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Informal Dynamics of Global Change
universitätbonn Geographie
South Asia Institute
University of Heidelberg

The Megaurban Food System of Dhaka / Bangladesh

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The analysis of food systems in megaurban contexts offers special insights into the discontinuities, fragmentations and conflicts, which global processes generate in local arenas.

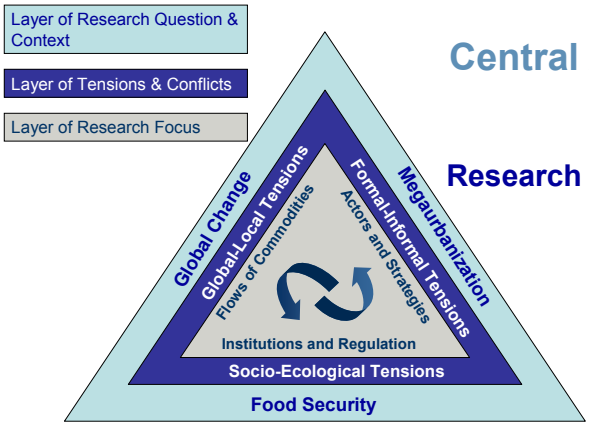
Objective

The project aims at understanding the functioning of Dhaka's food system and evaluates challenges to its resilience and to food security.

Research Questions

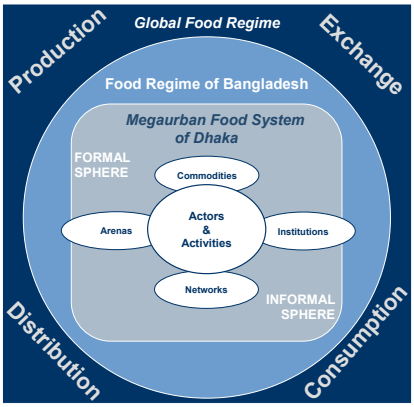
1. How is the megaurban society of Dhaka organized around food?
2. Who are the major actors (formal and informal) of the megaurban food system?
3. How is the food system regulated and what particular role do formal, informal and traditional institutions play?

Central Analytical Frameworks



Research Focus

Food Systems Approach



Subproject 1: Wolfgang-Peter Zingel and Markus Keck

Supply Networks and the Regulation of Urban Food Systems

A constant flow of food into Dhaka is needed to keep up the functioning of urban life. A basic goal of the project is to examine how this food supply is organized and how distribution networks within the city are working. The study focuses on two commodities: rice and fish. The current flows of food into the city are assessed. The range of formal and informal institutions that regulate the daily transactions are analysed. In a first step experts and practitioners have been consulted. Then the main actors have been interviewed and their activities have been observed. Standardized surveys are being undertaken at present.

Subproject 2: Hans-Georg Bohle and Benjamin Etzold

The Role of Street Food in Dhaka's Food System

Street food vending is an important type of informal food activity in Dhaka. It provides the vendor's families with a reasonable income to sustain their livelihoods. At the same time, it serves as the backbone to food security of the urban poor, who do not have the assets to prepare their own meal. Authorities often impede the street food business with the aim of improving food safety and `clearing´ public space. This has detrimental effects for Dhaka's food security.

This project aims at understanding the role of street food within Dhaka's food distribution networks, the contribution of street food to urban food security as well as its social and cultural value.

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