Industry	Secondary Industry	Tertiary Industry	New Contracted Inward Investment (\$' billion)	Export Volume (\$' billion)
Beijing	19.612	1780.100	0.8	22.8	76.4	11.350	59.650
Tianjin	12.938	1288.518	1.3	51.7	47.0	18.585	48.314
Hebei Province							
Shijiazhuang	10.164	450.220	10.0	49.8	40.2	1.270	7.340
Baoding	11.194	272.09	13.90	54.98	31.12	-	4.77
Qinhuangdao	2.988	113.917	13.0	39.3	47.7	0.628	2.488
Langfang	4.359	179.380	11.0	54.0	35.0	1.308	2.880
Cangzhou	7.134	281.190	11.3	52.6	36.1	1.345	2.098
Chengde	3.473	118.090	15.7	52.9	31.4	0.210	0.141
Zhangjiakou	4.345	123.367	16.7	42.9	40.4	0.123	0.318
Tangshan	7.577	586.163	9.1	59.2	31.7	0.734	4.318

Source: 2012 Statistical Communiqué of the National Economic and Social Development

There is no indication of which particular proposal would be prioritised since the NDRC's proposed regional plan has not been issued yet. By contrast, it has been quite a while since PRD and YRD were both handed over their regional plan by the NDRC. Thus it is not difficult to understand that the public is much more familiar with the geographical spatial form of the Jing – Jin – Ji than with the intra-regional

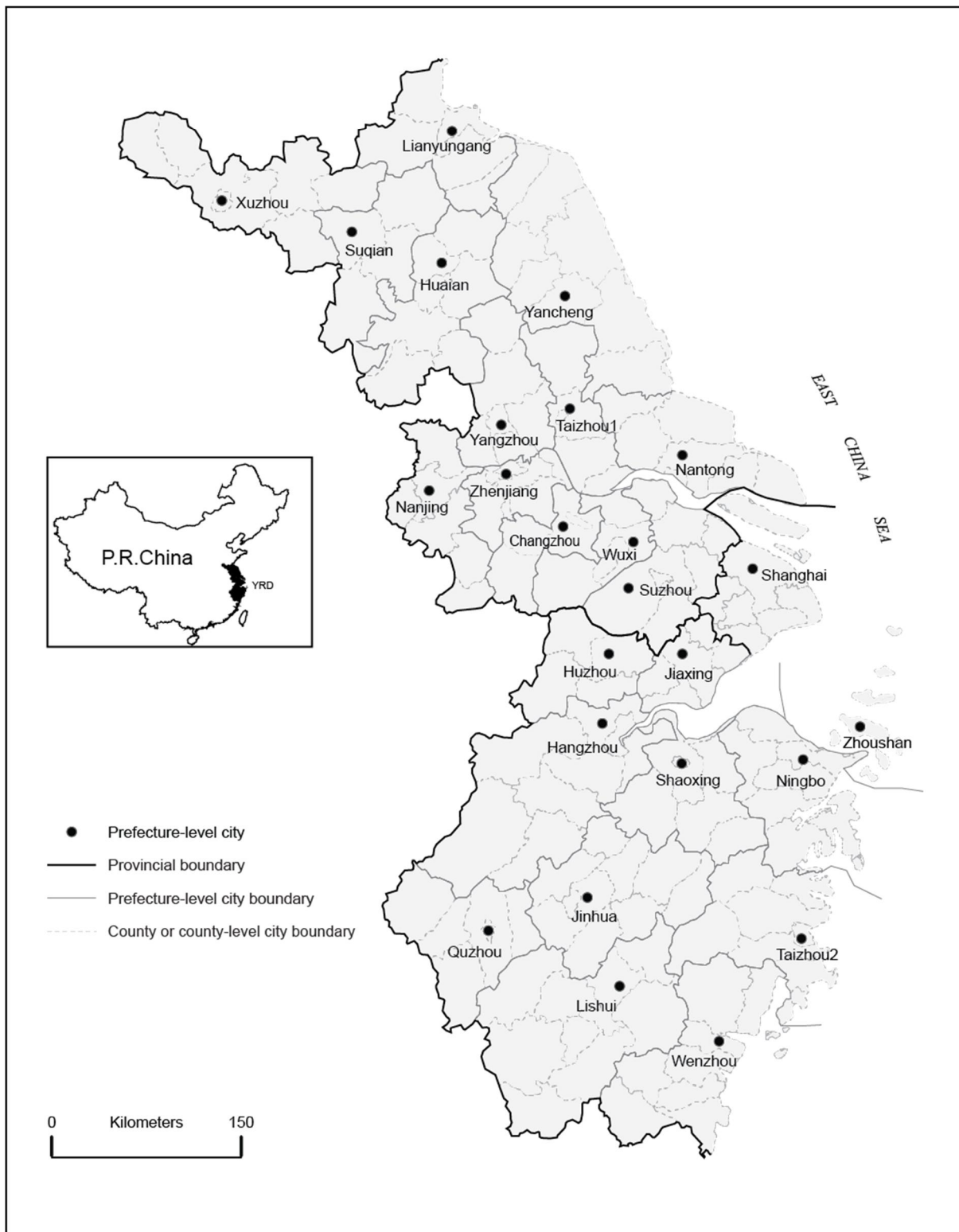
networking relationships of this area. In comparison with JJJ, PRD and YRD tell us a complete different story.

Yangtze River Delta (YRD)

In 1992, fourteen delta cities in the YRD, which included Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, Zhenjiang, Nanjing, Yangzhou, Nantong, Hangzhou, Shaoxing, Huzhou, Jiaxing, Ningbo and Zhoushan, founded the YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference (later known as YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economies (*Changsanjiao Chengshijingji XietiaoHui*)) initially with the aim of supporting economic growth and coordination. Afterwards, Taizhou¹ joined the association in 1997, and Taizhou² became a member in 2003. The official head-office is in Shanghai and the president of the association is Shanghai urban government. The association is responsible for holding the forum for official intercity interaction, which took place every two years before 2003, but has been meeting once every year since then. Now the forum is aiming for intercity coordination not only to boost the economy but also to improve many others aspects, such as environmental protection, regional innovation system and technology interaction. The association has currently 30 members.

After the 2000s, the YRD has become even more important since it is re-rising as China's mid-eastern economic engine. Its significant role is positively reflected by the issue of the YRD regional plan from the central planning system in 2010. According to the YRD Regional Plan, the enlarged spatial scope of the YRD now consists of the core YRD which includes one municipality which is under the direct control of the central state, i.e. Shanghai, and fifteen other prefecture level cities, including Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, Zhenjiang, Yangzhou, Taizhou¹, Nantong in Jiangsu province; and Hangzhou, Ningbo, Huzhou, Jiaxing, Shaoxing, Zhoushan, Taizhou² in Zhejiang province and the rest peripheral provincial area. The current YRD's area covers one municipality which is under the central government's direct control and two entire provincial territories.

Figure 4: The broad sense of YRD



The YRD accounts for almost one fifth of the national total GDP and contains more than six percent of China's total population. As a high-ranked global city according to

GaWC's work (e.g. Derudder et al., 2013), Shanghai is the main economic core of the YRD. Nanjing in the north of the delta, the capital of Jiangsu province, and Hangzhou in the south, the capital of Zhejiang province, are the sub-cores of the delta. Their position is reflected by their political representation and economic performance as table 5 shows. The YRD has been rising fast in terms of economic growth since the late 2000s. As the delta's main core, Shanghai's GDP is almost double Suzhou's achievement, which is the second largest in 2012. Apart from Shaoxing and Zhoushan, all other fourteen delta members are ranked among China's top 100 cities and towns in terms of economic output, and Shanghai is ranked top in 2012 (Elivecity.cn, 2013). Furthermore, the YRD is the largest export regional area and its delta members have a stronger capability for attracting foreign investments than PRD and JJJ (see tables 7 - 9).

In terms of YRD's physical geography, the Yangtze River crosses the delta area from the west to the east and then joins the East China Sea. This makes the YRD possess outstanding marine transportation. There are eight deep-water harbours and twenty-six river ports. In particular, Ningbo-Zhoushan harbour and Shanghai harbour are the top two largest deep-water harbours around the globe by 2003 in relation to both of cargo and TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) handling capacities (China Economic Net, 2014). Furthermore, on the land, several high-speed rail construction projects are working out. For example, the Ning-Hang and Hu-Hang high-speed rails would make the journey between Nanjing and Hangzhou, Shanghai and Hangzhou take no more than one hour and half an hour respectively. Thus, new infrastructure construction is significantly intensifying regional interaction.

YRD will be the main location for the thesis and there will be more discussion about the YRD in section 3.3 and in the following empirical chapters.

Table 9: YRD component cities' attributes (2012)

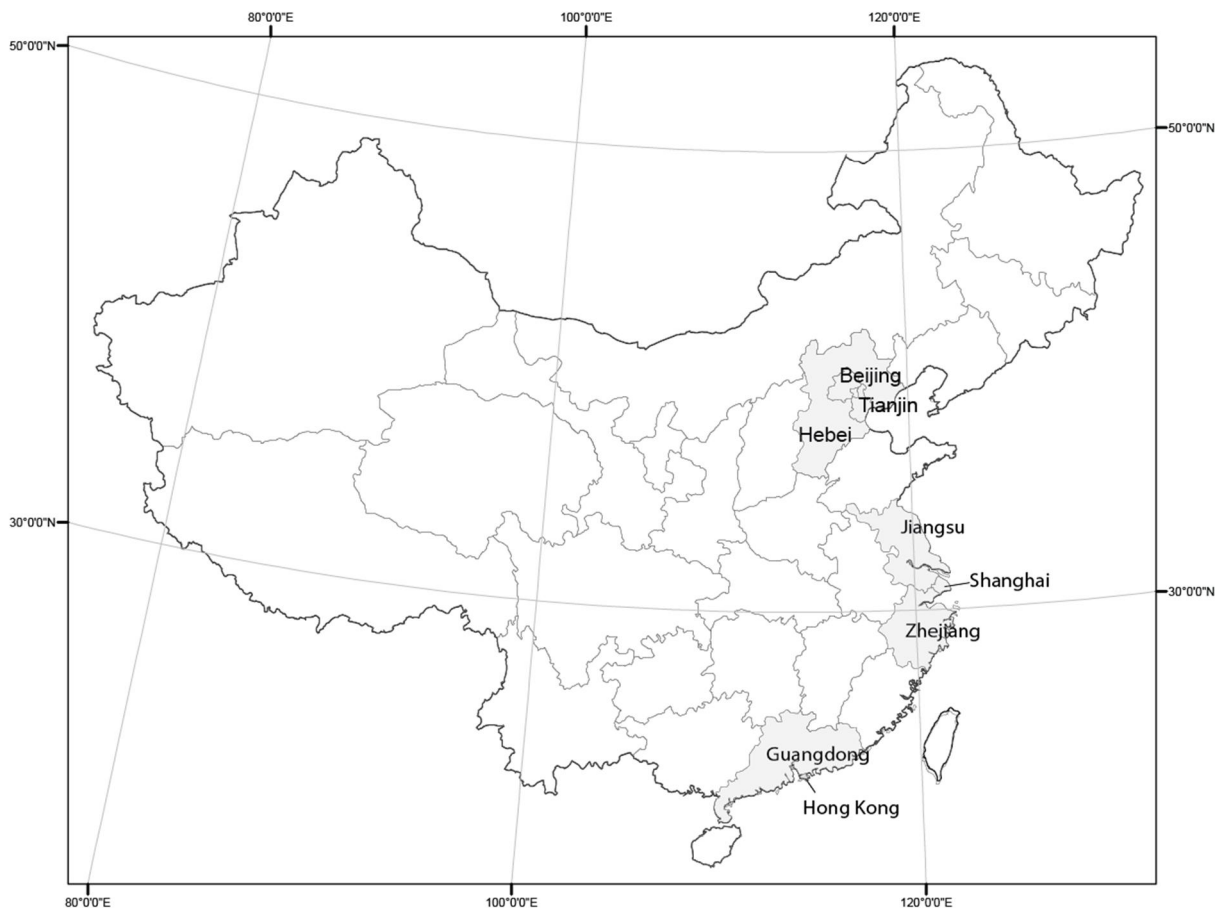
Cities	Permanent Resident Population (2010, million)	GDP (¥'billion)	Industries' proportion (%)			Open-up	
			Primary Industry	Secondary Industry	Tertiary Industry	New Contracted Foreign Investment (\$' billion)	Export Volume (\$' billion)
Shanghai	23.019	2010.133	0.64	39.36	60.00	22.338	206.807
Jiangsu Province							
Nanjing	8.005	720.157	2.60	44.00	53.40	6.115	31.901
Suzhou	10.466	1201.165	1.60	54.20	44.20	Not Sure	174.689
Wuxi	6.373	756.815	1.80	53.00	45.20	4.331	41.314
Changzhou	4.592	396.980	3.20	52.90	43.90	5.420	19.960
Zhenjiang	3.113	268.010	4.40	54.00	41.60	2.560	7.740
Yangzhou	4.460	293.320	7.00	53.00	40.00	4.264	8.172
Taizhou 1	4.619	270.167	7.10	53.10	39.80	4.014	6.947
Nantong	7.283	455.870	7.00	53.00	40.00	4.560	18.790
Zhejiang Province							
Hangzhou	8.700	780.398	3.30	46.50	50.20	8.265	41.262
Ningbo	7.606	652.470	4.10	53.90	42.00	5.310	61.440
Huzhou	2.894	166.197	7.42	53.44	39.14	1.687	7.396
Jiaxing	4.502	288.494	5.20	56.20	38.60	2.814	19.603
Shaoxing	4.912	100.877	3.50	58.20	38.30	0.206	9.739
Zhoushan	1.121	85.195	9.80	45.20	45.00	0.928	9.224
Taizhou 2	5.969	292.734	6.90	49.00	44.10	0.785	17.239

Source: 2012 Statistical Communiqué of the National Economic and Social Development

3.3. The strategic importance of the Yangtze River Delta (YRD)

The re-emergence of China's megaregions has drawn significant academic attention (e.g. Hu, 2006; Luo and Shen, 2009; Vogel, 2010; Wu and Zhang, 2007; Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2011), in particular its three main economic engines – the Pearl River Delta (PRD); the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) and the (Bei) Jing – (Tian) Jin – Ji (JJJ). There are three main reasons for explaining why the YRD is particularly worth undertaking further investigation.

Figure 5: The rise of Chinese mega city-regions



Firstly, the YRD is a region around Shanghai, which is famous for being China's mainland financial centre and in terms of global economic integration. Also Shanghai is China's second highest ranked city according to GaWC's 2012 classification of world cities, or in another word, Shanghai is China's most connected city in the world city network after Hong Kong. Moreover, although Shanghai cannot be mentioned together with London and New York which currently are sitting on the very top of the rank, data show Shanghai is rising fast (Derudder et al., 2010; Hanssens et al., 2011).

Secondly, as one of China's main economic engines, the YRD is experiencing the transforming of its industrial structure from manufacturing to high-technological and service economy. The YRD was titled as one of the most important 'world factories' in the earlier time. During the transformation stage, the YRD's manufacturing industries, Shanghai's in particular, has evolved into an advanced system which

focuses on high-tech industries since 1990s; moreover, tertiary industries, especially producer services, are expected to make up a major part of Shanghai's industrial constitution (see more details in Gu et al., 2011; Social Sciences Academic Press, 2011).

And finally, the YRD is a newly rising area. It was not in the State Council's priority development list which received strategic and financial resource support when the 'Open Door' policy was first issued in the 1980s. On the contrary, the PRD was the first mega city-region rising at that time. After the PRD experienced huge economic growth, the YRD started being planned as a city-region and academic and policy elites' attention started moving to the YRD. This thesis has seen a number of literatures emerge that discuss the PRD's developing regional governance (e.g. Ma, 2012; Vogel, 2010; Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2011). However, the YRD is still under-researched in comparison with the PRD; and there is significant scope to generate much new understandings of Chinese regional arrangements.

But perhaps the most interesting motivation for the research is the YRD has been issued official strategic 'mega city-regional' planning guidance by the State Council in 2010. This is important because it is the first time the national level has issued a guide for YRD's regional socio-economic development since the 1978 economic reform. This guide illustrates the most important issues existing within this region. One of the YRD Commission Members summarised that the regional economic integration itself is to address the division of administrative areas, but it is impossible to skip a few years of existence of the provincial units (Chinahourly, 2011). The administrative division of fifteen municipal units and a provincial-level unit in direct coordination is asymmetric. The result is not ideal, so more coordination is needed to maximise the benefits. In short, it highlights the problem of cities' expansion into larger city-regions – the problem of how the institutional planning and governance shall be territorialised on the basis of continuous territorial politics.

But what makes the YRD a particularly interesting case study is that unlike London (where the administrative boundary does not change to reflect the wider economic area), in the YRD governance mechanism is expanding to reflect the new mega city-regional geography. Also, what makes the YRD an important case study is that this central 'Guidance' suggests the solution to the problem of regional integration should

mainly rely on market forces [the geoeconomics of mega city-regionalism] and Government coordination [the geopolitics of mega city-regionalism] (Chinahourly, 2011). Or more specifically, one is deregulation, which is meant to build a platform for regional economic integration and greatly reduce the administrative barriers. Another is market driving force, which will bring trans-regional development institutions and inter-regional movement of people. It is important not to use the planned economy way to think of the current issues.

At this moment the institutional planning process is still largely depending on the state-led strategic plan in accordance with the intention of adjusting the urban functions and alleviating the intraregional competition. However, the problematic implementation of many Chinese regional plans leads to the scholar's criticism of the vertical planning arrangement which usually does not work well in dealing with the locational economic-political context in China (e.g. Luo and Shen, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2011). The reason for reaching such a pessimistic conclusion is related to the fact that the planning and governance of mega city-region is much likely to be centrally 'tooled' to improve the top-down intervention over the local administrative agenda since the Chinese economic reform and decentralisation. Thus attention was over-spent in the content of the arranged outcome instead of the ongoing territorial politics which shall constitute the governance outcome. Luo and Shen's (2008) analysis of the Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou city-regional planning raised the attention towards the political dynamics behind the construction of a strategic plan which is critical for improving the effectiveness of current Chinese mega city-regional planning.

3.3.1. The comprehensive YRD regional plan

The YRD regional plan was initiated by the NDRC in 2005, and finally approved and announced by the central State Council in 2010. The spatial planning scope consists of Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. The YRD regional plan focuses on providing developmental guidance for the sixteen main cities, which are Shanghai; Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, Zhenjiang, Yangzhou, Taizhou¹, Nantong in Jiangsu province; and Hangzhou, Ningbo, Huzhou, Jiaxing, Shaoxing, Zhoushan, Taizhou² in Zhejiang province. In 2010, the YRD regional plan was approved by the central State Council. It was the first time since the 1978 economic reform for a

mega city-regional coordinated plan to be launched for the YRD which covers three entire provinces.

The YRD regional plan contains twelve chapters, and covers coordinated guidance on spatial and functional distribution, urban and rural development, industrial distribution, infrastructural construction projects and regulatory arrangements. Chapter one states the strengths and conflicts within the YRD's development; and also the opportunities and threats with which the delta is confronted. Chapter two states the strategic positioning and the overall aim for the delta's future development. International financial centre and global urban agglomeration with strong competitive capability are proposed to be the potential positionings in the future global arena. The aims of a 'well-off society' and full modernisation are to be achieved by 2015 and 2020 respectively. In order to reach this overall aim, there are specific expectations as discussed below.

By 2015, the proportion of the service industries' output in the total regional delta's GDP was to achieve further improvement. The innovation ability was to make a large step forward so that the technological advancement would contribute notably to GDP growth. The aim of achieving functional complementary and systemic linkages is to be followed for further regional development. Environmental protection, improving social welfare and security system and governments' public service capability shall become the index for measuring social improvement. The GDP per capita of the regional delta is expected to reach 82K Yuan (100K Yuan in core regional area) by 2015. The service industries shall contribute to 48% (50% in core regional area) of the regional delta's economic outputs. Referring to the growth of GDP per capita and the tertiary industry, the YRD is on the right track towards the expectation of the YRD regional plan. According to the 2014 published data from Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang's Statistical Communiqués, 97.3k Yuan with 7.99% annual growth rate, 81.9k Yuan with 9.74% annual growth rate, and 73.0k Yuan with 6.58% annual growth rate were reached respectively. Moreover, tertiary industries were separately contributing to 64.8%, 46.7% and 47.9% of Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang's GDP.

By 2020, the service industries shall contribute 53% (55% in core regional area) of the regional delta's economic outputs. Further improvement is important for technological development, coordinated planning and development of regional

industrial layout, environmental protection and other indexes of measuring social advancement. The GDP per capita of the regional delta is expected to reach 110K Yuan (130K Yuan in core regional area) by 2020. The remaining ten chapters specify and expand the overall developmental aim which is stated by chapter two.

This is a national level mega city-regional plan; and the plan should be able to exercise some impact over the regional planning and administration within the delta. However, the extent of the YRD regional plan's influence over local decision making is questionable since the enforcement and evaluation mechanism for implementing the mega city-regional plan remains unclear. To make this even more ambiguous, proper regulatory legislation barely exists for enforcing the implementation of the regional plan in China.

Furthermore, the political scalar structure of the delta is complicated. The YRD consists of three provincial governments and twenty-four prefecture-level governments, not to mention the large number of county-level and rural governments. In the absence of a consolidated regulatory institution at the cross-provincial regional level, it is not hard to see the difficulty for monitoring and assessing the implementation of the plan in the YRD. The empirical chapter six on governmental arrangements will engage with the planning process and analysis of this plan. The next section is going to highlight the constitutive role of locational territorial politics in the construction of cross-territorial regional governance by looking at the earlier regional projects of the city network of Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou (SWC).

3.3.2. The city network construction for Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou (SWC)

'Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou (SWC) regional plan' is the first city-regional plan which has obtained authorisation from the central State Council since 2000 (Luo and Shen, 2008). As the first, the planning reveals the precious experience and deficiencies for following a regional plan in China. The structures and many planning provisions of the YRD regional plan are quite similar to this very early version.

Suzhou, Wuxi and Changzhou are three prefecture level cities in Jiangsu province, which means they share the same administrative rank and power. According to Table 5, Suzhou and Wuxi are the two largest GDP generators in Jiangsu, and

Changzhou is an important GDP contributor which follows next to Wuxi. Individually, they deserve to be recognised as one of the core functional areas in the delta. The SWC regional construction project was initiated and has been led by Jiangsu provincial government since 2001. The main intentions behind the SWC planning arrangement are diversified (Wang and Chen, 2006). Firstly, it is for responding to the internal need of alleviating the serious urban competition and to improve the cooperation among these three cities.

Secondly, it is for improving the relationship between the SWC region and Shanghai by enhancing the SWC region's competitive capacity. It has been stated that Shanghai government has been engaged more in improving the manufacturing base within its suburban areas by implementing 173 projects since 2000 (Luo and Shen, 2008). The coordinated city network is seen as the leverage to improve the relationship between SWC region and Shanghai by Jiangsu province. The SWC regional plan was initially proposed by the provincial government in 2001 and then formulated by a range of different planning groups which individually contained provincial level officers, local urban administrative officials and planning scholars from all three cities.

However, the expectation of equal importance of all different planning groups was not reached during the planning stage. Specifically, the chief administrative leaders from provincial and prefectural governments were heavily influential in the formulation of planning and development strategies in comparison with the planners (Luo and Shen, 2008). This concern led to the issue of inter-city competition within the planning process and the regional plan proved difficult to be enforced due to ongoing locational inter-city conflicts.

Therefore, after 2002, the enforcement of the SWC regional plan on regional administrative agenda experienced significant challenges. According to Luo and Shen's (2008, 2009) report, six main reasons were raised to explain the challenging circumstance. Firstly, inter-city competition was underestimated by the planning institution. Secondly, the regional plan was either too general or too detailed to be followed by regional members. Luo and Shen then concluded that four of the five components of the plan, including industry planning, spatial planning, environment protection planning and tourism planning, were too general and hard to be followed

by the three cities; and the remaining part of infrastructural planning was too detailed and therefore infeasible to be followed.

Thirdly, there was a lack of effective arrangements responsible for the enforcement, such as a consolidated specialised institution at the city-regional level. Fourthly, the implementation of the plan was heavily dependent on local fiscal resources. The Jiangsu provincial government as the initiator and primary organiser of this city-regional plan was only little involved in funding the planned projects. Since the SWC regional plan is not statutory, it was hard to push the enforcement for the cross-jurisdictional projects when this had to rely on each city's funding.

Fifthly, the regional plan chose to engage with planning for the industrial distribution which is highly market-oriented. Resistance was thus generated in the implementation process. From this perspective, the SWC regional plan carried the legacy of the top-down central-commanded plan during the socialist period. Finally and the most important point is that:

“there was little information exchange and interaction among various governments, preventing cities from reaching consensus and building up mutual trust” (Luo and Shen, 2008: 210).

Before Luo and Shen's (2008, 2009) analysis, little attention had been paid to the locational territorial politics during the planning process in comparison with the analysis of planning organisation (e.g. Mao and Fang, 2002; Wu and Zhang, 2007; Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2010) and political approach for enforcing the planning provisions (e.g. Leaf, 1998; Hu, 2006; Ma, 2012). It is therefore unfair to state that it is the central and provincial planning institution's sole responsibility to plan for the cross-territorial regional governance; more importantly, the geopolitical interaction among local governments shall constitute a key component within the planning process. Without effective horizontal communication among local governments, the planning provision could easily swing to one's favour while at the expense of others. One specific example is the intercity competition for location of infrastructural construction projects, including airports and seaports. In the case of the SWC city-regional plan in particular, Luo and Shen (2008, 2009) concluded that the Jiangsu provincial government shall invest more efforts, as a facilitator, in working on building

trust and consensus on planning provisions among the three prefecture level governments during the plan-making stage.

3.4. Conclusion

In order to supplement the understanding of the geopolitical mega city-regionalism in distinct historical-geographical contexts, this chapter has aimed to investigate the transformation of Chinese state spatiality in its periodical continuity. To achieve this aim, it is crucial to explore the underlying characteristics embedded in the historical path of Chinese state rescaling process since the emergence of the current state scalar organisation along with the establishment of the P.R. China in 1949.

The centrally-commanded economy and egalitarian-oriented national strategy were the primary characteristics of Chinese political-economic constitution at the pre-reform stage. With regard to hierarchical control, mega cross-provincial administrative regions were constructed to ensure the central socio-economic command to be rigorously carried out through the vertical regulatory chain. Under this circumstance, even development was needed to be secured within each mega administrative territory on the basis of self-reliant socio-economic development. Meanwhile, the horizontal linkages among administrative jurisdictions were largely denied in the context of the top-down hierarchical dominance across the national territory. Therefore, the development of rural space was promoted at the expense of the city. The urbanisation process was restricted and a large number of urban populations were artificially transferred from cities to the countryside under the central command. The economic contribution and administrative significance of the city within regional development was significantly undermined. Consequently, the issues of poor production efficiency and fiscal deficit emerged and hence prompted central decision-makers to start the 1978 economic reform and decentralisation of economic decision-making rights between central and local governments.

During the transitional period, urban space was mobilised by local authorities, prefecture level governments in particular, to replace the previous mega administrative regional jurisdiction as the primary territorial site for concentrating social-economic activities. Growth-oriented locational decision-making substantially

encouraged the competition between local authorities for attracting production resources towards each urban jurisdiction. Geopolitical boundaries became the invisible barriers able to fragment local contiguous functional spaces.

Since the beginning of the 21st century we have witnessed a large number of state-orchestrated vertical regional planning initiatives, aiming to shift local attention away from local prefecture level administrative territory towards developing a cross-jurisdictional regional vision. Improving and sustaining regional comprehensive competitiveness is essential to the planning provision. Hence coordinated development and complementary functional connections were frequently mentioned by scholars (e.g. Social Sciences Academic Press, 2011; Xu and Yeh, 2011); and the YRD regional plan was identified as being crucial for managing important locational issues, including inter-locality competition, redundant infrastructure construction and increasing uneven development. However, it proved challenging for many of the top-down regional plans to be realised in the local political-economic agenda with few effective enforcement mechanisms in place.

The historical path of Chinese changing state spatiality reveals an underlying consistency through the continuous political-economic transformation. Firstly, there has been strong and direct political intervention, either as top-down control or in form of locational regulatory decisions, in the functional development at all scales and at all times. Unlike the European relation-oriented megaregionalism in favour of accelerated economic integration and American form-oriented approaches based on accelerated urbanisation (Harrison and Hoyler 2015a), the change of state spatiality in China always prioritises the geopolitical purpose over geographical socio-economic considerations, including the changing national interest from political concentration to economic efficiency by the end of pre-reform stage, and alleviating intense competition for production resources among local administrative jurisdictions around the turn of the century. The political administrative division has substantial influence over the functional development at local and regional scales.

Therefore, socio-economic activities are usually operated and concentrated on the basis of local and regional political administrative jurisdictions in China. From the egalitarian-oriented mega-regional policy at the pre-reform stage to the functional fragmentation as a result of political administrative barriers at both local and

provincial scales after the 1978 economic reform, what we have seen is the largely entrenched functional activities in the geopolitical territory unlike the cross-territorial functional space or market in the western context.

For this reason, researching territorial politics is fundamental for understanding the socio-economic transformation at subnational scale in relation to the Chinese historical-geographical context. Or in other words, it is crucial for us to explore how the socio-economic transformation has been politically territorialised before the researcher can understand mega city-regionalism in China. This will provide essential conceptions for us to research the state spatial change in the following empirical chapters.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to critically interpret the methodology which is mobilised for this research project. Given the need for understanding the emergence of the current Chinese city-regional governance framework in relation to the 'new city-regionalism' theory and the embedded Chinese context, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the main method for the qualitative research in the field. To be specific, interviews are employed to: firstly, investigate how networked state governance is rising as a governance arrangement across the YRD's city-regional functional space; secondly, explore the structure and operation of contemporary city-regional governance in the YRD, and additionally examine the official consideration within the formulating process of the central-recommended YRD regional plan; and finally, identify contested issues in the current city-regional governance arrangement.

The series of semi-structured interviews targets a range of elite participants who hold various backgrounds, such as governmental officials, university professors, local business leaders and other key stakeholders. This research follows Harvey's (2011) suggestion to consider elites as people who used to or currently have significant influence over decision-making for either urban and regional policy or business development within and outside of their respective organisation. Much effort was initially planned to be invested in meeting a number of senior governmental officials who were working closely with or within the YRD's regional planning and governance system, i.e. the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and its subordinated offices, and the Regional Cooperation and Exchange Office, etc. However, it was seriously challenging to secure interviews with many of these Chinese elites, in particular the government officials and business leaders. They are highly ranked in the political administrative framework and very close to the official strategic decision-making. Many of them decisively rejected the request for further engagement. This is a prominent issue for academic research in the Chinese governmental context (e.g. Li and Wu, 2013). Nevertheless, alternative options for potential participants were engaged. The majority of interviewees who have an

academic or other research background have the experience of being involved in either national or local government's decision-making process of regional governance arrangement, such as the formulation process of the YRD regional plan in particular. This means some of them used to work for the governmental decision-making in relation to the city-regional administrative agenda together with the above-mentioned difficult to access officials. Moreover, online government reports and media interviews of these officials were also engaged with to reinforce the analysis of the primary data.

Secondary statistical and documentary data were employed to support the analysis and the understanding of the primary data. Secondary data used include official social and economic statistics, official policy documents, online government reports, in particular on industrial development, and press releases. Secondary data were selected to provide the "extensive" basis and context for a more 'intensive' investigation" (White, 2010: p75), and even more importantly, enable the researcher "access to subjects that may be difficult/impossible to research through direct, personal contact, perhaps because they relate to the past or to a geographically distant place" (Hoggart et al., 2002: p120).

To provide a more explicit explanation and discussion of the fore-mentioned statements, this chapter is structured as follows. Section 4.2 starts with brief comparative discussions between the thesis' methodology and recent work on (mega) city-regions, and then clarifies the alignment between research objectives and selected methodology. Section 4.3 reviews the process of conducting semi-structured interviews. Undertaking semi-structured interviews aims to "give the researcher deeper insight into respondents' feelings and attitudes" rather than generating representative findings (Flowerdew and Martin, 2005: 76). There will be four sub-sections – recruiting interviewees, interview structure, conducting interviews and data analysis – explaining how deeper insights were generated through the entire process of conducting qualitative research. This section also discusses the specific challenges for doing qualitative research in a Chinese context while outlining how the researcher conducted elite interviews in the field. Following this part, sections 4.4 and 4.5 critically reflect on the interview process in relation to the issue of positionality, and discuss ethical considerations. Section 4.6 briefly justifies the sources and considers the appropriateness of secondary data collection, including

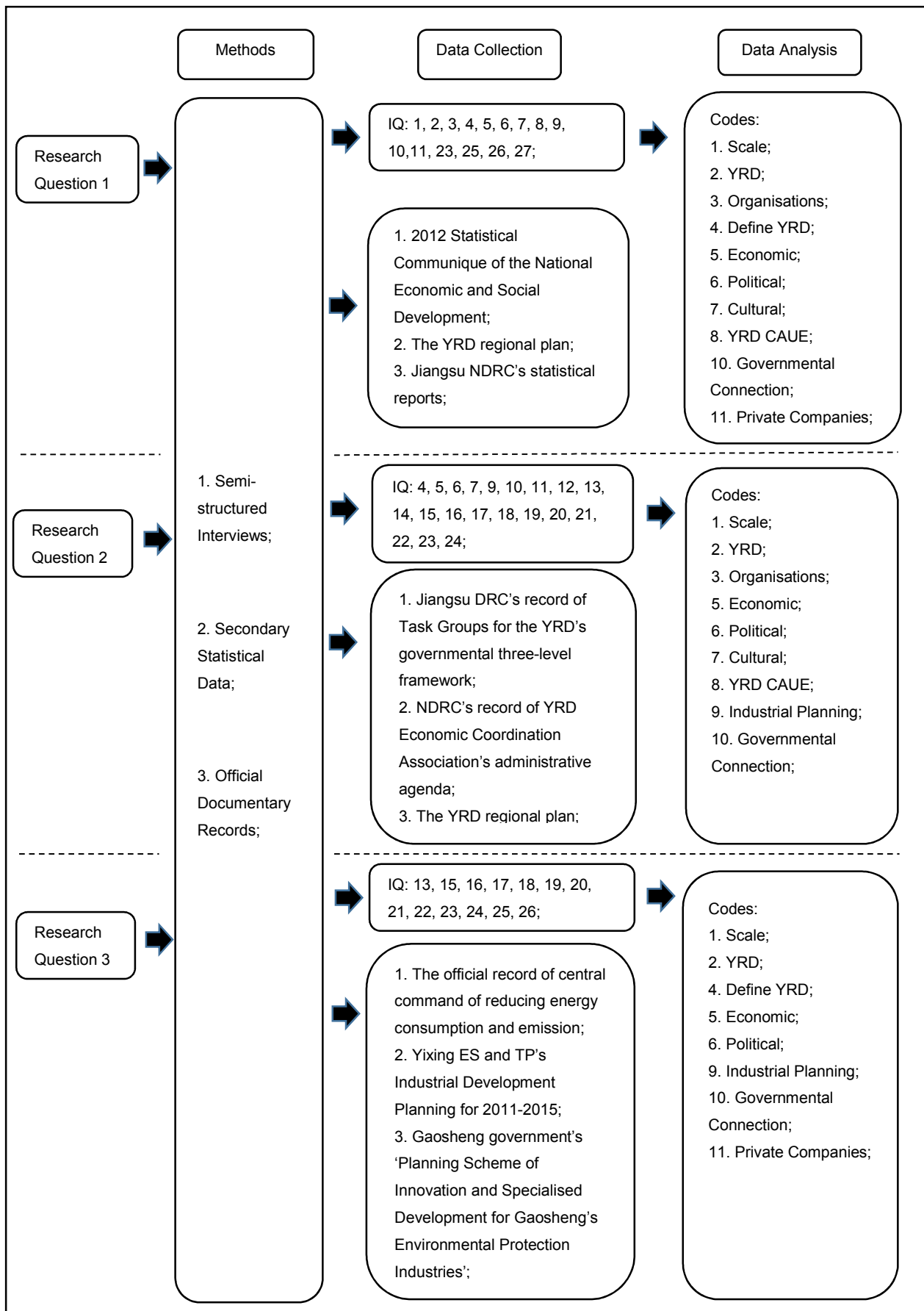
both quantitative and qualitative data, for reinforcing the analysis of primary qualitative data. At last, section 4.7 links the critical discussion of all five sections, and concludes that the qualitative research in the Chinese context enriches the research experience of the researcher and leads this project to valuable data. More importantly, together with secondary data, the interviews contribute well to investigate the appropriateness of applying western 'new city-regionalism' theory in the Chinese city-regional context.

4.2 Researching (mega) city-regions

First of all, the thesis determines that it is not easy to detect specifics about how other researchers conducted empirical research on the topic of (mega) city-regions. In some studies, there is no empirical research conducted to inform the authors' contribution to debates around existing city-regional concepts and policies, and further growing the 'new city-regionalism' theory. For instance, little empirical evidence was provided to support John Harrison and Michael Hoyler's (2015c) call for opening future city-regional research around the conceptual framework of 'who (question of agency), how (process) and why (specific interests)' in their new edited collection *Megaregions: Globalization's New Urban Form*.

For many others, the individual interview has been frequently stated as one of the primary qualitative methods, such as Harrison's (2010) research about the project of the Northern Way in England, and Li and Wu's (2013) critical reflections on the YRD regional plan. However, specific evaluations of the strengths and limitations of their respective research experiences were commonly not being generated in their publications. Apart from interviews, Peter Hall and Kathy Pain's (2006) research teams recorded and mapped telephone and email traffic in selected firms for serving the POLYNET project's aim of exploring the intra- and inter-regional functional relations in eight European city-regions. Such effort is going to need intensive cooperation from participants, which proves to be extremely challenging for the researcher who is new in the field.

Figure 6: Alignment between research objectives and methodology



Relating to this thesis, Figure 6 specifically explains how the overall aim and each research objective influenced this thesis' research methods, data collection and data analysis. Column 2 explains that the thesis employed three different types of data, including interview transcripts, secondary statistical data and official documentary records. Column 3 has two boxes for each research question. In each case the top one mentions the number of interview questions (see Appendix 2) which are responsible for serving each specific research question. Similarly, the bottom one works for documentary/policy analysis. Column 4 extends the 'interview' information one step further. There is a full list of 'codes' which the thesis uses to analyse the interview transcripts in Appendix 3. Therefore, column 4 identifies which 'code categories' specifically help to address each research question. The following sections are going to review and justify all research methods which this thesis chooses to employ.

4.3 Semi-structured interviews

A small number of interviews which use open-ended questions are usually treated as examples of qualitative research and hence in some respects "doing an interview is the most natural thing in the world" (Silverman, 2010: 190). The term qualitative interview generally refers to "in-depth, loosely or semi-structured interviews", and what this open-ended approach is trying to achieve is "extracting different forms of information from individuals and groups" (Byrne, 2004: 180-181). The previous prevailing path of the qualitative interview was filled with critical reflection, and therefore led to its contemporary prevailing role in primary research (Silverman, 1997; Byrne, 2004; Herzog, 2005; Hitchings, 2012). Representations of research findings become easily affected by feelings, emotions and a number of potential failings, and such is seen as one prevalent controversial debate in relation to the interview approach. As Hitchings (2012: 61), referring to Thrift and Dewsbury (2000) puts it, interviews "can only ever provide an unsatisfactorily washed out account of what previously took place" in order to illustrate the emerging critical debate over the appropriateness of utilising the research method of interview, before he engages

with the need for keeping interviews as an efficient means for generating meaningful research findings.

However, as Kvale (1996) suggests, it is largely agreed that an interview shall be conducted, as its name suggests, as an 'inter-view', which means interchanging of views between interviewer and his/her participants around a research topic. Both parties are able to contribute to the outcome of the interview. Similarly, what should never be overlooked is:

“whether we like it or not, researchers remain human beings complete with all the usual assembly of feelings, failings and moods. And all of those things influence how we feel and understand what is going on. ...Our consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs; there is no method or technique of doing research other than through the medium of the researcher” (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 157; see Valentine, 2005: 112).

