City University of Hong Kong
Department of Public & Social Administration

Research Student Seminar

Understanding the process of administrative reform in local government:
the case of 'Mega-ministry' administrative reform in Shunde district,
Guangdong, China

by

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7/F, Blue Zone, Academic Building
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(Please use Lift No. 8)
Language: English
Administrative reform is a hot topic around the world. The Chinese Government has initiated a series of administrative reforms to improve its efficiency and seek better governance since the 1980s, but to limited effects. In 2008, the central government started a new round of administrative reform—‘mega-ministry’ reform --- to resolve long-standing administrative and governance issues. Will this latest reform attempt stand any chance of success, and where initial changes were observed, to what extent could these changes be sustained? Shunde district of Foshan city, Guangdong province, has been famous for its innovative administrative reform and outstanding economic development since 1990s. In 2009, Shunde was instructed by the Provincial leadership to pilot the ‘mega-ministry administrative reform’ in the province, and the subsequent ‘Shunde Model’ of administrative reform was soon implemented across 25 counties in the province. The sustained progress of administrative reform in Shunde, against the lackluster progress nationally, invites questions as to how and why of change. This case study of Shunde will illuminate the interesting story of the dynamics of the local government and the impact of various actors including officials from Foshan city and Guangdong province. It will trace the dynamic process of the mega-ministry reform there and identify the roles of different actors in making change possible. Through an detailed investigation into an atypical case, this study seeks to shed light on processes and mechanisms wherein obstacles to institutional change may be overcome, and thus contribute to the discussions over the larger picture of administrative reforms in China as well as discussions on institutional change processes.

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(Free admission)

All are welcome!