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Political economy and the emergence of a hybrid mode of governance of tourism planning

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HIGHLIGHTS

• Modes of overall governance and of tourism governance vary between destinations.
• Combined analysis of tourism governance modes and political economy in Hong Kong.
• A hybrid governance mode of pro-growth and pluralist elements evolved there.
• The mode reflected economic development pressures and civil society demands.
• There was hybridity between tourism plan-making and planning application systems.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how Hong Kong’s political economy influences its local modes of tourism governance and development planning. The study explores how a destination can exhibit a hybrid mode of tourism governance, and also how that emerged in Hong Kong in relation to three phases of socio-economic and tourism development. The three phases are 1842–1966, 1967–1997, and post-1997. Hong Kong’s present mode of tourism governance combines pro-growth and pluralist elements. It is affected by the need for capital accumulation and political legitimacy and by the relative influence of government and civil society.

1. Introduction

The notion of governance has become a powerful analytical focus for understanding public policymaking (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). In its general sense, governance refers to all patterns of power, authority and rule that can secure order, and it is relevant to situations where there is a hierarchical state, where the state depends on others, or where the state plays little or no role (Bramwell, 2011). The governance literature suggests that neo-liberalism and other changing circumstances have meant that the state in recent years often has a diminishing capacity to directly lead in public policies. To achieve collective goals more effectively, governments have had to work with a much wider network of agencies so as to benefit from their strengths and to access resources (Healey, 2003). Yet a debate remains about the extent to which such developments in governance have affected the state’s steering capacity. Some suggest that the state has weakened, but others consider that non-hierarchical governance is often embedded in hierarchical structures, and that government can be effective at steering these networks. Thus, governments can remain a central actor, especially in terms of legitimacy and accountability (Bramwell & Lane, 2010, 2011; Lange, Driessen, Sauer, Bornmann, & Burger, 2013).

A mode of governance involves the processes of mobilizing and coordinating social action (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). It also provides sets of rules in governing arrangements which affect who gets what, where, when, and how (Howlett, Rayner, & Tollefson, 2009). The power distribution in a governance mode is a socio-political construction embedded in a political economy, which depends on the actors’ socio-economic positions, interests, and values, and how actors’ interests and preferences are contested, negotiated and grafted together (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010). Any

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changes in the political economy might alter the actors’ influence, values and aspirations and the negotiation processes. The mode of governance will reflect the shifting patterns of perceptions, beliefs and relations among actors in society, as well as the demands of securing capital accumulation and retaining the legitimacy and authority of the governance arrangements (Pierre & Peters, 2005).

There is an emerging interest in how tourism governance varies between destinations, notably according to the differing balance between state intervention and societal autonomy. A few studies have examined the character of tourism governance in specific places, including the character of the governing relations, governing logic, key decision makers and political objectives (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Erkus¸-Öztürk, 2011; Hall, 2011). A very small number of studies of tourism governance in destinations use typologies of simplified “ideal typical” modes of governance from the political science literature. In these typologies each mode displays its own typical governance characteristics with regard to such features as the participants, objectives, instruments, and outcomes (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003). These typologies can be valuable in identifying differing potential approaches to tourism governance found in destinations. The present paper adds new understanding in this field by exploring in a more sustained way than in previous research how modes of general and tourism governance in a tourist destination.

The study notes that the typologies of modes of governance are “ideal types”, so that empirical work is needed to reveal the actual governance relationships in place, such as which elements and processes are evident, which are most important, and whether features of different modes are present (Pierre, 1999). In the real world, one should not be surprised to find tourism governance in one place resembling more than one “ideal type” mode, so there can be “hybrid” forms of governance (Treib, Bahr, & Falkner, 2005). Thus, the evaluation here adds new insights by exploring whether tourism governance in a specific destination resembles specific “ideal type” modes or is more of a hybrid, and also by considering the relationships between the constituent elements of the destination’s governance mode, including between the overall governance and the governance of tourism development.