What is hard to deny is that both interviewer and interviewee are 'co-producers' of the data (Byrne, 2004: 181). As a consequence, instead of contributing to eliminate the researchers' role of distorting, either directly or indirectly, the research findings in the field, careful consideration was invested into minimising the researchers' subjectivity through critically reflecting on the interview process, positionality and ethical issues.

As one of the most important qualitative research methods, the semi-structured interview “offers the chance for the researcher and interviewee to have a far more wide-ranging discussion” than other qualitative methods which usually rely on structured and closed questions; and more importantly, each interview varies “according to the interest, experiences and views of the interviewees” (Valentine, 2005: 111). Furthermore, Byrne (2004: 182) suggests that:

“qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes and values – things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire. Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretations of events, understandings, experiences and opinions”.

Byrne's statement particularly reminds us that open-ended interviews are even more appropriate for social research when researchers aim to investigate the various rationales behind each statement by combining the participants' past achievement and background with their words at the stage of data analysis. In short, qualitative interviews are able to function at a comparatively higher level of depth and complexity than other research methods.

Although the researcher's three core research objectives and a list of key questions were always prepared for the semi-structured interviews conducted, each interview was wide open for new questions to be raised during the specific conversation on the basis of varied statements from each particular interviewee. Relating to this perspective, Valentine (2005: 111) stresses that "the aim of an interview is not to be representative but to understand how individual people experience and make sense of their own lives." Hence semi-structured interviews not only enable the interviewer to ask the same core questions in different ways when the researcher meets participants who hold various backgrounds, but also to dig deeper each time on the basis of each specific answer. The result is "allowing the discussion to unfold in a conversational manner [which] offers participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important" (Longhurst, 2010: 107). This is the primary benefit for the thesis to employ the research method of semi-structured interviews. This is also the reason for involving a group of participants who hold various biographies respectively. They could express mixed opinions on the basis of their unique specific experiences. Following the above-mentioned suggestions, the researcher aimed to collect mixed statements from a range of different interviewees, and discusses their backgrounds in order to indicate why their answers are diversified. This is critical for discussing the empirical findings and conclusions.

In total the researcher conducted 32 face-to-face individual interviews with government officials, planners, university professors and other key stakeholders across different YRD's cities over a period of more than three months between June and September 2013. The shortest interview lasted 1 hour with the longest lasting 2 and a half hours on the basis of the agreement which was usually reached before the conversation happened. Interviews took place in a location arranged by the participant, either his/her office or conference room. These were easily arranged and reached by both the researcher and participants. More importantly, they were quiet

and private, which were both highlighted by Bryman (2008) as important for protecting the quality of audio recording from noise and the confidentiality of the conversation from being overheard.

4.3.1 Recruiting interviewees

The thesis primarily aims to investigate the role of the state in the governance of the YRD's city-regional geography. In particular, it aims to explore how state governance reacts to cross-provincial functional activities. A range of stakeholders were identified before the start of the field research, which include five government officials, such as local economic policy makers, officials who directly deal with local enterprises and officials from YRD city-regional governance framework; twenty-one academic planners, including eight non-official members of the formulation team of YRD regional plan and thirteen other academic planners; and six local business leaders. For academic interviewees in particular, three different groups of academic planners were respectively recruited. The first group includes five of those who used to be involved in formulating the YRD regional plan, and are now officially tracking the implementation of the YRD regional plan or working as partner with the YRD's city-regional governance framework. The second group consists of four academic planners who used to be involved in formulating the YRD regional plan, but parted way from either relating to the implementation of the YRD regional plan or YRD's city-regional governance framework. The third group includes thirteen academic planners who were not previously involved in the formulation of the YRD regional plan, but held rich experience of leading or participating in state-funded and -organised regional and urban planning projects in the YRD.

The YRD regional plan is the representation of the central orchestration over the city-regionalism in YRD. Government officials and academic planners who were involved in the plan-making process were initially targeted to be interviewed. The entire plan-making community can be grouped under three teams, i.e. the comprehensive team, expert team and local team. Names of core team members who used to lead and manage the comprehensive team and the expert team were taken from the NDRC's published data on its official website. Three research or academic organisations were focused on since they provided key academics and planners to the plan-

making community: Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology Chinese Academy of Sciences (NIGLAS), East China Normal University, and Urban and Demographic Studies of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Furthermore, Shanghai keeps the liaison office for the YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economy (YRD CAUE), named The Regional Cooperation and Exchange Office of Shanghai Municipal Government, as a part of the Shanghai government. Local Economic and Information Technology Commission (EITC) was the crucial participator of seven out of ten city-regional task groups within the YRD's governance framework. Hence the Shanghai's liaison office and local EITC were also added to the list of potential targets. Potential participants were then identified from official organisational websites on the basis of their role and past achievement.

Furthermore, although other interviewed academics were not directly engaged with either the making of the YRD regional plan or the current city-regional administrative agenda, they all have rich experience of participating in research and discussion in relation to the official decision-making under local government's request. For instance, Shanghai Academy of Development and Reform (SADR) which is subordinate to Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission (DRC) is providing consultancy service for Shanghai Municipal Government in relation to economic and social development and reform issues. Some of SADR's committee members were university professors in Shanghai. More importantly, local DRCs are one of the crucial official institutional members of the local team within the plan-making community for the YRD regional plan.

In relation to the business sector, attention was paid to local key business enterprises that operate at the larger city-regional scale. Their significance in the local business community ensures that they are able to draw many insights from policy-makers of local government. They are all based in Wuxi and Changzhou because they are two of the greatest GDP contributors in the YRD, and more importantly, they are the core city-regional spaces from which traditional manufacturing industries are leaving while service and high-tech industries are moving into.

According to Fobby (1993: 15) "the answer given by a particular respondent to a question in one social situation is often quite different to the answer given by the

same respondent in another situation". Therefore, equal importance is given to each group because the researcher aims to collect mixed opinions for the same research questions from different fields. This should be able to generate diversified opinions which not only reinforce but also criticise each other in relation to the role of the state within the city-regional construction. The researcher expects direct comments from the government officials in relation to their role and function towards the integrated governance at the city-regional level. Academic planners and business leaders are expected to reflect on the state dynamics, in particular over the economic decision-making, in the light of their specific knowledge and experience. Two different types of academic planners were selected to be the potential interviewees, those who were still involved in the operation of city-regional governance framework and others who either used to be involved or were not. The researcher was careful in highlighting the divergence of opinions towards the state decision-making.

For the recruitment of interviewees, the invitation letter was specifically tailored and initially sent by email to the potential participant on the basis of their respective biography. Each invitation letter was composed of four main parts, which included: Firstly, a brief introduction to the researcher's background, i.e. researcher's university, research title and main objectives. Secondly, a list of potential meeting time options and the suggested length of the interview. There was usually a period of several weeks available for each potential interviewee, and they were able to choose a convenient date. The expected length of conversation was approximately 45 minutes, and open to be extended or shortened according to the interviewee's schedules. Mutual agreement about the potential duration was reached in the following email exchange after the first invitation. The third section explained how the researcher found the potential interviewee and why they were regarded as an ideal participant. Their working position and experience were usually stated to reinforce why they were relevant to the research objectives. For the academic planners in particular, their relevant publications or public statements were mentioned to show why the researcher thought they could make an important contribution to the research project. The last section inquired whether they could provide the names of other potentially available participants and forward the email to them no matter whether they themselves were available or not. Particular attention was paid to appropriate and polite use of language in addressing potential interviewees.

There were three attachments to the invitational email: Both English and Chinese versions of the research project overview, and a participant information sheet which highlighted the research background, contact information and relevant ethical considerations, such as, firstly, the interviewee can withdraw from the conversation at any time; secondly, the entire conversation will be kept confidential; and thirdly, the conversational data will be utilised for Ph.D. thesis and potential publications of book chapters and journals; and finally, who to complain to if they are not happy about the interview process.

There was not always a positive response from the potential interviewees. As a result of much cold calling and emailing, instant rejection from government officials and business leaders, or their assistants or secretaries, often prevented further engagement. 'Full schedule' or 'not expert in the field' was usually seen in their response. Some of them recommended that the researcher should obtain all the data from their organisational website. Many of those who only provided an email address as contact on the organisation's website did not respond at all. This is because the targeted government officials are highly ranked, and they are not willing to give away more information than has been published to a stranger. Even for those five interviewed officials, none of them accepted audio recording of the meeting. Although the researcher already learnt that 'off the record' without a recording device may encourage the interviewee to talk in more depth (see, for example, Byron, 1993; Peabody et al., 1990), it was still surprising to see no government official willing to be recorded. On the other hand, the invitation was declined by the entrepreneurs usually due to poor time schedule. It was normal to witness that unexpected guest visits and incoming phone calls disrupted the interview process for a while amid all six business interviews.

Furthermore, there is another important consideration for explaining the almost 90% rejection rate from both governmental officers and business elites. Jiong Tu used to express a similar dilemma in LSE's (the London School of Economics and Political Science) 2013 workshop of 'Addressing Field Research Constraint in China'. Tu (2014) interviewed junior Chinese officials for her PhD project of health care transformation over the past decades in a county in eastern Sichuan, and struggled to gain access to Chinese administrative officials in the absence of the introduction of an intermediary acquaintance. In the researcher's case, most potential

participants from a political and business background simply declined the request for a meeting without a proper acquaintance to mediate the contact between the researcher and potential interviewees. However, there was one alumna of the researcher's university who holds very good inter-personal friendship with the researcher agreeing to invite her father, Mr C who is a private business leader in Yixing of Wuxi province, to be met. Under Mr C's introduction, the researcher successfully met a number of business leaders and government officials. Before his favour, there were only two government officials and no local business leaders formally accepting the researcher's invitation for interview.

At the end of the field trip, Mr C told the researcher that it had been difficult for him as a young student researcher to meet all these local political and business elites in China because they had no knowledge about the researcher and there was nothing the researcher could provide in return. Many potential interviewees have neither interest nor trust in the researcher's university letter and project overview. The word of '*Renqing*' was then highlighted in his subsequent words. This was not the first time for the researcher to hear this '*Renqing*'. Wang et al. (2008) and Wang (2014) both mentioned the significance of '*Renqing*' in conducting interviews with business elites. Wang et al. (2008: 819) refers '*Renqing*' to "one's obligation of repaying favours and showing empathy to partners involved in their business network". According to Mr C's statement, the main reason for these introduced interviewees to accept to be interviewed was that based on Mr C's assurance and their close personal or business connection, they either now repaid private or business favours to him or did him a favour which would be repaid with a proper cost at some point in the future after the interview. Although the researcher promised that a finalised and approved version of the PhD thesis would be posted to Mr C as a thank-you present, the researcher still felt that it was highly likely that he would never have the opportunity or capability to repay his favour in the future.

On the contrary, academic planners were more welcome to the invitation of exchanging views around the city-regionalism topics. Their interest in exchanging opinions was easily caught from their initial response to the invitation. Only few were not able to accept the meeting because they were taking annual leave or academic trips at the time when the researcher was staying around the YRD.

'Snowballing' technique was mobilised to diversify the interviewees' portfolio and ease the concern for high rejection or no response rate from potential participants. Many of the interviewees forwarded my invitational email to other contacts, or provided me with the names and contact details for potential meetings. Thus several initial contact points were employed to avoid "recruiting all informants from a very narrow circle of like-minded people" (Valentine, 2005: 117). There was one particular senior planner who was not available to meet due to the timetable clash introducing his primary assistant to the researcher for the conversation.

The 'snowballing' technique firstly helps "to overcome one of the main obstacles to recruiting interviewees, gaining their trust" (Valentine, 2005: 117). Building trust is critical for facilitating the conversation with government officials and business leaders because some research questions are seeking to discuss state governance which could be sensitive. Furthermore and as Mr C mentioned, even the university letter and project overview could hardly contribute to establish potential political and business interviewees' sufficient assurance. Secondly, snowballing "allows the researcher to seek out more easily interviewees with particular experiences or backgrounds" (Valentine, 2005: 117). It was sometimes challenging to realise who the most appropriate informant in one particular organisation was. Some of them only have either a brief personal biography or no information in the public data base. There was no fixed target set for the number of interviews. The result is 'snowballing' earned a few more positive responses for all three interviewee groups which have been examined in section 4.2.1, and the qualitative research was continued until the researcher felt that sufficient data had been captured to serve the research objectives.

4.3.2 Interview structure

Before each interview started, the researcher sought for the signature in the informed consent form which proves the informant understands all their rights associated with the interview, such as they can withdraw from the interview at any stage for any reason, and highlighted that the conversation would be kept anonymous and confidential. After all of these, the researcher would ask for permission for audio recording of the conversation. Each interview was only

recorded after the permission was orally granted by the interviewee. An audio recording should “produce a more accurate and detailed record of the conversation” and thus enable the researcher to “pick up on ideas and inferences which they may have missed or which did not seem important when the conversation first took place” (Valentine, 2005: 123-124).

The main part of each conversation began with introductory questions of how the YRD could be defined and based on what measurement. After this ‘warm-up’ stage, specific tailored questions would be brought up according to the interviewee’s background. The reason to carefully tailor the question list for each interviewee was they were not all standing in the appropriate position for answering all the questions. For instance, business leaders were in most cases not familiar with the YRD regional plan and related questions.

The question list was composed of key questions which were worded beforehand in relation to the cross-jurisdictional governance and state’s economic decision-making, and new follow-up questions which allowed the information to be captured by following the interviewee’s mind-set. For the former, a list of key questions were always prepared beforehand because the researcher did not want to lose the train of thought in the middle of the conversation, or see any key question missing after the meeting. Referring to the latter follow-up questions, the key words, phrases and sentences were “picked up on things said by interviewees” and led to more in depth discussions (Bryman, 2008: 438).

The order of key questions did not remain fixed for each semi-structured interview. This is because, firstly, conversation continued by following the key words and topics in each informant’s answers. Therefore, the coherence of the interviewee’s train of thought could be secured in order to keep digging along their insight in depth. The researcher did not intend to keep throwing in fresh and distinct questions in a haphazard way which could easily interrupt the interviewee’s mind-set. Secondly, government officials and academic planners usually had a clear logic and affluent information to express their opinion, thus it was usual for their answer to cover several of the following key questions in one stage. They had comparatively richer experience of being involved in the interview before the meeting of the researcher. In short, semi-structured interview secures the nature of flexibility which enables the

researcher for “varying the order of questions, following up leads, and clearing up inconsistencies in answers” (Bryman, 2008: 456).

According to Valentine (2005: 124), “one of the perverse laws of interviewing is that in any research project at least one tape will turn out blank because of a technical mishap”. By learning this, in addition to the recording file in the digital device, a copy was stored on a laptop which was accessible by password only once the researcher reached the laptop after the meeting. Extra battery was carried all the time with the recording device just in case the used battery went out amid the interview.

4.3.3 Conducting elite interviews in Chinese context

The researcher gave the greatest effort to express questions neutrally in order to ensure interviewees’ answers could be developed in their own terms and mind-set. Or in other words, it was not the researcher’s wish to gather the statements which the interviewees possibly thought the researcher might want to hear. For this reason, most of the interview questions start with the words ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ instead of ‘do you think’ which could indicate the potential answer in the question. Key questions were carefully constructed and possibly evolved between interviews so that both of the main themes and fresh concerns and questions which were realised in the previous interview were covered in the following interviews. For instance, the historical case of 1983 Shanghai Economic Zone Planning Office (Shanghai EZPO) which was little studied by the publications during the past two decades was mentioned to examine the relationship between market push force and state control power during one early interview. Afterwards, why such organisation was abandoned became one of the key questions for government officials and academic planners. The evolvement and expansion of key considerations ensured that ideas and concerns which were previously overlooked and more importantly potential knowledge gaps could be included in the following interview process.

Due to the powerful position that most interviewees hold, such as senior academic planner, highly ranked government officials and business leaders, it was highly likely for many of them to explore the researcher’s understanding of the particular subject and its relevance in either gentle indirection or outright antagonism (Zuckerman,

1972). In this researcher's case, their interest highly compromised the neutral role of the interviewer. Some questions they frequently raised included: why there were inter-city competitions over the newly fast-growing, in particular high-tech manufacturing, industries; what the researcher thinks of the implementation of the YRD regional plan; and what the researcher thinks of networked governance over the YRD's territory? In order to ensure the minimisation of direct influence over the potential answers for the following questions, the researcher tried the best to recall and then quote other scholars' opinions from previously reviewed literatures as the response and avoid presenting a straightforward individual viewpoint. This was a critical stage because "if interviewees sense an interviewer is not knowledgeable about a subject, the chances of gaining in-depth insight are much reduced" (Hoggart et al., 2002: 207).

However, the researcher's words apparently did not satisfy some interviewees. There was one academic professor who was bearing a role of senior policy advisor for urban government who became annoyed saying that my interview questions were 'too general' and 'inappropriate' even during the first fifteen minutes. Although this particular interview hampered my confidence in the field and caused anxiety in a few following interviews, there were several positive points extracted from this case. Firstly, the interview process must be varied on the basis of the interviewee's attitude, tone or even facial expression. Not every interviewee has the patience to answer all the easy questions during the early stage of the interviews. Secondly, the researcher shall prepare more thoroughly for each interview, such as remembering more quotations from reviewed literatures, in order to better defend his research subject. However and here is the third point, the researcher shall not over-emphasise his own opinions when replying to elite interviewees' questions on the research subjects. The researcher's statement could easily generate disagreement and then lead to a long debate amid the interview which the scheduled interview could usually not afford. This is particularly the case when the researcher was facing several senior academic experts. The researcher therefore shall act more carefully and thoughtfully on the basis of interviewees', either facial or verbal, reaction. In short, it is critical for the researcher to continuously reflect on the previous research process and conduct subsequent interviews while carrying learnt experiences and confidence.

Moreover, it was common to see many of the interviewed government officials over-present their knowledge and information, no matter whether their statement was relevant to the interview question or not; such like the statement easily expands to what the individual official had done or spoken in relation to the department's historic achievement in many different aspects. It was time-consuming and leading the longest interview to reach two and a half hours. What became even more important was that it was easy for the researcher to get lost, such as picking up the important points and coming back to them for more details, and raising a question which may already have been unconsciously answered in the previous response during the past one to two hours. Because none of the political officials accepted audio recording, full concentration was necessary for extracting important data from the interviewees' long answers during the entire interview. The researcher was aware of such issues in the field and tried to prevent the interviewees' non-related and extremely long presentation by expressing an apology and asking new questions. However, a clear signal of not wishing to be interrupted, such like 'Please let me finish this' or 'This is important', was usually sent to the researcher. What worried the researcher was too many interruptions may upset the interviewee and hence jeopardise the rest of the interview. What was learnt from interviewing the officials was to always bring a notebook and pen to the interview to remind the researcher of subsequent interview questions while recording valuable data, and more crucially not planning another interview after meeting officials on the same day. It was possible for an interview to run for a surprisingly longer period than originally scheduled.

For business leaders, institutional customers' unarranged visits usually meant substantial trading orders. Although most of them could return to continue the interview after they had to leave for their VIP customers, there was one exception. It was one interview with the CEO of a private mineral powder material manufacturing company, who left abruptly for a customer's visit and never returned. At last one of his secretaries showed to apologise for his disappearance and announced the end of the interview. The researcher never obtained a second opportunity to continue the interview afterwards. There was not much that the researcher could do to affect the interviewee's decision of leaving permanently or suspending the interview for a while. What the researcher could do was search for a key statement which may have been

overlooked and/or review the notes to remind him which question or key points to re-engage with after the interviewee returned.

4.3.4 Reading between the lines in the interviews

Many elite interviewees are experienced at interviewing and being interviewed. They are fully aware of “how to subvert interviews, control them or deny interviewer access to key information” (Valentine, 2005: 212). Relating to the researcher’s case, business elites would rather provide irrelevant or inaccurate answers to deal with the researcher’s question, instead of stating they do not have a proper answer. It has been largely noted that we need to read between the lines or ‘recognise the boundaries of claims’ in the interview in order to reveal the underlying feelings and perceptions and then draw our inferences (see Hoggart et al., 2002). Such realisation is prevalent for research in human geography inside and outside of the Chinese context. However, the researcher must admit that it is more difficult for a ‘new’ researcher in the field to consistently read between the lines throughout the entire research. Although these lines can become clearer as the interviews progress, it also shows how experience is key to research in the field, or in the Chinese context for this thesis.

4.3.5 Data analysis

Eleven out of thirty-two semi-structured interviewees were digitally recorded, either partially or entirely, on the basis of participants’ willingness; and therefore generated audio data which lasted twelve hours sixteen minutes and nineteen seconds. They were fully transcribed afterwards. Although it was time-consuming to generate full transcripts for all of the digital recordings, the transcripts allow re-familiarisation which pays off in the long run (Crang, 2005). Full transcripts enabled the researcher to easily access any part of the conversation with full details during the data analysis, in particular when the researcher was seeking for accurate quotations.

Meanwhile, notes were taken with or without recording during every interview. Taking notes ensured that the researcher would not miss any of the key words and

ideas which appeared in the interview. Furthermore, rich notes were particularly valuable when digital recording was not accepted, partially or entirely, by the participant. In these cases, notes were further supplemented within one or two hours after each interview ended based on fresh memories of the conversation.

All interviews were undertaken in Chinese. Hence in order to ensure each interviewee's statement remains original and not biased by the researcher, both transcripts and notes were generated and remained in Chinese for coding and analysis. Coding is a fundamental way of evaluating and organising data within a rational code framework for making sense of meanings which hide in fragmented textual data (Cope, 2010). The method of 'open coding' was employed to construct the framework of codes (cf. Cope, 2010). A list of important codes was initially picked up by reviewing notes and transcripts, such as Crang (2005: 223) recommended, "each time people refer to a particular event, it is given the same code; each time they use a particular explanation of an event it might be given another". But that list was open for revising during the following coding process. Hence codes are basically abbreviations for similar textual statements which can be of any length. Following Strauss and Corbin's (1998) recommendation, there are different kinds of codes such as 'concept' for the lower level of coding and 'category' for a combination of several concepts. Here, interview transcripts were coded into eleven categories (see Appendix 7).

Afterwards, what becomes challenging for the researcher is how these coded data shall be analysed and reported. The framework of codes itself does not generate explanations for research questions. What the researcher sought from the coding task was "not so much the codes as the text they denote, not how often they occur but what is in them" (Crang, 2005: 224). The researcher was looking for opinions in relation to the operation of the YRD's city-regional governance framework. It was important to bear in mind that answers shall be diversified based on each interviewee's unique and specific working background and experience. It was not the researcher's intention to count the frequency of the appearance of any particular kind of opinion as conducting qualitative analysis, rather, constructing comparisons among diversified viewpoints towards the same code and then investigating further why the divergence appeared remained the main aim. In short, the researcher was

looking for the rationale behind the statements by relating these to events and how each interviewee interpreted these.

Thematic analysis is a widely used and fundamental qualitative method due to its flexibility (Braun and Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clark (2006: 78), thematic analysis “is the first qualitative method of analysis that researchers should learn, as it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis”. However, it must be admitted that flexibility also leads the data analysis and interpretation to face the potential issue of ‘anything goes’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 95). Themes are constructed by grouping codes to identify a pattern of elements based on massive disjointed data (Bazeley, 2009). Theory and contribution are then expected to derive from analysing a variety of themes. Since there is no clear agreement about how themes shall be constructed, they can lead the researcher to anywhere without careful and rigorous consideration about the analysis method. In the researcher’s case, Bazeley’s (2009) three-step formula of ‘describe, compare and relate’ was employed to reinforce the approach of thematic analysis. The combination of the thematic analysis and Bazeley’s (2009) formula ensures that selected themes and their contained coded data were carefully thought through both in terms of the demographic features of the interviewed sample and the city-regional theoretical context. In particular divergent views which appeared with less frequency cannot be simply ignored. Investigation of divergent or alternative explanations is inevitable for challenging and enriching the report of themes for data analysis.

While reporting themes in the thesis, quotes will be employed for linking and supporting the researcher’s debate. Relating to this perspective, there is a concern in relation to the selection of the quotations. Although qualitative research usually does not justify ideas by counting the frequency of their occurrence across the sampling, it cannot be denied that one or two quotes do not convey how widely this theme might have applied (Bazeley, 2009). Quotes are provided together with the explanation of the interviewee’s partial biographies which have potential links with their statements; and frequencies are sometimes reported.

4.4 Positionality

Undertaking intensive research frequently leads to the criticism of generating researcher bias during collecting and analysing qualitative data (Hoggart et al., 2002: p223). Hence it is important to be reflexive over the diversified positionality and the resulting power dynamics between the researcher and each different participant during the entire intensive research process. Bryman (2008: 698) defines reflexivity as

“a reflectiveness among social researchers about the implications for the knowledge of the social world they generate of their methods, values, biases, decisions, and mere presence in the very situations they investigate”.

For achieving this, first of all it is essential to recognise that the researcher's own identity has direct or indirect influence over the outcome of the interaction between the researcher and participants. As Valentine (2005: 113) stressed, “it is important to reflect on who you are and how your own identity will shape the interactions that you have with others”. Despite being an ethnic Chinese, the researcher, as a Loughborough postgraduate researcher, was aware of still being an ‘outsider’ when meeting with interviewees who hold rich knowledge and career experience of being engaged with city-regional political or economic activities within the Chinese context. Relating to this context, the researcher had to admit that maintaining the balance of power was challenging, and power sometimes swings towards the participant in the field. Therefore and here is the second point, how the researcher behaved in the conversation is critical for shaping the power relations, and hence generate direct influence in participants' responses. Thus besides the mental preparation beforehand, it is critical to remain alert and then carefully react to the changing context and power relations when undertaking a series of semi-structured interviews.

The researcher was aware that he was seen as unfamiliar by each interviewee. There had not been any face-to-face contact between the researcher and any of the interviewees before the interviews, which were all conducted in the summer of 2013. The only communication between the researcher and each participant before the conversation was an email exchange sending out the invitation and organising the meeting. Relating to such circumstances, Hoggart et al. (2002: 209) warn that:

“since most intensive interviews involve people who either were not acquainted before the interview or are only slightly familiar, despite the claims to ‘depth of insight’, analysts should be aware that they only touch the surface of an interviewee’s views”.

The researcher therefore realised that it was critical to encourage participants to open up their minds by establishing rapport between the researcher and each participant.

For doing this, the researcher firstly attached a self-introduction and research background to the invitational email. This shall allow the participant to have a clear idea about who they are dealing with and what kind of data the researcher expected to acquire from them before they accepted further contact. Secondly, the researcher conducted an investigation into their career background and experience, and explained why the particular participant was valuable for the researcher’s project in the invitational email. For instance, before meeting any academic professor, the researcher looked into many of the state-led regional and urban planning projects which he/she was involved in, and sought for their main viewpoints about city-regionalism through reviewing the abstracts of their publications. Hence these were included in the email as evidence for explaining why he/she was important. The researcher expected to create the impression that each of the participants was paid full attention instead of being chosen randomly.

My aim was to ‘warm up’ an interview and to develop a rapport with the participant (Valentine, 2005: 119) in the initial stage of each interview. For some of them who used to study or work in UK universities, the researcher shared the experience of international research and conferences. For others who used to translate English versions of western publications in relation to the discourse of ‘new regionalism’ to Chinese, the researcher expressed that the publication was prominent and attracted the researcher’s attention in the literature review stage of the research. This worked particularly well for some academic professors because the researcher received six published books from six participants as gifts at the end of the interview.

The researcher recognised that most of the interviewees, such as many academics and government officials, were much more powerful than the researcher due to their deep knowledge and experience of being involved in city-regional planning and

administration. As section 4.3.2 of interview structure mentioned, many powerful interviewees were interested in challenging the research objectives and interview questions. The researcher did not intend to upset them with his own opinion and mind-set which may be determined as flawed by the interviewee. Hence their questions were carefully answered with reference to published literature statements instead of the researcher's own opinion.

By doing this, firstly the researcher did not expect the potential debate to take over a large proportion of limited meeting time by intensifying the debate. Secondly and as Hoggart et al. recommend (2002: 207), "if interviewees sense an interviewer is not knowledgeable about a subject, the chances of gaining in-depth insight are much reduced". There was hardly a general criterion which is commonly agreed for defining 'knowledgeable', particularly when the researcher needed to deal with a diversified portfolio of interviewees. The researcher thus prepared to be familiar with academic terms, author names and practical events as much as possible before each interview. A copy of the YRD regional plan was brought to each conversation to illustrate the quotations within some of the interview questions.

Interviewing business people generated a different problem. They are themselves "experienced at interviewing and being interviewed and consequently know how to subvert interviews" (Valentine, 2005: 121). They sometimes provided irrelevant or inaccurate answers to deal with the researcher's question. In this case, they may not have had the appropriate answer for the question and they guessed what the researcher was expecting. It was rare to hear them say that they had no idea how to answer any particular question. Hence, it was important for the researcher to be neutral about wordings when he explained and clarified the question, rather than revealing the key words of the potential answers. Moreover, several phone calls were received and picked up by each business leader amid the conversation, and thus interrupted the interview. Hand-written notes thus became important for guiding both the interviewer and interviewee back to the interrupted point.

In short, the researcher paid much attention to reflect on firstly the positioning of both of him and participants, and secondly on the interview process. The researcher then tried hard to be responsive to any concerns in order to ensure the data collection was not tainted by the implication of "methods, values, biases, and decisions"

(Bryman 2008: 698). In retrospect, the research framework was filled with challenge and uncertainty just as Bryman (2008: 683) complained that “reflexivity is a notoriously slippery concept”.

Although the importance of being reflexive has been often highlighted for conducting primary intensive research, every research project is so unique and different that there is hardly a general agreed framework which could be learned and then inform the researcher how to make the most appropriate reaction towards every single different scenario within any particular research project. Even the same positionality issue could be represented differently when various interviewees were dealt with. Even if the researcher knew many of the interviewees were going to challenge some of the interview questions, he had to deal with a variety of diversified questions. What the researcher accomplished was to be reflexive, learn from the past experience and deal with recognised issues more appropriately in the future.

4.5 Research ethics

According to Hoggart et al. (2002: 245), “ethical issues are relevant to research design, implementation and presentation”. It is fundamental for the researcher to remain thoughtful of the ethical consideration throughout the entire research process which includes methodological preparation, data collection and analysis. Ethical research in geography is defined by Hay (2010: 35) as to “behave with integrity” and “act in ways that are just, beneficent and respectful”, and last, be able to “yield satisfactory approaches for all parties involved”. The research project was carefully planned with the guidance for ethical clearance checklist and approved by Loughborough University Ethical Approval Sub-committee (see Appendix 1).

In order to ensure that every interviewee was able to participate and provide a range of rich data during a long and sophisticated conversation on the basis of careful and thoughtful consideration, a series of cautious approaches were undertaken as below, based on Hay’s (2010: 39-40) advice. Firstly there was a reasonable amount of information provided to participants on matters such as nature and purpose of the research, what kind of information the researcher was expecting, expected time duration of the interview, their right to withdraw at any point of the meeting without

providing reasons, and contact detail of the Ethical Approval Sub-committee for complaints if they were not happy with the conversation.

Secondly, participants were informed that their consent would be required for the expected length of interview duration and digital recording. Particular elites “may not want their comments on the record. It is therefore important to be sensitive to the interviewees’ wishes” (Valentine, 2005: 124). For example, recording was shut down amid one interview under the interviewee’s request while she felt her following statement could be sensitive.

Finally, it was essential to let the participant know that confidentiality and anonymity are two primary principles in the course of research and in the release of results (Longhurst, 2010). Participants were assured that all collected data would remain secure on a laptop accessible by password only; that information supplied would remain confidential and participants would remain anonymous (Longhurst, 2010: 111). Their names would not appear to anyone else but the researcher himself all the time. For those whose statements were digitally recorded, the recording would be assessed by the researcher only in the future. There were several times different interviewees were trying to find out who other participants were and what they presented in response to several interview questions. The researcher gently denied their wondering for the reasons of firstly complying with the principles of confidentiality and anonymity; and secondly not expecting others’ statement to influence the interviewee’s expressions.

There are two other arrangements in relation to ethical considerations. Invitational emails for meetings were always sent two to four weeks before the expected meeting date in order to ensure that each potential interviewee had a fair length of time to consider whether or not they would like to be involved in the research (Hay, 2010: 38). Furthermore and before each interview started, the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix 2) was explained by the researcher, and then signed by both the interviewee and the researcher after the interviewee was able to guarantee that he/she fully understood their rights and the researcher’s responsibilities.

4.6 Secondary data collection

This thesis employed government statistics and documentary records for conducting secondary analysis. The principal source for both data is government publications. Although the researcher was fully aware that such secondary data may not be generated for the researcher's specific purpose (White, 2010), they are valuable because they are extremely difficult for the primary method to generate, and more importantly these data can help the understanding and analysis of the primary empirical evidence. For instance, statistical data consists of population data, economic indexes which cover YRD, PRD and JJJ as mega city-regions; and chemical industrial indexes. A range of different government documentary records, such as a serial of national 'Five-Year plans', local government reports and conference summaries, were collected to explain how the YRD's city-regional governance framework works. This section is going to explain the rationale for utilising quantitative statistics and qualitative documentary records.

4.6.1 Making use of statistical data

A quantitative analysis of government statistical data relating to the YRD, PRD and JJJ's respective mixed economic indicators was undertaken prior to the primary research. The data was firstly utilised to highlight the significance of the selective research location in comparison with other Chinese city-regions. On the basis of the analysis of quantitative data, chapter three explains why the YRD was selected as the research target for this thesis. Then the respective economic contribution of Shanghai and other municipalities illustrate the comparative economic importance of regional individual city members within the YRD. Such data should be able to portray the YRD's wider economic context and then facilitate the understanding of the structural and spatial transformation of manufacturing industries within the YRD's jurisdictions. Moreover, statistical data relating to the number of chemical manufacturing enterprises across the YRD provide a context for the qualitative analysis of the industrial transformation process within the following empirical chapters. This was gathered to supplement the primary data during the period of conducting individual interviews because it was challenging for interviewees to provide accurate statistics from their memories. Both of the above mentioned types

of data were collected from each municipal government's 2012 Statistical Communiqué of the National Economic and Social Development and other relevant local government reports. Secondary quantitative data was therefore "providing the 'extensive' basis and context for a more 'intensive' investigation" (White, 2010: 75).

4.6.2 Utilising documentary records

Reviewing the written records of national government policy documents and YRD governance framework's operating agenda were essential for studying the historic process of Chinese political city-regionalism before conducting the primary research. They were recorded to cover a large number of historical political decision-makings and events. According to Hoggart et al. (2002: 120), "such records allow access to subjects that may be difficult/impossible to research through direct, personal contact, perhaps because they relate to the past".

A series of national 'Five-Year Plans' and the YRD regional plan were collected from central government's website in full version. Moreover, a series of conference agendas and events within the YRD's city-regional governance framework was gathered from local governments and regional association's website. Therefore, key written records of past events and city-regional regulatory policies were secured for the following intensive research and analysis. By borrowing Hoggart et al.'s (2002: 122) words again, "the information they contain does not alter because it is used in a research project". Following the secondary data collection, primary research was then engaged in by conducting individual face-to-face interview in the YRD.

4.7 Conclusion

This research project employs both primary and secondary research approaches for investigating how the YRD's city-regional governance framework has emerged and how it operates. Interviews, as a qualitative method, constituted the entire agenda of primary research. The reason for concentrating on undertaking interviews was that the thesis aimed to make sense of each interviewee's opinion by seeking for the rationale behind their answer instead of a representative idea which was potentially

based on counting the frequency of appearance. Secondary data were mainly collected for explaining the selection of research topic and location, and supplementing the information which lacked from the primary research.

This chapter then critically reflects on the research challenges in the Chinese context. Interviewing elites poses a variety of challenges because the power relation sometimes swings to favour the interviewees. The researcher put significant efforts in keeping the conversation in a favourable climate while trying to avoid influencing the knowledge and information collected from the interviewee. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to constantly pay attention to the changing positionality and ethical issues as well as data collection in the field. It was fundamental to learn and prepare for how to conduct primary intensive research by looking at others' experience and recommendations. Nevertheless, the researcher sometimes found the situation difficult to deal with because the issue which was drawn particular attention to beforehand could appear in the conversation by taking a variety of forms. For instance, powerful interviewees could challenge the interviewer from different and unexpected perspectives of which there are no way to prepare for in advance. What became even more challenging was the researcher needed to be very careful when he intended to clarify the meaning of his question or statement because his statement could easily lead the following conversation to any unanticipated discussion around any particular research subject which the scheduled interview's length could usually not afford. Although the researcher kept alert to many of such concerns, it may not always have been possible to reduce the influence to a satisfactory extent. It enhanced the need for the researcher to keep reflecting on previous interviews, and constantly change the strategy of how to deal with similar situations in the subsequent interviews.

Evolving challenges did not only raise uncertainty, difficulty and frustration, they also assisted the researcher to think through the undertaken research strategy, such as how to approach participants, and how to interpret interview questions as well as improving research questions on the basis of interviewees' inquiry and interpretation. This research generates valuable experience which is closely related to the Chinese context from the field for conducting future potential research.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the research was limited by several elements. YRD is one of the most developed mega city-regions in China and still experiencing spectacular growth. A number of historic records of statistical and documentary data may be seen as outdated by the time of this thesis being published. In particular, the YRD regional plan was initiated by the central NDRC in 2005 and then issued by the central State Council in 2010 and may be no longer appropriate, from some perspectives, for guiding the city-regional integration of the YRD in 2015. This may have impacted the researcher's conclusion around the function and role of states within the city-regional integration of the YRD at this moment.

The consideration of '*Renqing*' in Chinese society led to difficulties for the researcher to access a number of potential participants who hold senior political backgrounds. In particular, the lack of direct or indirect, i.e. intermediary acquaintance, personal linkages which could make '*Renqing*' work was the major concern when several officials from central NDRC were approached by the researcher. This means that findings may not be representative of senior officials' voice in the central government as a whole. There is a need for future research to extend the field research to the currently inaccessible organisations and participants in order to discuss and interpret based on a larger and more rational sampling.

Despite the challenges and limitations explored in this concluding section, careful design and implementation of the methodology ensured that data was collected from a variety of participants who held diversified experiences and knowledge for comparing and reporting. The following chapters (5, 6, 7 and 8) present the analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

Chapter 5: Rethinking Mega City-Regionalism as a Geopolitical Outcome: The Transformation of the YRD as a State Space

5.1 Introduction

This chapter approaches the construction of city-regional space and dynamic territorial politics by investigating the integration process of the Yangtze River Delta (YRD) as a state space. The YRD is concentrating a significant amount of functional activities mainly around Shanghai and is seen as one of China's major contemporary economic engines. It is this large scale of functional agglomeration which crosses a variety of continuous jurisdictions attracting much attention from both Asian and western regional studies for recognising the YRD's identity as a mega city-region (e.g. Scott, 2001; Hall and Pain, 2006; Luo, 2011; Xu and Yeh, 2011). Specifically, such recognition is usually referred to a group of cities and their adjacent regions around the global city of Shanghai in accordance with their socio-economic relations and flows. Enhancing the intra-regional socio-economic integration and political coherence becomes a primary aim for the YRD's governance task in order to improve its mega city-regional competitiveness in the national and global economy.

Responding to my first research objective of accounting for the transformation of the YRD as a state space, this chapter investigates how the YRD has been expanded to correspond with extant administrative jurisdictions on the basis of extending socio-economic activities. In particular, this chapter explains the role of locational territorial interests as constitutive characteristics of the mega city-regionalism in order to enforce the implementation of cross-territorial collective governance in the local administrative agenda.

