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Agency and the Making of *Transient Urban Spaces: Examples of Migrants in the City in the Pearl River Delta, China and Dhaka, Bangladesh*

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Abstract

Internal migration within and international migration to, within and out of Asia have been on the rise throughout the past decades. As types and pathways of migration, migrants' socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds as well as their transnational and translocal trajectories become increasingly diverse, a majority of them move to cities. Diverging power geometries and relations are constantly negotiated and (re)produced in the socio-spatial dialectic of a city. Through their individual and collective agency, assets and knowledge, mobile subjects have become important agents in the (re)production of spaces in cities, while the socio-political and physical conditions of spaces frame their livelihoods, opportunities and agency. Research on migrants' agency has intensified recently, but the specific modes through which agency operates in the socio-spatial dialectic still need to be conceptualised. We develop a framework that outlines different modes through which agents and space interact. The framework is exemplified through papers on case studies from Dhaka and the Pearl River Delta (PRD) that are part of this special issue. Dhaka and the PRD have been characterised by accelerated growth throughout the past decades, particularly due to the influx of rural-to-urban as well as international migrants. We conclude that through their diverse, multi-sited and *translocal* relations and activities stretching beyond the receiving cities in a context of constant *transformation*, migrants' practices contribute to the emergence of a specific type of urban spaces that we delineate as *transient urban spaces*.

"The city is a fractured collection of mundane places that produces connections (both social and material) with other spaces, places and locales within and beyond the city or nation. Moreover, just as the city shapes migrants' everyday lives, migrants too construct, rework and transform the city through their transnational and translocal mobilities" (Brickel and Datta, 2011: 17).

1 Introduction

Internal migration within and international migration to, within and out of Asia have been on the rise throughout the past decades (cf. Skeldon, 2006, Amrith, 2011). Types and pathways of migration, migrants' socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, their transnational and translocal trajectories become increasingly diverse. Despite these variations, the unifying tendency is that a majority of them move to cities. Through their individual and collective agency, assets and knowledge, mobile subjects have become important agents in the (re)production of spaces in these cities. In turn, the social, political and physical conditions of the receiving localities frame migrants' livelihoods, opportunities and agency.

An approach that emphasises migrants' agency is often viewed as a challenge to the powerful paradigm of migrants' victimisation, marginalisation and exclusion (e.g. by Barber, 2000, Hilsdon, 2007, Briones, 2009). Recent academic writing considering the role of migrant agency has stressed the reflexive component in migrants' practices in an attempt to overcome the often one-sided emphasis on the hardships experienced by migrants (Bakewell, 2010, Samers, 2010). Prominence has long been given to migrants' struggle to sustain their livelihoods and their identities against multiple constraints. Such constraints derive from social, political and cultural exclusion, discrimination and

strict regulatory regimes in the receiving spaces, spaces of origin and the spaces "in-between" (Etzold and Sakdapolrak, 2012).

Less often, research on migrants' agency has focused on the specific role of migrants in recreating and contesting spaces (cf. Gielis, 2009, Gransow, 2012a). In this collection, we argue that migrants are important agents in shaping and even producing new types of spaces. This is especially true in urban areas that have received large numbers and heterogeneous groups of migrants, which, as complex places, offer a great array of socio-cultural and entrepreneurial opportunities for newcomers. Cities in the age of globalisation are, on the one hand, increasingly influenced through international competition that goes hand in hand with a neoliberal restructuring of the urban fabric (cf. Smith, 1996, Brenner and Theodore, 2002, MacLeod and Jones, 2011). On the other hand, cities are more than ever deeply connected to global networks and serve as hubs for the transnational flows of capital, technologies, goods, ideas and people (cf. Sassen, 1991, Appadurai, 1996, Castells, 2000). As Brickell and Datta (2011: 16) note, cities are the "sites of translocality *par excellence* harbouring places of origin, settlement, resettlement and transit." Urban spaces and migrant landscapes are mutually constructed. An analysis of the relationship between cities and migration thus has to go beyond the study of migratory movements *to* cities (important and complex as they are) and the life of migrants *in* cities (including necessary debates on social exclusion, segregation, identity formation and migrants' roles in urban labour markets) but also needs to look at the coupled processes of urban restructuring and translocal migration (cf. Smith, 2001, Simone, 2010, Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2011).

In this article, we discuss social and material spaces in cities that are especially characterised, influenced and formed by *translocal* and *transnational* connections and flows and that are constantly *transformed* through the everyday practices of individual and collective agents as *transient urban spaces* (cf. section 3). Although translocal networks, movements and associations are also characteristics of earlier forms of migration, it is the fugaciousness, dynamics and speed of change in the age of globalisation that make transient urban spaces specific. Transient urban spaces are also different from the traditional concept of the (migrant) community because they are not based on a shared local culture and history. They consist of a farrago of overlapping social and material spaces deriving from and simultaneously being shaped by (power) relations of diverse agents interacting in these spaces as well as by a criss-cross of distinct social networks of mobile subjects – who arrive in the city to find a shelter or make a living and stay for shorter or longer periods of time or are in a frequent state of flux between spaces of origin and the destination city.

International, national and local politics of migration often share the same neo-liberal bias towards the role of different migrants in the global production chain. The movement of certain types of migrants is encouraged, whereas that of others is deemed less desirable, others whose existence in the receiving communities is more strictly regulated (cf. Castles, 2000). This circumstance also results in different opportunities to interact in and with spaces in the cities. Contestation about the use of space often involves migrants, different state agents (often with conflicting interests between various state actors), other local citizens and private organisations. Marginalisation, institutional and social discrimination limit affected migrants' right to spaces in the city. In contrast, the role of other groups of migrants, particularly highly skilled migrants, become instrumental in the urban elites' and national government's campaigns to brand and create cosmopolitan cities and in the art of "worlding cities" (cf. Findlay et al., 1996, Farrer, 2010, Roy and Ong, 2011).

The objective of this special issue is to highlight the role that migrants as particular and heterogeneous actors play in the (re)making of urban spaces. In the age of globalisation, representing migrants as a unified category is futile. New information and communication

technologies, emerging economic opportunities, modes of organisation, transport links and the increasing popularity of air travel have led to a diversification of the types of migration and to new forms of temporary, repeated or circular mobilities. They have resulted in an increase in translocal, and transnational trajectories and networked existences as well as an unprecedented social and cultural diversity of migrants' lifestyles and livelihoods (Castles, 2002, Brickel and Datta, 2011, Castles and Miller, 2003³).