It is also argued that, while “ideal types” of tourism governance can assist heuristically, they do not help us greatly in explaining how and why this governance retains its essential character or evolves over time. This is because “ideal types” of governance modes from the political science literature are primarily analytic rather than causal and predictive (Harding & Blokland, 2014). Thus, the present study evaluates tourism governance using a political economy approach as a broad theoretical perspective that suggests causal processes of temporal continuity and change. Thus, the paper adds new understandings in this field by combining analysis at two levels of abstraction: a more specific level of conceptual analysis of modes of governance, together with a more general level of theoretical analysis using a political economy perspective. This means that stability and change in the modes of overall governance and tourism planning governance in a destination are related to trends in the local political economy.

The article, first, evaluates the extent to which actual governance in a tourist destination resembles specific “ideal type” modes or is more of a hybrid, and also the relationships between the constituent elements of the governance mode in the destination, including between overall governance and the governance of tourism development planning. Second, it evaluates how the mode of tourism governance is affected by the wider context of local political economy; and it shows that the use of historical analysis can help in understanding how the changing political economy may affect the tourism governance mode. Hong Kong is used as the case study to assess whether its tourism governance has resembled a single or a hybrid mode, how this governance mode has evolved over time, and how continuities and changes in these governance relationships have reflected Hong Kong’s political economy.

The paper next reviews relevant literature on governance, typologies of governance modes, and connections between political economy and tourism governance. It then introduces the case study context and the methodology used. Subsequent sections present the study’s findings, with discussion of the consequences of Hong Kong’s political economy for its general governance modes and tourism development planning.

2. Relevant literature and approaches

2.1. Governance

Governance concerns “how societies are governed, ruled or steered” (Wang & Bramwell, 2012, p. 988). Traditionally, governments acquire the power to steer. According to Jamal and Getz (1995, p. 193), “no single organization or individual can exert direct control over the destination’s development process” because each actor in the tourism sector holds a certain degree of power, resources and access to networks. Collaboration among these actors, therefore, is usually important for governments to achieve their collective goals. Thus, governance is generally seen as involving governmental and non-governmental actors working together collectively, perhaps so as to secure a collective goal or social order (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Rhodes, 1996). It entails a set of rules and practices, and the outcomes affect who wins and who loses in accessing resources (Howlett et al., 2009).

Governance changes over time as it adapts to evolving societal circumstances, such as because of the shifting influence of influential actors or of hegemonic values (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). Some commentators also suggest that there has been growing pressure in recent years for more open platforms for discussion and for wider civil society participation in decision-making (Beaumont & Dredge, 2010; Wesley & Pforr, 2010). Campbell, Hollingsworth, and Lindberg (1991) suggest that when pressures for change develop, then actors may engage in trial-and-error search processes within certain limits for alternative governance processes, with this operating through evolutionary variation, selection and retention.

2.2. Political economy and tourism governance

Governance can be seen as a crucial part of society’s political economy (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003; Jessop, 2008). Political economy as a broad perspective has been widely applied in the social sciences, but it is only occasionally applied to tourism (Bramwell, 2011). It assists in understanding how economic and political conditions help shape power relationships among actors (Jessop, 2008) and how government operates within society (Bramwell, 2011; Jessop, 2008; Pierre, 1999). In this perspective governments are considered to help to regulate society in order to mitigate various economic and social crises and to promote the system’s resilience (Bevir, 2009). Such regulation is important as Marx argues that market forces are inherently unstable and lead to capital over-accumulation and unstable social relations (Wang & Bramwell, 2012). Stability in capitalist economic systems is also considered to depend on securing economic returns on capital and on establishing the societal conditions to further this end. Governments also need to maintain political legitimacy in the context of unstable social relations. Without that legitimacy governments can fail to retain the authority required to regulate the economy and maintain social order. Concerns about legitimacy may
encourage governments to respond to popular pressures, pursue welfare policies, or to form alliances or partnerships with some social groups. In such ways, therefore, the economic and political conditions can substantially influence the government’s activities and policies, although such conditions are not determinant because of the vital importance of the agency of actors and the contingency of particular circumstances (Bramwell, 2011).