This chapter aims to concentrate on the enlarging process between the narrow sense and the broad sense of the YRD, relating to socio-economic relations and territorial politics. In comparison with either 'invisible' spatial boundary of city-regional functional space or stubborn city-regional administrative jurisdictions which usually lags behind the accelerated urbanisation scale or extended socio-economic connection in western European and north American context, the spatial expansion of the YRD's officially defined scope is apparent and then able to, more or less,

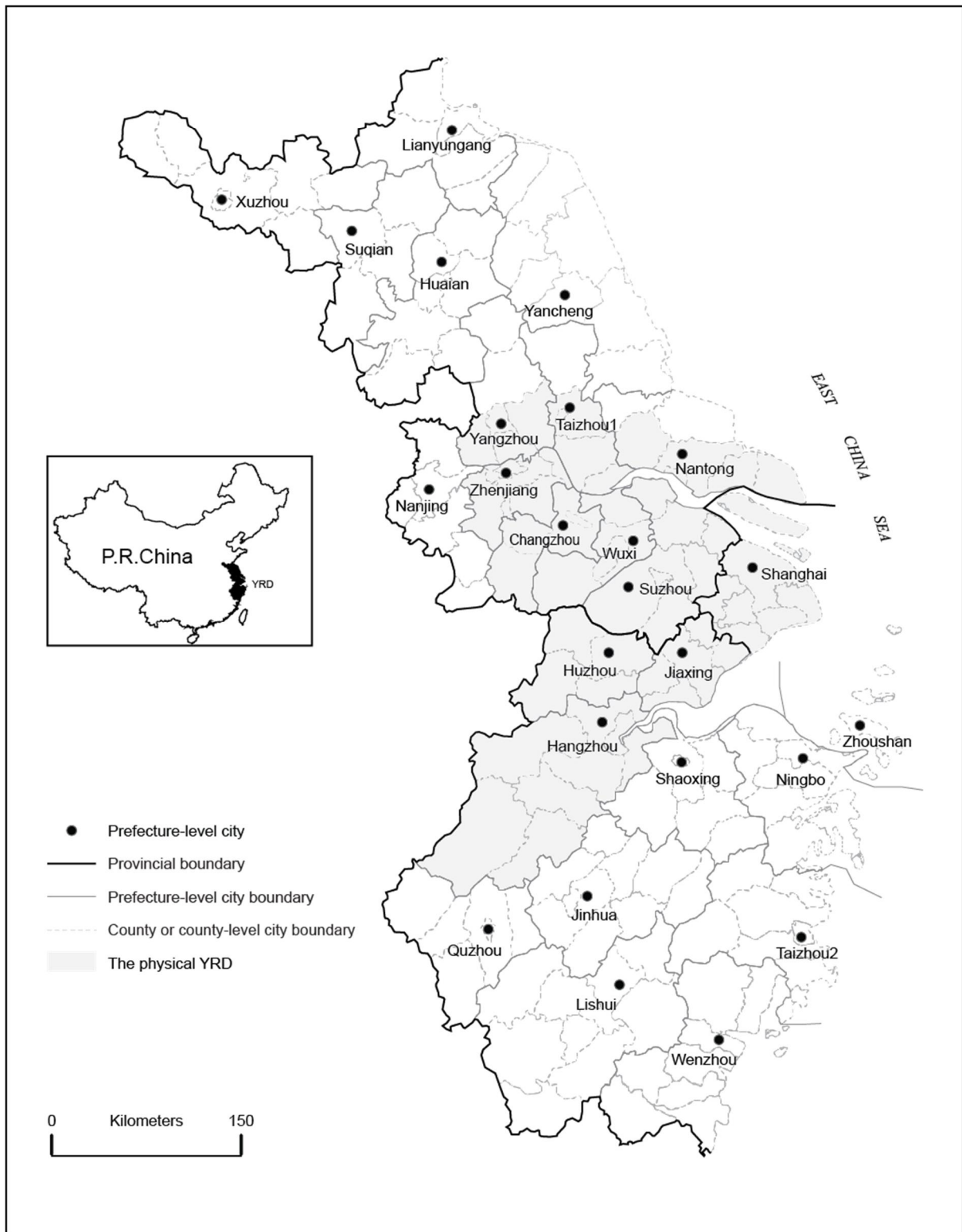
capture peripheral and other interlinked functional areas. Therefore, comparing with the difficult situation which chapter 2 mentioned, or ‘compromised city-regionalism’ (Harrison, 2010) in western context, the emerging city-regionalism process seems much simpler in China.

Following this introduction, three main sections are produced: Section 5.2 introduces the historic event of centrally-orchestrated city-regionalism in the YRD for the comparative study with more recent geopolitical bottom-up city-regionalism. Section 5.3 presents the transformation process between two recent but various official recognitions of YRD while focusing on the dynamic territorial politics. The second half of this section explores how the mega city-regional functional space has been reinforced and enlarged by researching the spatial shifting of traditional labour-intensive manufacturing industries towards peripheral less-developed areas in the same provincial jurisdictions from the core YRD around Shanghai. The case study of chemical manufacturing industries’ withdrawal in Wuxi will be focused on. Finally, section 5.4 concludes for this chapter by stressing the constitutive role of geopolitical actors in matching the enlarging functional space with administrative jurisdictions at mega city-regional scale.

5.2 Historic realisation of YRD’s mega city-regionalism

The term ‘Yangtze River Delta’ was traditionally used to define a triangular alluvial plain at the end of the Lower Yangtze River in terms of Chinese physical geography (A chief member of the comprehensive team, interview, 23rd July, 2013). According to this definition, the scope of the YRD is no more than fifty square kilometres. The furthest eastern part of the triangular plain is the end of Yangtze River. The northern end would reach the Tongyang Canal which is sitting between the Nantong and Yangzhou. The northern land of the Hangzhou Bay would be seen as the southern boundary of the plain. At last, the furthest western end of the plain is Zhenjiang. This particular YRD experienced the shape force during the Chinese thousand year’s history. This definition is currently little referenced in the social science literatures since only few would like to pay attention to the YRD’s physical unity. But the term of YRD has survived until now. What the term of YRD stands for now is varied, and the different meanings will be individually discussed in this chapter.

Figure 7: The physical YRD



To begin with the 1978 Chinese economic reform, the earliest state-led effort of constructing city-regional tier governance around Shanghai can be traced back to the early 1980s. Before this arrangement, accelerating drawdown of decision-making rights from the central to the local and growth-oriented policies accentuated the inter-city competition for external capital investments. Overall,

“there is also the potential for a reduction of regional economic links as local officials place a greater priority on deriving the highest value added from their own local resources, rather than working to develop complementarities with other localities” (Leaf, 1998: 147).

Meanwhile and in 1983, Shanghai was accounting for approximately 6% of national GDP and almost 2% of national population with no more than 0.1% of Chinese land area.

Under this circumstance and aiming for boosting economic relations between Shanghai and adjacent administrative jurisdictions, in December 1982 the central State Council issued the announcement of establishing the Shanghai Economic Zone Planning Office (EZPO). The planning office was constructed to cover Shanghai; Changzhou, Wuxi, Suzhou and Nantong in Jiangsu; and Hangzhou, Jiaxing, Huzhou, Ningbo and Shaoxing in Zhejiang, ten municipalities in its jurisdiction; and Shanghai was nominated by the central State Council as the centre of this state-constructed economic zone. The Shanghai EZPO was branded as the central State Council’s branch organisation in the YRD, and only took personnel appointment decision from the central State Council. The institution was first headed by the former vice-director of the Ministry of Water Resources and Electric Power (*Shuili Dianli Bu*). However, the Shanghai EZPO only remained for five years’ time until it was disbanded under the central command in 1988. This shall not turn out to be a surprise outcome if we could look at this project more closely.

The Shanghai EZPO was one of the few ‘centrally-orchestrated’ projects after the 1978 Chinese economic reform. It was the central state’s initial command to establish a governmental institution at the trans-provincial scale with the intention of breaking the regulatory shackle within the trans-jurisdictional socio-economic activities. From another perspective, it was a middle arrangement between the operation of centrally-controlled mega administrative regions prior to 1978 and the

decentralisation of decision-making rights after the 'Open Door' policy amid the drawdown process of regulatory power towards provincial and municipal jurisdictions since 1978. It was a top-down force attempt for improving the functional relations among municipal jurisdictions, and specifically, Shanghai and its surrounding urban and countryside.

In this case, there was a lack of careful consideration relating to the role of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provincial governments in the city-centric regional governance scale. According to the State Council's Circular of Establishing Planning Offices for Shanghai Economic Zone and Shanxi Energy Source Base [NO. 152] (*Guowuyuanguan'yuchengli Shanghaijingjiquhe Shanxinengyuanjidi Guihuabangongshidetongzhi*) in 1982, the office was run for promoting inter-city functional cooperation around Shanghai by formulating the city-regional social and economic plan, and facilitating interaction among local authorities. For achieving this aim, it was the planning office's responsibility for working out the coordinated city-regional plan and then ensuring the planning provisions to be reflected in the individual local city states' strategic and operational decisions, however with no means to enforce the implementation in the local administrative agenda. Specifically, the central authority did not state clearly how the administrative responsibilities relating to the local economic decision-making would be re-distributed between the planning office and local provincial governments.

The Shanghai EZPO only covered part of the territories of Jiangsu and Zhejiang. It was challenging for local municipal governments to operate within provincial governments' agendas while considering the Shanghai EZPO's decisions (people.com.cn, 2003; Li, 2009). Therefore, trans-jurisdictional matters easily fell into abeyance once there were evident conflicts between the Shanghai EZPO and local authorities. Political divergence increased when GDP growth and competition became the primary benchmarks for the local authorities' political achievement appraisal. There was insufficient consideration for long-existing territorial politics by the 'centrally-orchestrated' city-regional arrangement. The central State Council set this ambitious institutional mechanism in the belief that this would facilitate horizontal economic relations above the hierarchical territorial politics without interrupting or altering the long existence of hierarchical belongings between the local provincial and municipal states.

Furthermore, local provincial and municipal governments were holding major financial resources for organising and financing local administration, i.e. tax collection, and constructing activities. It means the Shanghai EZPO had to rely on local authorities to enforce their decision-making in the city-regional administrative agenda. Therefore, the Shanghai EZPO's decision-making was easily compromised on the basis of local territorial politics. According to Li's (2009) report on the official website of the history of People's Republic of China, there was one particular example reflecting the dilemma which was faced by the Shanghai EZPO. The term 'regional integration' was initially included in the draft strategic constitution, but soon removed according to local authorities' objections. The opinion against the term was that constructing the Shanghai-centric economic region shall not be seen as an approach to consolidate local administrative jurisdictions. Referring to such political context, the Shanghai EZPO was not able to reach the central State Council's initial expectation of actively promoting the horizontal functional relations above the local territorial political division in this Shanghai-centric region.

Finally, a number of crucial points can be concluded from this case. Firstly, 'centrally-orchestrated' governance arrangements, in our case appending one new middle-level administrative institution to the hierarchical state organisation, needs to carefully consider how this is going to fit and avoid conflicts in the top-down chain of administrative responsibility. The Shanghai EZPO was struggling for five years amid territorial politics between administrative divisions. Relating to this perspective, there is no way overlooking the dominating role of local governments within the local operating agenda while spatially rescaling state power. Secondly, the top-down 'orchestration' may not function effectively when central state's command contradicts the local specific context. The regionalisation around Shanghai was initiated by the central state to pursue its political wish of facilitating the trans-jurisdictional coordination in local economic agenda. However and apparently, local governments invested more attention in inter-city competition for concentrating economic activities in their own administrative jurisdictions, or the so-called 'Administrative Region Economy' (*Xingzhengqu Jingji*) (Liu et al., 2002; Liu, 2006), than city-regional scale at that stage which was right after the economic reform.

This case may provide us some clues for why we have seen so little central state-led construction of inter-jurisdictional governmental institutional arrangements after the

Shanghai EZPO was abandoned. Nonetheless, it is too early to exclude the nation state from the construction of the governance framework at the city-regional scale by solely relying on this historical case. The next section is going to investigate the more recent mega city-regionalism around Shanghai while relating back to the Shanghai EZPO in order to explicate the respective role of various political forces in the 'new city-regionalism'.

5.3 Expanding mega city-regional space by considering territorial politics

This section concentrates on the transformation between two distinct versions of the YRD, i.e. the narrow sense of YRD and the broad sense of YRD, which both frequently appear in the interviews, city-regionalism literatures and governments' announcements. Each of these two versions is tailored to fit unique and specific expectations, either economic or political, rather than a general requirement. What we have witnessed is the expanding process of the mega city-regional scale in the YRD, and more importantly, a better match between the YRD's spatial scope and local provincial-level territories.

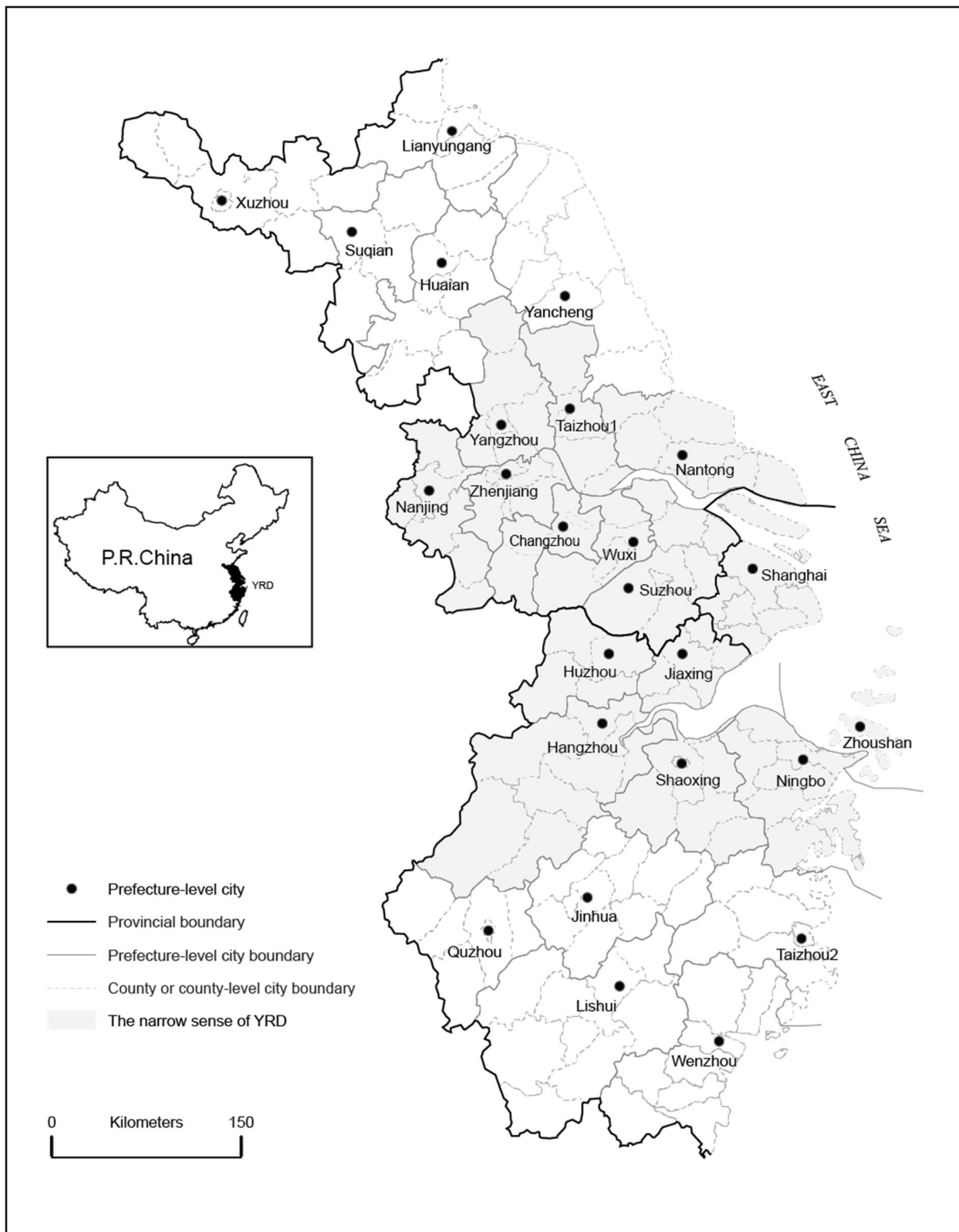
5.3.1 The Narrow sense of YRD

In terms of Chinese economic geography, the initial scope of the YRD consists of fifteen cities. They are Nanjing, Zhenjiang, Changzhou, Wuxi, Suzhou, Yangzhou, Taishou¹, Nantong in Jiangsu, Hangzhou, Jiaxing, Huzhou, Shaoxing, Ningbo, Zhoushan in Zhejiang and Shanghai. The size of this delta area is approximately ten square kilometres. According to a researcher from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS), these fifteen cities are "interconnecting on the map, and sharing identical local culture and consistent resources endowment; and together they are termed as the Wu(Jiangsu) and Yue(Zhejiang) culture (*Wu-Yue wenhua*) during their thousand years' history" (A researcher from SASS, interview, 25th July, 2013). Hence the definition of the narrow sense of YRD was initially raised due to this deep historical heritage. This was the early YRD in terms of geoeconomic recognition until Taishou² made its seat in the YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economies

(YRD CAUE) in 2003. The '14+1' (1 means Shanghai) was then replaced by the concept of '15+1' for defining the YRD.

The concept of '15+1' became the basis for many scholarly studies and research projects relating to the geoeconomic YRD, such as the Contemporary Shanghai Research Institution's (2005) '*The YRD's Development Report – Economic Growth and Urbanisation Process*', Luo's (2011) '*Inter-City Cooperation and Governance in Yangtze River Delta*', IEAS, UN-Habitat's (2012) '*The state of China's Cities 2012/2013*' and Xu and Zhu's (2013) edited collection '*A Research on Transition and Development in Yangtze River Delta's Urban Agglomeration*'; and the basis for much official statistical work, such as the data of YRD's total population and income per capita, etc. in Jiangsu, Zhejiang or Shanghai Statistical Bureaus' reports. The above mentioned statistical work illustrates that the concept of YRD in terms of '15+1' has been officially accepted by local authorities. The '15+1' is also termed as the narrow sense of YRD, and this is the YRD which has been frequently referenced by both eastern and western city-regional literatures (e.g. Luo 2011; Xu and Yeh, 2011; Harrison 2014; Hall and Pain 2006).

Figure 8: The narrow sense of YRD



Moreover and more importantly, the YRD's internal functional connection among the delta cities was already recognised by local municipal governments as early as 1992.

The framework of YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference, (later known as YRD CAUE), was established under the delta component municipal governments' agreed wish of reinforcing the horizontal functional linkages. This was a strong sign for local governments recognising the regional identity in favour of geoeconomic regionalisation. The regional integration process was significantly accelerated after the YRD CAUE was founded in 1997. Tourism, transportation and human resource used to be focused on by the association members to promote the integration process across the narrow sense of YRD as initial tasks (see Luo, 2011). There will be more discussions relating to this new city-regional governance framework in chapter 6.

According to Luo's (2011) work, the narrow sense of YRD consistently produced a substantial proportion of China's total GDP while holding only one percent of the entire national land and no more than ten percent of the national population since 1978. By the time the NDRC started the YRD regional plan in 2005, the narrow sense of YRD contributed almost one fifth of the national total GDP (see table 1). This mega city-regional space also produced more than one third of the national entire export; and attracted forty percent of the total national incoming foreign investments. The capability of agglomerating substantial economic activities in this area contributes significantly to the recognition of the narrow sense of YRD.

Table 10: Key economic indicators in 2005

Indicators	The Narrow Sense of YRD	Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang (%)	China (%)
Population (thousand)	82654	62.54	6.32
Area (km ²)	109960	52.18	1.15
GDP (million yuan)	3396315	83.04	18.63
Export (million dollar)	275969	94.99	36.22
Utilised Foreign Capital (million dollar)	26333	77.51	41.27

Source: Compiled from Luo (2011, 7)

Another important fact which shall make the YRD distinct from its adjacent cities and regions is the construction of its intra-regional transportation network as the

response to enhancing demand. The Hu-Ning (Shanghai-Nanjing), Hu-Hang (Shanghai-Hangzhou) and Ning-Hang (Nanjing-Hangzhou) highways, and many other highway lines together constitute one of the most complex intra-regional highway networks in China. Hu-Ning and Hu-Hang experienced continuous widening after their first utilisation and hence became the first two highways which had eight lanes in mainland China. Furthermore and more importantly, they are now two of the busiest highways in the whole country.

The idea of a 'one-hour economic circle' emerged as a result of the construction of the intra-regional high-speed rail network (top speed over 200 km/h), centred on Shanghai and connecting Nanjing and Hangzhou. The concept of 'one-hour economic circle' implies the regional area which is covered by the one-hour traveling distance from Shanghai. As a consequence, the narrow sense of YRD possesses strong transportation capacity in comparison with the rest of mainland China. The highway and high-speed rail network formed the basis for much research relating to population mobility in the YRD, such as Luo, Johnston and Chen's (2008) research, who analysed the scalar structure within the YRD and delimited the YRD's functional boundaries by measuring the people's flow between functional spaces and their surrounding less important cities. Their work is a reflection on Christaller's (1933) central place theory and contemporary relational approaches (e.g. Allen et al., 1998; Amin, 2004; Massey, 2007; Taylor et al., 2010).

It is not difficult to see local governments' intention of actively upgrading the existing trans-provincial highway network to cope with the growing traffic demand rather than be forced to follow the nation state's orchestration by looking at the historic event of inter-territorial highway disconnection. There was a long-established history of poor performance of inter-jurisdiction transportations within the entire China, including both railways and highways. Between the late 20th century and early 21st century, all of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai provincial-level governments consistently refused to modify their original plan of highway routes in order to find connections across provincial boundaries. Local governments had the main responsibility of leading and financing the construction of highways within their respective jurisdictions as well as the modification of their constructing plans. Changing original routes for connection around the administrative boundary may have meant to skip some urban and rural places in their own jurisdictions which could possibly have jeopardised their own

interest. The inter-jurisdictional highways disconnection clearly evidences existing inter-locality conflicts (see Li et al., 2014 and Luo and Shen (2008)).

But as one interviewee recalled, “after the mid-2000s, much more efforts have been invested in completing the construction of transportation projects around the provincial boundaries because of the accelerated enhancement of economic relations among cities” (A researcher from the SASS, interview, 12th July 2013). Her statement was further supported by another famous case of the highway of Hu(Shanghai) – Su(Jiangsu) – Zhe(Zhejiang) – Wan(Anhui) which goes through Shanghai, Suzhou in Jiangsu, Huzhou in Zhejiang and Xuancheng in Anhui. The involvement of all four provincial governments significantly delayed the constructing schedule. The Hu-Su-Zhe-Wan highway which was approximately two hundred and sixty kilometres long took almost five years to be entirely completed between 2003 and 2008. This used to be one of the central-orchestrated key projects according to the national tenth ‘Five-Year Plan (2001-2005)’. Zhejiang and Anhui’s tasks were completed by 2006 and then waiting for Jiangsu and Shanghai’s connection until 2008. The demand for this highway to be completed was increased by the second half of the constructing timetable.

This section explains that the narrow sense of the YRD is defined on the basis of a geoeconomic logic in terms of functional agglomeration and enhancing economic relations among selected local urban jurisdictions. It is apparent that this version distinguishes the comparatively more developed functional spaces, i.e. Shanghai, Southern Jiangsu and Northern Zhejiang, from the rest of the provincial jurisdictions, i.e. Northern Jiangsu and Southern Zhejiang. But this is only a part of the current mega city-regionalism in the YRD. The next section is going to explain the expanding process of the YRD.

5.3.2 The broad sense of YRD

The YRD Regional Plan expands the YRD to cover three entire provincial jurisdictions, i.e. Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. The YRD regional plan was formulated by three different teams, i.e. comprehensive team, expert team and local team, under the lead of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC)

in 2005 and then launched under the approval of the central State Council in 2010. The YRD regional plan is important since this is the first time for the central authority to issue official strategic guidance for the YRD's mega city-regional formation. Consequently, the YRD regional plan shows that the broad sense of YRD is the definition which is able to obtain the central authority's recognition for the YRD, instead of the narrow sense of YRD which considers little about the provincial-level politics. It was stated, by one of the comprehensive team members, as:

“The YRD regional plan was initially formulated for the ‘15+1’ by the NDRC between 2005 and 2006, but afterwards modified to cover three entire provinces under the State Council's indication. This is also one of the main reasons for explaining why it took five years, such a long period, to complete before it was finally issued in 2010” (A member of the comprehensive team, interview, 15th July, 2013).

According to the senior members who were involved in drafting the YRD regional plan, there were two primary intentions behind the expanding process toward the broad sense of YRD. Firstly,

“it is challenging for a group of local municipal governments to participate in the horizontal interaction while each is holding various political ranks, for instance the provincial level, vice-provincial level and municipal level. Their voices would not be heard equally in the horizontal interaction. Even more challenging, it is sometimes not possible for municipal governments to make direct contact with others across the provincial boundaries. Considering this issue, the broad sense of YRD is able to include all three provincial governments [Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang] in the governance of the YRD” (A chief member of the comprehensive team, interview, 23rd July, 2013).

The second point is that “the YRD's expansion reflects both the central and provincial governments' expectation of extending the [functional] development over the rest of the provincial area” (A researcher from Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology of Chinese Academy of Sciences (NIGLAS), interview, 1st August, 2013).

Relating to the cities' political rank in the first statement and amongst all of the YRD's ‘15+1’ component cities: firstly, Shanghai is the municipality under the direct control

of the central state, and hence belongs to the provincial-level; secondly, Nanjing, Hangzhou and Ningbo are vice-provincial level of prefecture cities; and finally, the rest of city members are prefecture level. All of the delta's component members are operating under direct commands from their respective provincial government, apart from Shanghai. It means their activities shall not collide with their superior authorities within the hierarchical political system while participating in the operation of the mega city-regional governance. Consequently, the YRD regional plan and the concept of the broad sense of YRD prompt provincial governments to be much involved in constructing the mega city-regional scale of governance. It is much easier to organise the horizontal interaction among local authorities which hold the same political level.

The preface of the YRD regional plan explains the central state's overall aim of enlarging the YRD as improving the competitiveness and sustaining the economic growth at the mega city-regional level. Based on this aim and according to the regional plan, the YRD is expanded to include northern Jiangsu and southern Zhejiang in order to employ the former's spare land and labour resources and the latter's abundant natural physical resources and prosperous local private capital. All of the above-mentioned resources are stated by the regional plan as crucial elements for transforming the YRD's industrial structures from current manufacturing to high-technology and service industries. The content of the YRD regional plan will be focused on in chapter 6. The key point here is the expanded version of YRD reflects the central state's strategic aim of promoting the cross-jurisdictional economic integration and sustainable growth at a larger city-regional space. However, it is important to notice that this is not a centrally-commanded expansion process.

The comparatively under-developed prefecture cities within Jiangsu and Zhejiang have had a few years' experience of frequently sending signals of being eager to be included in the YRD through a variety of methods, for instance applying for being a part of the YRD CAUE, and expressing their wish of underpinning the functional connections with the narrow sense of YRD by receiving the manufacturing enterprises which shift away from them in the governmental officials' oral presentation and media interviews etc. since the mid-2000s. The former example will be included in the introduction of YRD CAUE and the latter case will be explained in

the discussion of the manufacturing industries' relocation within the YRD for section 5.3. What can be stated here is before the enlargement of YRD CAUE's membership, all of the municipalities in Northern Jiangsu and Southern Zhejiang have been constantly seeking for opportunities to be involved in functional relations with YRD's members. Therefore, the conceptualisation of the broad sense of YRD fits for both of the central and local governments' political demand for enlarging city-regionalising process across entire Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai.

In short, the broad sense of YRD is replacing the narrow sense of YRD as a mega city-regional space which is supported by the Chinese hierarchical state organisation based on the consideration of local territorial politics. The broad sense of YRD represents both the central and local authorities' expectation of achieving local political effectiveness and economic efficiency by driving local administrative attention to the mega city-regional level. However, the central state's favour in the broad sense of YRD was merely transmitted by the YRD regional plan, which was seen by many as guidance without enforcement power. By contrast, the enlargement of the spatial scale in the YRD has been largely driven by local political force. The following sections are going to investigate the enlarging process by relating to both intra-regional economic relations and local territorial politics.

5.3.3 The dynamic territorial politics within the YRD's mega city-regionalism

There have been continuous state-led attempts for constructing and improving functional relations in the YRD around Shanghai despite inter-city competition for GDP growth since the 1978 economic reform. This section is going to explain how the interaction among local governments has prompted city-regionalising processes in the YRD.

The inter-city networked governance was engaged with as early as 1992. In 1992, fourteen cities from the current narrow sense of YRD, apart from Zhejiang's Taishou², voluntarily started the YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference. The conference was attended by each city's Planning and Economy Committee. In 1997, Taizhou¹ was split from Yangzhou and then established as a new municipality under the direct control of Jiangsu government. Then the number of municipalities which

agreed to attend the joint conference increased to fifteen. The YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference was principally serving to enhance the horizontal inter-city interaction through economic data and functional experience exchange among the local states. There was a lack of a specific topic as well as regularity for each conference. Due to its informal and aperiodic nature, the meeting did not generate much achievement other than act as a platform for casual inter-governmental communication in relation to data exchange (Luo, 2011: 132). However, the YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference was an important sign that local governance started to extend beyond each urban jurisdiction to become networked at a larger scale. It was the early stage for local governments starting to shift their attention to the mega city-regional level.

In 1997, based on the agreement of all fifteen member cities, the YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economy (CAUE) was established to replace the framework of the joint conference, and Shanghai became the permanent president of the association. Each city's Planning and Economy Committee, who used to represent each municipal government in previous conferences, was replaced by all the fifteen city mayors. The constitution of the association was constructed and stated that the mayor conference and another following meeting for discussing details should be conducted once every two years. This was the initial step for the networked governance mechanism becoming institutionalised at the mega city-regional level in terms of regular frequency and establishing a clear aim for each conference.

After Zhejiang's Taizhou² joined in 2003, the YRD CAUE experienced continuous recruitment in the following decade, and included 30 cities by 2013. As a researcher from SASS mentioned in the interview,

“the Urban and Demographic Studies of the SASS was always invited to make an official assessment whether the potential applicants were qualified for becoming a part of the association based on their existing or potential economic connections with existing association members” (A researcher from SASS, interview, 12th July 2013).

During 2003 and 2004, the YRD CAUE's constitution doubled the frequency of the mayor conference and working meeting to once every year. For understanding the YRD CAUE, it is important to realise that it is a voluntary trans-provincial institution

without a superior regulatory unit and it is currently registered in the Department of Civil Affairs. Or in other words, the association emerged as a result of local governments' wish of intensifying horizontal connections in order to sustain economic growth in the future rather than through a top-down commanded institutional arrangement. Before the 2003 expansion, the association reflected municipal governments' recognition of the '15+1' YRD in terms of economic relations. Therefore, the establishment of the YRD CAUE was the local official recognition that the context of local activities was no longer much bound in the cities' jurisdictions, and thus networked governance became necessary for regulating and promoting such cross-jurisdictional activities.

Furthermore, three provincial level governments, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, started to engage with YRD's networked governance in 2003. It was the initial stage for provincial governments shifting their attention to the YRD's mega city-regionalism. In March 2003, the governor of Zhejiang province at that time, Jinping Xi, headed a visiting delegation to Shanghai, and stated that intensifying the provincial level connections between Shanghai and Zhejiang would become one of the prioritised tasks in the future agenda. His statement was then formalised and included into the Zhejiang provincial government's official strategic documents. By following Xi's visit, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang's provincial delegation groups completed mutual visits of each other by the end of 2003. There were a number of bilateral contractual agreements for intensifying the trans-provincial economic connections reached by following each tour, such as 'The Agreement on Further Improving the Economic Cooperation and Growth between Shanghai and Zhejiang (*Guanyu Jinyibutuijin Huzhe Jingjihezuo yufazhande Xieyishu*)' and 'Further Strengthening the Exchange and Cooperation of Economic Technology between Jiangsu and Zhejiang (*Jinyibujiqiang Jingjijishujiaoliuyuhezuo Xieyi*)' after Xi's visits to Shanghai and Jiangsu respectively.

All three provincial governments expressed the same consideration as integrating the cross-jurisdictional socio-economic connections was becoming critical and urgent for sustaining the economic growth of the entire YRD in the future. This is saying that the identical interests and strategic aim sharing by all three provincial governments was one of the main forces to push forward the YRD's geopolitical city-regionalising process. Following the meetings among provincial governments, the YRD's

governance framework, which consists of the decision making level, coordination level and execution level from top to bottom was completed by 2008. We will come back to this governance framework with more details about its structure and operation in chapter 6.

5.3.4 The expanding YRD in accordance with the spatial restructuring of manufacturing industries

“According to Scott and his acolytes, city-regions represent a new scale of urbanization and city-regionalism a new phase in capitalist territorial development - a belief fuelled by recognition that while accelerating processes of global economic integration and rapid urbanization are resulting in the resurgence of cities in globalization, substantive expressions of urbanization result in metropolitan landscapes stretching far beyond their traditional territorial boundaries. One only has to look at the exceptional rate of city expansion into larger city-regions comprising multiple functionally interlinked urban settlements in China, for example, to appreciate how “the city” as traditionally conceived no longer adequately reflects the underlying structure of how urban life is being organized in globalization” (Harrison, 2015b: 20-21).

Accelerated economic integration and urbanisation have substantially improved the economic relations among cities and therefore resulted in the emergence of functionally interlinked urban clusters in the YRD. Meanwhile what we have also witnessed in the YRD is that the operation of functional activities continuously expands the inter-connected city-regional space to cover even more cities and the countryside at its periphery. The spatial restructuring of traditional manufacturing industries during the past decade is a part of such functional activities. Both market forces and government intervention are playing a crucial role in the manufacturing businesses’ decision-making relating to spatial relocation in the YRD. Section 5.3.4.1 argues that the spatial movement trend of the YRD’s manufacturers is improving functional linkages between the narrow sense of YRD and its outer area; and section 5.3.4.2 focuses on the role of local politics in the case study of Wuxi’s chemical manufacturing industries.

5.3.4.1 The spatial shifting of the manufacturing industries

During the past decades, YRD's cities kept focusing on enhancing their own industrial structures and maximising the jurisdictional GDP volume while paying less attention to achieve functional complementary at the mega city-regional level. This resulted in "similar structures located in neighbouring cities, and implicitly, a relationship dominated by competition instead of cooperation and harmony" (Gu et al., 2011: 240). According to Social Sciences Academic Press' (2011: 11) *Blue Book of Yangtze River Delta: The Yangtze River Delta Stepping towards the World-Class City Group 2011*, amongst all sixteen cities in the narrow sense of YRD, twelve chose to focus on electronic and informational manufacturing; eleven concentrated on the automobile manufacturing; and nine grew their petrochemical industries. Even more challenging, along with China's transformation into a world factory, YRD's external constraints began to emerge such as "the export-oriented development of labour-intensive products caused trade friction" (Wu and Zhang, 2010: 62).

According to the YRD regional plan, it is now a critical moment for the YRD to accelerate its industrial transformation relating to traditional labour-intensive manufacturing industries and structural upgrading towards high-technological and service industries in order to improve mega city-regional competitiveness. Or in other words, facilitating and achieving industrial specialisation and labour division within a larger spatial scale is to become a fundamental part of mega city-regional planning and development.

This is because: Firstly, Shanghai has become one of the cities with the slowest growth rates in terms of urban GDP in China. Furthermore, other top global cities, such as London, New York and Tokyo, are still significantly ahead of Shanghai based on economic statistics. For instance, in 2007 the average GDP per capita for Shanghai was \$8,500, in comparison with London and New York's \$30,000 and Tokyo's \$50,000 (Gu et al., 2011: 239). Secondly, YRD's labour-intensive manufacturing industries are vulnerable to the up-down trend of the world economy. Export-oriented industries are currently contributing a substantial part of their annual economic volume. Table 10 illustrates that the core YRD accounted for more than one third of China's exports in 2005; and furthermore, table 9 discloses that, in 2012,

the sixteen delta cities' exports still represented a very large proportion of their GDP, in particular, Shanghai's export value was more than one tenth of its annual GDP, and Suzhou's annual export value was almost fifteen percent of its annual GDP. Third, the growth of labour, land and other production costs in the core YRD greatly undermines the local enterprises' profitability and competitiveness. For these reasons, the YRD needed to confront the demand for accelerated restructuring of spatial functions.

Consequently, the YRD is currently facing the tasks of upgrading the current industrial structure and preserving the existing agglomeration of manufacturing industries. Improving economic relations among the narrow sense of YRD and its surrounding areas has become important and urgent. According to the YRD regional plan, while following Shanghai's lead, Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Hangzhou and Ningbo shall shift their attention to improve their Research-and-Development capability and increase the proportion of the high-technology industries and advanced producer services' outputs of their entire GDP generation; and Shanghai is to focus on improving its national and global influence by concentrating financial functions and other service industries. The rest of the YRD' cities, in particular northern Jiangsu and south-western Zhejiang, shall focus on receiving labour-intensive manufacturing industries which are to move from the core YRD to take advantage of the outer areas' spare land and labour resources as well as their abundant natural physical resources and prosperous local private capital. As a consequence, the spatial restructuring process city-regionalised the YRD at the larger scale by increasing its agglomerated economic volume and enhancing internal functional linkages.

Table 11: The relocation of core YRD's investments to northern Jiangsu

	2004	2007	2009
The Number of Relocated Investments*	1893	2026	2051
Valuation of proposed Investments* (billion ¥)	64.1	99.38	145.4
Valuation of Completed Within the Year* (billion ¥)	25.7	49.79	77.81

* Valuation of Single Investment is no less than five million Yuan
Source: Compiled from Jiangsu NDRC's statistical Reports

Table 11 shows that the value of projects relocating from the core YRD to northern Jiangsu more than doubled between 2004 and 2009. The increase in both the number and value of relocated projects means that the spatial restructuring process has become even more intensive in recent years. If we take a closer look at the YRD industries' relocating process, it is reflected by the following.

In general, there are three main categories of manufacturing businesses which are likely to shift away from the core YRD toward the outer area. Firstly, labour-intensive manufacturing businesses which have a comparatively high demand for production resources of labour and land are likely to move out of the core YRD. There has been a long recognition of the trend for labour-intensive manufacturing industries to shift away from core YRD around Shanghai to the developing northern Jiangsu and south-western Zhejiang (e.g. Chen and Ye, 2002; Fan, 2004; Song, 2010). The major concern here is that the sustained economic boom of core YRD, in particular Shanghai, has driven up local land and labour costs and created shortages in spare developable land, which has become expensive for potential investors (Chen, 2007). For example,

“667 square metres of industrial land shall value at between thirty thousand and forty thousand Chinese *Yuan* in Southern Jiangsu in comparison with between only ten thousand and twenty thousand Chinese *Yuan* in Northern Jiangsu” (A business leader in Wuxi, interview, 8th July 2013).

There is a three to four times difference for industrial land cost. Moreover, there is a significant gap in labour cost between northern and southern Jiangsu. According to National and Jiangsu's Statistical Bureaus' 2005 data, the annual income per-capita for the narrow sense of YRD's sixteen members was 15255 Chinese *Yuan* in comparison with 12319 Chinese *Yuan* for the entire Jiangsu province which included eight municipalities from the narrow sense of YRD and another five in Northern Jiangsu.

Secondly, “businesses which consume large amounts of water, electricity and other physical resources [...] are likely to be required to move away from the developed area by local authorities” (A researcher from NIGLAS, interview, 1st August 2013).

This relates to the aim of achieving sustainable economic and social development by reducing the industries' energy consumption. Thirdly, industries which might create significant damage to the physical environment would be required to shift away to less developed areas. For the latter two categories, it is important to realise that the requirement for spatial relocation of targeted industries is not an easy decision for local governments to make in the face of the GDP-led political performance appraisal system. Why this spatial shift is accelerating in the YRD at this moment cannot be understood without reference to changing market forces and the role of state politics. According to the statement of a researcher from NIGLAS,

“large number of meetings, forums and conferences among local governments in the YRD, which are organised by the mega city-regional governance framework, are able to quickly build close relationship for negotiation about guiding local businesses' decision relating to the spatial transformation” (A researcher from NIGLAS, interview, 1st August 2013).

His opinion partly interprets why some of Anhui's municipal authorities had constantly expressed, directly and indirectly, their interests in joining the YRD CAUE. By 2015, five of Anhui's municipal authorities, including Hefei, Wuhu, Huainan, Maanshan and Chuzhou, have become official members of YRD CAUE. His statement highlights the importance of maintaining the circle of the YRD's component members as being closely networked through face-to-face meeting. In comparison with a variety of telecommunication methods, face-to-face conversation is still an effective method for conducting communication in depth. By taking advantage of the shorter physical distance, face-to-face meetings which are organised by government officers, business leaders and other key stakeholders can be achieved regularly at comparative higher frequency every year than those with people from more remote areas, such as inland China. Thus intra-regional horizontal communication easily facilitates the information exchange about potential locations and the policy environment for the industries which are required to relocate within the YRD.