In this introduction, we look at different examples of urban-bound migration into the Pearl River Delta (PRD) megaurban region in south-eastern China and Dhaka, Bangladesh. The results presented here are based on six years of research by the participating authors in the frame of Priority Program 1233 "Megacities – Megachallenge: Informal Dynamics of Global Change" funded by the German Research Foundation. As part of the program, the authors have analysed different aspects of the migratory experience in the complex, informal and globalised processes of urbanisation in both regions. Migration flows, migration legislation and regimes differ quite substantially between the two case study regions (cf. section 2). However, both recently underwent accelerated economic growth and developed into major destinations, especially for domestic but increasingly for international migrants as well. As hubs of some of the most significant processes of globalisation, they are the perfect locations for investigating transient spaces. First, the regions are at the forefront of the concentration of unskilled labour that has turned them into world workshops and led to the delocalisation of labour intensive production away from developed countries. Second, the PRD is, in particular, an example of the progressive process of up-skilling that is attracting the educated professional classes towards the urban areas of Asia. To encapsulate the different groups that are the protagonists of these stories, we use the collective category of *migrants in the city* (section 2). We then elaborate and discuss the specific modes through which migrants and their agency produce transient urban spaces through diverse and multi-sited relations stretching beyond the receiving cities in a context of constant transformation (sections 3 and 4).

The conceptualisation of the interaction of agency and space presented here was developed during several workshops and meetings by the participating authors and in parallel to the writing of our individual case study articles that are included in this issue. As a result, this introductory article takes up and partly unifies theoretical considerations and findings from the case study papers and intends to serve as a frame for this special issue on "Migrants' Agency and the Making of Transient Urban Spaces", which is further achieved by exemplifying our theoretical discussion with the respective individual papers¹.

2 Migrants in the City: Examples from the Pearl River Delta and Dhaka

As Amrith (2011) illustrated, population movements in South and East Asia are nothing new, similarly to migration to and out of these regions. Although movement of population in Asia has traditionally been connected to trading networks, the consolidation of the nation states during the 20th century has increasingly produced different solutions to the coexistence of ethnic groups, some involving integration and others segregation. With the creation of nation states, borders and fences, with the modern concept of "citizenship" and the erection of other complex registration systems that are intended to delimit locally born or registered from non-locally or -registered born population groups

¹ Please refer to the individual papers for methodology and methods applied in the collection of empirical data for each case study.

– as China's household registration system for instance – and with a new global division of labour, the rules of the game for the involved migrant agents have changed. At the same time, we witness new forms of migration and an acceleration of movements within, out and to South and East Asia. Importantly, internal mobility has sparked international migration within and from South and East Asia, just as international movements have led to subsequent changes in internal migration patterns (Skeldon, 2006).

The dimensions and dynamics of the influx of a highly variegated migrant population are new phenomena in the PRD and Dhaka. In the following, we are going to sketch the development of migration in the PRD since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 and in Dhaka since the partition of India in 1947 as well as discuss the role of migration regimes in China and Bangladesh, which is necessary for understanding our theorisation of types and effects of migrant agency in both regions in the subsequent sections.

When China's developmental goal, between the late 1950s and mid-1970s, was to create a national heavy industry by extracting resources from its countryside, cities were systematically deprived of their trading networks, of private consumption, and were organised based on cellular productive structures to rationalise consumption and reduce the costs of industrialisation. The state replaced the market in the distribution of resources and goods, whereas migration into the cities became virtually impossible due to a draconian control of mobility, which was enforced especially through the *hukou* (i.e., household registration) system. This "anti-urban" ideology was progressively replaced when the state began introducing a post-industrial idea of the urban, starting in the reform period from 1978 onwards and accelerating with the real estate and consumption craze of the 1990s and 2000s. In this modernist idea of the city, industrial capital provided by the state was no longer the only engine of growth, and individual and household consumption became an additional decisive motor of economic development. Both rural domestic migrants and international migrants are key elements in this new modernist ideology of the Chinese state.

Rural-to-urban migrants provide the cheap labour and the dynamic trading skills that the city requires and expand trading networks, increasing the variety and reducing the price of products and services available to the urban consumer. Although necessary to the urban economy, these migrant groups do not belong to the city. Their right to the city is limited, while their participation in the urban economy is highly place-dependent. Migrants from rural areas are perceived, managed and policed as outsiders or temporary guest workers by most local urban citizens, governments and employers (Bork-Hüffer, 2012, Hartmann Kilian et al., 2013). For a long time, the national government has tried to channel rural-to-urban migration into smaller or middle-sized cities, whereas the migrants have been much more attracted by the booming large and megacities (Gransow, 2012a). The traditional policy-based division imposed by the *hukou* (household registration) system that defines residents based on their "rural" or "urban" places of origin with specific limitations on migrants' rights to the city and its welfare has fuelled biased discourses on who belongs to the city. Terms such as "floating population", "peasant workers", "temporary migrants" or simply "outsiders" – used in everyday parlance, the media and in academic and political discourses to describe non-*hukou* migrants – convey a sense of exclusion and indicate that migrants are not viewed as holding the same rights as urban citizens.

Providing the necessary infrastructure to new immigrants or other preferential policies is thus not high on the agenda of most city governments (cf. Zhao, 2003, Wang and Fan, 2012). Concomitantly, rural-to-urban migrants remain largely excluded from social services and segregated from the local population as they are mostly accommodated in dormitories on factory grounds and temporary

housing on construction sites or take precarious residence in interstitial urban spaces known as urban villages or "villages-in-the-city" (cf. Bork-Hüffer, 2012). These are former "rural" communities that have been encircled by urban sprawl, whose territory was included in the metropolitan area before a formal transition to urban governance (cf. Ke and Li, 2001, Zhang et al., 2003, Wehrhahn et al., 2008, Bork et al., 2011). In addition to practices of strictly monitoring the influx of low-skilled, unwanted internal and international migrant groups, one could even argue that there are endeavours of "hiding" unwanted groups. This is a direct or at least indirect effect of the recent initiative to "transform" thousands of villages-in-the-city in the central areas of China's major cities; this transformation mostly entails the demolition of current structures without the provision of alternative residential space for their rural-to-urban migrant residents, which pushes this group further to the fringes of the city (cf. Bork et al., 2011). Even among the highly skilled rural-to-urban migrants, only few manage to move up the social ladder and obtain urban citizen rights through an urban *hukou*, whereas others, the so-called *yizu* ("ants"), remain in (in)formal precarious working and living conditions for many years without knowing whether they will be able to establish a permanent home in their destination city (cf. article by Suda in this issue).

