Revisiting multi-level governance theory
Politics and innovation in the urban climate transition in Rizhao, China

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Rizhao – An “ordinary” city in China

Rizhao Population (10'000 People)

Rizhao Built Area (100'000 m sq.)

Rizhao Municipal Yearbook (1978-2011)
1. New forms of collaboration across sectors and the public-private-civil society divide

2. Leadership at the sub-national level

3. New sources of authority and agency in global governance

MLG
A climate governance paradigm
MLG is…

Deliberative?

Legitimate?

Inclusive?

Effective?

From descriptive to normative
MLG in Rizhao
ECO CITY DEVELOPMENT

Horizontal intra-governmental
“Different municipal authorities, such as the forest department, the agricultural department, the tourism bureau, and the DRC, tend to have different opinions for each piece of land”
(Planner, Beijing, 2013.03.22)

Vertical intra-governmental
“The port serves the entire region, so the development path had been decided on a higher level… it is needed, logistically, for the region”
(Planner, Beijing, 2013.05.22).
ECO CITY DEVELOPMENT

Horizontal inter -governmental
“When they write the plan, they do consider the environment… But in my experience, this will be a process of ‘in the day -time we research, in the night -time we vote’. Because in the end, even if there may be pollution, the government still needs to consider GDP, economic growth, factories”
(Local researcher, Rizhao, 2013.03.13)

Vertical inter -governmental
Not visible on the ground!
SOLAR HEATER INNOVATION

Horizontal inter -governmental
Little interaction required

Vertical inter -governmental
Alignment of political objectives across levels
SOLAR HEATER INNOVATION

Horizontal inter-governmental
Bottom-up experimentation and culture of solar energy use

Vertical inter-governmental
“Newly-built high-rise buildings often do not install SWH systems … If things continue this way, soon Rizhao will lose its leading position in the application of solar thermal technology”
(Governmental official, Rizhao, 2010.04.29)
1. Enduring power of traditional authority

2. Limited participation in international networks

3. Economic stakeholders distort the meaning of “horizontal collaboration”
Does the focus on process remove attention from outcome?
THANK YOU


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