A few studies highlight how political economy affects tourism governance, and especially the character of government intervention. First, Wang and Bramwell (2012) note that local government in Hangzhou, China had a strong entrepreneurial and pro-growth policy agenda in order to secure competitive advantage, such as by creating a strong business environment and by attracting inward investment, and to safeguard its political legitimacy and authority. In that context, decision-making for the city’s strategy for the heritage and tourism district of West Lake was restricted to a few powerful “policy community” actors who at times put more emphasis on economic development than on heritage protection.

Second, Sharpley’s (2008) assessment of tourism planning in Dubai suggests that the country’s huge oil revenues gave the government considerable political and economic legitimacy to steer policies in support of its pro-growth interests. Yet, the government also collaborated with the private sector. The institution “rules of governmental objectives, to achieve quality in the tourism sector, to boost tourism skills and employment opportunities for local people, and to encourage local women to take up tourism managerial positions in an Islamic state, all of which enhances Dubai’s economic competitiveness and quality of life. A hybrid governance mode involving state control and public-private partnerships was considered effective for Dubai’s tourism development so that capital accumulation and the government’s legitimacy were safeguarded.

Third, Wan (2013) explores how the different political and economic structures of Hong Kong and Macao, China’s two Special Administrative Regions, have influenced their tourism planning governance. She shows that, compared with Hong Kong, Macao’s tourism governance was more centralized, with decisions made by just a few senior government officials. Macao’s government appears to have more political and economic legitimacy behind its tourism policies and planning, with this affected by the slower development of its active civil society, the generally lower educational levels, and the casino industry’s substantial contributions to government revenues.

2.3. The dimensions of different modes of governance

Lange et al. (2013) suggest that it is helpful to see the modes of governance in specific places as involving interdependent relationships between three dimensions: politics, polity and policy (see Fig. 1). First, the politics dimension of governance involves “the actors and interaction processes inherent in a mode of governance” (Lange et al., 2013, p. 409). DiGaetano and Klemanski (1999, p. 8) identify the politics dimension with the “composition of key participants” and the “governing alignment”, as well as with who has most influence and power in public policymaking, the procedures through which actors interact in networks, and how the actions of players influence the network’s direction.

Second, Lange et al. (2013, p. 409) suggest that the polity dimension of different modes of governance covers the structural facets of governance, or “the institutional ‘rules of the game’ that shape the interactions of actors”. The institutional “rules of the game” concern the “institutions and procedural settings, that is, the institutional architecture in which politics and policymaking take place” (p. 410). This architecture shapes the actors’ interactions, such as whether use is made of formal rules and of a top-down command-and-control type of approach or of a bottom-up social learning approach. Third, the policy dimension denotes the content facets of the mode of governance, and it is described as involving “policy formulation and implementation and thus ... objectives and instruments of political steering towards outputs” (Lange et al., 2013, p. 409). DiGaetano and Klemanski (1999, p. 6) refer to this as the “governing agenda.”

The three dimensions of different modes of governance are seen as interdependent, so that changes in one dimension are likely to affect the others. Further, the “complex and variable relations between political processes, institutional structures and policy content” mean that in one place there is often a “plurality of simultaneously co-existing modes of governance” resulting from “multiple and complex changes in governing” (Lange et al., 2013, pp. 410 & 408). Pierre (1999, p. 377) also argues that “cities frequently display conflicts between different models of governance supported by different segments of the city administration”. Changing governance modes can also occur in places many times, often depending on how forceful the pressures are for change (Campbell et al., 1991).