Other factors influencing domestic migration patterns in particular are the informal rules and the patrilocal marriage system in the countryside, gender norms determining household strategies as well as the gendered nature of urban labour demands (cf. Murphy, 2004). Because of the *hukou* system, marriages between rural and urban *hukou* holders are unusual, and social upward mobility through marriage of a female migrant with an urban resident is an exception. Migrants normally return home for their marriage, and female migrants also return home to give birth and eventually stay there for a while. This behaviour generates different migration trajectories of male and female migrants, with the female migration biography tending to be of a more circular type. Whereas it is predominantly men who work in the construction industry, both men and women are employed in the export industry and catering and service sectors. In many of the factories located in the PRD, 80% of the workers are female (Lee, 1998, Pun, 2005, 2012). Urban working spaces of female migrants are influenced by gender-related social orders and power structures. Roughly the same number of men and women migrate. However, women are younger when they take up paid employment, and fewer female than male migrants are in an employment situation (Department for Management and Services for Migrants at the National Population and Family Planning Commission, 2010, Gransow, 2012b).

Although a range of hurdles exists for immigration specifically from rural areas and for international migration from developing countries, recent national and local policies have also tried to attract selected wealthy, highly educated and qualified professionals who are viewed as crucial assets for the "post-modern" city. China is at the forefront of promoting entrepreneurial discourses and strategies that fuel intense city competition (cf. Xu and Yeh, 2005, Wu et al., 2007, He, 2010). As Ong and Roy (2011: xv) argue, a city is here regarded as a "milieu of intervention, a source of ambitious visions, and of speculative experiments" by urban governments and entrepreneurs, whose related strategies "must be understood as worlding practices, those that pursue world recognition in the midst of inter-city rivalry and globalised contingency". In line with such strategies, policies towards internal and international migrants are furcated. On the one hand "high-end" migrant professionals, economic and cultural elites from within the PRC (particular from other cities), from developed countries and Chinese overseas scholars and elites, who are thought to be natural elements of the post-modern cosmopolitan city, are encouraged. On the other hand, non-, low- or medium-skilled migrants from rural areas in China or developing countries are largely discouraged (cf. Bork-Hüffer and Yuan-Ihle, accepted for publication).

International migration to China has diversified and increased, particularly since China became part of the WTO in 2001 (cf. Pieke, 2012). These heterogeneous agents encompass foreign students, expatriates working for multinational – and increasingly also Chinese – companies, traders and labour migrants, Chinese return migrants and ethnic Chinese refugees. Furthermore, through a series of systematic initiatives, China has been very active in trying to encourage especially highly skilled overseas Chinese to return to the country – so far with mixed success. The aim has been to benefit from the additional experiences, know-how, education, money, relations, etc. that these migrants have gained abroad (cf. Xiang, 1993, Wiesbrock, 2008).

In comparison, in the 20th century, migration and urbanisation patterns in Bangladesh were largely driven by external shocks such as the partition of India in 1947, the war of 1971 and the famine of 1974 and by demographic dynamics, economic and industrialisation policies, rather than by policies that directly aim at shaping migration flows or influencing urban growth, as was the case in China. During the British colonisation and until the partition of British India in 1947, the province of Bengal was primarily rural, with only few industrial activities (van Schendel, 2009). As Dhaka was subordinated to Kolkata, it grew comparatively slowly. When the city became administrative capital of East Pakistan during the time of Pakistani control, between 1947 and 1971, more rapid industrialisation, urban growth and in-migration were facilitated (Siddiqui et al., 2004). With independence in 1971, when Dhaka became the capital city of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, this new economic, political and symbolic primacy status drew thousands of people from the countryside to the city. In the early 1970s, the urban population grew by 10 per cent annually. Until the first decade of the 21st century, the urban population and the economy continued to grow rapidly, although the growth rates declined successively. In 2010, the urban growth rate stood at 3 per cent (United Nations, 2012).

Migrants in Dhaka encompass different groups: Domestic migrants comprise labour migrants, students and more affluent individuals coming from villages and towns. International migrants in Dhaka include mostly labourers and traders from South Asia, few representatives of international companies, particularly the garments industry, as well as diplomats, experts and consultants working for various multi- and bilateral agencies of international development cooperation.

Although not subject to a formal and strict registration and migration control as in China, migrants in the cities of Bangladesh enjoy very different perspectives and positions in the urban context, depending on their socio-economic background and their legal status. International migrants, especially those from high-income countries, receive preferential treatment by authorities and often have close linkages to the local and national power elites. Students come from all parts of the country to Dhaka. Generally, they enjoy a high social status, especially those studying at public universities, and for most, subsidised accommodation and food is provided. In stark contrast, the approximately 120,000 Biharis, an Urdu-speaking minority, are officially denied citizenship. They fled to "East Pakistan" during and after the partition of India in 1947, sided with the "West Pakistan" troops in the War of Liberation 1971 and became stranded, as Pakistan is reluctant to take them in. They have neither voting rights nor access to social services, and most live in refugee camps in Dhaka (Bertuzzo, 2009). Another important refugee community that largely resides in Chittagong, Cox Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Southeastern Bangladesh are the Rohingyas, an ethnic-religious minority who fled from persecution in Myanmar (Ullah, 2011).

Tens of thousands domestic labour migrants come to Dhaka every year, many of them only temporarily. These migrants largely work as producers in the booming garments industry, as day labourers in the construction sector, as traders and entrepreneurs in the informal economy, as

rickshaw pullers in the transport sector and as domestic workers in the households of Dhaka's upper-middle-class and upper-class households (Ikemoto et al., 2008, Rahman et al., 2013). The migration of women from rural to urban areas has been on the rise, and female workers make up an important part of the workforce in the above-named occupational sectors in the city, with the exception of rickshaw pulling (Afsar, 2005, Rahman et al., 2013). The domestic migrants' labour is required for a functional city and contributes to connecting Dhaka with the world economy. However, socially and especially in terms of representation, they are to a high degree disconnected from the urban contexts. In local discourses of policy makers, media, academics and partly also international development professionals, migrants are frequently equated with the urban poor population, and their – assumed or real – translocal livelihoods are associated with a lack of urban civic sense and a lack of commitment and identification with the city. Their belonging and their "rights to the city" are delegitimised (Siddiqui et al., 2010).

By creating informal alliances and forming clientelistic networks, members of the economic elites and political leaders of Dhaka ensure their access to and continued control over material, political and symbolic resources. In this context of uneven power relations, most rural-to-urban labour migrants are excluded from access to resources, from participation in decision-making structures and from the rule of law (Hackenbroch and Hossain, 2012, Hackenbroch, 2013). Although the scope of action of local government units of Dhaka remains limited due to institutional deficits and financial constraints, there is a continuity of repressive actions such as evictions of street vendors and hawkers (Etzold, 2013) or road bans for rickshaws, all major occupations for rural-to-urban migrants. Slum evictions and city beautification campaigns in particular took place in the forefront of major events (e.g., the 2011 Cricket World Cup), as visible poverty but also rural-to-urban migration do not fit into the image of a modern city that policy makers, the government and media want to convey.