Moreover, the networked transporting capacity is one of the most significant considerations involved in the manufacturing industries' decision relating to the factories' location. Transportation has been one of the YRD CAUE's focused tasks

since its early stage (see Luo, 2011). As section 5.3.1 already mentioned, much of local governments' efforts had been invested in completing the construction of transportation projects around the provincial boundaries. The end of the issue of inter-jurisdictional highways disconnection and following rapid improvement of the combined highways and high-speed rail network over the last decade has earned the nearby northern Jiangsu and south-western Zhejiang's component municipalities the advantage of more efficient transportation over mainland regions further away for receiving relocated investments. An interview with a private chemical enterprise in Wuxi revealed that

“the upgrade of the existing transportation infrastructures enables the same quantity of input resources and output products to spend less time on the road but at even lower cost in comparison with previous time” (A business leader in Wuxi, interview, 19th July 2013).

According to Social Sciences Academic Press' (2011: 5) *Blue Book of Yangtze River Delta: The Yangtze River Delta Stepping towards the World-Class City Group 2011*, the total length of highways within the entire broad sense of YRD had almost reached 7000 kilometres when it was published. Together with the normal and high-speed railways, the cross-territorial ground transportation network within the YRD ensures that the industries located in the peripheral areas can operate relatively cheaper and make use of faster physical connections with the core YRD around Shanghai.

As well as the ground transportation network, cross-territorial flows are also reliant on water transportation. The Pacific Ocean faces the YRD in its east and connected to Shanghai, southern Jiangsu and Anhui via the Yangtze River. According to the Contemporary Shanghai Research Institute's (2005: 7) *The Progress Report of Yangtze River Delta 2005: Economic Growth and Urbanising Process*, the intra-regional shipping lanes reach 36,800 kilometres in total, which accounts for 34% of the national figure. Shanghai's Yangshan port and Zhejiang's Beilun port are able to fit the fifth and six generation of container ships which can carry 4800 and 10000 Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEU) respectively. In addition, a few other river ports along the lower Yangtze River are able to fit the third and fourth generation container ships which could carry 3000 and 4400 TEUs respectively. This is the YRD's unique

transportation advantage over other eastern coastal and inland regions. These water transporting facilities make significant contribution to the narrow sense of YRD's export value which accounts for more than one third of the national total outputs according to table 10. All of the above-mentioned improvements to YRD's transportation network shall not be stated without mentioning the constitutive role of local authorities as construction organisers and fundraisers. The following section will reinforce the need to consider the role of local politics in the functional transformation of the YRD.

5.3.4.2 The spatial shifting of Wuxi's chemical industries

According to Jiangsu Government Information Centre data, textiles, electromechanical and chemical manufacturing enterprises are three of the main inclusions in the relocation trend towards northern Jiangsu by 2006. The data illustrates that the withdrawal of chemical manufacturing industries from the core YRD already happened before 2007. For the YRD, Wuxi is one of its greatest GDP contributors and the chemical manufacturing industry plays a significant role in this contribution. There was an important decision to be made by Wuxi government in 2007 as they chose to accelerate the withdrawal process of its own chemical manufacturing industries as a result of the algae blooming in Taihu Lake.

As table 9 discloses, Wuxi is the second strongest GDP generator in Jiangsu province, following only Suzhou. According to the Wuxi government's document of '*chemical industries' control planning for 2010-2012*', chemical manufacturing is one of the giant industries by focusing on fine chemicals and new materials in Wuxi. Wuxi's chemical industry generated approximately 100 billion Yuan output annually by 2007, as 13.6% and 1.6% of Jiangsu and China's whole chemical industries' outputs respectively. Since Wuxi's yearly GDP for 2007 was no more than 400 billion Yuan, the chemical industry was making up almost one quarter of its entire economic output.

However, between May and June 2007, as a result of the blue algae blooming in Jiangsu Taihu Lake, the water was no longer drinkable for a certain period of time. Although there is still much disagreement about the primary cause of the blue algae

blooming, the industrial sewage which comes from surrounding cities, Wuxi in particular, has been recognised by Wuxi government as one of the important pollution sources. This critical event triggered one of the largest withdrawals of the chemical manufacturing industries in Wuxi. During 2007, the algae blooming in Jiangsu Taihu Lake drew particular attention not only from local provincial and municipal governments, but also the central authority. The former premier of the central State Council, Jiabao Wen, made a special visit to Taihu Lake and Wuxi's chemical enterprises after the event happened. An emergency meeting was called and organised by Jiabao Wen for discussing with local political officers about how to handle this particular event. The central State Council's visit left Wuxi government a strong sign of the need to prevent the event from generating more potential harm to the local environment. As a result, apart from sending specialists to fish the blue algae out of Taihu Lake, Wuxi government paid serious attention to their own chemical industries.

Table 12: Wuxi's GDP for the year 2007, 2009 and 2012

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Wuxi Chemical Industries' Output (¥'billion)	About 100	/	About 100	/	/	About 110
Number of chemical enterprises	2955	/	1654	/	/	Less than 1500
Wuxi GDP (¥'billion)	385.800	441.950	499.172	575.800	688.015	756.815
Primary Industry	5.500	6.300	9.362	10.494	12.298	13.722
Secondary Industry	225.600	254.657	283.638	320.879	372.812	401.203
Tertiary Industry	154.700	180.993	206.172	244.427	302.905	341.890

Source: Compiled from Wuxi Government's Statistical Reports

Moreover, as a local government officer mentioned in the interview, “the Energy Consumption for Every Ten Thousand Yuan GDP (*WanyuanGDP Nenghao*) would become a part of the political assessment system soon in this year or next” (Chief

Officer of Yixing Economic and Information Technology Commission (EITC), interview, 6th July 2013). Such modification of the existing political assessment system means even more challenges for the operation of manufacturing industries which consume significant amounts of water, electricity and other physical resources in the YRD's core area around Shanghai, which is seen as the manufacturing base.

According to the Wuxi government's document of '*Chemical Industries' Control Planning for 2010-2012*', by the end of 2009, 1301 of 2955 chemical enterprises in Wuxi had either been shut down or sent away to Northern Jiangsu or Anhui, which were still operating sloppy environment provisions. The Wuxi government compensates those enterprises that choose to shut the operation or move the production base out of Wuxi by employing several different approaches. According to the statement of a business leader in Wuxi, such compensations include,

“firstly, purchasing their chemical business operating licences back at a variable rate on the basis of their business scale and annual output; secondly, buying the industrial land which their factory occupies; and thirdly returning the business tax charged for the last three to five years” (A business leader in Wuxi, interview, 7 August 2013).

Within the local political intervention, it is interesting to see that “the Wuxi government sent away or shut down the comparatively smaller companies but chose to retain the chemical giants, such as Sanmu Group which not only supply to consumers in mainland China but also export to the global market” (A business leader in Wuxi, interview, 7 August 2013).

This is the local government's reaction towards the pressure that resulted from the remaining GDP-led political assessment. For the relatively larger scale chemical companies, in particular those which have the capability of upgrading their R&D capacity, environment protection devices and production lines, what they need to change is paying more attention to reduce their harm to the local environment, i.e. reduction of industrial inflow to Taihu Lake in particular, and shift their output focus to the high-technological production from the low value chain in exchange for their stay in Wuxi. At the same time, Northern Jiangsu and Anhui cities actively engaged in order to attract chemical investments by promising preferential provisions, such as firstly, corporate tax free for the first three years and half corporate tax for the next

three years; and secondly, VAT free for the first year and half VAT for another year, etc. These preferential treatments may vary depending on each local government's extent of interest in attracting such investment.

Overall, what is emerging from the recent spatially shifting trend relating to traditional manufacturing industries in the larger version of YRD is what Scott (2001b: 818) explains at the beginning of this century as “dense urban agglomerations continue to increase in size and importance” on the basis of “the network arrangements and relational interdependencies that constitute the basic structure of organized economic and social life”. Interviews with local business leaders disclose that their relocation decisions are closely tied their commercial considerations, for instance, the comparative level of production costs of the core YRD around Shanghai and its contiguous less-developed area and business operation context in terms of local communities' requirement for reducing environmental footprints and local environmental regulations. Therefore, market forces are essential for triggering the shifting process which then results in the changing relations among cities in the broad sense of YRD.

However, what makes the study of Wuxi's chemical industries important here is that this case discloses the fact that local jurisdictional authorities, such as provincial and municipal governments, are actively involved in the operation of local functional activities. Firstly, local governments, which in our case include both the Wuxi government and peripheral municipal governments, accelerate the existing market-triggered trend of relocating manufacturing industries which otherwise would take a longer period to complete. Even more importantly, the involvement of provincial and municipal governments in the YRD's networked governance relating to both the improvement of mega city-regional transportation and regular interactive events, such as face-to-face meetings, forums and conferences, ensures the economic relations are formulated among cities which belong to the YRD's provincial jurisdictions, i.e. Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, rather than other peripheral administrative areas. Such important 'discursive processes' (McGuirk, 2004) facilitate the information exchange among YRD's cities and then highlight the attractiveness of potential destinations for labour-intensive manufacturing industries. Hence, just as Jonas and Ward (2007: 173) argued, “city-regions ought to be conceptualised as contingent products of practical acts of political construction and,

therefore, as necessarily variable according to political interests and thus indeterminate territorial formations”. Consequently, it is crucial to recognise the constitutive role of territorial politics out of the state-controlled scalar origination in constructing the contingent outcome of the YRD’s mega city-regionalism.

Secondly, the nation state is, more or less, retaining its superior influence over local affairs. The central State Council’s signal of implementing stricter environmental regulation over local functional activities after the 2007 blue algae blooming in Taihu Lake, assessment of local political performance in terms of GDP and the Energy Consumption for Every Ten Thousand Yuan GDP (*WanyuanGDP Nenghao*) are all making an impact on local governments’ decisions relating to the local economic development in the YRD. From this perspective, indeed, “city-regions are not the quasi-autonomous political-economic spaces many proponents of the new city-regionalism would have us believe” (Harrison, 2015b: 36). Nevertheless, we shall also not overlook that it is local governments’ choice about how to react towards the above-mentioned central policies in the middle of the YRD’s mega city-regionalism.

For instance, Wuxi government sent away or shut down the comparatively smaller companies but chose to retain the chemical giants. It is local government’s decision about how to shape the mega city-regionalism in the context of local economic and political circumstances, and central policies. Constructing mega city-regional governance is therefore a process that has involved hierarchical relations within the state scalar organisation, discursive rendering of horizontal relations, and “active mobilisation by a range of actors pursuing strategic spatial interests” (Jonas and Ward, 2007: 173; Jonas, 2013; McGuirk, 2004).

5.4 Conclusion: Enlarged mega city-region as a contingent geopolitical outcome

Cities expansion into mega city-regions under the supervision of political authorities is evident in the case of the YRD’s recent spatial transformation. This chapter has examined the spatially enlarging process from the narrow sense to the broad sense of the YRD through exploring the spatial transformation of traditional manufacturing enterprises. In contrast to the previous ‘centrally orchestrated’ commanded

arrangement of the Shanghai EZPO, two more recent attempts at conceptualising the YRD relating to intra-regional socio-economic linkages and cross-territorial political interests are both 'bottom-up' reactions to the changing economic-political contexts on a voluntary basis. By focusing on the YRD's spatially enlarging process, this chapter illustrates the political contribution in expanding the mega city-regional functional spaces to cover three entire provincial jurisdictions.

This chapter has justified that extending socio-economic linkages and cross-territorial political consensus associated with both provincial and prefectural governments constitute two crucial characteristics of the YRD's enlarged mega city-regionalism. Institutional interaction has been built and operated by local authorities as a 'tool' for exchanging locational political interests and then reinforcing inter-city functional relations on the basis of cross-territorial consensus. In specific, the YRD CAUE, as an essential part of the mega city-regional governance framework, is able to act as a platform for involved local governments to conduct continuous interaction in the form of regular face-to-face meetings, forums and conferences.

What becomes important about this institutional arrangement is that such geopolitical connections firstly facilitate the economic transition towards high technological manufacturing and service industries in the core YRD around Shanghai, and secondly ensure traditional labour-intensive manufacturing industries can relocate from the core YRD into the surrounding less-developed peripheral area and more importantly remain in the same provincial territories, including Northern Jiangsu and Southern Zhejiang. To achieve this, the YRD's collective governance is able to, firstly promote the infrastructural construction projects relating to cross-jurisdictional transportation which is crucial for labour-intensive manufacturing industries; and secondly highlight the attractiveness of the potential destination over other peripheral administrative areas for traditional labour-intensive manufacturing industries through improving the information exchange among YRD's cities. This is the advantage of being part of constant cross-jurisdictional interaction which local governments are able to take from engaging with the institutional arrangement at the mega city-regional scale.

According to Cheshire and Magrini (2009), "there is general recognition that the best performing cities are those where local government boundaries are most closely

matched to the functional geography of the local economy” (cited in Harrison, 2010: 313). Following this perspective, what becomes interesting about the YRD’s mega city-regionalism is the YRD’s functional space has been expanded to cover three entire provincial jurisdictions under the lead of local and provincial political authorities. The wish of three provincial governments to extend the existing functional relations from the ‘15+1’ version of the YRD into the less-developed areas of provincial jurisdiction is evidently in accordance with the mega city-regional governmental agenda. The political participation not only accelerates the existing functional transformation, but also organises the agglomeration of socio-economic activities, in our case traditional labour-intensive manufacturing industries, in the provincial jurisdictions, which matches the enlarged mega city-regional space with extant political jurisdictions.

In the case of the YRD, it is not enough to solely rely on socio-economic relations to shape and extend a mega city-regional space. Rather, we shall pay more attention to the political contribution in delimiting a visible spatial scope for our mental concept of the mega city-region. Institutional interaction among locational political authorities ensures various territorial interests to be exchanged and then reflected in the collective decision-making across a group of different political territories. The reflection of various territorial interests in the mega city-regional governmental agenda is fundamental for encouraging local political authorities to enforce collective decisions in the local territorial administration as volunteers in the absence of statutory support. Therefore, reflecting on Jonas’ (2012: 268) recommendation of “perhaps the problem hitherto with relational thinking around regions has been a tendency to overemphasise territorial politics as a response to external flows and mobility and, correspondingly, to underemphasise internal territorial interests, constraints and problems of immobility”, we emphasise the dynamic territorial politics which largely follow their own political interests as one of constitutive actors in shaping and re-shaping mega city-regional space.

Furthermore and according to Brenner (2009: 134),

“the rescaling of state power never entails the creation of a ‘blank slate’ on which totally new scalar arrangements could be established, but occurs through a conflictual ‘layering’ process in which emergent rescaling strategies

collide with, and only partially rework inherited landscapes of state scalar organisation”.

It shall be noted that the collective governance at the mega city-regional level still needs to react to the national interest. For instance, this chapter illustrates that local governments are currently accelerating traditional labour-intensive manufacturing industries’ spatial shifting process by following the central State Council’s advice relating to emerging environmental issues. It is also their local decision to retain the chemical giants in their prefectural jurisdiction while sending away or shutting down the comparatively smaller companies. One of their fundamental challenges is to deal with a centrally-controlled assessment system for local political achievements, which contains combined elements of GDP growth and energy consumption (measured per every ten thousand Yuan GDP).

More importantly, both provincial and prefectural governments hold the primary responsibility to organise and regulate socio-economic activities in their political territories amid the YRD’s mega city-regionalism. It is always their decision how to flexibly respond to the national state’s interests and supervision based on local socio-economic and political contexts. The key point here is the strategic relation among different scales of governments within the state scalar organisation. Therefore, it is crucial for mega city-regional research to collect detailed empirical evidence about how “territorial politics inside the competition state shape city-regional institutions and politics “from below”” (Jonas, 2013: 287).

Overall, geopolitics is a constitutive actor for shaping and reshaping a mega city-regional space through assembling a number of various cities and their regions based on socio-economic connections. It is essential for locational territorial interests and national impacts to be engaged and reflected in the cross-territorial collective decision-making. The research into the spatial transformation of long-existing labour-intensive manufacturing industries across the enlarged YRD’s spatial scope provided empirical evidence for explaining why it has been a contingent geopolitical outcome to match the functional space with administrative jurisdictions at a new spatial scale. The result is we have been delivered a ‘visible’ mega city-regional space for conducting collective governance. The next chapter is going to provide more details about how this outcome has been achieved through establishing political consensus,

and more importantly how the operation of cross-territorial governance has improved the YRD's wealth and well-being at a sustainable path.

Chapter 6: Ongoing Geopolitical Dynamics: A Case Study of the YRD's Collective Governance and Sustained Competitiveness

6.1 Introduction

Competitiveness has been highlighted as “the means by which regional economies are externally validated in an era of globalization” (Bristow, 2005: 285). But how to improve city-regional competitiveness is such a complex discourse resulting in much research and debate amongst scholars and regulatory institutions (e.g. Bristow, 2005; Huggins and Davies, 2006; Gardiner, 2003; European Commission, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014; IEAS, China Association of Mayors and UN-Habitat, 2012). While it is not this chapter’s aim to explore the meaning of regional competitiveness, it is critical to understand that the competitiveness of a region, such as the Yangtze River Delta, depends on its “ability to anticipate and successfully adapt to internal and external economic and social challenges, by providing new economic opportunities” (Huggins and Davies, 2006: 1).

In this way, *mega* city-regional governance has long been claimed to “promote those local levels of efficiency, productivity and competitiveness that markets alone can never fully secure” (Scott, 2001b: 822). Indeed, Chinese *mega* city-regional networked governance and institutional arrangements have been an important focus in contemporary urban and regional debates (e.g. Luo and Shen, 2008, 2009; Lin, 2014; Wang, 2008; Wang, 2009; Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2011; Zhang and Wu, 2006; Zhang, 2006). We have seen a variety of focuses in favour of administrative annexation around the main urban authority (Zhang and Wu, 2006), regional collaboration (Zhang, 2006; Lin, 2014), the centrally or provincially orchestrated *mega* city-regional plan (e.g. Xu, 2008; Xu and Yeh, 2011), and institutional interaction among prefectural governments (Luo and Shen, 2008, 2009). Much of this work focuses on the final product of the emerging rescaling process of state governance and then examines whether such an arrangement is able to facilitate socio-economic integration across political boundaries. In contrast, Luo and Shen (2008) stress that investigating the geopolitical bargaining process *before* the cross-

territorial consensus and their finalised arrangement shall be key for understanding why many regional plans cannot be enforced in the local agenda.

Relating this to my second research objective, the structure of the YRD's current mega city-regional governance framework has experienced two decades of evolution since 1992. According to the 2010 YRD regional plan, the primary aim of organising this cross-territorial collective governance is to enhance the YRD's competitiveness as one integrated entity. The framework enables the interactions among provincial and prefectural governments to be advocated and institutionalised in favour of improving cross-jurisdictional functional connections, after 2003 in particular. Zhang (2006) explains why it is becoming more urgent than ever for promoting inter-city cooperation, and coordinated planning and governance at the mega city-regional level since 2003: firstly, the eastern coastal region around Shanghai is largely losing the previous central support, including funds and favoured policies, for promoting economic growth in the eastern coastal area. Following the change of Chinese presidential leadership in 2003, there has been an apparent transformation of central interest from economic efficiency to national equality across the national space. In terms of improving economic efficiency, "the policy of letting the capable get rich faster was a typical example" (Zhang, 2006: 48). Previous focus on economic efficiency was then quickly replaced by seeking national equality among the developed eastern, developing middle and underdeveloped western China. As a consequence, centrally orchestrated programmes of 'Rising mid-China' and 'Developing the West' became prominent during the transformation.

Secondly, the threat of external competition for attracting capital investments has become more serious than ever for the YRD's cities, and hence has started to shift local governments' attention away from the intra-regional competition. The rise of other Asian developing countries, such as Vietnam, is challenging the attractiveness of the YRD for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as a traditional manufacturing base. Therefore, the YRD is facing the need to "improve their productivity and marketing skill and make smarter investments in infrastructure, because low-cost labour alone is not enough to enable them to compete internationally" (Zhang, 2006: 50). Under this circumstance, Shanghai is in the right position for leading and assisting YRD's economic upgrade towards high-technological manufacturing and service industries as a regional service centre.

Finally, even at the stage of largely losing central support, Shanghai is still one of the centralities of Chinese socio-economic development within the global economic network. It was crucial for surrounding cities to remain in interaction with Shanghai. For example, Shanghai hosting World Expo 2010 generated a huge incentive for regional cooperation about the development of tourism across the entire YRD, and successfully accelerated the evolving process of the mega city-regional governance framework including the increased frequency of inter-local government meetings and the announcement of regional agreement ('Guidance about Accelerating the Integration of YRD's Urban Network by Using the World Expo Event as a Starting Point' (*Guanyuyichengban shibohui weiqiji, jiakuai changsanjiao chengshiliandongfazhan deyijian*)).

Hence, the establishment of the YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference in 1992, which later became known as YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economies (YRD CAUE), became the initial step of institutionalising the cross-territorial interaction and subsequent collective governance among provincial and prefectural authorities for the YRD's three-level framework. After two decades of institutional evolution, a three-level governance framework exists in the YRD at the mega city-regional level. To centrally reinforce the cross-territorial integration, the YRD regional plan has been issued by the central State Council as a comprehensive guidance. It is then crucial for this chapter to analyse this regional plan because its planning provisions, more or less, reflect the political consensus among provincial and prefectural governments in relation to the spatially coordinated development across three provincial territories.

The aim of this chapter is therefore to examine how the YRD's three-level framework has united as many aspects of territorial interests as possible, step-by-step, during the past decades through looking at its institutional transformation. Detailed empirical data are provided in relation to all scales of the governance framework and cross-territorial collective decision-making. Following this perspective, I argue that the current three-level framework has the capability to identify and adapt to emerging challenges in accordance with changing economic-political contexts. Responding to our second research objective, this chapter concludes that the contemporary mega city-regional governance and relevant institutional arrangement is able to enhance

the YRD's socio-economic competitiveness as an integrated entity at a sustainable path.

After this introductory part, this chapter is divided into four main sections. Section 6.2 introduces the structure of the YRD's current three-level governance model with details about the main responsibilities at each level. For this section, the importance of the YRD's governance framework will be illustrated by firstly exploring its ongoing construction process and secondly explaining the differences between the past Shanghai EZPO and this contemporary arrangement. Section 6.3 investigates the centrally-recommended primary challenge facing the YRD's city-regionalism by reviewing the YRD regional plan, and how a substantial part of planning provisions have been engaged or achieved by city-regional coordinated governance. Section 6.4 discusses the YRD's current capability of identifying and reacting to the realised challenges. Finally, section 6.5 will integrate all the findings into a conclusion which argues geopolitical mega city-regionalism as an ongoing but conflicted process.

6.2 The emergence of the YRD's mega city-regional governance framework

The establishment of the YRD's mega city-regional governance framework is not a task to be completed in one-day. On the contrary, to begin with the founding of the YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference in 1992, the current structure of the framework has experienced constant expansion and restructuration during the last two decades until the framework became comprised of the constitution which we are looking at today in 2009. At this moment, the framework consisted of three scalar compositions including the decision-making level, coordination level and execution level in the top-down hierarchical order. All three levels were organised to become integrated into the hierarchical governance framework following the lead of three provincial governments, i.e. Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, by the end of 2008. Two constitutional documents include 'The Framework of YRD Regional Cooperation and Development Joint Conference' (*Changsanjiaodiqu hezuoyufazhan lianxihuiyizhidu*) and 'The Framework of YRD Key Cooperative Task Groups' (*Changsanjiaodiqu zhongdianhezuozhuantizu gongzuozhidu*) were issued by the coordination level to institutionalise the three-level framework for the YRD's mega city-regional governance in 2009.

6.2.1 The decision-making level (*Juececeng*)

The decision-making level is the arrangement for the networked governance among the provincial officials, which is also termed as 'YRD Chief Officials' Meeting'. Hence it was operated by provincial governors, provincial party committee secretaries and deputy secretaries from each of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai. The decision-making level is responsible for setting the major cooperative direction, overall aim and principles for the YRD's annual networked development. The first meeting was scheduled in 2004. It signals that the networked governance started stepping into the trans-provincial vision. Anhui's chief officials acquired the acceptance of being a part of the decision-making level from the original YRD leading group in 2008.

6.2.2 The coordination level (*Xietiaoceng*)

The coordination level is the vice-provincial officials' alliance mechanism. It is also termed 'YRD Cooperation and Development Joint Conference'. The vice-provincial governors of Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang are involved in this level. The coordination level was born in 2001 with the original aim to promote trans-territorial economic activities and to formalise the structure of the entire mega city-regional governance model. It looked for the transition from conversational to institutional connections among Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang before the framework was formally constructed. Now its main task is formulating the overall aims for the trans-jurisdictional cooperation in order to answer for the decision-level's annual strategic aim. Anhui's vice-provincial governor joined the coordination level meeting in 2008.

6.2.3 The execution level (*Zhixingceng*)

Finally, the execution level is responsible for working out the plans to meet the targets set by the upper two levels mentioned above. In short, the execution level could be summarised as the 'N+1', where N means a variety of specific task groups and 1 stands for the YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economies (YRD CAUE).

The number of task groups continuously change on the basis of the three-level framework's consideration of mega city-regional integration. According to the 2008 YRD Chief Officials' Meeting in Zhejiang's Ningbo, the number of task groups was expanded to ten, which include transportation, energy, information, science and technology, environment protection, credit system, social security, finance, external service, business administration; and 1 means the YRD CAUE. Each task group chairs the cooperation and trans-municipal activities in its specific thematic area. They are the units taking the responsibility for making the actions happen in the YRD. The members of each task group include the local corresponding and other related departments. The head of each provincial corresponding department takes the position of the task group leader (see (L) in table 1), and other involved departmental officials fill the role of other group members.

Table 13: The State Department Members of Each Task Group (2009)

Task Groups	Group Members of State Bureaus and Commission Members	Tasks
Transportation	Transport Authority (L); Civil Aviation Administration;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Railway and Highway transporting network construction; 2. Regional ports' Coordinative Planning; 3. Airlines management; 4. Regional transportation planning;
Energy	Development and Reform Commission (DRC) (L); Economic and Information Technology Commission (EITC); Science and Technology; Land and Resource; Environmental Protection; Housing and Urban-Rural Development; Transport; Electricity Regulatory Commission; Electricity;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of green and renewable energy; 2. Regional transportation and storage of petrol, natural gas and coal; 3. Electricity transporting, nuclear wind power development;
Information	EITC (L); DRC; Science and Technology; Housing and Urban-Rural Development; Transport; Radio Film and Television;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing YRD information regional standard and data share system; 2. Improving network infrastructure, i.e. telecommunication, radio and TV, Internet; 3. Regional information infrastructure Construction; 4. A number of specific programs, i.e. enterprises information system, public information service and traffic information service, etc.;
Science and Technology	Science and Technology Authority (L); DRC; EITC; Education; Finance; Human Resource and Social Security; State Administration of Taxation; Local Tax Bureau; Financial Service Office; Trade Union;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regional technology innovation; 2. Construction of regional technology and knowledge share system; 3. Improvement of intellectual property right protection;
Environmental Protection	Environmental Protection Authority (L); DRC; EITC; Finance; Land and Resource; Housing and Urban-Rural Development; Water Resource; Agriculture; Forestry; Ocean and Fishery;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Controlling river and Lake pollution; 2. Controlling regional industrial pollution; 3. Treatment for household garbage; 4. Controlling non-point source pollution in rural areas;

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Drinking water protection; 6. Preventing soil and water loss at the regional level; 7. Forest development; 8. Reducing the maritime environment pollution;
Credit	Credit Authority (L), DRC, Public Security, State Administration of Taxation, Local Tax Bureau, Industry and Commerce, Quality and Technology Supervision, Financial Service Office, The People's Bank of China, China Banking Regulatory Commission, China Securities Regulatory Commission, China Insurance Regulatory Commission;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing the regional standard of Entrepreneurial and individual credibility; 2. Establishing the regional economic and financial data share system;
Social Security	Social Security Authority (L), DRC, Civil Affairs, Health;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing the regional employment standard, i.e. equal pay and relevant other treatments, and access to jobs; 2. Improving both of rural and urban social welfare system; 3. Protecting the migrant workers' rights; 4. Regulating the regional social insurance;
Finance	Provincial Financial Authority (L), DRC, EITC, Education, Human Resource and Social Security, Agriculture, Commerce, The People's Bank of China, State Administration of Foreign Exchange, China Banking Regulatory Commission, China Securities Regulatory Commission, China Insurance Regulatory Commission;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving and regulating the financial service industry; 2. Improving the financial reform; 3. Encouraging the expansion of commercial banks' overseas business activities; 4. Improving the rural financial service; 5. Establishing the rural financial system;
External Service	Commercial Authority (L), DRC, EITC, Finance, Land and Resource, Housing and Urban-Rural Development, State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, Financial Service Office, State Administration of Taxation, Local Tax Bureau, Industry and Commerce, Quality and Technology Supervision, State Administration of Foreign Exchange, Custom Administration, Inspection and Quarantine;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgrading the structure of importing and exporting sectors, i.e. changing from low value to high value products; 2. Establishing the regional standard investment environment for foreign investment; 3. Promoting the Chinese enterprises' oversea investment;
Business Administration	Industry and Commerce Authority (L), DRC, EITC, Science and Technology, Finance, Human Resource and Social Security, State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, State Administration of Taxation, Local Tax Bureau, Quality and Technology Supervision, Legislative Affairs Office, Financial Service Office;	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishing the regional common market; 2. Cancelling the government policy barrier for the regional common market; 3. Establishing the regional standard for market access and technical norms, i.e. regional quality certification standard; 4. Regional tax management

Source: Jiangsu Development and Reform Commission (2013)

Another half of the execution level is the YRD CAUE which is considered to be the eldest component of the framework. As chapter 5 mentioned, the YRD CAUE was formerly known as the YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference which was led by fourteen YRD cities since 1992. It was a communication-focused arrangement which involved each city's Planning and Economy Committee concentrating on the exchange of economic data and regulatory experience among the city states.

Table 14: YRD Economic Coordination Association (YRD CAUE)

	Time	Location	Focus Task at Mega City-Regional Vision	Published Statement
1.	28 th -30 th April 1997	Yangzhou	1. Tourism; 2. Commerce;	YRD CAUE constitution
2.	6 th – 7 th May 1999	Hangzhou	1. Science and Technology; 2. Reform of State-owned Enterprises and Asset Reorganisation; 3. Building Online Information Exchange System; 4. Tourism; 5. Commerce;	/
3.	26 th – 28 th April 2001	Shaoxing	1. Formalising the Task Group Framework; 2. Tourism;	/
4.	15 th – 16 th August 2003	Nanjing	1. The 2010 World Expo in Shanghai; 2. Intra-Regional Integration in YRD; 3. Taizhou2 joins the YRD CAUE;	By Using the World Expo Event as a Start Point, Further Pushing the YRD's Coordinated Development
5.	2 nd November 2004	Shanghai	1. Regional Governance Framework; 2. Regional Cooperation;	YRD City Cooperation Agreement
6.	22 nd October 2005	Nantong	1. The YRD Logistic Integration; 2. Enhancing the YRD Competitiveness;	1. The Amendment of YRD Constitution; 2. YRD Inter-City Cooperation Agreement (Nantong)
7.	24 th November 2006	Taizhou	1. The YRD Regional Plan; 2. Enhancing the YRD's Competitiveness in the Global Economy;	YRD Inter-City Cooperation Agreement (Taizhou)
8.	11 th December 2007	Changzhou	1. Promoting Intra-Regional Integration; 2. Improving and Formalising the YRD Governance Model;	YRD Inter-City Cooperation Agreement (Changzhou)
9.	27 th March 2009	Huzhou	1. State Council's 'The Guidance on Further Pushing the Reform and Open Process and the Development of Society and Economy in YRD'; 2. Facing the Economic Crisis; 3. Pushing the Regional Cooperation;	YRD Inter-City Cooperation Agreement (Huzhou)
10.	26 th March 2010	Jiaxing	1. Six new members for the YRD CAUE; 2. Medical Insurance Cooperation; 3. Financial Cooperation; 4. Exhibition Cooperation; 5. Establishment of Trans-Regional Industrial Park; 6. Intra-regional Off-site Pension System; 7. The integration and Upgrade of Modern Logistics;	YRD Inter-City Cooperation Agreement (Jiaxing)

Source: Compiled from Luo (2011) and NDRC's data

In responding to the concern of not being able to contribute much to the formal inter-states functional cooperation, the comparative low level committee network was upgraded in terms of regulation and participants. In 1997, after acquiring the acceptance of institutional change from all of the city members, the YRD CAUE was founded to replace the previous informal arrangement in order to promote the trans-jurisdictional functional linkages while keeping all fourteen city members in the administrative network.

After the more recent 2013 expansion, the number of YRD CAUE's city members has reached thirty to include three entire provincial territories, i.e. Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and five municipalities in Anhui. This is a mega city-regional institution which is responsible for formulating networked governance under the control of the mayors of all of the member cities. Shanghai has been chosen for filling the role of the permanent supervisory president and operating the association's liaison office, named The Regional Cooperation and Exchange Office of Shanghai Municipal Government, as a part of the Shanghai government. In addition, there is an executive president rotating among all the association members and bearing the main duty of chairing the institutional regular meeting. By contrast with the previous informal arrangement, the YRD CAUE has been institutionalised by its own constitution. At the moment, the major responsibility of the YRD CAUE is covering the particular trans-municipal cooperative concern which is not covered by any task group or engages with a mixed range of task groups.

6.2.4 The ongoing geopolitical mega city-regionalism

The three-level governance framework is tailored by a group of local governments to collectively manage functional relations across the three provincial territories in the YRD. Before the framework, the circumstance of YRD covering three provincial jurisdictions generated significant concerns about the emerging impact of administrative division on local economic activities. The administrative separation challenged the geopolitical coherence of the YRD. According to a researcher who was involved in the formulation stage for the YRD regional plan,

“the PRD wholly remains within Guangdong province, so the provincial government could simply take the role of supervisor for facilitating the trans-municipal activities, which is not going to happen to the YRD” (A researcher from Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS), interview, 12th July 2013).

For our case of the YRD, only the central government is able to facilitate the cooperation among a group of local governments which are not locating in one single provincial territory.

Additionally, there has been a long tradition for Chinese economic activities operating in the context of geopolitical ‘localism’. Liu Junde’s (2006) definition of ‘Administrative Region Economy’ recognised that the boundaries of local political jurisdictions were delimiting the scale of local functional activities at the expense of trans-jurisdictional economic coherence after the Chinese 1978 economic reform. Based on his research, the administrative boundary, in particular the provincial boundary, used to become a visible barrier for local functional activities within each administrative jurisdiction. Although urban economic growth continued at a comparatively rapid rate in China after the 1978 economic reform, the existence of ‘localism’ raised issues of economic fragmentation and inefficiency. According to Xu and Yeh (2011: 216), such evident issues resulted in

“increasing subsidies and giveaways to investors, inefficient and uncoordinated duplication and oversupply of infrastructure, facilities, and services, overriding diversion of scarce public resources away from environmental and social concerns to economic growth”.

In the 1990s local governments in the YRD started to pay more attention to shifting their managerial behaviour from building ‘localism’ to improving functional connections with surrounding jurisdictions as a result of the incoming global investments through Shanghai and improving economic connections among different local administrative areas. Hence the initial arrangement of networked governance across Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang emerged, which was prompted by local governments for enhancing horizontal functional relations; for instance, the emergence of YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference in 1992.

The early horizontal interaction among the YRD's component municipal governments at that moment remained limited, for example, to exchanges of economic information and regulatory experiences relating to the management of local functional activities; and there was little further in depth cooperation (Luo, 2011; Yu, 2011). Moreover, it was each city's Planning and Economy Committee sending their officials to operate this conference framework every year. This was a relatively much lower level of official meeting in comparison with the later mayors and provincial governors' conference. The conference which was organised by the committee from each local urban government had neither the intention nor sufficient authority to continuously push the trans-municipal coordination in depth for many specific tasks.

By the end of the 1990s, single administrative jurisdictions were no longer an appropriate basis for attracting and containing the emerging functional activities. Local governments' past experience of actively restricting economic activities within their own administrative boundaries became an obstacle to sustaining the previous spectacular economic growth in the face of accelerating urbanisation and economic integration. Therefore, the expansion of economic activities at the larger territorial scale increased considerations of coordinated governance among local governments and required local authorities to pay even more attention to the city-centric regional affairs which were difficult for the previous inter-committees communication and information exchange to cover. Specifically, the need for relieving the impact of political territorial division over economic coherence within YRD's scope significantly increased. Both external and internal challenges generated increased demand for a more formal, regular and effective framework of city-centric regional governance replacing the previous informal arrangement. Consequently, the change of governance model became a crucial and urgent task for local governments in the YRD. This resulted in the continuous expansion and re-structuration of the three-level governance framework for more than one decade, which began with the establishment of YRD CAUE in 1997.

The re-emergence of the cross-jurisdictional governance arrangement in the YRD shall not be seen as repeating its historical path of 'centrally orchestrated' Shanghai EZPO. There are significant differences between the past Shanghai EZPO and the current three-level governance framework. The first perspective is rather similar to Harrison and Hoyler's (2014) recommendation as,

“It is important to distinguish between coalitions of the willing vis-à-vis coalitions of the obliged. The former identifies those urban-regional spaces where actors, recognising the need to consolidate fragmented planning and governance arrangements, set about forming a loose development coalition without prescription. By contrast the latter refers to those spaces where actors have never sought, ... but who have been compelled to act as a direct response to the growing orthodoxy surrounding city-region governance, itself manifest in more formalised policy prescription and new state spatial strategies” (Harrison and Hoyler, 2014: 6).

In comparison with the Shanghai EZPO which was engaged and operated under the command of central State Council, the current three-level governance framework in the YRD is voluntarily prompted by local authorities to collectively manage cross-jurisdictional activities. This is critical for ensuring the governance mechanism to be constructed uniquely as meeting most needs and thus be able to function effectively in the long term.

Therefore and here is the second point, which is similar to the distinction drawn by Harrison (2008) between ‘centrally orchestrated regionalism’ and ‘regionally orchestrated centralism’: The Shanghai EZPO was constructed by the central State Council as its regional representation which was able to receive the devolution of central power in the YRD. It was the Shanghai EZPO’s responsibility to embed central political interests and tasks into the YRD’s mega city-regionalism. For the stage at which both local provincial and municipal governments chose to concentrate on growing each jurisdiction’s economic growth by attracting and retaining economic investments within their political boundaries, it was not surprising to witness that the divergence between central and local governments’ respective understandings of local economic context and political administration was driving the Shanghai EZPO in a struggling position for planning and achieving cross-jurisdictional integration.

On the other hand, it is important to understand that it is this time local governments, municipal authorities in particular, who initially took into consideration the need of leading and running networked governance across three provincial territories. The three-level governance framework was then upgraded to involve higher-level provincial governments. Such an arrangement was specifically structured by a group

of different local governments to produce collective provisions for managing trans-provincial activities based on cross-territorial political-economic contexts.

Finally, local territorial politics are embedded in the YRD's current three-level governance framework, which was not the case for the Shanghai EZPO. One of the framework's major responsibilities now is decreasing the administrative barrier and reducing the cross-territorial policy differences in the mega city-regional integration (Social Sciences Academic Press, 2011: 193). To achieve this aim, the three-level governance framework is generating a political platform for local provincial and municipal governments to reach consensus about how to overcome emerging intra-regional conflicts through conducting regular and institutionalised interaction. The bargaining process among local provincial and municipal governments has proven to be an essential component of reaching agreements for any potential collective provisions.

Currently it has effectively worked out for a large number of previously conflictual items, but there has been comparatively little evident progress for some others. For instance, we can barely discover any sign of progress for the YRD's household registration reform in the three-level governance framework's agenda. However, this may not be sufficient to become a breakpoint for incurring criticisms about the progress of current geopolitical city-regionalism. On the contrary, what we have witnessed is ongoing engagement and even accelerating consensus among local authorities over an enlarging amount of previously conflictual items. Referring to this perspective, what becomes even more important out of the understandings of the current geopolitical city-regionalism is the ongoing constructing process rather than its temporary products.

