



Institute of Chinese Studies

# WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

*The Rise of China's Silicon  
Valley? The Growth of  
Research and Development in  
the Guangdong-Hong Kong-  
Macao Greater Bay Area*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Speaker :

**Laurie Pearcey**

6 November 2024

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Speaker:** Mr. Laurie Pearcey, Advisor to the President, Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), and College Master, CUHK (Shenzhen).

**Chair:** Mr. Ravi Bhoothalingam, Emeritus Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; and, Founder and Chairman, Manas Advisory, Gurgaon.

**Date:** 6 November 2024

**Venue:** Zoom Webinar

- The seminar examined China's efforts to transform the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) into a global innovation hub. The speaker, Mr. Laurie Pearcey, delivered a data-driven presentation, with an emphasis on the collaborative report by the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Elsevier. The session began by referencing contrasting views on China's scientific trajectory as covered by The Economist, underlining the country's evolution from a research underdog to a global leader.
- Mr. Pearcey structured his talk into five thematic areas: the importance of the GBA for science and innovation, the research performance of the region, specialised subject areas, potential for knowledge transfer, and the GBA's connection with global academia. The speaker emphasised that despite impressive infrastructural advancements, including high-speed rail and mega bridges, the GBA continues to face challenges stemming from legal disparities and administrative fragmentation across its constituent regions.
- While Hong Kong has traditionally been the intellectual anchor of the region, Shenzhen has surpassed it economically, hosting tech giants like Huawei, Tencent, BYD, and DJI. Nevertheless, Hong Kong retains primacy in academic research. Mr. Pearcey noted that Guangdong's universities remain absent from the world's top 200 rankings and have a lower-than-average participation rate in higher education. This gap has led to foreign universities establishing campuses in the GBA to support research expansion.

- The speaker noted that there has been a remarkable 200% increase in research output in the GBA between 2018 and 2022. This growth is not just in volume but also in citation impact, with Hong Kong leading in global collaborations. Notably, academic institutions dominate the region's research landscape, with limited but growing contributions from the corporate sector, particularly from companies like Huawei and Tencent.
- Mr. Pearcey that research focus is largely inclined toward STEM subjects, especially in mainland GBA cities. In contrast, Hong Kong demonstrates more diversity with notable output in social sciences. The predominance of STEM disciplines reflects state priorities and industrial strategies. Both Hong Kong and the GBA are fostering academic-corporate collaborations, particularly in electrical and electronic engineering.
- In conclusion, Mr. Pearcey drew attention to Hong Kong's potential as a gateway between China and the global research community, citing its 41% international collaboration rate. The chair, Mr. Bhoothalingam, summarised the discussion by underscoring the futuristic significance of the GBA's research trajectory and its implications for China's innovation-driven development model.

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