At the same time, maintenance of strong relations to the communities of origin and regular circular mobility are characteristic of many rural-to-urban translocal migrants' livelihoods and more persistent than in the case of their Chinese counterparts (cf. the contribution by Etzold in this special issue, Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan, 2003, Zhu and Chen, 2010). Traditional social norms, rules and personal relations remain more active and binding in the everyday lives of Bangladeshi domestic migrants. In China, socio-cultural changes have resulted in a different structure of interests of younger migrants of the second generation – defined as those migrants who grew up in the era of economic opening and have migrated to China's cities since the late 1990s (cf. Pun and Lu, 2010). These migrants appear now less inclined to align their trajectories with the expectations of families back home and to also remit substantial parts of their incomes, which many prefer to use for themselves, partly to invest in a new urban lifestyle (cf. Bork-Hüffer, 2012).

The impact of migrants on the (re-)configuration of cities in the PRD and on Dhaka is further demonstrated by the quantitative dimension of their presence in the city. The number of people who left their places of origin and most of whom migrated from rural to urban areas in China was estimated at 221 million people² in the 2010 Population Census (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011: 59-61). The number of international migrants in China, which is comparatively very small, stood at approximately 594,000 according to the 6th national census in 2010 (People's Daily as of 29 April 2011). In 2015, the Greater PRD (that includes Hong Kong and Macao) is expected to encompass five megacities, i.e., cities with a population of more than 5 million inhabitants, with Guangzhou and

² This figure includes those people that crossed at least county borders and stayed for more than 6 months in another place than the place of their permanent residency.

Shenzhen each being home to 12.3 million people, Dongguan 7.9 million, Foshan 7.6 million and Hong Kong 7.4 million (United Nations, 2012). Their growth is mainly due to in-migration and only partly to the incorporation of rural areas in the urban territory. In 2015, the mega-urban region of Dhaka is estimated to comprise 17.4 million people in 2015 (United Nations, 2012). Dhaka is by far the largest receiver of rural-to-urban migrants in Bangladesh, followed by Chittagong with an estimated population of almost 6 million in 2015 (United Nations, 2012). When evaluating the growth of Dhaka's population, one needs to consider that it is affected by a combination of migration, natural population growth and an expansion of the administrative boundaries and of the census area of Dhaka.

Migration research communities have been, for a long time, separated into those studying internal migration and those studying international migration. As a consequence of this division, the migration destinations of domestic migrants has often been viewed as "the city" (as in "rural-to-urban migration"), whereas international migrants have been considered to migrate to "foreign countries". Therefore, the fact that cities are also the preferred destination for international migrants has often been overlooked (cf. Koser, 2007, King and Skeldon, 2010, Smith and King, 2012). By addressing a variety of migrant groups under the heading "*migrants in the city*" (emphasis added, Gransow, 2012a), we wish to rectify the existing divisions in the study of domestic and international migrants and also attempt to bridge other binaries in migration research that result from separating, for instance, voluntary and involuntary, short-term and long-term forms of migration, migrant manual workers and professionals, non- or low-skilled and highly skilled migrants. We acknowledge the equally important exploration of other forms of migration as rural-to-rural movements; however, the focus in this paper is put on migrants' (re)production of urban spaces. Although we intend to treat migrants in the context of their common experience of the city, their aspirations and realities of staying in the city may vary from permanent to temporal to circular forms and include some who are in a constant state of flux between their places of origin and the destination city. We also wish to address their idiosyncrasies and heterogeneities echoed in their individual ambitions, desires, creativities and perspectives and meanings they hold of life in the city. Consisting of many sub-groups and individuals with different characteristics, aspirations and multiple forms of organisation, migrants in the city can be described as a highly diverse and mobile group impacting on urban environments while using various strategies to respond to, adapt to and to cope with city life.

3 Transient Urban Spaces

It is appropriate at this stage to consider the existing theories of space and urban space and how migrants as a particular and heterogeneous population contribute to their making. Space is a "social product", i.e., it is produced by individuals, groups and more or less consciously woven discourses and interactions (Soja, 1980, Lefebvre, 1991, Massey, 2012⁷). Hence, space is relational, as its configuration is the result of agents' practices, connections and association. It is multiple, characterised by a "contemporaneous plurality" and "simultaneity of stories-so-far", which results in a state of "coexisting heterogeneity" (Massey, 2012⁷: 9). Because it is relational, it embraces spaces of face-to-face interaction, virtual and other ways of contact, and it can serve an endless number of functions, e.g., as space of communication, housing, business, meeting or recreation but also as space of domination, surveillance, of closure or openness, public or private space.

Space is not neutral but political, shaped by uneven power geometries (Massey, 2012⁷) in the social field, which is defined as hierarchically structured spaces of positions of agents vis-à-vis each other (Bourdieu, 1985). Given the manifold and constantly (re)composed and mingled links and exchanges of agents with material and agential structures (Archer, 1995), space can be viewed as being in a constant process of "becoming" or "in the making" (cf. Simone, 2010, Massey, 2012⁷). In such processes of emergence (Archer, 1982, 1995, Bhaskar, 2008²), not only is space continuously produced or transformed but hierarchies, positions and power configurations are also being contested and possibly newly rearranged or recreated.

Like social spaces in general, urban spaces and cities are socially constructed. Cities are places of interaction that are literally built by the hands of people and shaped through people's everyday practices and their imaginations of what a city constitutes. The (re)production of urban space requires permanent "investments" of capital, labour, ideas, time, etc. by actors. Urban areas and centres show specifically high dynamics and fluidities. They are permanently in transformation as they are the base of particularly high numbers of diverse and heterogeneous agents who mingle and interact, the political and cultural elites, just as the urban subaltern, and it is here that innovation, economic development and neoliberal transformations take their quickest pace (Lefebvre, 1996, Brenner and Theodore, 2002).

In the "age of migration" (cf. Castles and Miller, 2003³) and globalisation, migrants do play a particular role in reshaping urban spaces. Despite possible restrictions and hardships encountered, they are not passive victims but actively drive urban re-structuring. This is particularly the case in Asian megacities such as Dhaka, Guangzhou, Shenzhen or Dongguan, into which migrants continuously move and which thus experience a highly dynamic growth of the population and the economy and a rapid expansion of the built-up area, where migrants contribute to a specific *transformation* of spaces and the emergence of new structures in the social, cultural, economic and political fabric of the cities.