6.2.5 The institutionalised interaction for collectively adapting to various challenges

“...the political and social constitution of the city-region [is] an integral component in the wider re-scaling of states: not an input, nor an output, but part of the process and politics of state re-territorialisation” (Jonas and Ward, 2007: 172).

The YRD's three-level governance framework has been engaged by local governments for facilitating cross-jurisdictional integration through prompting regular and institutionalised interaction across various provincial territories. The framework has never been a quick and fixed strategic orchestration for the mega city-regional governance; on the contrary, it has experienced more than one decade of evolvement before the framework was able to grow to cover a large number of different aspects. The range of items which have obtained or are obtaining consensus among local territorial authorities is still expanding.

Luo's (2011) research in the book *Inter-City Cooperation and Governance in Yangtze River Delta* specifically traces the historical path of expanding the YRD CAUE's operating agenda since the establishment of the YRD Economic Cooperation Joint Conference in 1992. He proposes three different but continuous development stages which had been passed through by the YRD's city-centric regional governance, including information exchange, task-focused cooperation and establishing the regional common market. His research is important because his data reveal that the YRD's governance framework was able to gather a group of local governments around the principle of "recognising the common while reserving the differences" (*qitongcunyi*) (Luo, 2011: 151) and then continuously push them towards consensus for collectively managing even more intra-regional conflicts through prompting regular and institutionalised bargaining.

Furthermore, according to Jiangsu Development and Reform Committee's 2013 annual report, the number of task groups within the execution level increased from five in the beginning to ten by the report's date. The more recent change is composed of the addition of a new task group for industrial relocation in 2011 and the withdrawal of the task group for business administration from the framework in 2012. The report explains that the new task group is constructed by following the official collective recognition of the need for more cross-territorial cooperation on the newly emerging issue in the YRD; and the latter withdrawal happened because there was general agreement that the cooperation on this task was able to continue more effectively without the three-level governance framework's supervision. It is this adapting trend that makes us believe that although the current three-level governance framework is not yet a perfect orchestration able to relieve all the geopolitical differences, the YRD's three-level governance framework is functioning

as a platform which enables the political bargaining process to carry on and produce collective consensus for an increasing number of issues. More importantly, the framework is well-situated to continuously reflect on emerging economic, political and social challenges and then generate opportunities for adaptation and further political integration and economic development.

What is certain for now is more coordination is needed to enhance the mega city-regional integration. Relating to this concern, the YRD was issued the official strategic 'city-region' planning guidance by the central State Council in 2010. The YRD regional plan is a collective achievement which reflects both central and local governments' understanding of local political-economic contexts and their political interests. The next section will analyse to what extent the YRD regional plan is able to guide the YRD's mega city-regional governance to confront and adapt both internal and external challenges at the current stage.

6.3 The YRD regional plan reflects the political consensus among local authorities

The YRD regional plan is the first comprehensive regional plan for all three provincial-level jurisdictions, including Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang (Li and Wu, 2013). The regional plan illustrates the central government's guidance for improving the cross-jurisdictional coordinated development and functional competitiveness in the YRD around Shanghai. The regional plan was initially instigated in 2005 by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), and then approved and issued by the central State Council in 2010. It is the supplement to the chapter nineteen regional constructions of the eleventh national 'Five-Year Plan (2006-2010)'. According to a chief member in the formulation team for the YRD regional plan,

“in 2005, it was the State Council's indication which was originally for guiding the national plan requiring the formulation of both of the YRD regional plan and the eleventh national 'Five-Year Plan' to be worked on at the same year”
(A chief member of the expert team, interview, 23rd July 2013).

Although the YRD has been frequently mentioned to be the focus of regional construction projects by a series of national 'Five-Year Plans', beginning with the

ninth version, it is this time the State Council's instruction' which is principally serving the national political interest' stating that the regional plan for the YRD would be engaged from the central level.

NDRC was previously known as National Planning Commission and for its role as the planner of the Chinese planned economy (Li and Wu, 2012a). The NDRC is an important part of the central State Council; and it is responsible for studying and formulating strategic plans for the macro-economic and social development. Drafting the national 'Five-Year Plan' is one of their responsibilities. The national 'Five-Year Plan' is a powerful instrument for central strategic arrangements because local governments are expected to make their own local version of each 'Five-Year Plan' by combining the national plan with their specific context (Li and Wu, 2012a). The eleventh national 'Five-Year Plan' is the central economic and social orchestration for the five-year period between 2006 and 2010, which includes rural construction, industrial development, service industries, regional construction, environmental protection, education, opening-up, institutional reform, military affairs and many other aspects. It was formulated by the NDRC in accordance with the central State Council's indication. Therefore, the planning provisions reflect the central authorities' interest in local governance.

Part four of chapter nineteen, titled 'regional development', states that it is important to firstly promote the leading development of eastern China regions, in particular the mega city-regions around Shanghai, Tianjin and other special economic zones. As one participant in the formulating process of YRD regional plan mentioned in the interview,

“the central state considers the decision on the eastern city-regions' leading development to be critical; ... as a result of the YRD's trans-provincial attribute, it is challenging for the Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang states to organize the city-regional coordinated development in some aspects when they put their own considerations ahead, thus it becomes important for the nation state to issue the guidance for coordinating the trans-provincial activities from the upper level state” (The researcher from NIGLAS, interview, 1st August 2013).

The central intention of reducing the role of local political barriers in mega city-regional economic development is clearly reflected in the national plan and the YRD regional plan. This section will investigate the guiding role of the regional plan for the YRD's mega city-regionalism through looking at the formulating process and the planning provisions. The central State Council's instructions, documents of the YRD regional plan and national 'Five-Year Plan', and other relevant official news are all found on the government website.

6.3.1 The mixed participants in the regional plan's formulation process

The formulating process of YRD regional plan was entirely funded by the China Development Bank which is wholly owned and controlled by the national State Council, and headed by the vice-director of NDRC. Under the vice-director's lead, the NDRC's Local Economic Development Department (*Diqu jingji fazhansi*) was responsible for organising and supervising the plan making process. Apart from the central official departments, other participants included three provincial development and reform commissions (DRC) from Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, sixteen municipal DRCs from the narrow sense of YRD's component cities, Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (NIGLAS), individual planning experts from Shanghai East China Normal University, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Zhejiang University, Zhejiang Provincial Development Planning and Research Institute and many other research and planning institutions. The entire plan-making community were grouped around three distinct teams, i.e. the comprehensive team, expert team and local team.

The comprehensive team is the organiser who put the entire formulating community together. Its responsibilities include organising the research task in local fields, supervising the drafting process of the planning content and finalising the YRD regional plan under the consideration of economic context and political interests. Both the NDRC and SASS are crucial parts of the comprehensive team. The expert team and local team are responsible for drafting provisions for the regional plan while ensuring that the local economic-political context has been reflected by the planning content. The former is consisting of the local academic researchers and planning specialists, and the latter team is filled by local DRCs and other relevant

official institutions. The combination of governmental officials and academic specialists is of great importance to the effectiveness of the YRD regional plan. As a chief member of the comprehensive team stated in the interview,

“Both central and local DRCs are the government agencies which have carried the planning function for the local development since their inception, thus it is rational for them to be involved in the formulating process of YRD regional plan. However, the current regional plan collects, more or less, each city’s different interests. For these local interests, some of them can be simply coordinated combined, but the rest of them easily generate local conflicts. For example, it is very difficult for local authorities themselves to reach agreement on the allocation of certain industries within the current city-regional scope. Thus this is where the academic specialists who are seen as relatively independent could step up to provide objective, fair and rational opinions” (A chief member of expert team, interview, 23rd July 2013).

Moreover and as disclosed by a participant researcher, “the initial draft of the YRD regional plan was formulated to cover the ‘15+1’ version of YRD and completed as early as 2006; however, we received the central State Council’s guidance on planning provisions of the YRD regional plan in 2008, which delayed the issue of the regional plan to the year 2010” (A member of the comprehensive team, interview, 15th July 2013).

The central State Council’s guidance is titled as *‘The national State Council on the Yangtze River Delta region to further advance reform and opening up and economic and social development of guidance* (later referred to as ‘guidance’). The central State Council’s guidance explicitly expands the YRD from the scope of ‘15+1’ to cover three entire provincial territories, including Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. The importance attached to the expansion of the YRD’s regional space relates to concerns about the asymmetric political coordination between fifteen municipalities and one provincial administrative space. There are already discussions about this consideration by relating to the national and provincial political interests in chapter five. For this chapter, we borrow the explanation from Chen Jianjun, an academic professor from Zhejiang University and more importantly a chief member of the

comprehensive team, in his public presentation to indicate the political motivation behind the above-mentioned territorial expansion. His statement includes that,

“Regional economic integration itself is to address the issue raised by administrative division, but it is impossible to skip a few decades’ existence of the provincial jurisdictions at once. The direct coordination among fifteen municipalities and one provincial unit is asymmetric. The result is unfair bargaining among the local state, and no way to generate ideal achievement. After the expansion, interactions among the three provincial units will be done at the same level. It is a better way to achieve the benefit maximization from the coordination” (Caijing.com.cn, 2008).

What is emerging from such a centrally-led attempt to modify the YRD regional plan is the central consideration of local territorial politics and their political-economic interests within central supervision of local development. Therefore, although the central State Council has become a part of the formulating process of the YRD regional plan, the indication from the central authority shall not be solely understood as a top-down command in accordance with central political interest.

Finally, formulating the YRD regional plan was a collective task involving central indication, local political-economic territorial context and interest, and regional academic specialists’ understandings about city-centric regionalism. The regional plan is hence expected to be used to coordinate the trans-jurisdictional functional development while considering the impact of local territorial politics in order to maximise the YRD’s mega city-regional economic advantages. One of the YRD regional plan’s responsibilities is reducing the concern of administrative barriers within the improvement of intra-regional functional linkages.

6.3.2 The coordinated planning provisions

The YRD regional plan, in general, provides guidance for coordinated development of mixed aspects which range from each city’s positionality, industrial allocation, urban and rural development, innovative capability, infrastructural construction, physical resource utilisation, environmental protection, social welfare system, regulatory reform and regional open economy, etc. at the mega city-regional level,

which consists of three entire provincial units, i.e. Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. The text is divided into one introduction and twelve chapters. The introduction states that the YRD needs to improve its comprehensive competitiveness and growth sustainability on the basis of the nation state's strategy of a focus on regional vision and facing the global financial crisis.

Chapter one explains firstly the YRD's strength of possessing a comparatively developed urban agglomeration around the regional core of Shanghai; secondly opportunities for promoting mega city-regional integration; and thirdly other internal and external challenges. Chapter two provides the overall aim for the YRD's economic and social development. The plan aims to improve the city-regional comprehensive competitiveness in the global economy and build a world class urban agglomeration around Shanghai. To achieve this aim, growing objectives include improving GDP per capita and strengthening the contribution of the service sector in the YRD's economy and urbanisation and such like. For the structure of the urban agglomeration, chapter three brings the definition of 'one core and six belts' which means Shanghai and six conceptual trans-provincial economic corridors. Explicitly, chapters three, four and five state the role of every YRD component city in the industrial development for achieving the complementary economy at the mega city-regional level.

Furthermore and relating to the geopolitical integration, chapter ten presents the need for promoting local political reform in order to reduce the administrative barriers amid the YRD's mega city-regional integration. For reaching this purpose, the regional plan suggests local administrative authorities to firstly re-identify the share of responsibilities between political and economic stakeholders. Specifically, chapter ten recommends local governments to reduce their participation in local economic activities for market forces to become more decisive in the distribution of capital investments within the mega city-region. Meanwhile local governments shall pay more attention to improving and integrating the regulatory standards across three provincial territories as supervisors. Moreover, the chapter encourages other non-governmental stakeholders to improve their participation in the governance of cross-jurisdictional functional activities, such as establishing the regional industrial association.

Secondly, to accelerate the emergence of a mega city-regional common market, the term 'common' is reflected on, encouraging the flow of human resources, capital and technical resources. For the people resource, the household registration system, housing, education, personnel administration and social insurance all need to be managed in accordance with the unified regulatory policy. For the latter assets, examples include facilitating trans-jurisdictional transactions among financial institutions, and establishing mega city-regional technical standards. Finally, a number of administrative reform experiments were proposed, such as constituting a mega city-regional development and promotion fund, collectively financed by local provincial and municipal governments for funding the construction of trans-jurisdictional infrastructure projects in the YRD.

Overall, a substantial proportion of the YRD regional plan is produced to promote the coordinated development relating to a large range of different aspects at the mega city-regional level. The underlying intention of the guidance is trying to call for the realisation from all the YRD regional members that it is important and urgent to think and act as one coherent entity. This is not an easy task since the collective benefit cannot always be distributed at an equal share among local administrative territories. Relating back to the YRD's governance framework, this is why the framework has been utilised as an interacting platform for bargaining and achieving consensus among the local states.

Amongst all planning content, there is one attempt asking for redefining the respective role of the state and market forces in the YRD's mega city-regionalism. According to this particular provision, local governments are recommended to collectively withdraw, more or less, from their current strong participation in local functional activities. This requirement reveals the central anticipation of reducing the impact of local administrative division over enhancing the YRD's internal economic relations by promoting market-oriented development. From another perspective, administrative fragmentation has been seen as an internal challenge facing the YRD's mega city-regionalism. Coordinated governance is therefore highlighted as essential for improving the integration of the YRD. The next section which is relating to the relevance of the centrally orchestrated YRD regional plan in the mega city-regional governance shall explain how the challenges have been considered and engaged by local administrative authorities.

6.3.3 The role of the YRD regional plan

A number of points can be expanded for explaining the role of the YRD regional plan. Firstly, the YRD regional plan is the national level planning arrangement which is expected to shed light on the local potential planning tasks. The YRD regional plan is the expansion of the regional development chapter of the national eleventh 'Five-Year Plan'. As the introduction to the NDRC above (section 6.3) mentioned, local DRCs need to formulate their local version of the five-year plan on the basis of their specific context while considering the NDRC's national 'Five-Year Plan' (also see Li and Wu, 2012a). Hence the YRD regional plan has been anticipated to act as a general guidance for local provincial and municipal DRCs for formulating their local plans.

From this perspective, the YRD regional plan can be seen as a bridge between the national strategy and local planning tasks (Social Sciences Academic Press, 2011: 202). If we look at each of Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang's twelfth provincial 'Five-Year Plan' for 2011-2015, it appears that both the terms 'YRD' and 'YRD regional plan' are frequently mentioned. It is not hard to figure out that the YRD regional plan's primary aim of enhancing the city-regional synergy is carried by a substantial section of their local planning content. For example, there is evident overlap about the proposed general function of each city between the YRD regional plan and each of the three provincial-level 'Five-Year Plans'. Specifically, the respective proposed function of Shanghai, Nanjing and Hangzhou as comprehensive service centre; high-technological manufacturing and modern service base, and regional financial, cultural and creative centre remains the same amid the transformation from the YRD regional plan to each provincial 'Five-Year Plan'. The local plan shall provide us a starting point for explaining how local governments are shaping their administration in their respective jurisdictions and making them relevant to the mega city-regional scale in the YRD.

The second point is that the YRD regional plan is a general guidance for the mega city-regional comprehensive development across Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang rather than a 'box ticking' plan. The lack of detailed instruction in each chapter leaves much room for the local state to actively fit in while considering their own requirements. For example and firstly, referring to the chapter for industrial spatial

distribution which may require comparatively high specification for each component city, the planning provisions are stated briefly in short paragraphs. The available options for each city are wide-ranging. Secondly, in terms of the YRD's political administrative reform, the regional plan aims to reduce local governments' responsibilities and enhance the role of market forces and other social actors in cross-jurisdictional functional development. Thirdly, details are also missing for the suggested establishment of region-wide unified standards of indicators, norms and regulations and the reduction of the existing policy differences.

The result is we do not see which particular item or policy the central authority would like local governments to focus on. Consequently, it becomes local governments' decision to make. Their decision shall depend on what they consider to be critical based on the local specific context. Thus general guidance would only earn the support from the local stakeholders, in particular the local states, when the match between the central and local interests can be realised. For instance, two years after the issue of the YRD regional plan, the YRD Cooperation and Development Joint Promotion Fund was born in 2012. It was one of the YRD regional plan's required experimental programmes for achieving regulatory innovations. The fund was raised by four provincial governments, including Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui. The primary responsibility of the fund is financing the trans-provincial infrastructure construction projects, ecological construction and environmental protection, and many other cross-jurisdictional projects. During the past decade, these were realised as the essential aspects for accelerating city-regional integration by local governments in the YRD. The transportation and environmental protection had already become focused tasks since the birth of the execution level. However, in terms of another proposal which is relating to the reform of the YRD's household registration system, there has not been much progress to date. Concerns about the inequality in treatment remain strong, due to the locational division of the household registration system.

Thirdly, a large part of the regional plan consists of the concerns which municipal governments are working or have worked on. Or in other words, a large part of the planning content covers local political-economic interests and the targets which the geopolitical city-regionalism is currently aiming for. Although it is the centrally-organised planning teams formulating the planning content and stating the guidance

and targets for the YRD’s coordinated development, the regional plan still reflects on the local developmental context. For example and relating to the industrial planning chapter, a researcher from NIGLAS emphasised the importance of field research stage before drafting the plan text:

“We did significant research in each city to understand their existing industrial elements and potential demands for new kinds. We compared all regional cities’ unique data after all the research was done and stepped in when we found quite a few cities were trying to focus on developing the same kind of industry, which could quickly lead to the inter-states’ inefficiency competition. Based on our expertise and analyses, we concluded which one or several cities are in the best position to develop certain popular industries and we drafted the YRD regional plan this way” (A researcher from NIGLAS, interview, 1st August 2013).

Table 15: The Important Achievements by the YRD’s Governance Framework

Year	Event	Achievements	2010 YRD Regional Plan
1997	Keep focusing on mega city-regional tourism task since the first meeting of the YRD CAUE;	Trans-jurisdictional cooperation on the regional tourism integration;	Joint development of all regional components on the tourism market; building the mega city-regional brand as one;
2004	The mutual recognition of provincial quality inspection report mechanism for Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang	The cancellation of repeat inspection of products quality in the YRD’s trans-provincial market;	Establishing the regional common technical standard and mutual recognition of high technology and achievement;
2004	YRD Talent Development Unification Joint Declaration	Aiming for establishing the regional common personnel standard, market and service system; and finally achieving free flow of talents in the YRD;	Establishing the region-wide human resources market in the YRD;
2006	Establishment of the coordinated team for ‘YRD One Card Pass’	Aiming for ‘One Card Pass’ for all ‘15+1’ YRD cities’ transportation; the result is ‘Bus Pass’ for six cities in 2012;	Achieving the ‘One Card Pass’ for the YRD;
2007	Pushing the YRD Financial Coordinated Development and Supporting Regional Economic Integration Agreement	Encouraging the trans-territorial operation of financial institutions;	Policy incentives to encourage the trans-territorial operation of financial institutions, i.e. banks, etc.

Source: Compiled from Luo (2011), People.com.cn and Xinhuanet.com

Furthermore, five particular events are listed in table 15 to explain that several sections of the regional plan were made to include aspects which YRD’s member

cities had already engaged with even before or during the formulation stage of the YRD regional plan.

To summarise this section, although the YRD regional plan is a central attempt to draw the local states' attention to the mega city-regional level in terms of a large range of aspects, the planning chapters are the combination of central recommendations and local context. In this way, it ensures that the regional plan is not going to diverge from the local specific political-economic context. Hence, it becomes the local provincial and municipal governments' decision how to enforce the implementation of the planning provisions in the YRD regional plan. Subsequently, what we have seen is a variety of achievements which have been highlighted as fundamental for reducing the administrative barriers by the YRD regional plan under the administration of the YRD's governance framework. The current three-level governance framework has been continuously functioning as an interacting platform for promoting coordinated governance to cover even more administrative divisions which constantly challenge the mega city-regional integration in the YRD.

6.4 The three-level governance framework: confronting the regional challenges under the changing territorial politics

The YRD's three-level governance framework is initialised and operated by both local provincial and municipal governments. There is little sign of the direct intervention coming from central authority in the structural change or administrative decision of the YRD's three-level governance framework. According to a chief member of the regional plan formulation team,

“in 2007 YRD Economic and Social Development Forum, the former premier, Jiabao Wen, who officially represented the central State Council pointed out that the central government has no intentions of constructing an administrative institution at the trans-provincial regional level at that moment and its near future” (A chief member of expert team, interview, 23rd July).

The operation of the three-level governance framework mainly relies on the coordinated interaction and decision-making among local provincial and municipal governments in favour of the 'scale model' which considers mega city-regions to be "a strategic and political level of administration and policy-making, extending beyond the administrative boundaries of single urban local government authorities to include urban and/or semi-urban hinterlands" (Tewdwr-Jones and McNeill, 2000: 131).

Although the YRD regional plan was formulated under the lead and supervision of the NDRC which is a department belonging to the central State Council, it was seen as comprehensive guidance on local economic-political development. The chapter twelve of the regional plan illustrates an ambiguous arrangement about how to implement the regional plan:

"Three provincial governments have the joint responsibility for leading and organizing the implementation of the regional plan. ... The relevant department in the central State Council are liable for providing the future guidance about the implementation of the regional plan. ... NDRC retains the power of supervising and assessing the execution of the regional plan" (Chapter twelve of YRD regional plan).

Moreover and as section 6.3.3 already mentioned above, the regional plan was made up of brief planning provisions which were mostly able to generate significant room for creativity in local authorities' decisions. As a consequence, organising the trans-jurisdictional coordinated task remains as the accountability of the local decision-makers on the basis of their political interests and local economic context. Hence there is no guarantee that the YRD regional plan will certainly be realised by local political governance agenda.

However, what becomes important about the YRD regional plan is that it highlights the primary aim of the YRD's comprehensive development as enhancing the mega city-regional competitiveness. Achieving this aim shall largely depend on improving the YRD's internal functional relations among local political territories while reducing the impact of administrative division in the city-regional economic coherence. In particular, the regional plan suggests that the YRD's coordinated governance shall pay more attention to improving the city-regional regulatory environment in terms of

facilitating people and resource flow at the trans-jurisdictional level and reducing territorial political differences. Borrowing the statement of an academic planner,

“this is suggesting that local governments’ main responsibility shall focus on effectively supervising the city-regional economic environment rather than conducting direct intervention in the market such as formulating particular beneficial policies for attracting investments from other places, which easily result in inter-city competition” (A professor from Nanjing University, interview, 2nd August 2013).

As we have tried to exemplify the geopolitical achievements in this chapter, the current YRD’s three-level governance framework is continuously working to reduce the administrative barrier and territorial policy differences. As one of the researchers who participated in the formulation of the YRD regional plan mentioned,

“the current governance framework is able to slowly weaken the inter-locality isolation and even competition, and turns local authorities’ attention towards the coordinated development at the city-centric regional level” (A member of the comprehensive team, interview, 15th July 2013).

The YRD’s three-level governance framework is becoming the bargaining platform for reaching consensus among local provincial and municipal governments in relation to a comprehensive range of functional activities. What we have witnessed in the past decade is an accelerating geopolitical consensus on an enlarging range of trans-provincial affairs. The result is that this on-going geopolitical city-regionalism is on its half way to identify and hence react to the specific challenges in the form of changing administrative method and continuous geopolitical bargaining towards the consensus. It is necessary to recognise the contribution of the governance framework to improve city-regional competitiveness. These are essential elements for regional construction to rely on in order to enhance its regional competitiveness amid globalisation.

6.5 Conclusion: Geopolitical mega city-regionalism as an ongoing and conflicted process

There is no doubt that city-regions and their derivatives, including mega city-regions, have become the basic motors of the global economy in contemporary globalisation (Harrison, 2007). Similarly, the YRD has been long recognised as one of the motors of the Chinese economy by political authorities and in academic research. Enhancing the city-regional competitiveness has become essential to “justify change or the adoption of a particular course of policy action” (Bristow, 2005: 300). In particular, the city-regional competitiveness has been utilised to evaluate the appropriateness of relevant governance arrangements for a new spatial scale amid contemporary globalisation (e.g. Scott, 2001a, 2001b; Porter, 2001). However, mega city-regional competitiveness is such an abstract and complex concept that we may find challenging to recognise its most appropriate elements in order to measure its up-down movement. Following this argument, Scott (2001a: 4) has stressed that “city-regions today are facing enormous and unfamiliar pressures, so that they are being induced to search by trial and error for appropriate models of political response”. Therefore, this chapter examined the YRD’s comprehensive competitiveness through focusing on the three-level framework’s capability of identifying and reacting to the locational political-economic challenges as Huggins and Davies’ (2006) proposed.

On the other hand, the YRD regional plan expressed the centrally-led political concern about the fragmented impact resulting from regulatory division over cross-territorial socio-economic activities. The administrative barrier has been realised as the challenge faced by mega city-regional collective governance. After the previous experience of Shanghai EZPO which was considered to be an unsuccessful attempt to centrally command the trans-jurisdictional cooperation, there has been far less involvement of the nation state in actively leading the cross-territorial agenda in more recent years. The result was the emergence of the three-level governance framework under the co-lead of a group of various provincial and prefectural governments. The framework experienced continuous evolution over the past two decades in accordance with changing political-economic contexts.

In order to add knowledge to the understanding of the geopolitical tasks faced by mega city-regions, this chapter has asked what elements of the YRD's current three-level framework are crucial for enhancing mega city-regional competitiveness. The YRD's three-level framework provides a bargaining platform for a group of various territorial governments to reach political consensus over a variety of aspects. More importantly, the historic evolving path of the framework is wide open for transformation and expansion on the basis of a changing environment. It is this flexible institutional arrangement enabling locational territorial interests to be reflected in the mega city-regional agenda, and then prompting the bringing together of cross-territorial interests at the mega city-regional level. Such political consensus largely reduces the fragmented impact of regulatory division over mega city-regional coherence.

From another perspective, this locally orchestrated framework ensures that the three-level framework is able to pay attention to the emerging circumstances by employing flexible and carefully-structured arrangements in a feasible order. For instance, the YRD's three-level framework is able to engage with a group of various territorial authorities under the regionally agreed principle of 'recognising the common while reserving the differences'. According to Luo (2011), the framework has been operated to cover firstly the information exchange, then cooperation on trans-jurisdictional tourism projects, transportation construction and such like, and now the cross-territorial common market associated with the population and resource flow and integrated administrative policies.

Overall, it is crucial to make sure that mega city-regions are equipped with an effective governance arrangement which activates their capabilities of recognising and adapting to emerging challenges in order to enhance their competitiveness at a sustainable path. This chapter has employed rich empirical data to illustrate how the collective governance has been operated to unite cross-territorial interests over as many various aspects as possible. Specifically, institutional interaction and bargaining has been mobilised to create political consensus and trust on a feasible and continuous basis. At last, local political attention has shifted, step by step, towards the mega city-regional agenda which considers and reflects cross-territorial interests over as many various aspects as possible through a continuous timeline. For our mega city-regional research, it is fundamental to pay attention to the details

of the ongoing geopolitical dynamics. The next chapter will take a closer look at the 'differences' part of the agreed principles by exploring the tensions and barriers faced by the YRD's collective governance.

Chapter 7: Tensions Faced by the Mega City-Region: Conflicts between Geoeconomic and Geopolitical Processes

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the tensions faced by the YRD mega city-region. Three principal points will be engaged with, shaped by the findings in the previous chapters. The first point is the mismatch between functional spaces and administrative jurisdictions at the mega city-regional scale. As discussed in chapter 5, the YRD's three-level framework is operating across a combined geography which includes a functionally inter-linked space as well as substantial politically planned regional areas. According to the Wuxi Statistic Bureau's publication of 'The 2014 Economic Development Report for the Core Area of YRD' (*2014 Changsanjiaohexinqu jingjifazhan baogao*), the '15+1' version of YRD generated a GDP of 10600 billion *Yuan* which constituted 82.3% of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai's GDP on aggregate, which was 12880 billion *Yuan* during 2014. According to table 10, the '15+1' version of the YRD is only occupying half of the broad sense of the YRD in terms of physical territory. Even four years after publication of the YRD regional plan, the '15+1' version of YRD still contributed more than 80% of all three provincial jurisdictional economic volumes. Based on the above-mentioned statement, the readjustment of city-regional administrative territory raises the consideration of a territorial mismatch which is similar to Bennett's (1997) term of 'over-bounding' whereby "functional activity space is only a small part of an administrative division" (Bennett, 1997: 326).

Secondly, it becomes evident for territorial politics to be constitutive in the construction of intra-regional relations at the mega city-regional scale. As chapter 5 illustrated, although we have seen a slow market-oriented spatial transformation of traditional labour-intensive manufacturing enterprises from the '15+1' to the surrounding contiguous areas since 2000, local political authorities actively promoted and accelerated this functional transformation process within the broad sense of YRD after the mid-2000s. Therefore, Chinese political forces launched a direct intervention into shaping the mega city-regionalism as their locational response to

wider political and economic trends. Unlike Harrison's (2008) concept of the 'regionally orchestrated centralism', which documents the re-concentration of authority towards the region from its sub-regions, this thesis proposes a 'locally orchestrated regionalism' to stress the emerging territorial politics for voluntarily and collectively shifting local political attention towards the mega city-regional level.

Finally, the YRD's collective governance is still lagging behind the balance between the geoeconomic and geopolitical participation in the mega city-regionalism. The YRD regional plan indicates that it is crucial for local authorities to undertake the transformation of their responsibilities from direct intervention in the distribution of capital investments into constantly reviewing and modifying the supervisory policies and regulatory environment at the mega city-regional level. However, substantial local political interests remain for conducting intervention in containing and boosting the territorial socio-economic growth even at the expense of the market will. The imbalance between geoeconomic and geopolitical participation will be exemplified by the case study of Yixing government's decision making about constructing Yixing high-tech industrial park. Yixing is a county-level city that belongs to Wuxi.

Following Brenner's (2004b, 2009) contextually specific investigations, this chapter contextualises the three key points mentioned above associated with the YRD's mega city-regionalism. These three concerns will be engaged with through discussions embedded in each section. Section 7.2 proposes the term of 'locally orchestrated regionalism' to explain how Chinese specific context localised the city-regionalism. Section 7.3 evaluates the lack of statutory recognition for both the YRD's institutional arrangement and the YRD regional plan associated with Chinese territorial politics. Then both the vertical and horizontal nature of geopolitics will be examined in section 7.4. Finally, the concluding section connects all the findings and discussions to stress that it is difficult for one single framework to cover all the various categories of functional activities in the mega city-regional agenda. Furthermore, this chapter reinforces the significance of researching the specifications and diversities within the locational political-economic system for understanding mega city-regionalising process.

7.2 Locally orchestrated regionalism in China

The researcher admits that the 'locally orchestrated regionalism' which this chapter proposes to document the rescaling process of authority between the region and its sub-regions is, to some extent, similar to Harrison's (2008) 'regionally orchestrated centralism'. They are both regionally specific but Harrison's term explores how regional agencies devolve administrative authorities into sub-regional offices, and then re-concentrate, more or less, towards the regional centre which is argued to undermine the flexibilities of local decision-makings in the case of England's Northwest Development Agency (NWDA). Such a process highlights "how particular material structures and processes have become (temporarily) fixed at or around the regional scale and how they are becoming unfixed at other scales" (Jonas, 2006: see Harrison, 2008: 936).

Differently, locally orchestrated regionalism examines how sub-regional territorial authorities voluntarily shift their geopolitical attention from local to regional scale, and become willing to make collective decision-making for coordinating cross-jurisdictional activities on the basis of institutionalised meetings and interactions in the Chinese context. The YRD's three-level governance framework is established and operated by all chief political officers from each of the provincial and prefectural level political authorities. The rescaling process of administrative attention and geopolitical interest avoids local territorial jurisdictions to surrender regulatory authorities to regional institutions. Moreover, there is no official regulatory support for planning and governance at the mega city-regional level. The China constitution explains the state hierarchical organisation which includes provincial and prefectural level governments, but mentions nothing about the YRD's three-level governance framework. Thus, provincial government is the highest ranked authority in the sub-national political system.

As a consequence, collective decision-making at mega city-regional level can only be achieved on the basis of reaching mutual trust and consensus among all of the involved sub-regional authorities for any particular aspect. The discussion of the lack of regulatory support for trans-jurisdictional governance in the Chinese context will be reinforced in section 7.3. Therefore, it is argued that locally orchestrated

regionalism enables processes and administrative capacities to fix at local territorial scale and unfix at or around the regional scale.

On the other hand, the Chinese geopolitical context is filled with a highly centralised, one-party controlled political system. In most western states, such as the UK, Germany and the US, more than one party keeps competing for political leadership at all scales across the entire top-down administrative chain. It is then not abnormal to witness candidates who are each responsible for different parties taking over leaderships at different political scales. For instance, amid the period when national government was dominated by the Labour Party between 1997 and 2010, the Mayor of London who was in charge of the Greater London Authority which is central in the governance over 'the only true global city-region' of London (Harrison, 2012c) was firstly won by an Independent candidate – Ken Livingstone – in 2000; and then claimed by the Labour Party in 2004 until being defeated by the Conservative candidate – and current Mayor, Boris Johnson – in 2008. After 2010, and the election to power of a Conservative Party led UK national government ensured the Greater London Authority (major global city-region) and UK Central Government (the state) was only then controlled by the Conservative Party. The one-party Chinese context illustrates a very different story.

Both national and sub-national governments have been held by the Chinese Communist Party since the birth of the P.R.China in 1949. This is mainly the result of the central-concentration of political nomination rights in the hierarchical political chain, despite the devolvement of economic decision-making rights we have experienced since the 1978 economic reform and the 'Open Door' policy. The personnel promoting opportunity is largely derived from respective political performance which is primarily judged by the extent of jurisdictional GDP growth. This is apparently enhancing the possibility and capability of inter-city competition for improving respective territorial economic growth. The tensions between key actors at sub-national level will be further illustrated by the discussions around conflicts between geoeconomic and geopolitical actors in section 7.3 and 7.4, and particularly exemplified by the case study of politically-controlled Yixing Environmental Science and Technology Industrial Park in section 7.4.

7.3 The mismatch between mega city-regional functional space and networked administrative jurisdictions

Before the emergence of the three-level governance framework, the YRD's regional market was divided by the political administrative boundaries in terms of regulatory and policy differentials in the YRD. Hence, the coordinated governance framework was constructed in the belief that it would facilitate the improvement of economic relations and more importantly the development of consensus on reducing the impact of administrative division over trans-jurisdictional functional activities among a group of local provincial and municipal governments. Both local provincial and municipal governments actively promoted the three-level governance framework from the bottom in order to respond to the political-economic change at the trans-provincial level. However, this calls into question how far the current networked arrangement can go in the absence of enforcement power particularly at a moment when local authorities possess substantial economic decision-making rights.

The single mega city-regional administrative scale may find itself struggling to deal with a broad range of diversified socio-economic activities at the same time. What we have witnessed in the past is that the YRD's three-level governance framework successfully reaches inter-city consensus for particular issues, such as the spatial transformation of traditional manufacturing industries, but struggles with others. According to an academic planner,

“It is very difficult to assess the appropriateness of the YRD's governance framework because there are so many different categories of activities which could be related to the discussion. They may have worked out for some issues, such as constructing the trans-provincial highway network for achieving the YRD's 'one-hour economic circle' or even 'three-hour economic circle'. But there has been barely any progress on the reform of household registration and medical insurance system. Both of them are crucial for people's permanent movement across different provincial territories” (Professor from East China University, interview, 11th July 2013).

Relating to the interviewee's doubt, we have witnessed an enlarged city-regional governance scale that has been able to deal with the accelerated spill-over of traditional labour-intensive manufacturing enterprises from the '15+1' version into the

broad sense of YRD. But the enlarging administrative scale has not yet engaged with some other items, including the reform of household registration and medical insurance system in the YRD as the interviewee mentions. Based on these cases, there is an emerging mismatch between political administrative territory and interconnected functional space which is defined to cover particular activities. In short, we may not see an ideal single administrative arrangement which is able to perfectly bind a variety of functional geographies which are individually defined by different functional activities at the city-regional level (Bennett, 1997).

7.3.1 Lack of enforcing mechanism in the trans-jurisdictional planning and governance

As chapter 6 illustrates, the YRD's current three-level governance framework is constructed and operated by local provincial and municipal governments. The framework provides a political platform for local provincial and municipal governments to reach consensus about how to overcome emerging intra-regional conflicts through conducting regular and institutionalised interaction. It is then realised as an ongoing bargaining process in favour of the principle of "recognising the common while reserving the differences" (Luo, 2011: 151). Consequently, concern has been raised about the framework's ability to coordinate a group of local governments in relation to the part of 'differences' in an effective way. This concern comes from two different perspectives.

Firstly, since the commanding power which could facilitate inter-governmental cooperation is missing at this trans-provincial level, collective governance only happens when trust and consensus can be built among all of the involved local authorities for any particular aspect. A chief member in the formulation team for the YRD regional plan argues in the interview that,

"the current three-level framework is only an official arrangement for organising inter-government negotiations; no one particular authority can give the command to any others, so cooperation is happening only when members are able to reach an agreement" (A chief member of the expert team, interview, 23rd July 2013).

Horizontal cooperation among local governments, the interviewee implies, is only prompted by overlapping political intentions across political administrative territories.

Luo and Shen's (2008, 2009) research about the implementation of Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou regional plan reveals the fierce rivalry for industrial distribution and infrastructure construction including a bridge and airport among three municipal governments. The authors highly doubt whether local governments have the capability of building trust and consensus to distribute opportunities which should be able to stimulate the social-economic improvement for their own jurisdictional territory in the absence of a proper enforcement mechanism. At this moment, there is no enforcement mechanism covering the YRD's territory at the city-centric regional level. Hence organising the collective political actions mainly relies on local governments' voluntary agreements which are not easily reached, in particular when the collective interest may be at the cost of any individual cities' interest.

The second point is there is no specific legislation officially supporting this voluntary collective planning and governance at the regional level. The China constitution explains the hierarchical structure of central-led state organisation and mentions nothing about the YRD's three-level governance framework. Provincial government is acting as the highest administrative level in the local political system. The YRD's three-level governance framework is only realised by two voluntary consents among YRD's members, including 'The Framework of YRD Regional Cooperation and Development Joint Conference (*Changsanjiaodiqu hezuoyufazhan lianxihuiyizhidu*)' and 'The Framework of YRD' Key Cooperative Task Groups (*Changsanjiaodiqu zhongdianhezuozhuantizu gongzuozhidu*)'. Its enforcement power for prompting the trans-jurisdictional cooperation is questionable.

Furthermore, the implementation of the YRD regional plan is not guaranteed by any relevant legal provisions. There is the Urban and Rural Planning Act, which was previously known as City Planning Act, for legitimately supervising the formulation and implementation of the city plan. This law fits with any urban and rural plan which is formulated for local municipalities or their affiliated counties. According to this act, the corresponding level of Urban and Rural Planning Department (URPD) has the responsibility for ensuring the planning provisions to be realised at each political level and violation against the planning content to be fully investigated. In our case,

the YRD regional plan covers three provincial territories and hence becomes not relevant to the Urban and Rural Planning Act. Local government's decision of not complying with any particular planning provision is therefore not defined as illegal.

Overall, the YRD's three-level governance framework and the regional plan both ensure that collective governance can be prompted through a flexible and voluntary arrangement in accordance with locational political-economic contexts. Meanwhile the framework also generates a dilemma for the networked governance in relation to the part of 'differences' which may not be easily overcome between different local governments. It reflects how local territorial politics "shape city-regional institutions and politics from the below" (Jonas, 2013: 287). Hence the resurgence of mega city-regionalism has much to do with local territorial politics including local governments' incapability of contributing collective provisions in relation to some aspects. In order to understand their conflicted reactions toward a wider city-regional political-economic environment, it is essential to recognise the reasons behind emerging disparate political interests. The following sections will investigate this claim further.

