



Intercity Competition and Cooperation between Hong Kong and Shenzhen: Theories, Realities and Policies

Professor Jianfa Shen

Professor of Department of Geography and Resource Management
 Director of Urban and Regional Development Program, Hong Kong Institute of
 Asia-Pacific Studies
 The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Abstract:

In the age of globalization, inter-city competition has been intensified. It is generally assumed that cities are in competition in a zero-sum game and there is growing sense of city rivalry. Cities may also cooperate to enhance the competitive advantage of both cities. This paper will examine the theories, realities and policies of intercity relations using the case of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Two cities have developed closely economic relations since 1980. Economic complementarity prevails under the model of “front shop and back factory” in the 1980s and 1990s. Due to economic growth and restructuring in Shenzhen, Hong Kong-Shenzhen economic relation has been changed dramatically in the last three decades. Hong Kong is facing increasing “competition” pressure from Shenzhen especially in the logistics sector. By disaggregating the complicated inter-city relations, it is found that cooperation rather than competition prevails in Hong Kong and Shenzhen relations. Hong Kong government and public have strong sense of “competition”. But inter-city cooperation has also been recognized as an important strategy for Hong Kong. This will be illustrated by the case of competition and cooperation of Hong Kong and Shenzhen airports.

About the Speaker:

Jianfa SHEN is Professor in the Department of Geography and Resource Management and Director of Urban and Regional Development Program, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He obtained his PhD degree in Geography from London School of Economics in 1994. His research interest is focused on urban and regional development, urban competitiveness and urban governance, migration and urbanization. He has published extensively in international journals such as *The Professional Geographer*, *Urban Geography*, *Cities*, *Geoforum* and *Environment and Planning A*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. His recent co-edited book is “The Pan-Pearl River Delta: An Emerging Regional Economy in a Globalizing China” by The Chinese University Press in 2008.

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