Studies of governance often consider the roles and capacities of governments in governance processes (Bramwell, 2011; Jessop, 2008; Pierre, 1999; Pierre & Peters, 2005; Wan, 2012, 2013). Some research contends that, while there has often been a shift from “government” to “governance”, governments still play important roles because they are often the principal actors in political processes, and they often remain responsible for providing incentives and imposing requirements on actors in promoting objectives around common goals (Bramwell, 2011). Thus, studies of governance often focus on changes in the roles and capacities of government. These assessments require an understanding of what drives the changing roles and strategies of government, including in the wider institutional and political setting (Pierre & Peters, 2005).

Based on Lange et al.’s (2013) three dimensions of different modes of governance and on literature concerning government’s potential importance for governance, a set of four analytical dimensions of modes of governance are identified. They are used to organize parts of the subsequent analysis.

1. Who are the key actors? (the politics dimension).
2. What are the policy agendas/objectives of the key actors? (the policy dimension).
3. What are the rules of interaction? (the polity dimension).
4. What are the roles and strategies of government?
2.4. Modes of governance

There are many typologies of modes of governance in the political science literature. Combining the work of Pierre (1999) with DiGaetano and Strom (2003), one can propose seven modes of governance: managerial, corporatist, pro-growth, welfare, clientelistic, pluralist, and populist. Gill and Williams (2011) argue that the welfare mode is less relevant for tourism destinations as it occurs primarily in declining industrial cities where welfare payments comprise the main capital influx. Thus, the other six modes suggested by Pierre (1999) and DiGaetano and Strom (2003), which potentially are more relevant for tourism, are now discussed. Each is considered in terms of the four previously identified dimensions: (1) the key actors, (2) their policy agendas/objectives, (3) the rules of interaction, and (4) the roles and strategies of government (see Table 1).

First, the managerial mode seeks to improve the efficiency of public service delivery by introducing private sector management practices into governance processes, such as by contracting out services to the private sector and adopting their performance evaluation practices. In this governance mode a key form of interaction involves contracts, and customers are central participants because of the importance of satisfying their needs. Here the government is an administrator and its key roles are to set goals and manage contracts (Pierre, 1999).

Second, in a corporatist mode of governance major societal interests are included in public decision-making, with the institutional arrangements allowing government, employers, trade unions and other organized interests to formulate and implement the negotiated policies (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003). According to Pierre (1999, p. 381), “Although the emphasis is on safeguarding and promoting the interests of the organizations’ members, there is also a strong commitment to participatory democracy in a broader sense”. Interaction is carried out through deliberation, involving bargaining processes between organized interest groups (Pierre, 1999). Governments mediate between different groups, while seeking to preserve some autonomy (Healey, 1997). Pierre (1999, p. 383) observes that corporatist governance “frequently creates inequalities between members of favored organized interests, on one hand, and other social groups, on the other”. Similarly, DiGaetano and Strom (2003, p. 365) suggest that corporatist governance “tends to lead to the formation of exclusionary ruling coalitions of powerful economic and/or community interests”.

Third, Pierre (1999) indicates that a pro-growth mode of governance is based on public and private sector cooperation for local economic growth. In this mode, the rules of interaction involve cooperative and partnership working based on the shared interests of government and business elites in local economic growth, with government playing a crucial role as it is the key actor and facilitator of the cooperative and collaborative arrangements.

Fourth, DiGaetano and Strom (2003) suggest that a clientelistic mode of governance involves politicians and senior government officials as powerful gatekeepers who manage and determine the use of local resources sought by favored interests or clients (Stone, 1989). The policy agenda seeks to “provide selective benefits for the politicians and constituents involved, typified by the classic American party machine”, and also to sustain relationships of patronage (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003, p. 365). In this governance mode the government plays a passive role, with interaction rules involving informal and hidden social networks between politicians, senior government officials and clients.

Fifth, a pluralist governance mode is characterized by DiGaetano and Strom (2003) as involving considerable competition among contending interests. The key actors are “the constellations of politicians and private interests that form competing blocs or alliances in the contest to set a city’s policy agenda for material reasons” (p. 366). The policy agenda concerns promoting political democracy and the representation of diverse interests, while the interactions involve deliberation and bargaining processes among different organized interest groups. The role of the government in this governance model is that of a mediator, providing arrangements for different groups to articulate their concerns, while preserving some autonomy from the competing interests (Healey, 1997).