7.4 Geopolitical over-intervention in the socio-economic development

China's 1978 economic reform started the delegation of economic decision-making rights towards local provincial and municipal governments from a previously centrally concentrated authority (see Leaf, 1998; Li and Wu, 2012a). Consequently, urban entrepreneurialism and fierce competition emerged among local political territories which have been frequently criticised for undermining the regional integration process in the YRD (e.g. Li and Wu, 2012b; Chien, 2007; Chien and Gordon, 2008; Luo and Shen, 2008, 2009; Zhang and Wu, 2006; Wu and Zhang, 2010). For example, "[China's urban] entrepreneurialism has led to a series of crises which expose the limitations of the downscaling of governance. Inter-jurisdiction competition exacerbates redundant infrastructure development" (Wu and Zhang, 2010: 60). To reinforce the debate, Luo and Shen (2008: 208) argue that "cities are keen on inter-city competition instead of cooperation; in the competition to attract foreign investors to their own cities, the local states are keen to embark on place promotion, prestige projects and mega events".

Much of these literatures' discussions and conclusions choose to focus on local governments' transformation from managerial to entrepreneurial nature after China's 1978 economic reform, and then explain how the local competition is happening in selected aspects by relating to their growth-driven decision making. What we have seen is that plenty of literatures expressed their concern about the political administrative division and the resulting impacts in the regional political-economic development, including the conflicts emerging in the past construction of trans-jurisdictional transportations (e.g. Ye, 2014) and industrial planning for the regional space (e.g. Luo and Shen, 2009). Similarly, as one participant in the formulating process of YRD regional plan mentioned,

“During the research stage amid the formulation of many various trans-jurisdictional plans, it is very often noticeable that every local government is significantly interested in recruiting inward investments for all categories of industries by issuing competitive policies. ... It is normal to see them make efforts to maximise economic growth within their political jurisdiction instead of focusing on the agglomeration of any particular industry and coordinated development within a wider environment” (A researcher from NIGLAS, interview, 1st August 2013).

The interviewee here is suggesting that local governments normally focus on the impact of policies on local economic activities. We have realised that the decentralisation of economic decision-making rights within the state hierarchical organisation ensures that local governments become capable of attracting inward investments through issuing competitive policies, including tax reduction and discounted land supply and such like. However, the questions of why the political intervention shall be interpreted as excessive and the underlying political intention are under-emphasised by current literatures.

In the case of the YRD, locational decision-making has been 'tailored' by local authorities to improve economic growth in their controlled political administrative territories. According to the above-mentioned interview, how to enhance economic growth within a political jurisdiction becomes local governments' primary concern instead of concentrating on the development of existing economic activities within their territories. This has resulted in critiques of industrial similarity and lack of

complementarities in functional structure across the YRD by a large number of Chinese regional literatures (e.g. Li and Wu, 2012a; Luo, 2008; Social Sciences Academic Press, 2011; Zhang et al., 2007). To briefly summarise by borrowing two academic planners' words, "what is happening now is a small amount of production but almost all-inclusive in every city" (A researcher from NIGLAS, interview, 1st August 2013), and consequently "local governments' participation in the regional market is frequently seen as overdone" (A professor from Nanjing University, interview, 2nd August 2013).

One of the prominent examples is the preferential treatment which local governments generally provide for attracting inward investments. This topic has been brought up by several interviewees including local business leaders and academic planners in relation to inter-city competition. Such preferential treatment includes preferential tax exemption, discounted sales of industrial land and many other provisions. Local governments' intervention is able to underplay the role of market forces in the distribution of capital investment across the city-centric regional space. What also becomes a part of this consideration is,

"local governments are able to supervise and manage economic activities in the first place. However, who is able to correct local governments' behaviour when their participation in the market is realised as overdone? ... Based on this perspective, we need to investigate the political intention which is driving them to do so" (A professor from Nanjing University, interview, 2nd Aug 2013).

Thus it is not fair to direct most of the criticisms against locational decision-making if we do not fully understand on what circumstances these local economic decisions are based.

Finally, although there is emerging a large number of regional literatures explaining in what forms the inter-locality competition presents itself in reality, we are still not fully aware of why this is happening. In other words, current literatures focus much on the consequence of local entrepreneurial governance, but not on its cause. It is important and urgent for current debates to consider why this particular locational economic decision has been retained by YRD's local governments since the 1978 Chinese economic reform, which has been under-stated by existing literatures. This shall reinforce the understanding of why inter-locality competition and conflicted

interests have remained despite the efforts to develop the YRD's regional integration. Section 7.2 already takes into consideration the lack of enforcement and disciplinary mechanisms. The rest of this chapter is divided into two sections. Firstly, attention will be drawn to how regulatory power has been utilised to create locational advantage for attracting inward investments by looking at the historical path of political-controlled Yixing ES and TP. The second section will analyse the political intention behind the competition-driven decision-making process.

7.4.1 Politically-controlled Yixing Environmental Science and Technology Industrial Park (Yixing ES and TP)

Industrial park means an area which is politically marked out by local governments for agglomerating particular aspects of industries in accordance with political-economic demand and their original advantageous industrial outputs. Industrial parks are planned, established, managed and promoted by a political authority which is an integral part of local urban government. At the moment, there are a large number of politically-controlled industrial parks across China, especially in the YRD which is considered to be one of China's economic hot zones. One prominent example is Suzhou Industrial Park which primarily concentrates global investments, in particular from Singapore (Pereira, 2007).

Yixing Environmental Science and Technology Industrial Park (Yixing ES and TP) was initially proposed with the aim of concentrating environmental protection industries by Yixing government and subsequently approved by the central State Council in 1992. The park is governed by the management committee which is controlled by three different political organisations, including the Yixing Environmental Protection Industries' Development Centre (*Yixingshi Huanbaochanye Fazhanzhongxin*) in the park, the Yixing Environmental Protection Industries Association (*Yixingshi Huanbaochanye Xiehui*) which belongs to Yixing Environmental Protection Bureau, and the Administration Centre (*Xingguanzhongxin*) which is under the control of Yixing Economic and Information Technology Commission. Therefore, it is the state power controlling the development of the industrial park. The park's entire planning area is proposed to be 102 square

kilometres. The established area for the first term of the construction is 15 square kilometres.

Yixing is a county-level city under the control of Wuxi. Environmental protection industries have accounted for a significant proportion of local GDP for both Yixing and its subordinate town Gaosheng during the past decades. Constructing the Yixing ES and TP is the political attempt to eliminate the geographical separation of production sites by concentrating as many relevant environmental enterprises as possible in the park area. Thus the essential point here is to what extent the management committee's decision-making in relation to the development of the park shall be determined as 'unnecessary' amid local functional activities.

This section does not intend to produce a general conclusion for all Chinese industrial parks as they are planned and utilised by states as a 'political tool' to achieve their local economic growth at the expense of market indication. The Yixing ES and TP is a crucial component of Yixing's current economic structure. It is not our attention to question the decision to construct the Yixing ES and TP in the first place. As an academic planner mentioned in the interview,

“industrial park is a very complicated research target; ... even the development path of every industrial park could be unique and very different from another's; thus it is difficult to produce a general conclusion for industrial parks” (A professor from Nanjing University, interview, 30th July 2013).

Agreeing with the interviewee's statement, it is fundamental to realise that it is very hard to produce a general conclusion which applies to all Chinese industrial parks. The industrial park solely is not the end in our research objective. What this section is trying to achieve is explaining the extent to which political intervention can significantly affect local functional activities by looking at the past economic decision-making that led to the development path of the Yixing ES and TP. This discussion should help us to understand, firstly the potential conflict of local governments' over intervention in the YRD's collective governance; and secondly the existing conflict between state power and market forces in relation to the operation of local functional activities. The central State Council's statement, document of national 'Five-Year Plan', Yixing and Gaosheng's government's data and other relevant official news in this section are all found on the government website.

Environmental protection industry

Environmental protection industries have experienced fast-paced growth for more than three decades in Jiangsu, particularly in Yixing and its subordinated town Gaosheng. Currently, the environmental protection industry is composed of four main subgroups, the manufacturing of protection facilities, resource recycling facilities, environment friendly products and protection services. According to Shen's (2010) research, Jiangsu alone accounted for approximately one fifth of the entire national annual revenue resulting from environmental protection industries in 2008. Among all of Jiangsu's municipalities, Wuxi, Suzhou and Nanjing together contribute approximately 70% of Jiangsu's share. Wuxi in particular generates more than 61% of Jiangsu's sales revenue coming from the subgroup of environmental protection facilities manufacturing, meanwhile Yixing ES and TP and Gaosheng are Wuxi's two main contributors.

Yixing is a county-level city under the direct control of Wuxi; and Gaosheng is a town belonging to Yixing. Both Yixing ES and TP and Gaosheng focus on improving manufacturing capacity of environmental protection facilities, and Yixing recently expanded to produce other environment-friendly products, such as energy-saving products, low carbon products and such like. According to Gaosheng government's official publication of 'Planning Scheme of Innovation and Specialised Development for Gaosheng' Environmental Protection Industries (*Gaoshengzhen Huanbaochanye Chuangxinzhuanfayezhan Guihuafangan*), Gaosheng occupied about 10% of national market share for environmental protection facilities in 2008.

Furthermore, the most favourable provision for environmental protection industries is the eleventh national 'Five-Year Plan' which for 2006-2010 requires 20% and 10% reduction of energy consumption for national GDP generation and total pollutant emission respectively. For even more requirements, the central State Council continuously issues the official statement of 'Comprehensive Programme Work in Energy Conservation and Emission Reduction (*Jienengjianpai Zonghexing Fangan*)' as supplement to the national 'Five-Year Plan'. This statement significantly expands and clearly specifies the requirements for both energy conservation and emission reduction (see table 16).

After the eleventh national 'Five-Year Plan', the increasing demand for environmental protection knowledge and facilities ensured that the environmental protection industry stepped into an accelerating growth period which has not seen its end even by today. According to the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection's '2011 National Environmental Protection Related Industries' Circumstance Report (2011 *Quanguo Huanjingbaohuxiangguanchanye Zhuangkuangbaogao*), the average growth rate of annual sales revenue was 28.7% between 2004 and 2011. In 2011, the central State Council produced an announcement of the even more rigorous requirements for both energy conservation and emission reduction after the twelfth national 'Five-Year Plan' (2011-2015).

Table 16: The Reduction Command from the Central State Council's Announcement

Provisions	Reduction Target by 2010 against 2005	Reduction Target by 2015 against 2010
Coal consumption for generating every ten thousand Yuan GDP	1.034 KG (20%)	0.869 KG (16%)
Water Consumption for Industrial Increment	30%	30%
The Quantity of Entire Principal Pollutant Discharged	10%	10%
Sulphur Dioxide Emission	To 22950 thousand KG	To 20864 thousand KG
Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)	To 12730 thousand KG	To 23476 thousand KG
Disposal Rate of National Urban Sewage	No less than 70%	85%
Comprehensive Recycling Rate of Industrial Solid Wastes	Above 60%	72%

Source: Central Government Website of the P.R. China, 2007, 2011

The locational choice of Yixing ES and TP

According to the statements of the director of Yixing ES and TP's management committee and two local business leaders, the core aim of constructing Yixing ES and TP was to establish a business cluster for environmental protection industries by attracting potential investments and calling for the spatial relocation of existing businesses in Yixing and its subordinate town Gaosheng, while at the same time

persuading original manufacturing businesses not related to environmental industries to move away through utilising regulatory power. However, this does not mean state power is manipulated to exile traditional manufacturing industries from the industrial park on the basis of political intention. The result is the inclusion of hybrid industrial categories within Yixing ES and TP. The manipulation of regulatory power by local governments will be explained later in this section.

Yixing was not the only location choice for Yixing government to select the industrial park before the construction proposal was raised for the environmental protection industrial park. According to Gaosheng government's 'Planning Scheme of Innovation and Specialised Development for Gaosheng's Environmental Protection Industries', Gaosheng's environmental protection industries have experienced fast pace growth for more than three decades. It is extremely difficult to trace back the detailed decision making process which happened more than two decades ago. To make this even more challenging, since Gaosheng is a town belonging to Yixing, official economic statistics summaries for Yixing usually contain Gaosheng's contribution during past decades, thus it is hard to make accurate comparisons between Yixing ET and TP and Gaosheng's respective functional achievements. But we can still find some comparative indicators. Although we are not able to figure out the statistical work back to 1992, some more recent statistics are available.

According to Shen's (2010) research, Jiangsu generated 18.4% of national total sales of environmental protection facilities in 2008. But Gaosheng government's report mentions that they alone occupied approximately 10% of national market share for facilities production in 2008. Then Yixing and other Jiangsu's component cities share the remaining 8.4% market share. In addition, Shen (2010) also states that if we add both of Yixing ET and TP and Gaosheng's respective facilities manufacturing enterprises together, the sum is approximate 900. However, 800 out of these 900 companies are owned by Gaosheng according to data on Gaosheng government's website. According to data from the Environmental Protection Department of Jiangsu Province, Yixing ES and TP only owned about 30 out of the remaining companies in 2008, and lacks a giant enterprise which could be considered as market leader in the park. It means there are on average only two companies choosing to move into the park annually during the past sixteen years after it was founded in 1992. Therefore, at this moment there is a huge gap between

Yixing ET and TP and Gaosheng's respective industrial volume which are stated as both of their main development focus. Furthermore, Gaosheng government introduced the manufacturing of environment protection facilities as their primary industry in the 1970s in their official publications. This leads us to the question how Yixing can replace Gaosheng as the primary location for the industrial park under the local political command. This cannot be understood without looking at local governments' political logic.

The interesting part of this industrial park is although Yixing is only a county-level city under the direct control of Wuxi, Yixing ES and TP is officially recognised as a national level environmental protection industrial park. The proposal of founding Yixing ES and TP was sent by the local government to obtain the central State Council's approval in November 1992. In general, it is not necessary to seek central support before the establishment of an industrial park. Similarly, a large number of provincial and municipal level industrial parks have been built across China without central support. The central approval was finally obtained in accordance with the central State Council's recognition of the significance of developing the environmental protection industries. Currently the Yixing ES and TP is the only national level environmental protection industrial park which is located in a county-level city in China.

According to the explanation of an academic planner who has many years' experience of designing the industrial park for local governments, one of the key considerations here is

“the qualification of ‘national level’ is considered to be important by Yixing government because this shall become more attractive for inward investments in particular overseas capital than provincial level and municipal level” (A researcher from NIGLAS, interview, 2nd August 2013).

He also adds that

“in official opinion, Gaosheng, as a town, may not be as attractive as a county-level city for external investors; and more importantly, it is very difficult for a town to acquire the central approval for constructing national-level

environmental protection or high-technology industrial park and there is none at the moment” (A researcher from NIGLAS, interview, 2nd August 2013).

Based on the interviewee’s experience and explanation, it is highly likely the local government’s logic that the title of ‘national level environmental protection industrial park’ is able to become more attractive for existing and potential investors. Apart from local business, the park at last successfully brought in “more than 140 foreign-funded investments from more than 20 international countries and places” (A director of Yixing ES and TP’s management committee, interview, 19th July 2013). However, it was still not successful to meet the original expectation of primarily concentrating environmental protection investments, and more importantly moving Gaosheng’s existing environmental protection business base into the park.

The development path of Yixing ES and TP

Although Yixing ES and TP is currently the only industrial park which aims to concentrate environmental protection industries under political control in China, the park has recently grown to cover many other high technological and environment-friendly manufacturing categories, including electronics, mechanics, biological medicine, textile and fibre and such like. Again according to data from the Environmental Protection Department of Jiangsu Province, only 30 out of 320 companies were related to the environmental protection industries in 2008. Here is another critical point relating to the transformation of the political aim from an initial focus on attracting environmental protection industries to recent diversified high-technological manufacturing base. The statistical comparison between Yixing ES and TP and Gaosheng reveals that the proposed manufacturing agglomeration of environmental protection industries is not guaranteed for Yixing ES and TP, in this case at the expense of the local economic context, even under political intervention.

Gaosheng has long been famous for its concentration of environmental protection industries. The political proposal of spatially relocating the environmental protection industry from Gaosheng to the industrial park is therefore difficult to achieve. An interview with a business leader in Gaosheng discloses his understanding about the conflict between market forces and political intervention:

“Although the Yixing government makes continuous attempts to persuade Gaosheng’s environmental protection businesses to shift towards the Yixing ES and TP by promising a variety of preferential treatments; ... for example discounted industrial land sales and tax reduction or exemption for the early years operation; ... however even taking into consideration all the promised preferential policy, we still believe that the relocation is not going to be a beneficial decision for us. Because: firstly we are able to take the advantage of existing industrial agglomeration in Gaosheng; and secondly, there will be the huge cost for the movement of entire business” (A business leader in Gaosheng, interview, 27th July 2013).

There are two supplements to his statements for understanding the circumstance. Firstly, preferential policies apply to both of Gaosheng’s environmental protection industries & other potential inward investment. One prominent example is given by a business leader from Wuxi in the interview. He states that

“as far as I know, about three thousand Mu (Mu: 1Mu = 667 square meters) of industrial land were sold to one Taiwan Enterprise at the rate of 30K Yuan per acre no more than ten years ago; but at almost the same time, the rate which was given to me is about 100K Yuan per Mu” (Owner of a chemical manufacturing business in Wuxi, interview, 07th August 2013).

Secondly, the promised preferential treatments are to be weighed against Gaosheng’s existing advantage of industrial agglomeration. According to Gaosheng government’s ‘Planning Scheme of Innovation and Specialised Development for Gaosheng’ Environmental Protection Industries (*Gaoshengzhen Huanbaochanye Chuangxinzhuan yefazhan Guihuafangan*), more than 95% of Gaosheng’s business demands for raw and auxiliary materials can be met by the local supplier. Additionally, a long list of large national and foreign environmental protection companies which have subsidiaries or agency organisation in Gaosheng is disclosed by the report. This shows the international recognition of the significance of Gaosheng’s industrial agglomeration.

For these remaining traditional labour-intensive manufacturers in the park area, there was no direct political order forcing them to vacate the occupied industrial land. Instead, local politics chose to encourage these businesses to voluntarily leave by

issuing incentives and compensation. This time the political promise accelerated business leaders' decision making. The owner of a local chemical materials business says in the interview that,

“At that time, the management committee constantly encouraged us to move out of Yixing ES and TP. The decision to relocate my production factory to somewhere else was finally made on a voluntary basis after considering a variety of factors. For example and firstly, the comparative operating costs between Yixing and other cities in Northern Jiangsu, including labour costs and tax reduction; secondly the shifting trend between the southern and northern Jiangsu for labour-intensive manufacturers, which was also encouraged by our government; thirdly much more rigid environmental regulations in Yixing ES and TP; and fourthly better transportation infrastructure in the YRD;... and finally a crucial one, the management committee's promised compensation, such as purchasing our occupied industrial land at the market rate; ... for my case in particular, I bought the land at 60k per Mu, and sold to the Yixing ES and TP at 300K per Mu; this transaction significantly accelerated my decision to leave” (A business leader from Wuxi, interview, 07th August 2013).

As the interviewee's statement shows, local government focuses on exercising direct influence over local business' decision making through implementing rigorous environmental regulation, providing compensation for leaving businesses and actively establishing the connection between local business leaders and surrounding urban governments who are more willing to receive the labour-intensive manufacturers. So what we have witnessed is that local government constructs the Yixing ES and TP for concentrating growing environmental protection industries which are considered to be a comparative newly rising sector through a serial of political interventions, despite Gaosheng being a better location for doing so. Although Gaosheng retained its primary manufacturing base for environmental protection industries, an increasing number of related investments, though at slow pace, are growing their businesses in the Yixing ES and TP.

This case illustrates the active political intervention over local functional activities and potential competition for capital investments among political administrative

jurisdictions. In our case, the direct inter-city competition is less likely since Gaosheng is politically subordinated to Yixing government. On 4th July of 2012, Gaosheng became subordinated to Yixing ES and TP's management committee and liable to Yixing ES and TP's development planning and governance.

In addition, there were expectations from local business leaders in the interviews about the responsibility of local governments in relation to the change of mega city-regional business environment, which had been highlighted by the YRD regional plan. For example, borrowing the statement of a business leader from Gaosheng who has been manufacturing Environment Protection Facilities for many:

“even today, after almost thirty years' growth, we still have no unified official benchmark for manufacturing techniques and product quality in our environmental protection industry. Even not one unified standard for Yixing. ... The benchmark should have been formulated under the lead of our government a long time ago” (A business leader from Gaosheng, interview, 27th July 2013).

The interviewee then adds that in the absence of industrial standardisation, it is difficult for local authorities and the market to supervise and regulate production quality. Without the official benchmark, it is challenging for local products to be transacted across political administrative territories because the mega city-regional market which covers many different cities and even provinces may struggle to compare products across the region in terms of quality. This leads to inappropriate market competition solely in the form of production costs and insufficient incentives for pursuing qualitative improvements within the industry, which undermines the competitiveness of the environmental protection products in the regional, national and global market (see Wang, Dong and Shi, 2008).

The YRD regional plan devotes one chapter calling for redefining the responsibility of local territorial politics in the mega city-regional functional development. Specifically, chapter ten recommends local governments to reduce their direct influence in local economic activities and then offer market forces to become more decisive in the distribution of capital investments within the mega city-regional market. Meanwhile local governments shall pay more attention to improving and integrating managing standards across three provincial territories in their role as supervisors. In particular,

there is one specific planning provision asking for the establishment of region-wide technical standards and mutual recognition systems for high-technological achievements. In our case of the Yixing ES and TP, the management committee chooses to invest substantial efforts in constructing the manufacturing base for environmental protection industry in the park and then growing the economic scale of the park. There has not been sufficient attention from local territorial politics towards the operating environment of functional activities in terms of cross-territorial standardisation.

In short, the research of Yixing ES and TP reveals that local territorial politics has both the political interest and regulatory power to generate direct influence over the operation of local functional activities rather than supervising and regulating local socio-economic activities as administrative supervisors. Local economic decision-making rights ensure local governments have the capability to compete with other territorial political authorities for many different economic activities amid the YRD's mega city-regionalism. But why is there also an increasing possibility for local governments to conduct inter-territorial competition? In what circumstance does local government have increasing demand for the rivalry aiming for inward investments?

According to Yixing ES and TP's Industrial Development Planning for 2011-2015, the primary aim of the park is to grow the economic scale, including Gaosheng, to 100 billion *Yuan* by 2015, which shall include 65 billion *Yuan* and 35 billion *Yuan* for manufacturing and service industries respectively. This clearly represents the GDP-driven principle for the park's future development. Bearing in mind the underlying principle is essential for us to understand the political mind-set within their focus on the functional expansion of their local political territory at this moment. The GDP-oriented aim apparently enhances the possibility of emerging inter-city competition for inward investment. What is generating the continuous incentive for pursuing the GDP-driven growing aim? This question will be continued in the next section.

7.4.2 The vertical and horizontal nature of geopolitics at the city-regional level

An academic planner pointed out in the interview that "local governments should not take the full responsibility for the inter-city competition" (A professor from Nanjing

University, interview, 2nd August 2013), based on his rich experience of involvement in both national and local governments' strategic planning projects. This raises some important questions, specifically: who else should be held accountable for causing local political rivalry; and how are these other parties prompting local governments to join in local competitions? Localised entrepreneurial governance has been explained as one of the most important causes for regional fragmentation in the past literatures (e.g. Xu and Yeh, 2011; Vogel, 2010). There is no denying the significance of this cause as this chapter has demonstrated. Entrepreneurialism is important for explaining local state's economic decision-making in terms of its growth-driven nature after Chinese 1978 economic reform. However, past literatures often overlook the force behind the emergence of localised entrepreneurial governance. What is the local governments' ultimate motivation for pursuing territorial economic growth, even if it sometimes means conducting hostile competition with neighbouring cities?

Apparently no political enmity exists among provincial governments in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai. Additionally, governmental officials' salaries are not linked to the rate of local economic growth. Their concern was interpreted by an academic planner in the interview as,

“these Chinese local governments ... do not make the so-called trans-jurisdictional ‘hostile competition’ which is frequently referenced by current literatures as an end in itself; ... they compete to attract inward investments because they want to show better political accomplishments to their superior government in comparison with other political territories” (A professor in Nanjing University, interview, 2nd August 2013).

Contrary to the decentralised economic decision-making rights, the Chinese national state centralises a range of other political administrative powers, such as macro strategic decision-making and political nomination rights (Zhou, 2003; Zhou 2004; Wang, Zhang and Qin, 2007). After the Chinese 1978 economic reform, the nation state started to realise the significance of discretionary decision-making for local political authorities; and the result is we no longer see the central state allocate specific mandatory assignments to local governments, such as the index-inclusive tasks which operated before the economic reform (Leaf, 1998; Li and Wu, 2012a). It is extremely difficult for the nation state to constantly keep up with the local changing

political-economic contexts across the national territory, not to mention scrutinising the local political achievements based on the changing contexts. Hence the asymmetric information between central and local governments is becoming the increasing concern for the central state to supervise and regulate the local political behaviour.

Therefore, in order to effectively assess local governments' political performance and ensure that their accomplishments would be able to generally serve for the national strategic aim, the Chinese central state currently chooses to rely on a range of economic indexes, including employment rate, tax income, GDP growth rate and such like (Zhou, 2003: 99). Among all of these indexes, the GDP growth rate for each local political administrative territory has been selected as the primary benchmark for assessing inferior governments inside the central-led state hierarchical organisation (Zhou, 2004: 34). More importantly, the comparison result generates direct influence over the potential promotion prospects of the local political officers.

Li and Zhou (2005) investigated the historical cases of political promotion and termination among 254 provincial leaders who served in 28 Chinese provincial units from 1979 to 1995. Their conclusion was that "the likelihood of promotion of provincial leaders increases with their economic performance, while the likelihood of termination decreases with their economic performance" (Li and Zhou, 2005: 1743). Their conclusion reinforced the academic planner's statement in the interview who explained the political incentives behind local governments' economic decision-making. Their knowledge reflects on why promoting GDP growth, in our case expanding the economic scale for Yixing ES and TP, is given the priority by many local political authorities.

Furthermore, the promotion of competition among local political officers across the national territory is argued as a 'zero-sum' game, given that only a limited number of officers can step up into higher ranking positions (Zhou, 2004; Wang, Zhang and Qin, 2007). For example, the increasing possibility of political promotion for the mayor of Yixing is much more likely to undermine promoting opportunity for other county-level city mayors. This argument is fundamental for understanding the political logic within local economic decision-making. More importantly, this argument helps us

understand why enhancing economic outputs of local political territory could be favoured at great cost, including environment pollution and preferential treatment at discounted terms for inward investments.

To make the argument even more complicated, Zhou (2004: 32) adds that Chinese local governments are encouraged to act not only in favour of growing the economic activities in their own administrative territory, but also against others' economic growth. For example, and as mentioned in the last two chapters, there has been a long tradition for Chinese economic activities to operate in the context of geopolitical 'localism'. Liu Junde's (2006) definition of 'Administrative Region Economy' recognised that the boundaries of local political jurisdictions were delimiting the scale of local functional activities in case they could spill-over across the political boundaries after the Chinese 1978 economic reform. Based on his research, the political boundary, in particular the provincial boundary, became the visible barrier for retaining local functional activities within each administrative jurisdiction. Although urban economic growth continued at a comparatively rapid rate in China after the 1978 economic reform, the existence of 'localism' raised issues of economic fragmentation and inefficiency.

In short, the GDP-driven benchmark for assessing local political performance within the central-led state hierarchical organisation has been able to create a GDP explosion during the past three decades as well as producing much concern about fierce competition among local governments. To counter this, we have initially seen a central intention and attempt to diversify the list of benchmarks largely towards environmentally friendly items during the last decade. Table 16 illustrates the central State Council's specific command of reducing the environmental footprint in terms of reducing natural resources consumption and pollutant emissions within local economic development between 2006 and 2015. The impact of the transformation of central political interest has been reflected by the YRD's three-level governance agenda. According to table 13, environmental protection has become one of the primary tasks for YRD's regional cooperation almost at the same time. Such change reveals that the locational arrangements or decision-making still needs to respond to the nation state's political interest although in a flexible way which may vary based on local intention and context. Therefore, following Harrison's (2015b: 36) suggestion, we are agreeing with the realisation that "city-regions are not the quasi-autonomous

political-economic spaces many proponents of the new city-regionalism would have us believe”.

Thinking beyond his argument, this section discussed the vertical and horizontal nature of geopolitics at the city-regional level in China. For the former vertical hierarchical administration, centrally designed benchmarks for assessing local political performance, such as GDP growth rate, and the resulting opportunities for personnel promotion in the Chinese governmental system are key to understand the top-down geopolitical impact in local and regional administrative agenda. Contrary to direct hierarchical control in the western mode of ‘centrally defined’ or ‘centrally dependent’ city-regionalism (see Herrschel, 2014: 104), what this thesis has witnessed in the YRD’s city-regional governmental framework, in the vertical dimension, is indirect top-down political impact which is primarily relating to the long-existing Chinese wider political system, such as vertically controlled personnel promotion. We may find it difficult to believe that either Shanghai which is China’s most connected global city after Hong Kong, or the YRD which is one of China’s most developed mega city-regions would become free from regulatory shackles. Relating to the latter horizontal geopolitical relations, socio-economic connection plays a key role in facilitating the cross-jurisdictional cooperation mostly in the case of not jeopardising political officers’ promotion opportunity. Thus, local economic decision-making is able to reflect on locational circumstances while reacting to a wider national geopolitical context. Consequently, central and local geopolitical interests are negotiated at local and city-regional level in China differently compared to the western context.

7.5 Conclusion: Conflicted economic-political considerations in the mega city-regionalism

This chapter does not intend to deny the significance of organising and operating collective governance for the YRD mega city-region. Also it is not our intention to determine whether the YRD’s current three-level governance framework is a completely successful arrangement. Rather, we pay attention to the ongoing territorial politics amid the geopolitical institutional arrangement rather than the existing structure of governance framework. Following Brenner’s (2004b, 2009)

suggestion of conducting contextually focused investigations, this chapter aims to study and understand the tensions faced by the YRD's mega city-regionalism; and shed light on some of the comparative under-stated questions, such as: Why is the Chinese central state less likely to enforce another institutional arrangement for governing the emerging sub-national scale and in particular the implementation of the centrally-led YRD regional plan after dismantling the Shanghai EZPO? Why is the current three-level governance framework able to make evident progress about a broad but still limited range of aspects? Why do local territorial authorities choose to constantly generate direct impact over the operation of local socio-economic activities? This concluding section will link the findings from each of the previous sections and then reach a conclusion about a series of conflicted considerations in the geopolitical mega city-regionalism. The debate is raised on the basis of Chinese unique political-economic system, and one particular case study of politically-controlled Yixing ES and TP.

To begin with the Chinese 1978 economic reform, previous centralised economic decision-making rights were devolved towards local territorial authorities. The result is locational governance has been able to be tailored on the basis of local political-economic contexts in favour of entrepreneurialism. Hence local governments started to act like business firm which means their decision-making was closely linked to the growth of territorial tax revenues. The case of politically-controlled Yixing ES and TP has examined local government's enhanced likelihood and capability of generating direct impact in the operation of local economic activities even if it means to act against local market context. Relating to this perspective, local political rivalry is easily created, in particular when a group of neighbouring territorial governments are all seeking to improve the economic outputs within their political administrative jurisdictions. Local political-economic fragmentation thus generates serious challenges to the YRD's internal consistency.

Under this circumstance, the YRD's three-level governance framework is making apparent progress in achieving collective governance in terms of a broad and limited range of aspects, meanwhile facing growing tensions from not being able to create political consensus about some particular aspects. The dilemma has been exemplified by Luo and Shen's (2008, 2009) research about fierce rivalry for industrial distribution and infrastructure construction among three municipal

governments amid the implementation of Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou regional plan. Consequently, the three-level governance framework has been operating on the basis of the principle of “recognising the common while reserving the differences” (Luo, 2011: 151). In relation to the part of ‘differences’, the political conflicts over a group of various functional items was left in abeyance in the YRD’s governance agenda for this stage.

There are two main points which can be distilled from the operation of the YRD’s three-level governance framework. Firstly, current mega city-regionalism is closely related to territorial interests and political consensus. The decentralisation of economic decision-making rights and avoidance of central enforcement of governmental arrangement at the cross-provincial regional scale enables YRD’s networked governance to be conducted on a flexible and voluntary basis in accordance with locational political-economic contexts. Therefore, collective governance which reflects local political interests across a group of various administrative territories has been organised from below for governing at the mega city-regional scale in comparison with previous centrally orchestrated administrative arrangements.

Secondly, it has been increasingly challenging for this single administrative arrangement to deal with a wide range of various socio-economic activities which all occupy their own specific functional spaces. There has been only partial integration in terms of a limited range of functional items where collective governance and policy can be applied at this broad cities-centric regional scale which covers three entire provincial territories. Relating to this perspective, current mega city-regionalism has not been able to prompt yet a single ideal governance framework for achieving comprehensive integration from below.

In order to explain the Chinese GDP-oriented decision-making and its underlying intention to promote political rivalry amid the territorial politics, section 7.3 gives particular attention to local government’s logic embedded in their economic decision-making. One of the most important concerns here is that the so-called ‘locational policy’ has been compromised by central state’s supervising system, including assessing local governments’ political achievements, such as GDP growth rate. Because the asymmetric information between central and local governments is

becoming an increasing concern for the central state to supervise and regulate the local political behaviour, the GDP-driven measurement becomes one of the most important tools for serving central supervisions. On the other hand and more importantly, the limited political promotion opportunities for a large group of local political officers largely rely on the assessment result. Therefore, it is to be expected that local economic decisions are formulated to generate positive, or at least not negative, achievements for central governments to view. It becomes clear that the central state is capable of making, more or less, impact over the constitution of locational arrangement which is expected to manage changing locational political-economic contexts. Mega city-regionalism, under this circumstance, has been highly affected, though indirectly, by the central interest. It is not completely escaping from the administrative agenda of the state hierarchical organisation.

Overall, current mega city-regionalism is a hybrid but conflicted ongoing process combining territorial politics and interlinked socio-economic relations. In particular, the territorial politics consist of considerations associated with both locational strategy as a response towards wider changing political-economic contexts from below and central interests and supervision from above. Similar to Jonas's (2012: 289) conclusion, "this is never simply a one-way process insofar as the national state must be self-interested in managing its own internal territoriality". We have seen that collective governance and policy are trying to unite disparate material interests in relation to many different aspects across local territorialities. What also becomes apparent is the central indirect impact in the mega city-regional agenda. Therefore, there is the balance which cross-territorial collective governance must reach between pursuing the locational strategy for adapting to a changing socio-economic environment and following central interests and supervision in the mega city-regional agenda. Ultimately, conflicts are clear between geoeconomic and geopolitical processes in the construction of mega city-regional space.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Thesis summary

This thesis set out to explore the constitutive role of politics in the construction of contemporary city-regional geographies by relating to the Yangtze River Delta (mega) city-region in China. Following the general recognition of the functional importance of emerging city-regional spaces and thereafter the political-economic expectation for the imagined success of potential city-regional spaces, we have witnessed many requests for setting out the appropriate governmental arrangements for managing and enhancing the economic success of these new spaces (e.g. Harrison, 2012c; Herrschel and Newman, 2002; Scott, 2001a). However, as chapter 2 explains, there has been too much emphasis on the economic prosperity in relation to city-regional spaces in terms of functional agglomeration and inter- and intra-regional functional relations. Consequently, emerging city-regions and their derivatives, including mega city-regions, to a large extent, have remained as our mental unit with blurry boundaries. More importantly, if it is unlikely that we can rely on the market itself to govern the identified functional spaces, then the involvement of a group of different economic, political and social actors in the construction and operation of city-regional governance frameworks becomes fundamental.

On the other hand, the identified functional spaces change and expand on the basis of accelerated urbanisation and economic integration. Such uncertainty is therefore constantly challenging the involved political actors' collective decision-making and the relevant mega city-regional administrative framework. Hence long-existing state scalar organisation, as one of the critical political actors, stands in an extremely awkward position while dealing with fast-paced changing economic geographies. Meanwhile, regional and local governments are each responsible for managing a fixed territory. They do not hold direct responsibilities for activities beyond their jurisdictional boundaries.

Consequently, although we have seen proposals for linking the 'stubborn' conception of territory and scale with the relational viewpoints to re-introduce new city-regionalism as some flexible 'regional assemblages' of social, economic and political

relationships (e.g. Allen and Cochrane, 2007), we still cannot deny that it becomes increasingly challenging for involved fragmented economic-political actors to voluntarily pursue the regional common interests in the face of a changing economic-political context. This is particularly the case when the national state and a group of various local governments are proactively involved in the cross-territorial administrative agenda rather than withering away from the rise of city-regional geography, which Scott (2011a) and his proponents anticipated a decade ago.

What is largely missing from the previous relational approach is a serious consideration of state scalar organisation and both the vertical and horizontal political relations among governments in the construction of mega city-regional geographies which usually covers a group of various political territories, and moreover, empirical evidence about how such political conditions interact, in either positive or conflictual ways, with social and economic actors in the emerging city-regionalism. There is no way to think that local political actors will accept a new layer of governance which could generate potential conflicts with local interests and administrative capabilities without any resistance. Each local government has their own political-economic agenda for their administrative territories, which may not always correspond with the mega city-regional vision. Hence how to govern the cross-territorial functional space, which still largely remains 'invisible', becomes an urgent and crucial task for a group of diverse political-economic actors.

Thereafter chapter 2 discusses the conceptual framework for empirical research in this thesis. Firstly, three distinct perspectives on conceptualising city-regions were each reviewed to justify this research about why and how the city-region shall be reconstructed politically through understanding both wider and internal political-economic conflicts and achieving the coalition of territorial interests across administrative jurisdictions around the enhancement of regional competitiveness. The geopolitical construction of city-regions had been comparatively overlooked by previous literatures in comparison to their geoeconomic significance within global economic networks. In particular, the research was initially inspired by Jonas and Ward's (2007) recommendation that the city-region shall not be simply realised as a by-product of wider economic conditions and a finalised outcome of political orchestration, which primarily aims to enhance regional economic competitiveness, to engage with the on-going interplay among various political-economic actors amid

the constructing process of city-regional space and relevant institutional arrangements. It is then crucial to recognise that city-regional geographies are produced, reproduced, and struggled over on the basis of a variety of generative conditions and circumstances (Jonas and Ward, 2007).

Meanwhile, three key questions, including *who* is involved, *how* they are involved and *why* they are involved, became the focus of this research while exploring the interaction of various political-economic actors in the spatial rescaling process (see more in Harrison and Grove, 2014b; Harrison and Hoyler, 2015c). Specifically, territorial interests were recognised by the research as the key to understanding the geopolitical dynamics in the construction of city-regions. Relating to this perspective, city-regional geographies and relevant governance structures are continuously modified as an ongoing process for fitting the specific purposes or the emerging coalition of interests (e.g. Brenner, 2004b; Freytag et al., 2006; Hoyler et al., 2006).

Moreover, this research is also responding to Harrison's (2015b) call of investigating the extent of internal coherence of, firstly, the contemporary varied city-regional construction and, secondly, the subsequent transformative state scalar structure. It is therefore fundamental to investigate and understand the emerging spatial scale, mega city-region in our case, as an integral part of the wider state scalar regulatory system. This thesis then follows advice from Brenner's (2004b) 'New State Spaces' (NSS) framework and then illustrated the geopolitical city-regionalising process in favour of sub-national spatiality. As a consequence, external socio-economic relations shall not be over-referenced to evidence the quasi-autonomous existence of city-regions.

The agglomeration model intensifies the recognition of the increasing significance of city-regional geographies in the global network around the world. While much of the prevailing focus has been on the Global North, there is increasing need for balancing the research attention towards East Asian, but in particular, Chinese mega city-regions over the past decade. To start with the empirical research, it is essential to recognise that the locational specific political-economic contexts, including unique historic path of political-economic transformation, shall play a constructive role in the formulation and operation of the mega city-regional geography. The clues for understanding the motive for triggering the change of state spatiality and geographic

characteristics of new spatial units could be embedded in the historic trajectory of development. This thesis therefore has carefully researched the historic dimension of mega city-regionalism in the YRD. This is particularly important when there appears a surging interest in Asian mega city-regions while we are updating existing literatures about new city-regionalism, which are largely derived from North Atlantic case studies. Chapter 3 therefore analyses the historic transforming trajectory of the Chinese regional governance model since the establishment of the P.R. China in 1949.

During the centrally-controlled stage between 1949 and 1978, the great administrative regions were established in the middle of the hierarchical chain in order to ensure the central command to be enforced at the local level. Consequently, vertical control replaced horizontal connection as the prior relations among middle and local level authorities. Moreover, achieving region-wide spatial equality and self-reliance became the focus of regional strategy for each great administrative region. In particular, cities had to give way to non-urban places in terms of population growth and economic investment for achieving even development within the regional jurisdiction.