Based on their roots in and connections to their various places of origin and possibly other destinations where they have lived earlier, migrants in the city contribute to an intensification of exchanges between and networks across different places with their circular movements. However, different spaces and social fields are not only connected. New *glocal* spaces emerge through the intermingling of global trends and local re-interpretations (cf. Robertson, 1995). *Transnational* or *translocal* spaces are constructed through the personal relations and networks, trajectories, idiosyncrasies, identities, imaginaries and resulting practices of migrants and other actors who live their daily lives, interact and communicate across dispersed places and different nations (cf. Faist, 1999, Vertovec, 2001, Pries, 2008, Vertovec, 2009, Brickel and Datta, 2011, Çağlar and Glick Schiller, 2011, Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013). According to Smith (2001: 5, emphasis added), the "criss-crossing transnational circuits of communication and cross-cutting local, translocal, and transnational social practices [...] 'come together' in particular *places* at particular times and enter into the contested politics of place-making, the social construction of power differentials, and the making of individual, group, national and transnational identities, and their corresponding fields of difference". The place where translocal spaces manifest themselves – or where they are most visible – is often a city, which is (re)produced, transformed and often contested by migrants' everyday practices and through the very existence of translocal social fields. Cities can thus be viewed as the "contested meeting grounds of transnational [and translocal] urbanism" (Smith, 2001: 70).

We frame the combined effects of *translocality* and the continuing *transformation* of spaces in, between and beyond cities with the concept *transient urban space*. We argue that the activities and modifications imposed by the agency of multifarious migrants in the city vis-à-vis the hierarchies

created and built by the state and its regulations are highly important factors that contribute to shaping the transiency of urban spaces.

4 Modes of Agency and the Making of *Transient* Urban Spaces: Examples of *Migrants in the City* in the Pearl River Delta and Dhaka

Agency is often only vaguely delineated or taken for granted (cf. Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). We define agency as the capacity of human beings and of collectivities to affect their own – short-, middle- and long-term individual and collective – ventures and overall "life chances and those of others, and [their ability] to play a role in the formation of the social realities in which they participate" (Kapferer, 2000⁴: 4, cf. also Bork-Hüffer 2012). To discern the distinct tactics through which migrants' activities affect, alter and constitute urban spaces in the PRD and Dhaka, and the ways in which material and relational space, in turn, influences human action (*socio-spatial dialectic* (Soja, 1980)), we seek to develop a theorisation of the specific modes of such interaction. There is a great variety of approaches to theorising types of structures, types of social practices and the interaction of structure and agency, for instance, the duality of structure and "rules and resources" put forth by Giddens (2000¹²), the concepts of field, habitus and capital by Bourdieu (1987, 1997 [1986]), the morphogenetic approach and agential, structural and cultural emergent properties and entities by Archer (1995, 1996⁴) and the "Actor-Network-Theory" by Latour (2005). In comparison, there are far fewer attempts to distinguish between specific forms of agency (cf. Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), which focus, for instance, on conceptualising agents' responses to economic restructuring (Katz, 2004) and different temporal orientations of agency (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Hence, we are still missing a clear-cut conceptualisation of the specific ways through which agency works.

In our eyes, three types of interaction in the socio-spatial dialectic must be differentiated (cf. fig. 1): First, agents' practices have real effects on the layout and making of space, i.e., on the *(re)production of space*. Second, the specific characteristics of social or material space can have enabling or constraining effects on agents' scope for agency and thus on the *(re)production of agency* as such. Third, agents' everyday practices can reinforce or challenge the existing power relations in socio-political space and thus the *(re)production of power geometries*. With regard to the latter, we argue that Katz's (2004) framing of types of responses to the economic restructuring of everyday life under the condition of globalisation provides a useful starting point. Each of these types of interactions of space and agents can be conceptualised through different modes that describe the specific nature of the interaction. For coherence, in the following, we provide examples from the five case study papers in this issue that are complemented through additional publications on the Dhaka and PRD mega-urban regions to explain the modes of the interrelation of space and agents.

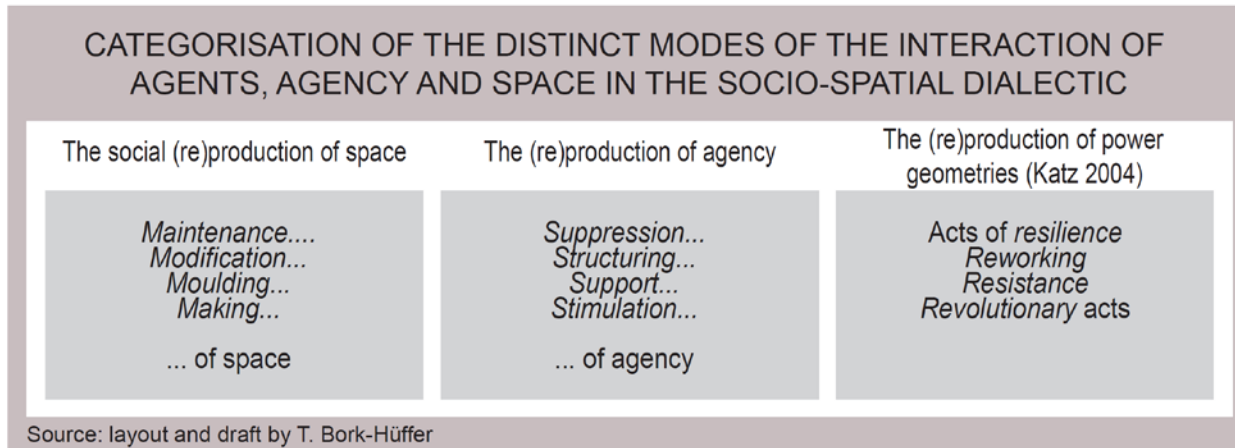


Figure 1

The Social (Re)production of Space

As noted in section 3, space is a social product, fashioned and refashioned by the activities of agents and their interaction with structure. The degree of change triggered by individual and collective practices can vary. Everyday activities can first of all result in a reproduction of space in its prevailing form if activities are adapted to the boundaries and characteristics of space and lead to continuity rather than change (*maintenance* of space). In Dhaka, for instance, the slum as a specific morphological form of the urban space, which is visibly divided from other settlement structures in the urban fabric and in which people are still excluded from many public services, continues to exist unabated. Existing power geometries and prevailing social practices maintain and reinforce the spatial fragmentations of the city (Bertuzzo, 2009, Hackenbroch and Hossain, 2012).

