

**Grass-root labour organisations
in China:
A Comparison of Pearl River Delta
and Yangtze River Delta**

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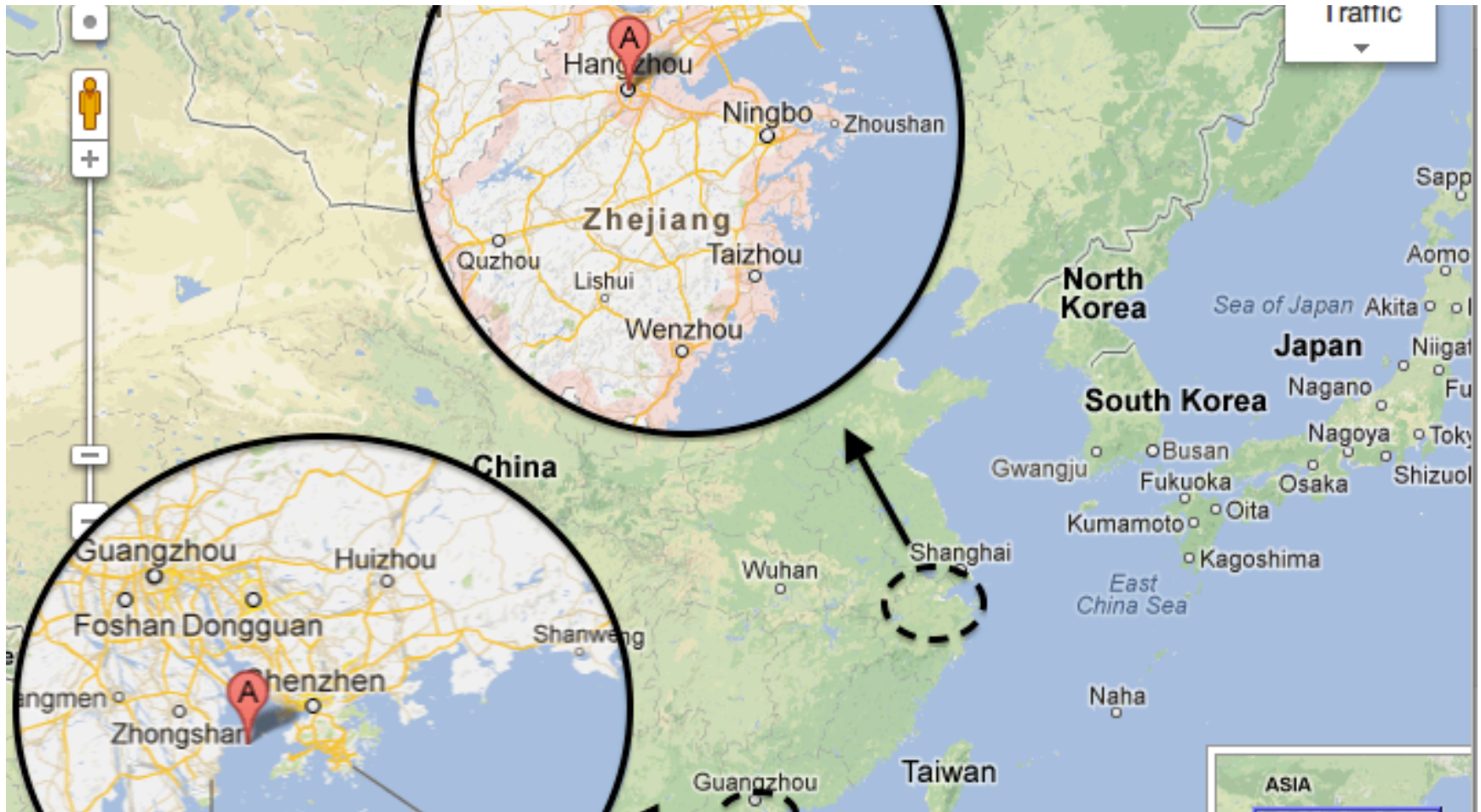
Labour Now

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Partial materials of this presentation has drawn from the co-authored paper with Andreas Beiler, *Exploitations and Resistances: A Comparative Analysis of the Chinese Cheap Labour Electronics and High-Value Added IT Sectors*

Pearl River Delta (PRD) vs Yangtz River Delta(YRD)

source from google map



Mapping Labour Unrest across China

- **China strike map: Built upon and documented by Manfred Elfstrom, a PhD student at Cornell University in the United States, has produced an extraordinary resource for the workers' strikes in China.**
<https://chinastrikes.crowdmap.com>
- **From January 2008 to April 2013, the number of strikes in the PRD is 310 and the number of strikes in the YRD is 154. The most concentrated labour strikes areas in China.**

Reasons

- Regional difference:

China has great differences and inequalities among different regions.

- Difference in Production type:

The types of production are different in the PRD and YRD.

Why do we care about the differences of production?

Reasons and Research methods

Research method:

- Interviewed and visited labour NGOs in the PRD and YRD from 2011 September to 2014 April, visited more than 10 NGOs in the PRD; 2 NGOs in the YRD.

General Background of NGOs in China

- **Background of NGOs' development in China**

Double filter system:

Started in October 1989, the Ministry of Civil Affairs Document No. 43.

Partially lifted in 2012 July, Guangdong province.

- **Can they be called NGOs?**

Western concepts of Non-Governmental Organisations: they are non-governmental and non-profit-making.

However, NGOs in China have 'Chinese characters'.

a. GONGO: Government-organised NGOs

b. Non-profit-making?

Different types of NGOs

- **Legal Status:**
 - a. Collaborate with organisations with clear legal status.
 - b. Register as a self-employed company.
 - c. Lie low and go on black list.
- **Founders' Background:**
 - a. Concerned Professionals
 - b. Former workers
- **Founding resources:**
 - a. Government: Gongo
 - b. Foreign foundations
- **Labour NGOs' activities:**
 - a. Community-based approach
 - b. Enterprise intervention approach

Labour NGOs in the PRD and YRD

- **Different Founding resources:**

PRD: Most of them are funded by foreign foundations for instance the World Bank, Ford Foundation, Oxfam, University of Oslo etc.

YRD: Many of them are receiving governmental funding.

- **Different Attitudes:**

PRD: more militant, have sense of workers' movement but also, types of NGOs are more diverse.

YRD: Cooperate with the government, work on the governmental project.

Possible reasons to cause the difference

- **Difference Developmental periods:**

PRD developed earlier hence the governance type is more laissez-faire.

YRD developed later hence the governance type is more regulated.

- **Different types of production (in the electronic sector):**

PRD: processing trade and low value added production.

YRD: with potential to develop R&D and better human capital.

- **Different types of capital**

PRD are more foreign investment especially Asian investment from HK, Taiwan, Japan.

YRD are more domestic investors

Conclusion

- Labour NGOs in the PRD compared to the YRD are more militant, advocated more on labour's fundamental rights.
- Traditional explanation of the different labour NGOs types in the PRD and YRD focuses on the governance types.
- We emphasized the types of production is a rather decisive element to this difference, the clarification of social relations of production therefore is our focal analytical perspective.

**Thank you and welcome
comments!**

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