

Locating Globalization: The Changing Role of the City-state in Post-handover Hong Kong

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Abstract

This paper aims to trace the historical role of the city-state in Hong Kong and how it has extensively reshaped itself in the post-handover period in response to the challenges of globalization. The study of Hong Kong, given its historical specificity, can contribute to the understanding of how the process of globalization takes place. Going beyond the dichotomy of a “strong” version of globalization — the end of nation-state, and a “weak” version of globalization — a state-centred account of globalization, our paper will look at the legacy of the colonial state and its current re-configuration after the 1997 transition. Hong Kong, as a British colony, was never a nation-state, nor, by and large, a city-state either before or after the transfer of sovereignty to mainland China. The rapid change of its urban governance from a philosophy of “positive non-intervention” to “active imagineering” in response to the global economy

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after the handover period has provided us with a good case-study to illustrate the changing role of city-state and to locate globalization in a specific economy.