If agents' practices lead to an alteration of the texture and organisation of space, we suggest that this can be the result of intentional activities of people or can simply be triggered by unintentional "side effects" of people's practices. If agents basically act within existing formations, boundaries and rules of space, their combined activities can nevertheless trigger a certain unintended (slow and gradual) change of space. We frame this as a process of the *modification* of space. In fact, it could be argued that a large part of agents' everyday activities does not have the intentional objective of changing space. Nevertheless, through the aggregated effects of these activities, unintentional practices may also alter social, political, and material fabrics. Taking the example of the largest slums in Dhaka from above, despite their continued existence, the perpetual inflow of new migrants leads to a further densification of the slums' building and change in their population structure but also to economic, social and political changes inside the slum settlements that are triggered by, for example, new entrepreneurial activities and changed networks among inhabitants (Bertuzzo, 2009, Hackenbroch and Hossain, 2012). To provide another illustration, the inflow of African migrants into the Xiaobei and Guangyuanxi areas in Guangzhou in south-eastern China has been increasing rapidly since the middle of the 1990s. The African migrants' everyday practices and their businesses have changed the social and ethnic composition of these areas and led to their gradual transformation into important trading hubs and "ethnic quarters", where culturally appropriate services are readily available for this new group of migrants (cf. contribution by Bork-Hüffer et al. in this issue).

Next to the unintentional modification of space, space can be more actively and reflexively reshaped; a process we denote as the *moulding* of space through people's practices. One example is the collective agency of migrant worker organisations in the PRD. The paper by Gransow and Zhu in this

issue demonstrates how migrant worker NGOs are creating organisational spaces in their day-to-day-routines and how those spaces are overlapping and interfering with urban institutionalised spaces. They focus on NGOs activities in four major focus sites, i.e., at office, factory, court and hospital sites, and show how, driven by the immediate needs of migrant workers in the city, migrant worker NGOs are developing informal, innovative and flexible forms of agency to negotiate urban spaces on behalf and together with migrant workers.

If a complete or substantial new creation of space occurs through the intentional activities of agents (even though the result of this process can vary from its intended effects) we delimit this process with the term *making* of space. In Dhaka, tens of thousands of rural-urban migrants make their living as street vendors. Their encroachment on public space is deemed illegal by the state. The street vendors nonetheless carve out "spatial niches" in the urban fabric as they build small shacks in "edge spaces" next to the street, for instance, over the open drainage system, as they occupy sidewalks and street corners with their flexible push-carts or as they move around with their goods and sell food snacks, hot tea or fruits in a mobile manner. By offering their services, the hawkers not only mould the existing urban space but they also alter the function of public space as passers-by stop to consume food on the street, which furthermore can become the starting points for new conversations and interactions between people that otherwise would not have taken place. The food and drinks offered are affordable to the urban poor and therewith crucial for the food security of hundreds of thousands of rickshaw pullers and other migrant workers. Hence, the street vendors create new flexible and fluid informal spaces, which serve pivotal social, cultural and economic functions in the megacity (cf. the paper by Etzold in this issue, Etzold et al., 2009, Keck and Etzold, 2013).

The (Re)production of Agency by Space

Although the creation of urban spaces is largely derived from humans' interactions in and with these spaces, the specific constitution of space in turn can promote, frame, restrict or hinder agents' practices (cf. fig. 1). The conditions of both social spaces and material spaces are important.

Social spaces are composed of the relations between diverse individual agents and organised agents (e.g., state agents, social and civil society organisations, companies). These relations are structured – not determined – by the power relations in a society and the agents' capacities to enact their agency (Bourdieu, 1985, Archer, 1995, Bork-Hüffer, 2012, Massey, 2012⁷). Socio-cultural rules, norms and social categories are ascribed to individuals and groups in society (cf. Archer, 1995, 1996⁴), such as the socially ascribed status of a migrant versus the one of a local person, which is often associated with social and institutional discrimination. Social spaces are structured by regulations (or "institutions" according to the definition by Etzold et al., 2012). In China, for instance, the *hukou* system defines the difference between rural and urban populations and thereby regulates their differential access to certain social services in the cities (cf. Bork-Hüffer, 2012). Furthermore, social spaces reveal different levels of cohesiveness and openness. A middle-class neighbourhood, for instance, may be more or less cohesive and less regulated than a worker dormitory in a factory.

Likewise, there are various ways in which physical space becomes relevant for agents, which is not restricted to its physical (human-made or natural) features but also refers to levels of its regulation. For instance, street connectivity, dwelling density, walkability, physical accessibility, fences and walls set limits on the use of space. A market, a neighbourhood or a highway might be more regulated than a walkway or a park. Furthermore, the political or symbolic significance of place plays a fundamental role in its utilisation. A shrine to the emperor might be harder to transform than an

underpass. Negotiations and conflicts about the "appropriate use of space" (Cross and Karides, 2007) are thus an inevitable part of urban transformations. At the same time, it is important to note that spaces are not discrete, homogeneous or united but are fragmented, open and highly interconnected with every social space being influenced by and integrated into a larger criss-cross of different other spaces (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992, Massey, 2012⁷). They overlap to different degrees and stretch across physical spaces of varying extents and at different scales.

In certain cases, the conditions of space might inhibit or impede people's agency. In such cases, we talk of the *suppression* of agency by space. To give an example, the use of community meeting halls, ancestor temples or small parks in Chinese villages-in-the-city (cf. section 2) is often restricted to locals. They are used as spaces of recreation, where locals meet and mingle to play mah-jong, card games, drink tea, play table tennis, but they are also socio-political spaces where issues of the community are discussed and negotiated. Exclusion from these spaces means that migrants are barred from participating in the recreational activities and socio-political life of the village community. Moreover, as often no other public open spaces are available in these dense settlements, migrants are generally denied access to recreational spaces (cf. Bork et al., 2011).