As a result of the shifting national interest between political concentration and economic advancement under the command of new central leadership, the 1978 economic reform triggered the decentralisation of economic decision-making rights toward local governments. Therefore, urban authorities became the dominant force amid the formulation and operation of the local administrative agenda. Urban jurisdictions replaced the previous great administrative regions to become the primary spatial unit for organising economic, political and social activities. In particular, inter-city competition for capitalist investments started emerging on the basis of growth-oriented development strategies.

After experiencing two decades of economic growth and capital accumulation, there has been increasing attention towards the switch between previously achieving economic growth and resource distributing efficiencies entrenched in urban jurisdictions, and building administrative efficiency and economic rationality at larger cross-jurisdictional scales among the scholars and government planners since 2000s. Or in other words, the local political divisions and boundaries acted as invisible and

proactive barrier which entrenched the capitalist interments in the political territory and then significantly undermined the functional relations among urban spaces.

Before we relate the theory of new city-regionalism to the YRD which is seen as one of China's economic engines, we must think of the above-mentioned historic path very carefully. There has been a long tradition for the state-controlled hierarchical organisation to proactively participate in the administration over socio-economic activities at all sub-national scales. Along with the transmission of economic decision-making powers along the hierarchical political chain, different levels of governmental territories, including great administrative regions and urban jurisdictions, take each of their turn to emerge as the dominant scale for attracting and containing socio-economic activities at different stages. On the other hand, political purposes, including national strategic interests and sub-national administrative efficiency, have provided the primary motives for triggering change or reorganisation of state spatiality since the establishment of P.R. China in 1949.

Following to the latest stage which began with the turn of the 21st century, chapter 3 explained the choice of the YRD as this thesis' research location amid the rise of Chinese mega city-regions by producing a comparative discussion of the YRD, PRD and JJJ, and relating the YRD to both the centrally issued regional plan and the context of its sub-regional planning and governance. Chapter 4 then introduced the methodology framework employed by the thesis and then explains why it is appropriate for conducting research in the Chinese context. Thirty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted with governmental officers, business leaders and other key stakeholders in summer 2013. Other useful documentary and numerical data were gathered from local governments and regional bureaus' websites to contextualise interviewees' statements.

The overall aim of this thesis was to **investigate the 'constitutive role of politics' in the spatial construction of the Yangtze River Delta (mega) city-region**. By following this aim, there were three main research objectives, including: firstly to account for the transformation of the YRD as a new state space; secondly to analyse how new (mega) city-regional governance and institutional arrangements can enhance the YRD's competitive capabilities in the global economy; and finally to

analyse the struggles and tensions around (mega) city-regional governance and the barriers to regional integration.

In reply to the first research objective, chapter 5 examined the expanding process of mega city-regional administrative jurisdiction, which reflects the enlarging functional spaces, by relating to, firstly, the transition between the narrow sense and the broad sense of YRD and, secondly, dynamic territorial politics in terms of the interaction among provincial and prefectural level governments. Specifically, the second half of chapter 5 focused on the spatial transformation of traditional chemical manufacturing enterprises between the YRD's core functional space and surrounding peripheral area under the administration of the state scalar organisation. One of the principal tasks for the mega city-regional governance framework is to secure the reflection of various cross-territorial political interests in the collective governance by maintaining constant interaction among a flexible group of political stakeholders. Moreover, it is not enough to solely rely on the economic relation in prompting the construction of mega city-regional space. Institutional communication and bargaining among provincial and local governments are needed for containing the extended functional activities within their own territorial jurisdictions through a continued timeline.

Chapter 6 discussed the appropriateness of current mega city-regional governance and institutional arrangements by referring to the competitive capabilities of the YRD. The three-level governance framework has experienced continuous expansion and re-structuration for nearly two decades, beginning with the establishment of YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economies (YRD CAUE) in 1997. The framework is still wide open for more modifications in order to adapt to potential economic-political challenges. The main reason for achieving such flexibility is that the three-level governance framework is able to provide a bargaining platform for a group of local governments to reach political consensus and mutual trust which significantly facilitate the enforcement of collective governance, including the general realisation of the need for 'recognising the common while reserving the differences'. Therefore, flexibility and bottom-up orchestration are two fundamental characteristics of the mega city-regional governance framework which is able to cope with global economic change, national political requirements, and internal changing economic-political contexts.

Finally, chapter 7 explored the emerging weaknesses of the mega city-regional governance for the third research objective. The case of politically-controlled Yixing ES and TP reveals local government's enhanced likelihood and capability of generating direct impact in the operation of local economic activities even if it means to act against the local market context. Hence 'differences' among local political interests remain as a challenge to the coherence of mega city-regional structure on the basis of political territories. The geopolitical divergence also leads to competitive rivalry between political territories. Reflecting on such struggles at the mega city-regional level, there are clear signs of, firstly prioritising national political interest, including GDP-driven development model, before specific considerations of the local context even in the mega city-regional administration; and secondly it remains difficult to cover all categories of socio-economic activities in one single mega city-regional governance framework.

8.2 Contribution to the theory of 'new city-regionalism'

The findings of this thesis improve our understanding of the construction process of mega city-regions through (1) engaging with the political involvement in the ongoing process of city expansion into larger city-regions, (2) analysing the political contribution to sustaining mega city-regional competitive capabilities, and (3) highlighting emerging obstacles in the attempt to create mega city-regional coherence. In short, this research is looking at how the city-region is constructed and modified politically in the wider political-economic conditions.

As chapter 2 discusses, city-regions and their derivatives, including mega city-regions, are replacing cities to become the primary spatial scale for organising human activities amid contemporary globalisation. However, both American form-based and European relation-oriented mega city-regionalisms are questioned about the appropriateness of this scale for practical use, including the institutional arrangement for mega city-regional governance in our case, in the context of global economic integration and urbanisation (e.g. Harrison, 2015b; Harrison and Hoyler, 2015c; Herrschel, 2014; Jonas and Ward, 2007; MacKinnon, 2011; MacKinnon and Shaw, 2010). What is missing from current city-regional literatures is detailed empirical research into the role of political actors in matching the emerging city-

regional administrative jurisdictions with cross-territorial functional spaces, particularly in a non-Western context. The principal expectation of this thesis is then to inject such a political contribution around the topic of enhancing city-regional comprehensive competitiveness into the theory of the new city-regionalism by relating to the Chinese YRD mega city-region to provide comparative research in relation to the dominant North Atlantic case studies.

Although there has been a general agreement about the significance and urgency of governing mega city-regional spaces collectively by a group of actors rather than relying on the market itself in order to preserve and enhance their wealth and well-being, conflicts are evident about who and how to organise and operate cross-territorial governance. The existing geopolitical literature has critiqued that the previous relation-dominated discourses fell short of full realisation of extant state scalar organisation in the emergence of new mega city-regionalism (e.g. Brenner, 2004b; Cox, 2010; Jonas and Ward, 2007; Harrison, 2015b). Thereafter the importance of understanding and constructing the mega city-regional governance as an interlinked scale within the state-led scalar regulatory system has been recognised. However, the lack of constitutional legitimacy is differentiating the mega city-regional scale of governance from the long-existing political hierarchical system as its legitimate existence, regulatory power and responsibilities are not secured by statutory provisions. Hence we have to consider how to delimit the functional spatial scope and then enforce collective governance within contained local territorial jurisdictions, which lacks detailed consideration and empirical evidence in the existing academic literature.

Consequently, it is crucial to ensure the reflection of local political interests in the mega city-regional agenda in order to enable collective governance. Relating to the YRD's mega city-regional governance, a locally orchestrated three-level framework is found to facilitate the mutual exchange and understanding of local political considerations across territorial jurisdictions. The framework acts as an interacting platform for local governments to constantly exchange their interests and concerns, including territorial GDP growth and environmental protection, in order to build trust and reach consensus about, for example, how to organise and supervise the spatial transformation of capitalist investments in the YRD's mega city-regional scope.

From another perspective, the framework not only prompts the functional transformation towards high technological manufacturing and service industries in the core YRD, but also contains the traditional labour-intensive manufacturing industries in the extended regional and more importantly peripheral provincial territories. Functional linkages that existed in the primary urban jurisdiction have been extended into the surrounding less-developed administrative territories under the co-lead of local governments. At this moment, such a mega city-regionalising process has largely remained in the contiguous prefectural level jurisdictions which locate in the fixed provincial level boundaries, including Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai.

The empirical evidence considers the construction of mega city-regional geography as a process of producing and reproducing a new spatial scale through proactively building the coalition of territorial interests from internal perspective around a variety of economic, political and even social subjects. Constructing city-regional geography is then operated as a temporal solution for improving the regional comprehensive competitiveness in the face of changing wider economic pressure and central political demand. This is continuously happening on the basis of what Jonas and Ward (2007) called 'the variety of generative conditions and circumstances' which keep changing all the time. But differently, the research explains how the mega city-regional agenda is built to improve the regional comprehensive competitiveness in the global network, in comparison with current geopolitical debates primarily around re-distribution and social reproduction (e.g. Brenner, 2004a; Jonas and Ward, 2007; McGuirk, 2007). This research is bringing back the topic of geoeconomic competitiveness while considering the geopolitical construction of city-regional geography. The connection between geoeconomic and geopolitical actors has not been seriously discussed since city-regional geographies and relevant institutional arrangements were previously over-referenced as the by-product of wider economic conditions.

Contrary to the topics of re-distribution and social reproduction, one of the primary struggles and conflicts faced by emerging subnational scales are considered by this research as the divergence between geoeconomic and geopolitical actors in the case of the YRD mega city-region. It is insufficient to solely rely on socio-economic actors to build and improve the relational connection among cities and their regions

under the demand of establishing mega city-regional geographies. Chapter 5 suggests that territorial interests shall be treated as one of a number of constitutive elements in the construction of mega city-regional space. It has become apparent that local governments have the intention and capability to attract and contain the socio-economic activities in their administrative territories. It is noted that the transformation of mega city-regional space shall be reflected in the spatial combination of political territories, and more importantly contained, though flexibly, by the fixed political territories, which is largely overlooked by current literatures. Therefore, it is essential to organise an ongoing bargaining process, which is supported and sustained by the YRD's three-level framework, before reaching the coalition of territorial interests for the mega city-regional agenda.

According to Jonas (2013: 287), one of the central geopolitical challenges facing city-regions is "how to unite what are in many respects disparate material interests within – and hence different parts of – the city-region into a cohesive territorial unit". One of the contributions this thesis makes towards this challenge is to exemplify a cross-territorial governance framework which unites disparate territorial interests in many various aspects step by step over a span of more than one decade. Unlike many other city-regional literatures, which focus on evaluating the appropriateness of the outcome of institutional arrangements in terms of the regional plan and governmental agenda, chapter 6 examined the YRD's three-level framework's capability of being able to detect and adapt to new regional challenges through its past institutional evolvement at a sustainable rate. Bottom-up orchestration ensures the structural upgrade to be made flexibly and timely in the face of emerging political-economic pressures. Both the decision-making level and coordination level were established to involve provincial level governments in the framework when the bottom execution level struggled to ensure the interaction among a group of local governments which hold different political ranks, including provincial, vice-provincial and prefectural levels, to be conducted on an effective basis. Meanwhile, the number of task groups, as an integral part of the execution level, has been constantly adjusted in accordance with changing regional interests during different time periods.

On the other hand, it has been too simple to mention the mega city-regional collective governance as an institutional arrangement for uniting local economic-political interests across political jurisdictions. Hence, this thesis brings up extended

detailed debates about cross-territorial unions of many various aspects of territorial interests in comparison with many existing literatures. Specifically, each task group in the three-level framework is responsible for coordinating and governing the particular category of socio-economic activities across jurisdictional boundaries. Hence urgent and regionally-agreed tasks shall be prioritised through the establishment and operation of the specific administrative group. Moreover, mature cross-territorial cooperation over specific aspects shall trigger the independence of the corresponding task group from the lead of the three-level framework. The flexibility of the three-level framework enables the YRD's mega city-regional governance to function under the principle of 'recognising the common while reserving the differences' and sustain its operation on the basis of mutual trust and consensus. The sustainability and bottom-up orchestration are two fundamental characteristics of the YRD's mega city-regional governance framework. More importantly, the thesis borrows Herrschel's (2002: 207) statement to reach the argument that, "a clear benefit from participation in this for the individual locality needs to be visible". This is crucial for understanding how the new institutional arrangements for city-regional governance shall become compatible with existing state-controlled administrative organisation, which is territorially embedded.

Pushing further debates around the conflicts between geoeconomic and geopolitical actors in the construction of city-regional geographies, this research has also contributed to the exploration of the struggles and tensions faced by Chinese mega city-regionalism. As existing literatures mention, the mismatch between functional geography and administrative jurisdiction is preventing the new city-regional space from best performing (Bennett, 1997; Harrison, 2012b, 2012c). Extending from the theory, this thesis provides detailed empirical evidence for dividing the general recognition of functional activities into a variety of concrete aspects. Although the thesis has seen the YRD expanding to cover the extended functional relations as a consequence of regional economic structural transformation, the YRD's three-level framework has to show respect to the other emerging 'differences' which is constituted to the regionally agreed principle of 'recognising the common while reserving the differences'. This is reflected by the operation of task groups in the execution level. Task groups are standing for a number of distinct socio-economic activities which are recognised to be the proper aspects for engagement by the

cross-territorial collective governance through the continuous timeline. Therefore, the challenge is apparent that a single framework is not able to cover all various categories of functional activities at the mega city-regional level.

For further relating the YRD's mega city-regionalism with the existing state scalar organisation, chapter 7 also contributes to explain the primary motivations for local governments' direct intervention in the territorial socio-economic activities, which often results in intra-regional conflicts. Many existing literatures focus on illustrating inter-city competition and call for a debate about governmental decision in favour of either 'soft' cross-territorial governance or 'hard' consolidated regional government. What is comparatively missing are the primary motivations underlying such growth-oriented competition in relation to non-western contexts.

In our case of the YRD, the GDP-driven measurement becomes an essential tool for the Chinese central state to evaluate local political achievements. Local political officers' potential promotion prospects largely rely on such central assessment results. It is therefore becoming evident that local governments have the intention to find the balance between achieving local territorial GDP growth and shifting towards mega city-regional vision under supervision of the central state. This is challenging the enforcement of YRD's collective governance which is organised on the basis of local political-economic voluntary agreements. The point this thesis can extract from the case of the YRD is that specific context-sensitive research is much needed in order to understand how the central state generates direct or indirect intervention in any unique mega city-regional governance. Such empirical evidence shall be able to reveal how the new mega city-regionalism is 'layering' into the locational economic-political contexts with unique and varied constitution.

In conclusion, this thesis strongly argues that mega city-regionalism must be considered as an economic-political conflicted process, responding to both a geoeconomic logic for constructing an agglomeration model in a wider connected network and to geopolitical claims for territorial interests in the context of the unique state scalar politics. Specifically, assembling a group of cities and their regions into a mega city-region has been completed under collective political co-operation in the case of YRD. This even means that geoeconomic aspects have become, more or

less, subservient to the geopolitical interests and dynamics. The thesis' argument follows Herrschel's (2014: 168) suggestion that:

“the governance of city regions is a product of a complex interaction between continuously changing external and internal parameters which impose a dynamic framework for the impact of globally defined economic pressures, and the relationship between, cities and state in terms of territoriality, and democratic principles and legitimacies”;

It also borrows from the notion of 'compromised city-regionalism', which explains the geopolitics of city-regionalism as “the mediated outcome of trans-regional economic flows and political claims to territory” (Harrison, 2010: 17). Finally, this thesis extends these arguments for considering the geopolitics of city-regionalism by providing a deeper understanding of the processes underpinning the political construction of the mega city-regional scale under the direct or indirect control of top-down political decision-making by focusing on the conflicted relationship between geoeconomic and geopolitical considerations. On the other hand, it is crucial for mega city-regional research not to judge the relevant institutional arrangements for governance solely based on either the temporal structure of the framework or territorial constitution of the spatial unit. Rather, more attention must be focused on the mega city-region's capabilities to recognise and adapt sustainably to emerging challenges.

In order to highlight how contemporary city-regionalising processes were provincialised in the Chinese context – identified as one of the most important contributions that this thesis aims to produce – Table 17 presents comparative evidence from three perspectives identified as starting points for constructing city-regions (population, geoeconomics, geopolitics) for the North American, European and Chinese contexts. Highlighting important differences between each context, this provides an overview of why my thesis is arguing that existing theories of 'new city-regionalism', which are primarily derived from a 'western theory' that draws on the North American and European contexts, is currently ill-equipped to satisfactorily account for how city-regionalism is unfolding in the Chinese context. Indeed, it is my argument that this thesis should be able to provide a starting point for arguing why we need to better understand different varieties of city-regionalism generally, and

Chinese city-regionalism in particular – something which requires less borrowed concepts and more concepts which emerge from detailed empirical work in situ.

To unpack this further, as Table 17 reveals, China is experiencing much more explosive growth relating to population and economic expansion than two main representatives of the Global North. In relation to the geopolitical perspective, the thesis investigates the unique Chinese political context, including the one-party system and highly-centralised macro strategic planning and political nomination rights, and then explores a new mode of ‘locally-orchestrated regionalism’ embedded in the indirect state scalar control, such as the GDP-led political performance appraisal system; local concern in favour of jurisdictional economic growth; and extended inter-city relations in wider provincial territories. Importantly, in contrast with surging interest in re-distribution and social reproduction as an alternative concern for politically constructing mega city-regional geographies in the western literature, for empirical research in the Global South, like China’s YRD mega city-region, the primary motivation behind, and barriers to, mega city-regionalism is closely connected to territorial economic growth.

Furthermore, as chapter 1 argues, the Chinese context is very specific and therefore the Chinese version of city-regionalism shall not be easily applied to the rest of Asian city-regionalism or other cases in the wider Global South. Conducting more context-sensitive empirical research around mega city-regional governance in the Global South would be fundamental for exploring more appropriate comparative evidence and arguments in order to improve the existing theories of ‘new city-regionalism’.

This thesis contributes to the understanding of new city-regionalism by illustrating the constitutive role of politics in the construction of mega city-regions on the basis of detailed empirical research. The latter is critical because, although much detailed empirical research has been conducted on city-regions in North America, Western Europe and Asia, conceptual accounts of the rise of *mega* city-regionalism have been almost exclusively developed from research undertaken in North America and Western Europe. But whereas city-regionalism in these two contexts is derived from studying city-regions of a particular size and dynamism, city expansion into larger city-regions is occurring at a scale and pace never before seen.

Table 17: Framing North American, European and Chinese city-regionalism

	United States	European Union	China
Population	(2010)	(2010)	(2010)
Number of cities:			
1 million +	39	31	79
5 million+	3	3	8
10 million +	2	1	2
20 million +	0	0	0
Urban population ('000)	261,375	371,875	635,839
Level of urbanisation	82.3%	73.72%	47%
Geoeconomics	(2013)	(2014)	(2014)
Economic profile:			
Primary	1.4%	1.52%	9.2%
Secondary	20.5%	23.75%	42.7%
Tertiary	78.1%	74.73%	48.1%
Rate of economic expansion	2.2%	1.29%	7.3%
Geopolitics			
Political structure	2 party system (Democrat, Republican)	Multi-party systems	1 party system (Communist Party)
Centre-local relations	Federal – local government rooted in localism and providing services for the local community	Mixture – many state centric governance structures	Highly-centralised political powers, including macro strategic planning and political nomination rights, while devolved economic decision-making rights towards provincial and prefecture governments
Business involvement	Entrepreneurial “growth coalitions”	More statist, protectionist “streak” - “public-private partnerships”	Conflicted geoeconomic and geopolitical relations – fragmented regional market in favour of jurisdictional economic growth
Primary concern for geopolitical city-regionalism	Facilitating and planning comprehensive urban-economic expansion	Various alternative concern, including economic growth, democracy, re-distribution and social reproduction	Promoting economic growth embedded in respective territorial jurisdiction
Starting point for defining mega city-regions	Urban form	Functional	Population
Production of Scales	Informal, network-based and self-organising principles of regionalisation	Centrally orchestrated regionalism and regionally orchestrated centralism	Locally orchestrated regionalism
City – State relations	Liberally inclined, pioneering-inspired mentality – against state regulation (or community-based control)	Strong autonomous state function – even substituting statehood (or government control)	Indirect state scalar control in the form of centralised political nomination rights – GDP-led political performance appraisal system
Jurisdictional boundary for mega city-regional governance	Extending to fulfil the requirement of community-based control – even sometimes means to be blur	Fixed but usually “compromised city-regionalism”	Extending to capture peripheral and other interlinked functional areas
Cross-border connection	Raised borders – cities are firmly embedded inside except special cases, i.e. New York or Los Angeles	Open borders – integration and cross-border cooperation	Opening borders – cross-border cooperation

Source: Compiled from UN-Habitat (2013), The World Bank website, Herrschel (2014) and the thesis.

This thesis has therefore examined the applicability of Western-derived city-region concepts, vocabulary and frameworks for understanding the geopolitics of city-region formation as a first step in considering the importance of developing city-region theory from China and the east. The next step of research in this field should be the refinement of comparative work for North American, Western European and Chinese mega city-regionalisms by considering other Chinese mega city-regions. Looking beyond China, city-regionalising processes embedded in other Asian contexts (and beyond) shall be useful – and indeed, necessary – for enriching the theory of ‘new city-regionalism’.

References

- Allen, J., Massey, D. and Cochrane, A. (1998) *Rethinking the Region*. Routledge: London.
- Allen, J. and Cochrane, A. (2007) Beyond the territorial fix: regional assemblages, politics and power. *Regional Studies* 41(9) 1161-1175.
- Amin, A. (2002) Spatialities of globalisation. *Environment and Planning A* 34 385-399.
- Amin, A. (2004) Regions unbound: towards a new politics of place. *Geografiska Annaler* 86B 33-44.
- America 2050 (2015) Megaregions, available at <http://www.america2050.org/content/megaregions.html> (accessed 25 September 2013).
- Agnew, J. (2013) Territory, politics, governance. *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1(1) 1-4.
- Bazeley, P. (2009) Analysing qualitative data: more than 'identifying themes'. *The Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research* 2(2) 6-22.
- Bennett, R.J. (1997) Administrative systems and economic spaces. *Regional Studies* 31(3) 323-336.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2) 77-101.
- Brenner, N. (1998) Global cities, 'glocal' states: global city formation and state territorial restructuring in contemporary Europe. *Review of International Political Economy* 5(1) 1-37.
- Brenner, N. (2002) Decoding the newest "metropolitan regionalism" in the USA: a critical overview. *Cities* 19 3-21.

- Brenner, N. (2004a). Urban governance and the production of new state spaces in Western Europe, 1960-2000. *Review of International Political Economy* 11(3) 447-448.
- Brenner, N. (2004b) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Brenner, N. (2009) Open questions on state rescaling. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 2 123-139.
- Brenner, N. and Schmid, C. (2015) Towards a new epistemology of the urban? *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 19(2-3) 151-182.
- Bristow, G. (2005) Everyone's a 'winner': problematizing the discourse of regional competitiveness. *Journal of Economic Geography* 5 285-304.
- Brunet, R. (1989) *Les villes "européennes". Rapport pour la DATAR*. Paris (La Documentation Française)
- Bryman, A. (2008) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Byrne, B. (2004) Qualitative interviewing. In Seale, C. (eds.) *Researching Society and Culture*. Sage: London. 179-192.
- Byron, M. (1993) Using audio-visual aids in geography research: questions of access and responsibility. *Area* 25 379-385.
- Caijing (2008) State Department issued guidance on the development of the Yangtze River Delta. Available @ <http://www.caijing.com.cn/2008-09-18/110013779.html>. [Chinese].
- Cartier, C. (2015) Territorial urbanization and the party-state in China. *Territory, Politics, Governance* 3(3) 294-320.
- Castell, M. (1996) *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*. Vol. I: *The Rise of the Network of the Network Society*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Chen, J.J. and Ye, W.Y. (2002) Study on transferring industry to the less developing area in Zhejiang. *Business Economics and Administration* 4 28-31. [Chinese]

- China Science Center of International Eurasian Academy of Sciences (IEAS), China Association of Mayors and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (2012) *The State of China's Cities 2012/2013*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing.
- Contemporary Shanghai Research Institution (2005) *The YRD's Development Report – Economic Growth and Urbanization Process*. RenMinChuBanShe: Shanghai.
- Chen, X. M. (2007) A tale of two regions in China: rapid economic development and slow industrial upgrading in the Pearl River and the Yangtze River Delta. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 48(2-3) 167-201.
- Cheshire, P. and Magrini, S. (2009) Urban growth drivers in a Europe of sticky people and implicit boundaries. *Journal of Economic Geography* 9 85-115.
- Chien, S. S. (2007) Institutional innovation, asymmetric decentralization, and local economic development: case of post-Mao Kunshan, China. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 25(2) 269-290.
- Chien, S. S. (2008) The Isomorphism of Local Development Policy: A Case Study of the Formation and Transformation of National Development Zones in Post-Mao Jiangsu, China. *Urban Studies* 45(2) 273-294.
- Chien, S. S. and Gordon, I. (2008) Territorial competition in China and the West. *Regional Studies* 42(1) 1-18.
- China Economic Net (2014) 2013 Global Harbour Rankings in relation to Handling Capacity. Available @ http://district.ce.cn/newarea/roll/201402/17/t20140217_2318162.shtml. [Chinese].
- Chinahrly (2011) State Department issued guidance on the development of the Yangtze River Delta. Available @ <http://www.chinahrly.com/bizchina/201111/29891.html>.
- Christaller, W. (1933) *Die Zentralen Orte in Süddeutschland*. Gustav Fischer: Jena.

- Chung, H. (2007) The change in China's state governance and its effects upon urban scale. *Environment and Planning A* 39 789-809.
- Coombes, M. (2014) From city-region concept to boundaries for governance: the English case. *Urban Studies* 51(11) 2426-2443.
- Cope, M. (2010) Coding transcripts and diaries. In, Clifford, N., French, S. and Valentine, G. (eds.) *Key Methods in Geography*. Sage: London.
- Cox, K. R. (2009) 'Rescaling the state' in question. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 2 107-121.
- Cox, K. (2010) The problem of metropolitan governance and the politics of scale. *Regional Studies* 44(2) 215-227.
- Cox, K. (2011) Commentary. From the new urban politics to the 'new' metropolitan politics. *Urban Studies* 48(12) 2661-2671.
- Cox, K. (2013) Territory, scale, and why capitalism matters. *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1(1) 46-61.
- Crang, M. (2005) Analysing qualitative materials. In, Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. *Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students doing a Research Project*. Pearson Education Limited: Essex.
- Derudder, B., Taylor, P. J., Ni, P., De Vos, A., Hoyler, M., Hanssens, H., Bassens, D., Huang, J., Witlox, F., Shen, W. and Yang, X. (2010) Pathways of change: shifting connectivities in the world city network. *Urban Studies* 47(9) 1861-1877.
- Derudder, B., Hoyler, M., Taylor, P. J. and Witlox, F. (eds.) (2012) *International Handbook of Globalization and World Cities*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Derudder, B., Taylor, P. J., Hoyler, M., Ni, P., Liu, X., Zhao, M., Shen, W. and Witlox, F. (2013) Measurement and interpretation of connectivity of Chinese cities in world city network, 2010. *Chinese Geographical Science* 23(3) 261-273.
- Dickinson, R. E. (1967) *City and Region: A Geographical Interpretation*. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.

- Douglass, M. (2000) Mega-urban regions and world city formation: globalisation, the economic crisis and urban policy issues in Pacific Asia. *Urban Studies* 12 2315-2335.
- Elivecity.cn (2013) Chinese City GDP Rankings 2012. Available @ <http://www.elivecity.cn/html/jingjifz/731.html>. [Chinese].
- European Commission (2010) *European Competitiveness Report 2010*. Publication office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
- European Commission (2011) *European Competitiveness report 2011*. Publication office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
- European Commission (2012) *European Competitiveness Report – Reaping the benefits of globalisation*. Publication office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
- European Commission (2013) *European Competitiveness Report – Towards Knowledge Driven Reindustrialisation*. Publication office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
- European Commission (2014) *European Competitiveness Report – Helping Firms Grow*. Publication office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
- Fan, J. Y. (2004) The regional integration, local specialization and spatial shifting of manufacturing industries within Yangtze River Delta. *Management World* 11 77-96. In Chinese version.
- Florida, R. (2008) *Who's Your City? How the Creative Economy in Making Where to Live the most Important Decision of Your Life*. Basic Books: New York.
- Florida, R., Gulden, T. and Mellander, C. (2008) The rise of the mega-region. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 1 459-476.
- Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. (2005) *Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students doing a Research Project*. Pearson Education Limited: Essex.
- Foddy, W. (1993) *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

- Frank, A. I. (2014) Review: Struggling Giants: City-Region Governance in London, New York, Paris and Tokyo. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 34 363-365.
- Freytag, T., Hoyler, M., Mager, C. and Fischer, C. (2006) Rhine-Main: making polycentricity work? In Hall, P. and Pain, K. (eds.) *The Polycentric Metropolis: Learning from Mega-City Regions in Europe*. Earthscan: London. 163-171.
- Friedmann, J. and Miller, J. (1965) The urban field. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 31 312-319.
- Friedmann, J. and Wolff, G. (1982) World city formation: an agenda for research and action. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 6 209-244.
- Friedman, T. L. (2006) *The World is Flat: The Globalised World in the Twenty-first Century*. Penguin: London.
- Gardiner, B. (2003) Regional competitiveness indicators for Europe – audit, database construction and analysis. Paper presented at the Regional Studies Association International Conference, Pisa, 12-15 April 2003.
- GaWC (2012) Classification of cities 2012. Available at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2012t.html>.
- Geddes P (1905) Civics: as applied sociology. *Sociological Papers* 1 104-144, reprinted in Meller, H. E. (eds.) *The Ideal City*. Leicester University Press: Leicester.
- Geddes, P. (1915) *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics*. Williams: London.
- Golubchikov, O. and Phelps, N. A. (2011) The political economy of place at the post-socialist urban periphery: governing growth on the edge of Moscow. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 36 425-440.
- Gottmann, J. (1961) *Megalopolis: The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States*. The Twentieth Century Fund: New York.

- Gu, C., Yu, T., Zhang, X., Wang, C., Zhang, Min., Zhang, C. and Chen, L. (2011) Spatial planning for urban agglomeration in the Yangtze River Delta. In, Xu, J. and Yeh, A. G. O. (eds.) (2011) *Governance and Planning of Mega-City Regions: An International Comparative Perspective*. Routledge: London.
- Halbert, L. Convery, F. J. and Thierstein, A. (2006) Reflections on the polycentric Metropolis. *Built Environment* 32(2) 110-113.
- Hall, P. (1966) *The World Cities*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London
- Hall, P. (1999) 'Planning for the mega-city: a new eastern Asian urban form?', in Brotchie, J., Newton, P., Hall, P. and Dickey, J. (eds.) *East West Perspectives on 21st Century Urban Development: Sustainable Eastern and Western Cities in the New Millennium*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hall, P. (2001) Global city-regions in the twenty-first century. In Scott, A. J. (eds.) *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Hall, P. and Pain, K. (eds.) (2006) *The Polycentric Metropolis - Learning from Mega-City Regions in Europe*. Earthscan: London.
- Hall, P. (2009) Looking backward, looking forward: the city region of the mid-21st century. *Regional Studies* 43(6) 803-817.
- Hanssens, H., Derudder, B., Taylor, P. J., Hoyler, M., Ni, P., Huang, J., Yang, X. and Witlox, F. (2011) The changing geography of globalized service provision, 2000-2008. *The Service Industries Journal* 31(14) 2293-2307.
- Harding, A. (2000) *Is There a 'Missing Middle' in English Governance?* New Local Government Network: London
- Harrison, J. (2007) From competitive regions to competitive city-regions: a new orthodoxy, but some old mistakes. *Journal of Economic Geography* 7 311-332.
- Harrison, J. (2008) Stating the production of scales: centrally orchestrated regionalism, regionally orchestrated centralism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32(4) 922-941.

- Harrison, J. (2010) Networks of connectivity, territorial fragmentation, uneven development: the new politics of city-regionalism. *Political Geography* 29 17-27.
- Harrison, J. (2012a) Life after regions? The evolution of city-regionalism in England. *Regional Studies* 46 1243-1259.
- Harrison, J. (2012b) Towards the new 'regional world'? In, Growe, A., Heider, K., Lamker, C., Paßlick, S. and Terfrüchte, T. (eds.) *Polycentric Urban Regions – The Region as Planning Space [Polyzentrale Stadtregionen – Die Region als planerischer Handlungsraum]*. Verlag der ARL: Hannover. 10-21.
- Harrison, J. (2012c) Global city-region governance, ten years on. In, Derudder, B., Hoyler, M., Taylor, P. J. and Witlox, F. (eds.) *International Handbook of Globalisation and World Cities*. Elgar: London. 309-317.
- Harrison, J. (2015a) Cities and rescaling. In, Paddison, R. and Hutton, T. (eds.) *Cities and Economic Change: Restructuring and Dislocation in the Global Metropolis*. Sage: London. 38-56.
- Harrison, J. (2015b) The city-region: in retrospect, in snapshot, in prospect. In, Jones, K. E., Lord, A. and Shields, R. (eds.) *The City-Region in Prospect: Exploring the Meeting Points between Place and Practice*. McGill/Queen's University Press: Montreal. 20-52.
- Harrison, J. and Growe, A. (2014a) From places to flows? Planning for the new 'regional world' in Germany. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 21(1) 21-41.
- Harrison, J. and Growe, A. (2014b) When regions collide: in what sense a new 'regional problem'? *Environment and Planning A* 46 (10) 2332-2352.
- Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (2014) Governing the new metropolis. *Urban Studies* 51(11) 1-18.
- Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (2015a) Megaregions: foundations, frailties, futures. In Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (eds.) *Megaregions: Globalization's New Urban Form?* Edward Elgar: Cheltenham. 1-28.

- Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (2015b) Megaregions reconsidered: urban futures and the future of the urban. In Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (eds.) *Megaregions: Globalization's New Urban Form?* Edward Elgar: Cheltenham. 230-256.
- Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (2015c) *Megaregions: Globalization's New Urban Form?* Edward Elgar: Cheltenham.
- Harvey, W. S. (2011) Strategies for conducting elite interviews. *Qualitative Research* 11(4) 431-441.
- Hay, L. (2010) Ethical Practice in geographical research. In, Clifford, N., French, S. and Valentine, G. (eds.) *Key Methods in Geography*. Sage: London. 35-48.
- Herschel, T. (2011) *Borders in Post-Socialist Europe: Territory, Scale, Society*. Ashgate: Surrey.
- Herschel, T. (2014) *Cities, State and Globalisation: City-regional Governance in Europe and North America*. Routledge: London.
- Herschel, T. and Newman, P. (2002) *Governance of Europe's City Regions*, Routledge: London.
- Herzog, H. (2005) On home turf: interview location and its social meaning. *Qualitative Sociology* 28(1) 25-47.
- Hesse, M. (2015) Megaurban regions: epistemology, discourse patterns, big urban business. In Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (eds.) *Megaregions: Globalization's New Urban Form?* Edward Elgar: Cheltenham. 29-50.
- Hitchings, R. (2012) People can talk about their practices. *Area* 44(1) 61-67.
- Hoggart, K., Lees, L. and Davies, A. (2002) *Researching Human Geography*. Arnold: London.
- Hoyler, M., Freytag, T. and Mager, C. (2006) Advantageous fragmentation? Reimagining metropolitan governance and spatial planning in Rhine-Main. *Built Environment* 32(2) 124-136.

- Hoyler, M., Freytag, T. and Mager, C. (2008a) Connecting Rhine-Main: the production of multi-scalar polycentricities through knowledge-intensive business services. *Regional Studies* 42(8) 1095-1111.
- Hoyler, M., Kloosterman, R. C. and Sokol, M. (2008b) Polycentric puzzles – emerging mega-city regions seen through the lens of advanced producer services. *Regional Studies* 42(8) 1055-1064.
- Hoyler, M., Kloosterman, R. C. and Sokol, M. (eds.) (2008c) Globalization, City-Regions and Polycentricity in North-West Europe (special issue). *Regional Studies* 42(8) 1055-1217.
- Hoyler, M. and Taylor, P. J. (eds.) (2013) *Cities in Globalisation. Global Cities*, Vol. 1. 412pp, Routledge: Abingdon.
- Hu, X. (2006) Evolution and prospect of China's regional planning. *Acta Geographica Sinica* 61(6) 585-592.
- Huggins, R. and Davies, W. (2006) *European Competitiveness Index 2006-2007*. Robert Huggins Associates Ltd: Pontypridd.
- Jessop, B. (1999) Reflections on Globalisation and its logics. In, Dicken, P., Kelley, P., Olds, K. and Yeung, H. (eds.) *Globalisation and the Asia Pacific: Contested Territories*, Routledge: London.
- Jessop, B. (2001) The rise of the regional state in economic governance: 'Partnerships for prosperity' or new scales of state power? *Environment and Planning A* 33 1185-1211.
- Jonas, A. E. G. and Ward, K. (2007) Introduction to a debate on city-regions: new geographies of governance, democracy and social reproduction. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 31(1) 169-178.
- Jonas, A. E. G. (2011) City-regionalism: questions of distribution and politics. *Progress in Human Geography* 1-8.
- Jonas, A. E. G. (2012) Region and place: regionalism in question. *Progress in Human Geography* 36(2) 263-272.

- Jonas, A. E. G. (2013) City-regionalism as a contingent 'geopolitics of capitalism'. *Geopolitics* 18(2) 284-298.
- Jones, K. E., Lord, A. and Shields, R. (eds.) (2015) *City-Regions in Prospect? Exploring the Meeting Points between Place and Practice*. McGill/Queen's University Press: Montreal.
- Jones, M. (1997) Spatial selectivity of the state? The regulationist enigma and local struggles over economic governance. *Environment and Planning A*, 29(5) 831-864.
- Jones, M. and MacLeod (2004) Regional spaces, spaces of regionalism: territory, insurgent politics and the English question. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 29(4) 433-452.
- Kanai, J. M. (2014) Capital of the Amazon rainforest: constructing a global city-region for entrepreneurial Manaus. *Urban Studies* 51(11) 2387-2405.
- Kantor, P., Lefevre, C., Saito, A., Savitch, H. V. and Thornley, A. (2012) *Struggling Giants: City-region Governance in London, New York, Paris, and Tokyo*. University of Minnesota Press: London.
- Kavle, S. (1996) *InterViews – An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Sage: Thousand Oaks/London.
- Keating, M. (2014) Introduction: Rescaling Interest. *Territory, Politics, Governance* 2(3) 239-248.
- Kirkby, R. J. R. (1985) *Urbanization in China: Town and Country in a Developing Economy, 1949-2000 AD*. Croom Helm: London.
- Knox, P. L. and Taylor, P. J. (2005) Toward a geography of the globalization of architecture office networks. *Journal of Architectural Education* 58(3) 23-32.
- Kunzmann, K. (1998) World city regions in Europe: structural change and future challenges. In, Lo, F. C. and Yeung, Y. M. (eds.) *Globalization and the World of Large Cities*. United Nations University Press: Tokyo, 37-75.

- Lang, R. and Dhavale, D. (2005) Beyond megalopolis: exploring America's new 'megapolitan' geography. *Metropolitan Institute Census Report Series Number* 05:01. Available @ <http://america2050.org/pdf/beyondmegalopolislang.pdf>
- Lang, R. E. and Nelson, A. C. (2007) America 2040: the rise of the megapolitans, *American Planning Association Planning magazine* 7-12 January.
- Lang, R. E. and Knox, P. L. (2009) The new metropolis: rethinking megalopolis. *Regional Studies*, 43(6) 789-802.
- Leaf, M. (1998) Urban Planning and Urban Reality Under Chinese Economic Reforms. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 18 145-153.
- Lee, Y. and Shin, H. (2012) Negotiating the polycentric city-region: developmental state politics of new town development in the Seoul capital region. *Urban Studies* 49(6) 1333-1355.
- Lei, W. (2014) Forging growth by governing the market in reform-era urban China. *Cities* 31 187-193.
- Leitner, H. and Sheppard, E. (2015) Provincializing critical urban theory: extending the ecosystem of possibilities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Doi: 10.1111/1468-2427.12277.
- Li, H. B. and Zhou, L. A. (2005) Political turnover and economic performance: the incentive role of personnel control in China. *Journal of Public Economics* 89 1743-1762.
- Li, L. (2009) Discussion about the YRD's regional cooperation during 1980s. In Chinese version. Available @ http://www.hprc.org.cn/gsyj/yjig/zggsyjxh_1/gsnhlw_1/baguoshixslwj/201110/t20111018_162304.html
- Li, Y. and Wu, F. (2012a) The transformation of regional governance in China: the rescaling of statehood. *Progress in Planning* 78 55-99.

