Entangled Spaces of the Global Economy: Export Processing Zones in Asia, in the Asia and Middle East module

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Description:

There are over 3,500 special economic zones or export processing zones around the world, in which over 66 million people are employed, up from just 80 zones in the mid 1970s. Of those 66 million, 56 million are employed in Asia. Likewise, Regional Trade Agreements have become prevalent since the 1990s. As of 2013, 575 Regional Trade Agreements have been notified, out of which 379 are in force. In Asia, only 3 such agreements were in force by the year 2000. Today, there are 38 implemented agreements in Asia. Furthermore, over fifty percent of people live in urban areas and this percentage is expected to rise to two-thirds (6 billion people) by 2050. Eight out of ten of the largest cities around the world are from developing countries, and seven of the ten are located in Asia.

In this course, we will discuss the institutionalization of the global economy in relation to political decentralization and economic liberalization policies and the emergence of various spatial economic forms, especially export processing zones (EPZs). An emphasis will be placed on the interactions and entanglements between EPZs and other socio-political and socio-economic spaces like regional trade agreements, growth triangles, urban areas, and the nation state. The course will provide a broad introduction to the various topics and will focus on the spatial aspects of economic change- the increase of cross-border trade in the 20th century with a simultaneous rise in territorialization strategies/re-bordering through the use of trade barriers, tariffs, and zoning practices. The material will include texts from urban studies, anthropology, political economy, and political geography. Furthermore, news articles, blogs, and visual material will also form the basis of readings. Alongside these topics, the course will involve theoretical texts from Harvey, Brenner, Ong, Bach, and Sassen, among others.

Syllabus:

Background Reading:


1. **April 13th**
   **Introduction (1): Institutionalization of the Free Trade Zone**

2. **April 20th**
Introduction (2): Neoliberalism and State Re-scaling

3. April 27th
Neoliberalism and Graduated Sovereignty

4. May 4th
History of Economic Zones in Asia

5. May 11th
Between the Systems: Periodization in Global Capitalism

6. May 18th
A Case Study: Export Processing Zones in Mauritius
   b. Neveling, Patrick (2014). The three shades of embeddedness: State capitalism as the informal economy, emic notions of the anti-market and counterfeit garments in the Mauritian export processing zone. in: Research in Economic Anthropology, Vol. 34, pp. TBD.

7. June 1st
Spatial Specialization and Fragmentation

8. June 8th
Governance and Scale

9. June 15th
State Rescaling and Cities in China and India

10. June 22nd
Accumulation by Dispossession

11. June 29th
New Regionalisms Approaches in Asia
12. July 6th
Zones and Regionalism?


13. July 13th
Micro- and Meso-Regionalism


d. Financial Times, “Guangxi seeks to become China’s ASEAN hub,” video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEU905jFT4U

Writing the final essay

Suggested Writing Guide:


Additional help for the final essay, presented in class:
1. Introduction to Citavi
2. Introduction to Web of Knowledge
3. Overview of library webpage

Possible Paper Topics may include:
1) One country’s zone policy
2) Comparative analysis of zones
3) Interaction between zones and urban spaces
4) State rescaling in relation to RTAs, zones, and/or cities
5) Case study of a growth triangle
6) One country’s liberalization strategies
7) Changing labor policy in relation to state rescaling
8) Decentralization and economic liberalization in relation to a city/zone
9) Comparative analysis of urban planning and urbanization strategies
10) Analysis of zone policies in light of regional trade agreements

*Other topics are possible if approved.