In addition to a complete obstruction of agents' practices, the existing fabric of socio-political or physical spaces might emboss, form or determine the scopes and types of activities that agents can conduct. We denote this process as the *structuring* of people's activities by the conditions of social and/or material space. For example, the formal and yet imaginary geography of the Chinese state, with its defined levels of administration and a clear distinction between what is urban and what is not produces a hierarchical and symbolic organisation of spaces. The Chinese socialist state has often used urban territories to reproduce its power and to facilitate the implementation of its economic and political priorities. The reproduction of the state through urbanisation has, historically, been connected to the role that cities played in the developmental model of the different eras (see above). In the metropolitan PRD the state remains a central actor, both as a regulator and a player. In museums and parks and on public squares and historic sites, the dominant ideology and narratives of the state are often vividly re-produced. These most symbolic spaces in the city therefore tend to be over-regulated. The state and its agents try to control this territory and determine the rules of the game. The state also intervenes in the planning of private spaces, for instance by enforcing rules of segregated private governance in gated communities that host different clusters of the middle class. These spaces are built by either private or public developers, but typically guarantee that private actors (from management companies to civic associations) exercise certain social and policing functions elsewhere provided by the state, and lead to forms of membership in privileged communities (Tomba, 2009). Through this spatial planning and segregation, citizens obtain different levels of access to the city, its services and its opportunities, both as a result of their socio-economic status and as a result of existing state regulations (on household registration/ immigration, employment, and access to housing). The suppression and structuring of agency is highly selective. In Dhaka, the state's tolerance of the illegal business practices and building projects of the rich and powerful stands in stark contrast to the restrictions, repressions and interventions against slum-dwellers and the "urban underclass" (Hackenbroch and Hossain, 2012).

Conversely, the character of space might be conducive to agents' activities to different degrees. If the layout and specific characteristics of space do allow or constitute a stage for agents' practices, i.e., they neither hinder nor particularly promote agents' practices, we denote this influence as the *supporting* effect of space on agents' practices. For example, public spaces often become important sites for the activities of mobile services that in both focus regions are often provided by migrants in the city. Flock and Breitung (this issue) illustrate that certain public spaces in Guangzhou such as

major shopping streets, the main train station, entrances of metro stations or bar streets can become highly important places for migrant street vendors. Here, enough physical space is available to erect a small food stall or display goods for sale, and a crucial number of customers is frequently present and interested in hawkers' services. The characteristics of public space therefore support the activities, with one public space being more suited for certain businesses than another.

Beyond "only" supporting agents' activities, space might also substantially facilitate them. In her study on Bangladeshi migrant female workers in Malaysia, Dannecker (2009) has shown how the socio-cultural environment in Malaysia, in which women in most parts have more personal freedoms, enlarges their agency by granting them the ability to work, to dress differently, and to meet whom they wish. In addition to the new scope for agency in Malaysia, the experiences that women have engaged in, have triggered new aspirations to change the gender relations in their communities of origin and have led some women to change their behaviour when being in Bangladesh. In this case, space has a *stimulating* effect on agents' practices.

The (Re)production of Power Geometries

Actors are relationally positioned towards one another in the multiple social spaces in a city and beyond the city. They have different interests, needs and desires with regard to the design, functions and qualities of urban spaces. Concomitantly, other's dominant or subversive productions of space are perceived as desirable or objectionable, tolerable or intolerable. Diverging power geometries and power relations are constantly negotiated and produced in the socio-spatial dialectic of a city. It is important to recognise how such "politics of space" (Massey, 2012⁷) transform the nature and characteristics of space and the positions and relations of agents and how it affects their agency. Although space is potentially open, those with power do establish spaces of inclusion and exclusion – in physical terms, through walls and borders, and discursively, by coining rules and regulations, images, notions, identities and meanings. The condition of urban space is thus an expression of power relations that evokes questions about urban governance, citizenship and belonging (cf. Holston and Appadurai, 1996, Lefebvre, 1996, Low and Smith, 2006). The state and resourceful actors often have more power and capacities to reshape the socio-political fabric and to permanently structure urban space, to govern it and assign distinct meanings to it. Thereby, it is important to stress that the state is of course not a univocal actor: its different agents have contradictory interests, which might conflict within its own administrative hierarchy and lead to the adoption of variable governing rationalities; in turn, these rationalities combine with local factors and contribute to the complexity, multiplicity, plurality and often informality of urban spaces (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004).

Urban spaces created by migrants sometimes pose a challenge to established state regulation and neoliberal regimes. Migrants might contest, negotiate over and strive for space. As Yeoh (2006: 151) notes, "hypermobility and the easy transgression of national [and other administrative] borders in today's globalising world may well be liberating or emancipatory for the individuals involved, but may also reinforce existing social ideologies, including those of the nation-state". New transnational and translocal mobilities are not only involved in the production of new types of spaces but also trigger a shift in the role of spaces and borders and a new contestation of spaces. Migrants not only move through different physical spaces and across administrative boundaries but also traverse different social fields and thereby take on positions of power vis-à-vis other actors. Social movements and political struggles over "rights to the city" and institutional changes are the logical consequence (cf. Smith, 2001, Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2011). In a dialectic process of adaptation

and integration as well as resistance and separation, which evokes socio-cultural changes among the migrants and the "original" residents, the position of migrants in the city also changes over time (Çağlar and Glick Schiller, 2011: 3). Similarly, actors' social positions of power in the city lead to different temporalities of the physical structure. For example, in a megacity, such as Dhaka, an illegally constructed high-rise building of a rich investor is likely to be more permanently inscribed in the urban fabric than a small, illegally built slum shack self-made by a rural-urban migrant that can be demolished easily.

In addition to looking at how migrants' activities affect space and how the specific characteristics of social and physical space can influence agents' practices, we consider Cindi Katz's (2004) categorisation of different responses to the specific socio-political layout of space and the power relations in it. In addition to the categorisations above, her typology specifically looks into agents' responses to power relations and focuses on agents' intentional and reflexive responses. She identifies four types of responses: acts of *resilience*, the active *reworking* of space, *resistance* to existing power structures and *revolutionary acts* with the aim to reform the existing power structure (cf. fig. 1).

If agents are mostly trying to cope and adapt to existing power structures and rules in the social field, Katz talks of acts of *resilience*, which embrace the whole array of coping, circumvention and avoidance strategies. Migrants in the city, depending on their socio-economic status, origin and the specific migration policies in the receiving cities or countries, are to varying degrees included or excluded from urban institutions, infrastructures and services. Those at the lower end of the social ladder often have to create and/or expand informal spaces in search of securing a livelihood, housing, education, etc. (Roy and AlSayyad, 2004, Etzold, 2013, Hackenbroch, 2013). For them, the migration regime denies the opportunities to make long-term plans and decisions for work and life in the megacities; many areas of their lives remain in an improvised, fragile and temporary condition. Nevertheless, while adapting to the urban environment, these migrants in the city are transforming urban spaces according to their needs and constraint options. The example of Flock and Breitung's paper on migrant street vendors shall once more be drawn upon. Public spaces are focus areas of public order and street vendors' activities often lead to a contestation of urban spaces between security personnel and vendors. By adapting to rhythms of control or avoiding zones of inspection, vendors manage to avoid confrontation and eviction of their equipment. Similarly, restrictive and selective visa regulations targeting non- or low-skilled migrants from developing countries in China have led to a variety of strategies to circumvent migration legislation, such as working illegally on tourist or student visas or overstaying their visa, or escape control by moving to areas in the city or to neighbouring cities where fewer constraints on foreigners are imposed (cf. the contribution by Bork-Hüffer et al. in this issue, Haugen, 2012, Bork-Hüffer and Yuan-Ihle, accepted for publication). This state of affairs demonstrates that flexibility is a key to cope or take advantage of the conditions of or of changes in transient urban spaces.

