



Megacities - Megachallenge

Informal Dynamics of Global Change

Megacities “Laboratories of the future“

Megacities exhibit new spatial and population dimensions and dynamics as well as enormous economic, social and political impacts; they are focal points of global change processes. Megacities are a fundamentally new form of urban socialization of the 20th and 21st century and are important "laboratories of the future“, where global trends are reflected and anticipated.



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Sustainable development can be realized in megacities only if the complex dynamics and interactions of megaurban systems are better understood and the political actors can be provided with relevant knowledge. The simultaneity and overlap of a wide range of processes with mutual feedback present a great challenge, forming extremely complex and dynamic systems. Urban researchers are faced with a task of developing of new and appropriate concepts and approaches to understand these systems.

The priority research program

Four topic areas with the greatest dynamics and social relevance are central to the programme:

- a) Planning and governability and the influence of new forms of governance,
- b) Dominance and differentiation of urban economies,
- c) Complexity and dynamics of material and resource flows,
- d) Dynamics of settlement development.



In the first phase of the programme seven single projects are working in the Pearl River Delta (China) and three in Dhaka (Bangladesh). The programme follows a strong interdisciplinary and multisectoral approach, with a special focus on the interfaces and interactions between the diverse urban subsystems – taking into account both "horizontal" (cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary) and “vertical” (cross-scale, global, regional, local and sublocal) interconnections. Strong cooperation with partner universities in Bangladesh and China enables knowledge and experience to be shared at international level and joint scientific approaches and methods to be developed.

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