- Li, Y. and Wu, F. L. (2012b) Towards new regionalism? Case study of changing regional governance in the Yangtze River Delta. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 53(2) 178-195.
- Li, Y. and Wu, F. L. (2013) The emergence of centrally initiated regional plan in China: a case study of Yangtze River Delta Regional Plan. *Habitat International* 39 137-147.
- Li, Y., Wu, F. L. and Hay, I. (2015) City-region integration politics and their incongruous outcomes: The case of Shantou-Chaozhou-Jieyang city-region in east Guangdong Province, China. *Habitat International* 46 214-222.
- Li, Z., Xu, J. and Yeh, A. G. O. (2014) State rescaling and the making of city-regions in the Pearl River Delta, China. *Environmental and Planning C: Government and Policy* 32(1) 129-143.
- Libman, A. and Vinokurov, E. (2012) *Holding-Together Regionalism: Twenty Years of Post-Soviet Integration*. Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire.
- Lin, G. C. S. (2002) The growth and structural change of Chinese cities: a contextual and geographic analysis. *Cities* 19(5) 299-316.
- Liu, J. D. (2001) Study on the innovation of the administrative organization and management of the metropolitan areas in Chines mainland – a case study on the administrative innovation of the Pearl River Delta. *Economic Geography* 21(2) 201-212. In Chinese version.
- Liu, J. D., Feng, C.P., Hua, L. P. and Fang, J. C. (2002) *Comparative Study of Administrative Divisions: between China and Overseas Countries*. North East Normal University: Shanghai. In Chinese version.
- Liu, J. D. (2006) Perspective of the ‘administrative region economy’ phenomenon in China’s transitional period – an introduction of human-economic geography with Chinese characteristics. *Economic Geography* 26(6) 897-901. In Chinese version.

- Liu, Y. and Feng, J. (2008) *Economic geography of China: Changing regional patterns*. Capital Economic and Trade University Press: Beijing. In Chinese version.
- Longhurst, R. (2010) Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In, Clifford, N., French, S. and Valentine, G. (eds.) *Key Methods in Geography*. Sage: London.
- Lovering J (1999) Theory led by policy: the inadequacies of the new regionalism (illustrated from the case of Wales). *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 23 379-395.
- Luo, S. G., Johnston, A. and Chen, D. C. (2008) Approach to delimiting metropolitan regions' boundary and grading urban hierarchy within a metropolitan region – a case study of Shanghai metropolitan region. *Chinese Geographical Science* 18(3) 197-205.
- Luo, X. (2011) *Inter-City Cooperation and Governance in Yangtze River Delta*. ShangWuYinShuGuan: Beijing. In Chinese version.
- Luo, X. and Shen, J. (2008) Why city-region planning does not work well in China: the case of Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou. *Cities* 25 207-217.
- Luo, X. and Shen, J. (2009) A study on inter-city cooperation in the Yangtze River Delta region, China. *Habitat International* 33 52-62.
- Ma, X. (2012) The integration of the city-region of the Pearl River Delta. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 53(1) 97-104.
- MacKinnon, D. (2011) Reconstructing scale: Towards a new scalar politics. *Progress in Human Geography* 35(1) 21-36.
- MacKinnon, D. and Shaw, J. (2010) New state spaces, agency and scale: Devolution and the regionalization of transport governance in Scotland. *Antipode* 42(5) 1226-1252.
- MacLeod, G. and Jones, M. (2007) Territorial, scalar, networked, connected: In what sense a 'regional world'? *Regional Studies* 41(9) 1177-1191.

- Mao, H. and Fang, C. (2002) The basic propositions of new round territorial planning and its improving way in China. *Geographical Research* 21(3) 267-275. In Chinese version.
- Massey, D. (2007) *World City*. Polity: Cambridge.
- Mayer, M. (2008) To what end do we theorize sociospatial relations? *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26 414-419.
- McGee, T. G., Lin, G. C. S., Marton, A. M., Wang, M. Y. L. and Wu, J. (2007) *China's urban space development under market socialism*. Routledge: London.
- McGuirk, P. (2004) State, strategy, and scale in the competitive city: a neo-Gramscian analysis of the governance of 'global Sydney'. *Environment and Planning A* 36 1019-1043.
- McGuirk, P. (2007) The political construction of the city-region: notes from Sydney. *International Journal of Urban and regional research* 31(1) 179-187.
- McKenzie, R. D. (1933) *The Metropolitan Community*. McGraw-Hill: New York.
- McKinsey Global Institute. (2011) *Urban world: Mapping the economic power of cities*. McKinsey and Company. Available @ http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/urbanization/urban_world.
- MOHRSS. (2001) 2001 Statistical Communiqué of Labour and Social Security Undertakings. Available @ http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/SYrlzyhshbzb/zwgk/szrs/ndtjsj/tiqb/200603/t20060301_69897.htm.
- MOHRSS. (2014) 2014 Statistical Communiqué of Labour and Social Security Undertakings. Available @ http://www.mohrss.gov.cn/SYrlzyhshbzb/dongtaixinwen/buneiyaowen/201505/t20150528_162040.htm.
- Mumford, L. (1938) *The Culture of Cities*. Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York City.

- Nathan, M. and Overman, H. (2013) *Agglomeration, cluster, and industrial policy*. Oxford Review of Economic Policy 29(2) 383-404.
- Neuman, M. and Hull, A. (2009) The futures of the city region. *Regional Studies* 43(6) 777-787.
- Ng, M. K. and Xu, J. (2000) Development Control in Post-Reform China: the Case of Liuhua Lake Park, Guangzhou. *Cities* 17(6) 409-418.
- ODPM. (2006) A framework for City-Regions. ODPM, London.
- OECD (2007) *Competitive Cities in the Global Economy*. OECD Territorial Review: Paris.
- Ohmae, K. (2001) How to invite prosperity from the global economy into a region. In Scott, A. J. (eds.) *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Park, B. (2008) Uneven development, inter-scalar tensions, and the politics of decentralization in South Korea. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32(1) 40-59.
- Park, B. (2013) State rescaling in non-western contexts. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(4) 1115-1122.
- Parr, J. (2005) Perspectives on the city-region. *Regional Studies*, 39 (5) 555–566.
- Peabody, R. L., Hammond, S. W., Torcom, J., Brown, L. P., Thompson, C. and Kolodny, R. (1990) Interviewing political elites. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 23 451-455.
- People.com.cn. (2003) When the Hope for Regional Economy Encounters Administrative Regional Interests. In Chinese version. Available @ <http://www.people.com.cn/GB/paper40/9499/879199.html>
- Pereira, A. A. (2007) Transnational state entrepreneurship? Assessing Singapore's Suzhou industrial park project (1994-2004). *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 48(3) 287-298.

- Phadke, A. (2014) Mumbai Metropolitan Region: Impact of Recent Urban Change on the Peri-urban Areas of Mumbai. *Urban Studies* 51(11) 2466-2483.
- Porter, M. E. (1998) Clusters and the new economics of competition. *Harvard Business Review* 76 77-90.
- Porter, M. E. (2001) Regions and the New Economic of Competition. In, Scott, A. J. (eds.) *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Purcell, M. (2007) City-regions, neoliberal globalisation and democracy: a research agenda. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 31(1) 197-206.
- Reades, J. and Smith, D. A. (2014) Mapping the 'space of flows': the geography of global business telecommunications and employment specialization in the London mega-city-region. *Regional Studies* 48(1) 105-126.
- Robinson, J. (2002) Global and world cities: A view from off the map. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26 531-554.
- Robinson, J. (2006) *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development*. Routledge: London.
- Robinson, J. (2015) Comparative urbanism: new geographies and cultures of theorizing the urban. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Doi: 10.1111.1468-2427.12273.
- Robinson, J. and Roy, A. (2015) Global urbanisms and the nature of urban theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12272.
- Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2008) The rise of the 'city-region' concept and its development policy implications. *European Planning Studies* 16(8) 1025-1046.
- Ross, C. L. (eds.) (2009) *Megaregions: Planning for global competitiveness*. Island Press: Washington, DC.
- Roy, A. (2009) The 21st century metropolis: new geographies of theory. *Regional Studies* 43(6) 819-830.

- Roy, A. (2015) Who's afraid of postcolonial theory? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Doi: 10.1111/1468-2427.12274.
- Samara, T. R., He, S. and Chen, G. (eds.) (2013) *Locating Right to the City in the Global South*. Routledge: London.
- Sassen, S. (1991) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.
- Sassen, S. (2001) Global cities and global city-regions: a comparison. In, Scott, A. J. (eds.) *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Schafran, A. (2014) Rethinking mega-regions: Sub-regional politics in a fragmented metropolis. *Regional Studies* 48(4) 587-602.
- Scott, A. J. (1998) *Regions and the World Economy: the Coming Shape of Global Production, Competition, and Political Order*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Scott, A. J. (eds.) (2001a) *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Scott, A. J. (2001b) Globalisation and the rise of city-regions. *European Planning Studies* 9 813-826.
- Scott, A. J. and Storper, M. (2003) Regions, globalisation, development. *Regional Studies* 37 579-593.
- Scott, A. J. (2012) *A World of Emergence: Cities and Regions in the 21st Century*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham.
- Scott, J. W. (eds.) (2009) *De-coding New Regionalism: Shifting Socio-political Contexts in Central Europe and Latin America*. Ashgate: Surrey.
- Segbers, K. (Ed.) (2007) *The Making of Global City Regions: Johannesburg, Mumbai/Bombay, Sao Paulo, and Shanghai*. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore.
- Shen, H. T. (2010) Environmental protection industry's current development and strategy research in Jiangsu. *Prices Monthly* 9 66-69. In Chinese version.

- Shen, J. (2004) Cross-border urban governance in Hong Kong: the role of state in a globalizing city-region. *The Professional Geographer* 56(4) 530-543.
- Shen, J. (2007) Scale, state and the city: urban transformation in post-reform China. *Habitat International* 31 303-316.
- Sheppard, E., Leitner, H. and Maringanti, A. (2013) Provincializing global urbanism: A manifesto. *Urban Geography* 34 893-900.
- Sheppard, E., Gidwani, V., Goldman, M., Leitner, H., Roy, A. and Maringanti, A. (2015) Introduction: urban revolutions in the age of global urbanism. *Urban Studies* 52(11) 1947-1961.
- Silverman, D. (1997) *Qualitative Research: Theory, Methods and Practice*. Sage: London.
- Silverman, D. (2010) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. Sage: London.
- Smith, A. (2013) When sector meets territory: The case of European Union wine policy. *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1(2) 203-222.
- Social Sciences Academic Press. (2011) *Blue Book of Yangtze River Delta: The Yangtze River Delta Stepping Towards the World-Class City Group*. Social Sciences Academic Press: Beijing. In Chinese version.
- Solinger, D. J. (1978) Some speculations on the return of the regions: parallels with the past *The China Quarterly* 75 623-638.
- Song, K. (2010) Efficiency of northern Jiangsu undertaking the industrial transfer from southern Jiangsu – based on the Malmquist index approach (in Chinese). *Journal of Xidian University* 20(1) 41-46.
- Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology*. Routledge: London.
- Storper, M. (1997) *The Regional World – Territorial Development in a Global Economy*. Guildford Press: New York.

- Storper, M. (2013) *Keys to the City: How Economic, Institutions, Social Interactions, and Politics Shape Development*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Sage: Thousand Oaks.
- Taylor, P. J., Derudder, B., Saey, P. and Witlox, F. (eds.) (2007) *Cities in Globalisation: Practices, Politics and Theories*. Routledge: London.
- Taylor, P. J., Derudder, B., Hoyler, M., Ni, P. and Witlox, F. (2014) City-dyad analyses of China's integration into the world city network. *Urban Studies* 51(5) 868-882.
- Taylor, P. J., Ni, P. Derudder, B., Hoyler, M., Huang, J. and Witlox, F. (eds.) (2011) *Global Urban Analysis: A Survey of Cities in Globalization*. Earthscan: London.
- Taylor, P. J., Evans, D. M., Hoyler, M., Derudder, B. and Pain, K. (2009) The UK space economy as practised by advanced producer service firms: identifying two distinctive polycentric city-regional processes in contemporary Britain. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33(3) 700-718.
- Taylor, P. J., Hoyler, M. and Verbruggen, R. (2010) External urban relational process: introducing central flow theory to complement central place theory. *Urban Studies* 47(13) 2803-2818.
- Tewdwr-Jones, M. and McNeill, D. (2000) The politics of city-region planning and governance. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 7 119-134.
- The World Bank. @ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>. Last access on 29th January 2016.
- Thrift, N. and Dewsbury, J. D. (2000) Dead geographies – and how to make them live. *Environment and Planning D* 18 411-432.
- Tu, J. (2014) Encountering Chinese officials: bureaucratism, politics and power struggle. *Field Research Method Lab at LSE (21 October 2014)*. Blog entry.

URL: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/fieldresearch/2014/10/21/encountering-chinese-officials>

- Turok, I. and Bailey, N. (2004) The theory of polynuclear urban regions and its application to central Scotland. *European Planning Studies* 12 371-389.
- Turok, I. (2009) Limits to the mega-city region: conflicting local and regional needs. *Regional Studies* 43(6) 845-862.
- Ubarevičienė, R., Burneika, D. and Kriaučiūnas, E. (2011) The sprawl of Vilnius city-establishment and analysis of growing urban region. *Annales Geographicae*, 43-44 96-107.
- Unger, J. (1987) The struggles to dictate China's administration: the conflict of branches vs areas vs reform. *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 18 15-45.
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). (2006) *State of the World's Cities 2006/2007: 30 Years of Shaping the Habitat Agenda*. UN-Habitat: New York.
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). (2008) *State of the World's Cities 2008/2009: Harmonious Cities*. UN-Habitat: New York.
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). (2010) *State of the World's Cities Report 2010/11*. UN-Habitat: New York.
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). (2013) *State of the World's Cities Report 2012/2013*. UN-Habitat: New York.
- Vainer, C. (2014) Disseminating 'best practice'? The coloniality of urban knowledge and city models. In, Parnell, S. and Oldfield, S. (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South*. Routledge: New York, 48-56.
- Valentine, G. (2005) Tell me about...: using interviews as a research methodology. In, Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. (eds.) *Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students doing a Research Project*. Pearson Education Limited: Essex, 111-127.

- Vogel, R. K. (eds.) (2010) Governing global city regions in China and the West. *Progress in Planning* 73 1-75.
- Wang, C. (2008) *Regional cooperation in competitive and collaborative environment: Empirical studies on the Yangtze River Delta metropolitan area*. Fudan University Press: Shanghai. [Chinese].
- Wang, C. and Chen, L. (2006) Study on urban agglomeration layout from the network-city perspective – A case study of Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou urban agglomeration. *Resources and Environment in the Yangtze Basin* 15(6) 797-801. [Chinese]
- Wang, C. L., Siu, N. Y. M. and Barnes, B. R. (2008) The significance of trust and renqing in the long-term orientation of Chinese business-to-business relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management* 37(7) 819-824.
- Wang, F. (2009) *Governmental collaboration in progress: An empirical study of the Yangtze River Delta urban agglomerations*. Sun Yat-sen University Press: Guangzhou. [Chinese]
- Wang, W. J., Zhang, J. T. and Qin, C. L. (2007) Fiscal decentralization, competition between local governments and the economic growth of FDI. *Management World* 3 13-22. [Chinese]
- Wang, X., Dong, Y. and Shi, L. (2008) Analysis on technical mode of Yixing environmental protection industry and concentrating group mode. *China Environmental Protection Industry* 7 61-71. [Chinese]
- Wang, Y. (1994) China: Urban development and research towards the year 2000. In, Stren, R. (eds.) *Urban Research in the Developing World Volume 1*. Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto: Toronto.
- Wang, Y. (2014) 'Renqing' in conducting interviews with Chinese business people: Insights from a returning researcher. *Field Research Method Lab at LSE* (17 April 2014). Blog entry. URL: <http://wp.me/p46hMd-5k>

- Ward, K. and Jonas, A. E. G. (2004) Competitive city-regionalism as a politics of space: a critical reinterpretation of the new regionalism. *Environment and Planning A* 36 2119-2139.
- Wells, H. G. (1902) *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Unman Life and Thought*. Chapman and Hall: London.
- Weng, J. (2006) Study on the structural similarity in industrial sector in the Pearl River Delta. *World Regional Studies* 15(1) 21-25.
- Wheeler, S. M. (2015) Five reasons why megaregional planning works against sustainability. In Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (eds.) *Megaregions: Globalization's New Urban Form?* Edward Elgar: Cheltenham. 97-118.
- White, P. (2010) Making Use of Secondary Data. In, Clifford, N., French, S. and Valentine, G. (eds.) *Key Methods in Geography*. Sage: London.
- Winston, C. (1946) *Sinews of Peace (Iron Curtain Speech)* @ <http://www.unitedstreaming.com/videos/43853/a80b8865-1279-3b00-cdae91c9b9039014.pdf>
- Wu, F. L. (2002) China's changing urban governance in the transition towards a more market-oriented economy. *Urban Studies* 39(7) 1071-1093.
- Wu, F. L. (2003) The (post-) socialist entrepreneurial city as a state project: Shanghai's reglobalisation in question. *Urban Studies* 40(9) 1673-1698.
- Wu, F. L. (eds.) (2007) *China's Emerging Cities: The Making of New Urbanism*. Routledge: London.
- Wu, F. L. (2008) China's great transformation: neoliberalization as establishing a market society. *Geoforum* 39 1093-1096.
- Wu, F. L. and Zhang, J. (2007) Planning the competitive city-region: the emergence of strategic development plan in China. *Urban Affairs Review* 42(5) 714-740.
- Wu, F. L. and Zhang, F. (2010) China's emerging city region governance: towards a research framework. In Vogel, K. R. (eds.) (2010) *Governing global city regions in China and the West*. *Progress in Planning* 73 1-75.

- Wu, W. (2010) Globalising in fragmented space: spatial expansion and the development process in Shanghai. In Vogel, K. R. (eds.) (2010) *Governing global city regions in China and the West. Progress in Planning* 73 1-75.
- Xinhuanet (2010) Approve of the YRD regional plan from the central State Council. Available @ http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2010-05/24/c_12135724.htm. In Chinese version.
- Xinhuanet (2015) China's Yangtze River Delta moves to more services-based economy. Available @ http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/02/c_134031025.htm.
- Xu, J. (2008) Governing city-regions in China: theoretical issues and perspectives for regional strategic planning. *Town Planning Review* 79(2-3) 157-185.
- Xu, C. L. and Zhu, Y. X. (eds.) (2013) *A Research on Transition and Development in Yangtze River Delta's Urban Agglomeration*. GeZhiChuBanShe: Shanghai. In Chinese version.
- Xu, J. and Yeh, A. G. O. (2005) City repositioning and competitiveness building in regional development: new development strategies in Guangzhou, China. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29(2) 283-308.
- Xu, J. and Yeh, A. G. O. (2008) Regional Cooperation in the Pan-Pearl River Delta: A Formulaic Aspiration or A New Imagination? *Built Environment* 34(4) 408-426.
- Xu, J. and Yeh, A. G. O. (2010) Planning mega-city regions in China: rationales and policies. In Vogel, K. R. (eds.) (2010) *Governing global city regions in China and the West. Progress in Planning* 73 1-75.
- Xu, J. and Yeh, A. G. O. (eds.) (2011) *Governance and Planning of Mega-City Regions: An International Comparative Perspective*. Routledge: London.
- Xu, J. and Yeh, A. G. O. (2013) Interjurisdictional Cooperation through bargaining: the case of Guangzhou-Zhuhai Railway in the Pearl River Delta, China. *The China Quarterly* 213 130-151.

- Xu, X. Q. and Li, S. M. (1990) China open door policy and urbanization in the Pearl River Delta region. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 14 49-69.
- Yang, C. and Li, S. (2013) Transformation of cross-boundary governance in the Greater Pearl River Delta, China: contested geopolitics and emerging conflicts. *Habitat International* 40 25-34.
- Ye, L (2014) State-led metropolitan governance in China: making integrated city regions. *Cities* 41 200-208.
- Yeh, A. G. O. (2001) Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta: competition or cooperation? *Built Environment* 27 129-145.
- Yeh, A. G. O. and Xu, J. (2008) Regional cooperation in the Pan-Pearl River Delta: a formulaic aspiration or a new imagination? *Built Environment* 34(4) 408-426.
- Yeh, A. G., Yang, F. F. and Wang, J. (2014) Producer service linkages and city connectivity in the mega-city region of China: a case study of the Pearl River Delta. *Urban Studies* 1-25.
- Yeung, Y. (2005) Emergence of the Pan-Pearl River Delta. *Geografiska Annaler* 87 B (1) 75-79.
- Yeung, Y. and Shen, J. (eds.) (2008) *The Pan-Pearl River Delta: An Emerging Regional Economy in a Globalizing China*. Chinese University Press: Hong Kong.
- Yu, H. (2011) Strategic thinking on the coordinated development between Shanghai and Yangtze River delta region during the period of the 'Twelfth Five-Year Plan'. *Shanghai Urban Planning Review* 2 10-17. In Chinese version.
- Zhang, H., Zhang, M., Sun, K., Zhang, C., Zhang, Z., Zhu, D., Ding, H., Zhang, C. and Wang, W. (2007) *Integration Tenor of Changjiang Delta – Present Development, Obstacles and Tendency*. Social Sciences Academic Press: Beijing. In Chinese version.

- Zhang, J. and Wu, F. L. (2006) China's changing economic governance: administrative annexation and the reorganization of local governments in the Yangtze River Delta. *Regional Studies* 40(1) 3-21.
- Zhang, J. and Wu, F. L. (2007) China's changing economic governance: administrative annexation and the reorganization of local governments in the Yangtze River Delta. *Regional Studies* 40(1) 3-21.
- Zhang, T. (2002) Decentralization, localization, and the emergence of a quasi-participatory decision-making structure in urban development in Shanghai. *International Planning Studies* 7(4) 303-323.
- Zhang, T. (2006) From intercity competition to collaborative planning: the case of the Yangtze River Delta Region of China. *Urban Affairs Review* 42(1) 26-56.
- Zhang, X. (2015) Globalisation and the megaregion: investigating the evolution of the Pearl River Delta in a historical perspective. In Harrison, J. and Hoyler, M. (eds.) *Megaregions: Globalization's New Urban Form?* Edward Elgar: Cheltenham. 175-199.
- Zhao, S. X. B., Chan, R. C. K. and Sit, K. T. O. (2003) Globalisation and the dominance of large cities in contemporary China. *Cities* 20(4) 265-278.
- Zhou, Y. A. (2003) Local government competition and economic growth. *Journal of Renmin University of China* 1 97-103.
- Zhou, L. A. (2004) The incentive and cooperation of government officials in the political tournaments: an interpretation of the prolonged local protectionism and duplicative investments in China. *Economic Research Journal* 6 33-40. In Chinese version.
- Zuckerman, H. A. (1972) Interviewing an ultra-elite. *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 36 159-175.

Appendix 1: Interviewee details

ID	Length of Interview	Category	Titles	Responsibilities and Relevant Biographies
1	150 minutes	Government Official	Chief Officer of Yixing Economic and Information Technology Commission (EITC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EITC was the crucial participator of seven out of ten city-regional task groups within the YRD's governance framework. 2. Facilitating intra- and inter-city interaction and cooperation in relation to the business and trade management.
2	120 minutes	Business Leader	Entrepreneur	Mineral material manufacturing business in Wuxi.
3	120 minutes	Academic Professor	Professor in East China Normal University	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leading five national and Shanghai municipal governments-funded scientific research and consultant projects in relation to urban planning and manufacturing clusters; 2. Urban and Regional Economy Department; 3. Research interest in regional economy and business cluster amid globalisation.
4	120 minutes	Academic Researcher	Researcher in Urban and Demographic Studies of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of comprehensive team for formulating YRD regional plan; 2. Participating in several YRD's research and consultant projects which are organized by Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang's provincial-level governments together.
5	60 minutes	Academic Professor	Professor in Business School of Shanghai Fudan University	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of Shanghai Academy of Development and Reform which is subordinate to Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission and providing consultancy service for the latter in relation to economic and social development and reform issues; 2. Officer of YRD Research School in Fudan University.
6	120 minutes	Academic Professor	Professor in the Urban Study Center in East China Normal University	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of Regional Planning and Urban Economy Committee in China Association of City Planning which is subordinate to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of PR. China. 2. Organizing several national government-funded research projects in relation to the development of YRD's spatial space.
7	90 minutes	Academic Researcher	Researcher in Urban and Demographic Studies of SASS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member of comprehensive team for formulating YRD regional plan; 2. Rich experience of leading and participating national and provincial level governments-funded research and consultant projects.
8	75 minutes	Government Official	Director of Investment Promotion Department of Nanjing Municipal Government	Part of policy-making for attracting demanded labor, capital investment and other resources. His department has key influence over the Nanjing industrial structure.
9	90 minutes	Business Leader	Entrepreneur	Powder Material Manufacturing Business in Changzhou.

10	60 minutes	Government Official	Government Official	Chief Officer of Economic Development Bureau in China Yixing Industrial Park for Environmental Science and Technology (ESandTP). ESandTP is a national level High-technology industrial development zone which was approved by the central State Council in 1992. ESandTP experienced the transformation between traditional manufacturing and high-technological industries within its jurisdiction during last two decades.
11	90 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in Business School of Shanghai Fudan University	<p>1. Leading several national and Shanghai municipal governments funded projects, included Ministry of Education's research in urban agglomeration and coordinated development of urban spatial space in YRD, and Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development's research in urbanisation process and assessment of Urban and Rural Planning Law.</p> <p>2. Leading urban economic development research at the invitation of a variety of local governments.</p>
12	150 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in East China Normal University	<p>1. Senior member of expert tem for formulating YRD regional plan;</p> <p>2. Extreme extensive experience of educating, researching and providing consultancy for different level governments in relation to YRD's city-regional strategic development, sustainable development and population mobility and etc.</p>
13	90 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in East China Normal University	<p>1. Leading a large number of national and local government's research and consultant projects in Shanghai;</p> <p>2. Research interest in urbanisation, regional economy and regional governance.</p>
14	90 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in East China Normal University	<p>1. Leading a range of research and consultant projects for Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission and The Development Research Centre of Shanghai Municipal Government in relation to the YRD's regional integration and economic development, and cross-jurisdictional governance;</p> <p>2. Large number of publications in studying the 'new regionalism'.</p>
15	120 minutes	Academic Researcher	Researcher in Urban and Demographic Studies of SASS	<p>1. Member of comprehensive team for formulating YRD regional plan;</p> <p>2. Leading a range of research and consultant projects for NDRC, Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission, and The Development Research Centre of Shanghai Municipal Government in relation to the YRD's regional integration and economic development, and cross-jurisdictional governance.</p>
16	60 minutes	Business Leader	Entrepreneur	Environment Protection Facilities Manufacturing Business in Wuxi.
17	40 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in Nanjing University	<p>1. Member of comprehensive team for formulating YRD regional plan;</p> <p>2. Participating a range of research and consultant projects for NDRC, Jiangsu</p>

				provincial government, and Anhui Provincial Development and Reform Commission.
18	30 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in Nanjing Normal University	Leading a range of national government-funded research projects in relation to the transformation of spatial construction, distribution of spatial function and regional conflicts in YRD.
19	120 minutes	Academic Researcher	Researcher in Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology of Chinese Academy of Sciences (NIGLAS)	Member of expert team for formulating YRD regional plan;
20	80 minutes	Academic Researcher	Researcher in Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology of Chinese Academy of Sciences (NIGLAS)	Member of expert team for formulating YRD regional plan - he was responsible for contributing to the provisional chapters of population and regional industrial layout in the regional plan.
21	90 minutes	Academic Researcher	Researcher in Nanjing University	1. Leading a range of provincial and municipal level governments funded research and consultant projects mainly in relation to the urban and regional plan in YRD; 2. Translating several important western city-regional publications from English to Chinese.
22	90 minutes	Academic Researcher	Lecturer in Nanjing University	A range of publications in the European Journals in relation to the governance of YRD.
23	75 minutes	Business Leader	Entrepreneur	Raw mineral powder manufacturing business in Wuxi.
24	60 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in Nanjing Normal University	1. Leading a range of national and local governments-funded research and consultant projects in relation to regional cluster and innovation; 2. Particular research interest in the comparative study between Chinese and European city-regional governance;
25	60 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in Nanjing Normal University	Leading a range of national and local governments-funded research and consultant projects in relation to inter- and intra-regional conflicts;
26	45 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in East China Normal University	1. Participating a range of municipal governments' formulation of urban plan – he focused on industrial layout; 2. Research interest in the planning of transportation among urban spaces.
27	75 minutes	Academic Researcher	Professor in East China Normal University	Leading a range of national and local governments-funded research and consultant projects in relation to regional cluster and innovation;
28	60 minutes	Government Official	Chief Officer of the Regional Cooperation and Exchange Office of Shanghai Municipal Government	Shanghai keeps the YRD Economic Coordination Association's (ECA) liaison office, named The Regional Cooperation and Exchange Office of Shanghai Municipal Government, as a part of the Shanghai Municipal government
29	50 minutes	Business Leader	Senior manager	Raw mineral powder manufacturing business in Wuxi.
30	60 minutes	Business Leader	Senior manager	Construction business in Wuxi.

31	90 minutes	Academic Researcher	Researcher in Urban and Demographic Studies of SASS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Senior member of comprehensive team for formulating the YRD regional plan; 2. Member of Shanghai Academy of Development and Reform which is subordinate to Shanghai Municipal Development and Reform Commission.
32	90 minutes	Government Official	Chief Officer of Yixing Economic and Information Technology Commission (EITC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EITC was the crucial participator of seven out of ten city-regional task groups within the YRD's governance framework. 2. Facilitating intra- and inter-city interaction and cooperation in relation to the business and trade management.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

General Questions

1. How is the concept of YRD defined? Defined by whom? Based on what measurement? Economic? Political? Others?
2. Has the above-defined YRD's boundary evolved/changed over time? If so, when and why?
3. Are the above-defined boundaries contentious?

Transformation of the YRD as a state space

4. When was the initial sign for YRD, included Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, to become a state-coordinated space for planning and governance? YRD Economic Coordination Association (Changsanjiao Jingji Xietiaohui) in 1992?
5. Who was the main driving force behind the found of the YRD ECA? NDRC?
6. How do association members reach agreement about the decision on cross-jurisdictional governance?
7. How does association force its decision? Over industrial layout? Any difficulty?
8. Why expansion of association? Expansion of functional space? State-led expansion? Industrial transformation at larger scale?
9. Is there a sense that by making the YRD bigger it will make it more economically competitive?
10. Where does the YRD fit within the national planning/economic development strategy?
11. Are there competing visions for the economic development of YRD?

YRD's governance framework at the city-regional scale

12. What is the YRD's current governance model?
13. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this particular governance model?

14. Was the governance model implemented in YRD inspired by developments in other large metropolitan areas? If so, where, and what did they learn?
15. What influence do asymmetric administrative ranks of different delta members make over inter-city interaction in the above-mentioned framework?
16. How much of an issue is jurisdictional fragmentation in relation to implement the YRD regional plan's coordinated industrial planning in the YRD?
17. It is argued that the YRD's scope is so huge that Shanghai Government is currently more interested in improving the suburban areas' economic competitiveness by bringing the inward capital investment through issuing the favorable policies and project; thus it becomes an urgent issue for other two provinces, to rethink of their relationship with Shanghai. Is such bargaining among different provincial- and prefecture- level governments prevalent in the current YRD?
18. How much of an issue is 'localism' in relation to the economic integration and governance framework at the city-regional scale in YRD?
19. What are the motives behind local fragmentation? Personnel promotion? Fiscal decentralisation?
20. Are there any other challenges for promoting the city-regional vision for governance?
21. How can the city-regional governance framework be further improved?
22. The YRD regional plan -
 - 1) Motive for formulating the regional plan?
 - 2) Why was initiated in 2005?
 - 3) What preceded the 2011 YRD regional plan? What worked well under previous regional structures? What maybe did not work well?
 - 4) How was the plan formulated?
 - 5) What is each team's responsibility? Force Implementing?
 - 6) Did decision-maker look at other city-regions for examples of 'best practice'? If so where did they look? What did they learn? How has this been implemented in the YRD regional plan?
 - 7) What were the main challenges in creating the YRD regional plan?
 - 8) Does the implementation of YRD draw down more powers towards the YRD?

- 9) To what extent is the YRD regional plan aiming to improve the regional integration?
- 10) Does the above-mentioned governance model have anything to do with the implementation of YRD regional plan?
- 11) Thus which section of the plan the China Development Bank is going to raise finance for? If it does, will the funding facilitate the implementation of the regional plan?
- 12) Is the YRD an appropriate scale to plan/govern? Do you think planning at the scale of the YRD is practical/feasible? Is the YRD a scale at which to do holistic planning/governance or more specific policy areas and political interventions, especially for the distribution of industrial concentration?
- 13) There are statements of 'strengthening the functional connection between Shanghai and Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou' in both of YRD and SWC regional plans. Although it is not hard to catch a few points in the regional plan which towards this aim, such as Shanghai is planning to be a high-tech design center and financial center and trading center, and Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou is going to be the high-tech designing and manufacturing centers (well, it is my personal opinion of this could be the potential connection); there is barely clear indication for how the connection is going to be promoted in the YRD regional plan. Not mentioning the proposed projects and specific index or measurement for improvement of regional connection. Thus what is the main thought behind this aim in the making process of the YRD regional plan? What is the level of integration/cooperation between Shanghai and the other major cities in the YRD?
- 14) Even further, it is stated in the regional plan that Shanghai is going to lead the development of financial services and high-tech design industries in the YRD. How is the industrial growth going to be distributed among Shanghai and SWC? Will this lead to inter-city competition?
- 15) Referring to the YRD regional plan, YRD Commission Member, Chen Jianjun, is quoted as saying 'more coordination [i.e. internal linkage] is

needed to maximize the benefits' to overcome regional fragmentation.

How is this being taken forward?

- 16) According to the YRD regional plan, Shanghai, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou and other core delta members are each commanded to make different industrial focus, such as Shanghai needs to concentrate on the growth of commercial services industries etc. How is this distribution of regional economic industries planned in the planning process, or based on what facts?
- 17) There has been more than two years after the birth of the regional plan, how do you think of its implementation in general? From what other perspective does the regional plan enhance the city-regional vision in the governance agenda?

Business Sector

23. How do you think of the development of regional common market? Transportation? Product quality assessment system? Cross-jurisdictional industrial association?
24. How much of an issue is 'localism' in relation to the cross-jurisdictional trading?
25. Are there differences among administrative policies towards different industries in the local? Preferential policy for any particular industry?
26. What is state-led mechanism for forcing industrial transformation? Compensation?
27. How do traditional manufacturing industries select the location for potential transformation?

Appendix 3: List of Codes

Interview Coding

1. Scale

- 1) Global
- 2) National
 - a. Central Government
 - a) The State Council
 - b) NDRC (National Development and Reform Commission)
- 3) Pan-Regional
 - b. Pan-YRD (Yangtze River Delta)
 - c. Pan-PRD (Pearl River Delta)
- 4) Regional
 - a. Provincial Government
 - a) Provincial Governor
 - b) Provincial Party Secretary
 - b. YRD
 - c. PRD
 - d. JJJ (Jing-Jin-Ji)
- 5) Sub-regional
- 6) Local
 - a. Municipal Government
- 7) Other
 - a. City-Regions
 - b. Urban Agglomeration
 - c. One-Hour Economic Circle
 - d. Three-Hours Economic Circle

2. YRD

- 1) Shanghai
 - a. Shanghai Metropolitan Area
- 2) Jiangsu
 - a. Northern Jiangsu
 - b. Southern Jiangsu
 - a) Taihu Lake Basin
 - b) SWC (Suzhou-Wuxi-Changzhou)
 - c) Nanjing Metropolitan Area
- 3) Zhejiang
 - a. Northern Zhejiang
 - a) Hangzhou Metropolitan Area
 - b) Taizhou City
 - b. Southern Zhejiang

- 4) Anhui
- 5) History
 - a. Relation between SH and Others

3. Organisations

- 1) Shanghai Economic Area Planning Office
 - a. The City Mayor
- 2) YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economies (YRD CAUE)
 - a. Permanent President - Shanghai City Cooperation and Exchange Office
 - b. LDRC (Local Development and Reform Commission)
- 3) YRD Federation of Medium and Small businesses
 - a. EITC (Economic and Information Technology Commission)
- 4) CASS (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)
- 5) SASS (Urban and Demographic Studies of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences)
- 6) NIGLAS (Nanjing Institute of Geography and Limnology of Chinese Academy of Sciences)
- 7) Zhejiang Prov. Development Planning and Research Institute
- 8) Others
 - a) CDB (China Development Bank)
 - b) Industrial Park
 - c) Other Associations
 - d) NGO

4. Define YRD

- 1) History
 - a. Market Forces vs. Political Forces
 - b. Context
- 2) Definition
 - a. Regional Structure
- 3) Regional Core
- 4) Trans-provincial
- 5) Expansion
 - a. Economic Connection
 - b. Industrial Park
 - a) Land
 - b) Technique
 - c) Policy
- 6) Pan-

5. Economic

- 1) Chinese Private Enterprise
- 2) State-Owned Enterprise
- 3) Foreign Investment
- 4) Similar Industrial Composition
- 5) Regional Focus
- 6) Intra-regional competition
- 7) Transformation
- 8) *Hukou*
- 9) Market Forces
 - a. Regional Economic Integration
- 10) Political Intervention
 - a. GDP Competition
 - b. Administrative Divisions Economy
 - c. Localism
 - d. Non-Tax Trade Barrier
 - e. Photovoltaic
 - f. Integration
 - a) One Card Solution
 - b) Brand Promotion
- 11) Transport
- 12) Infrastructure
 - a) Transportation
- 13) Land
- 14) Labour
- 15) Toll station
- 16) Medical Care
- 17) Tourism
- 18) Housing
- 19) Environmental Protection
- 20) Clusters
- 21) 2nd Industries
- 22) Third Industries
- 23) Regional Issues
- 24) Marine Economy

6. Political

- 1) Chief Officers' Will
- 2) GDP-Driven Decision Making
- 3) Political Performance
- 4) Local Governments' Debts
- 5) Politicians' Attitude
 - a. National Level
 - a) Premier of the State Council
 - b. Regional Level
 - b) Provincial Governors

- 6) Preferential Policy
- 7) Government Coordination
 - a. Interest
- 8) YRD Governance Model
 - a. Decision-Making Level
 - b. Coordination Level
 - c. Execution Level
 - a) N+1
- 9) YRD Regional Plan
 - a. Team Composition
 - b. Plan Making Process
 - c. Implementation
 - d. Other plans
 - e. Law
- 10) Jurisdiction
- 11) The Role Of The Central Governments
- 12) Political System
- 13) Common Interest
- 14) TAX
- 15) Other Plans
- 16) Communication

7. Cultural

- 1) Cultural Similarities
- 2) Ethnic Group
- 3) 2010 Shanghai World Expo

8. YRD Coordination Association of Urban Economies (YRD CAUE)

- 1) More Members
- 2) Communication
- 3) Projects
- 4) Legal position

9. Industrial Planning

- 1) Difficulties
- 2) Reasonableness
- 3) Basis
- 4) Governors' thoughts
- 5) IP Implementation

10. Governmental Connection

- 1) Reimbursement**
- 2) Dead Pigs**
- 3) Vertical Governance System**
- 4) Horizontal Communication**
- 5) European Union**

11. Private Companies

- 1) Origin**
- 2) Customer Base**
- 3) Competitor**
- 4) Pollution**
- 5) Movement of Industries**
- 6) Environmental Protection Industry**