Once people's activities have the aim to influence existing social and power relations, although "their interests are not so much in challenging hegemonic power as in attempting to undermine its inequities" (Katz, 2004: 247), they are *reworking* space. One example of this process is the endeavours of Bangladeshi migrant NGOs to improve the situation of female migrants working abroad. They offer legal and social support as well as work on raising awareness on the situation of migrant women to contain exploitation and abuse as well as to strengthen the women's capacities to leave such working relations. Dannecker (2009) has shown how Bangladeshi women's experiences in Malaysia have resulted in new development notions and new visions of equality between men and women. Female migrants have started to encourage other women to migrate, to lend money to

them to allow them to migrate as well and to introduce new gender practices in their places of origin and new discourses in which they, for instance, propagate Malaysia is a role model for a state in which women can work. In this way, migrant women are slowly *reworking* the socio-cultural spaces and power relations in their home communities.

If agents intend to actively reshape power relations with the "invocation of an oppositional consciousness" (Katz, 2004: 251), their acts take the form of *resistance*. Chan and Pun's (2009) account of Chinese rural-to-urban migrant workers' collective actions shows how dormitory spaces in factories are used as such spaces of *resistance*, where workers meet and mobilise others and which therewith become contested spaces during their protests. Increasing numbers of events characterised by migrants' resistance and protest against precarious and hazardous work conditions and low pay have fuelled discussions on workers' rights and minimum wages in China. Such protest could have a powerful effect on restructuring the economic system, with a particular effect on those cities whose economic boom during the past few years has been built largely upon the availability of huge numbers of low-paid migrant workers. The same applies to Bangladesh, where garments factory workers, day labourers and thousands of informal entrepreneurs literally make the cities work. In Dhaka, these agents' resistance to oppression, low wages and extremely hazardous working conditions occasionally appears in open protests (for instance, after the collapse of a garments factory in April 2013). Predominantly, however, migrant workers' actions are neither organised nor open but take on more subtle forms, i.e., *acts of resilience*.

When intending to completely alter the political and social fabric, agents commit *revolutionary acts*, which could result in a complete change in the power geometries of social space. As Katz (2004) notes, such revolutionary acts are, however, rarely realised. In the context of Bangladesh and China, it is thus more adequate to appropriate to talk with Katz's (2004: 257) words of "revolutionary imagination[s]".

Links of the Modes of the Interaction of Agents, Agency and Space in the Socio-Spatial Dialectic

Given the multiplicity and complexity of the relationship between space and agency, different interactions are at work simultaneously. These are interlinked and interconnected (cf. also the conclusions of Bork-Hüffer et al. and Etzold in this volume). One locale might be the arena for different types of agents' interactions with physical and social space at the same time. The well-known weekend gatherings of thousands of Filipina migrant domestic workers on Statue Square in Hong Kong is a good example (cf. Rother, 2012). Filipina migrants congregate here primarily on Sundays, which is the only free day when the migrants can leave the highly confined walls and sometimes restrictive environment of their employers' homes. Although the Filipinas activities are adapted to the available physical and material space, the physical layout of Statue Square offers the room necessary for migrants to congregate, and it therewith *supports* these activities. As many businesses have opened nearby that serve the demands of the Filipinas, their demand has *modified* the economic structure of this space. Likewise, the gatherings have *modified* the social relations among this group. Migrants' activities also *mould* the social texture in the city by intentionally offering support to those in need. As a result, this location for congregations becomes a space of *resilience* where migrants have the opportunity to meet and talk to others, which they cannot do in the highly bounded spaces of work and living in their employers' homes. However, it is also a space of *resistance*, where migrants meet to protest for more rights, better work conditions and better payments and which they use for announcements and political gatherings. These practices have the aim of reshaping existing social and political power relations and injustices by fighting for migrants'

rights. Overall, the different activities of migrants on Statue Square can be considered a process of *making* a new diverse, relational, translocal and transnational urban space in Hong Kong. Thereby, this space is in a constant process of transformation – throughout the course of the week with the gatherings of migrants culminating here on Sundays and partly in the evenings but also through the constant *modification, moulding* and *making* of this space by individual and group agents.

5 Conclusions

Within the framework established in this paper, we sought to analyse the role of *migrants in the city* in the creation and contestation of urban spaces and the resulting transiency of spaces in two regional foci – the mega-urban Pearl River Delta and the megacity Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is our understanding that *transient urban spaces* are diverse types of overlapping social and material spaces in cities that are (re)produced and *transformed* by people's everyday practices and their local and *translocal* interactions. Urban spaces are expressions of social and power relations and of people's agency. The particular layout of urban spaces is the product of complex and relational politics of space that are crafted and contested by all actors in the cities. The urban residents – no matter whether they are "locals" or (former) migrants – are actively changing, or sometimes even completely *remaking* urban structures and the flows into, within and out of their cities. Therefore, it is the various urban actors – and not the invisible hand of financial-technological globalisation – who are shaping the characteristic of urban spaces and the everyday life in their cities (cf. Smith, 2001). Migrants are one particular segment of the population in cities – in the PRD cities and in Dhaka, they are in quantitative terms a decisive and in qualitative terms a widely heterogeneous population – which contributes to the *transiency* of urban spaces that we characterise as the simultaneous effect of the *translocality* of these spaces and the fact that they are in constant *transformation*.

In this paper, we complemented existing theorisations of agency and of the socio-spatial dialectic by offering a framework that outlines different modes through which agents and space interact. Although many have stressed the migrants' agency perspective, we argue that it is necessary to distinguish between different degrees and scopes in the socio-spatial dialectic. The social (re)production of space can result in the *maintenance, modification, moulding* or *making* of spaces. Conversely, different social and physical spaces in the destination cities can enlarge, i.e., *support* or *stimulate*, capacities for migrants' practices, as well as restraining or containing, i.e., *structuring* or *suppressing*, them. Thereby, migrants often face particular restraints in terms of their access to and their participation in the various social and physical spaces in the city. However, these constraining features of space are far from being cemented or fixed; in the constant interaction of agency and space, migrants attempt to *rework*, to *resist* or (in rather rare cases) to *revolutionise* existing inequalities and power geometries in the city.

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