

Chapter 12

The Role of Cultural and Creative Industries in Special Economic Zones: Development Recommendations for the Macao–Hengqin Region

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ABSTRACT

The Macao-Hengqin region, within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), consists of two special zones established by the central government of China. The development strategies for the GBA have been discussed worldwide. However, in-depth discussion of Macao-Hengqin is lacking. Through literature review, this study developed a theoretical framework that switches regional growth from a traditional path to a more sustainable one. With case analysis of the region, it finds that the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) are underdeveloped mainly due to their dependency on Macao's tourism and entertainment industries. To develop CCIs for culture and creativity, we need extra policy support to help CCIs spin off from the tourism and entertainment industries and alienate CCIs from the technology fallacy. Fortunately, this region is prepared with the necessary policies, plans, programs, and projects. The development of culture and creativity in Macao-Hengqin will have far-reaching meanings in terms of systemic sustainability for China and the world (e.g., China becoming a creator rather than a manufacturer).

INTRODUCTION

China, one of the oldest civilizations, has won great economic success in recent decades. Zone development is among its top strategies, ranging from Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Special Administrative Regions (SARs) to numerous industrial and research parks. To achieve the goal of connecting the world

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and promoting sustainability, in 2013 China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative. The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), one of its strategic regions, was outlined in 2016. The GBA consists of nine cities in Guangdong province and two SARs (namely, Hong Kong and Macao). How to make best use of this integration? Will this area be able to help connect the world and promote sustainability? To what extent and how? These questions have intrigued scholars and practitioners around the world.

This study explores development opportunities in the Macao-Hengqin region and attempts to answer the question of how to ensure a sustainable development path in this region. In addition to its strategic role in the Belt and Road Initiative, the GBA plan and as a SAR, Macao is studied for its under-tapped cultural and creative resources. Hengqin, adjoining Macao, is an island in Guangdong that has been the main playing field for collaborations between Guangdong and Macao. The sustainable development of this Macao-Hengqin region will have important economic and political meanings for itself, the GBA and beyond.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature and attempts to develop a theoretical framework that switches regional growth from a traditional and material path to a more sustainable and immaterial one. Section 3 introduces China's zone development pattern, Macao-Hengqin's regional characteristics, and an analysis of development opportunities based on the theoretical framework, resources support, and characteristics of the region. Section 4 proposes development strategies, making use of education, projects and the Internet. Section 5 discusses the findings, explores the implications, and concludes the chapter.

DEVELOPING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Regional Growth Fractals

SEZs as Growth Poles

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are regions with special policies, usually for the purpose of developing growth poles. Growth poles are centers of growth with a higher growth rate than the rest of a region, a concept first introduced to the literature by Perroux (1955). Due to their special policies, the costs of trade and production are usually lower in SEZs, encouraging them to grow faster than the rest of the region. In return, SEZs are expected to generate positive spillover effects within the entire region. It is worth noting, however, that growth poles can become anti-growth poles, bringing negative (such as low-quality investment and overexploitation or misappropriation of resources) rather than positive effects to the region; and the effects may also alter over time (Godlewska-Majkowska, Komor, & Typa, 2016).

Regions grow in a fractal manner because economic units (regions, cities, clusters, companies) are fractals, self-similar at different geographic scales. A region consists of cities, which consist of clusters, which consist of companies (and other institutions). The effect of a company on a cluster is analogically that of a cluster on a city or region. It is theoretically supported that the growth pole can be a company (Perroux, 1955), a cluster, or a city (Boudeville, 1972; Churski, 2011; Polenske, 2017). For an SEZ as a growth pole to bring positive effects to the country, the SEZ needs growth poles within, namely, the clusters.

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