Sixth, DiGaetano and Strom (2003) suggest that a populist mode emerges when politicians are inclined to resort to grassroots mobilization as a way of setting and implementing policy agendas. They indicate that the key actors are community activists and politicians, with their policy agenda being to “establish institutional mechanisms for enlarging the purview of popular control in ... governance” (p. 367). Interaction in this kind of self-governing network occurs through informal rules (norms, culture) and self-crafted (non-imposed) formal rules. Government serves as a facilitator of the democratic process by promoting institutional settings that enable stakeholders to be heard and to seek to build a consensus (Healey, 1997).

Such typologies of governance modes are Weberian “ideal types”, and they rarely if ever exist in a pure form. The suggestion, however, is that characteristics of a particular mode may prevail at a given time, although hybrid or mixed forms may also emerge which bring together features of two or more modes (DiGaetano & Lawless, 1999; Kooiman, 2003). Hybridity between governance modes can emerge, such as between one or more of (1) a dominant governance mode; (2) vestiges of a once dominant but now superseded mode; (3) the waxing and waning between relatively more durable alternative modes; and (4) a newly emergent mode that arises due to changing circumstances (Emery & Giauque, 2014).

Table 1
Typology of modes of governance.

| Key actor(s)          | Managerial      | Corporatist      | Pro-growth | Clientelistic | Pluralist | Populist |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|----------|
| Policy agendas/       | Efficiency      | Distributive     | Growth     | Selective benefits to sustain the patronage relations | Political democracy and the representation of diverse interests | Public interest |
| objectives            |                 |                  |            |              |           |          |
| Rules of interaction  | Contracts       | Deliberations    | Cooperation/ partnerships | Informal and hidden social networks | Informal rules (norms, culture) |
| Roles/strategies of   | Administrator   | Mediator         | Key partner and facilitator | Passive role | Facilitator |
| government            |                 |                  |            |              |           |          |

Source: Compiled by the authors from various sources, including DiGaetano and Strom (2003), Healey (1997) and Pierre (1999).
locking & Davidson, 2010). Here the term metagovernance can be used for the state’s overall coordination or steering of a single governance mode or a combination of such modes (Bevir, 2009; Jessop, 2011)

3. Case study context and methods

3.1. Hong Kong’s economic and political context

An assessment of evolving governance modes related to tourism development planning is undertaken next for Hong Kong, a global city and tourist destination. This former separate country and British colony is today closely connected with its neighbor, the People’s Republic of China. This major capitalist economic center is now attached to a centrally planned country led by a communist political party, and that country has itself opened up to substantial marketization. Hong Kong’s governance and political relations in preparation for, and subsequent to, this new relationship with its neighbor are especially interesting.

Hong Kong is situated on China’s southeastern coast, and its limited land area (1104 km²) accommodates about 7,187,500 people (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2014). The city provides tourists with access to Macao and Mainland China, notably the Pearl River Delta region. This capitalist city is now part of China, but as a distinctive Special Administrative Region (SAR) of that country it has retained many of its former economic and political features. Hong Kong was a British colony between 1842 and June 1997, and since July 1997 China assumed sovereignty and it became that country’s Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. China’s government allowed Hong Kong to maintain its current political arrangements for 50 years under a “one country, two systems” principle, and Hong Kong people have various rights in the SAR within the Hong Kong Basic Law framework.

Hong Kong is a global center for finance, trade, services, telecommunications and business. Its GDP in 2013 was HK$2125.4 billion or (US$265.67 billion) (HK$ 295,701 per capita or US$36,962 per capita), which is among Asia’s highest (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2014). It is also a world-renowned tourism destination. Hong Kong’s tourism businesses generally are of three types: privately owned, publicly owned, and joint public and private sector owned. Many hotels and airlines, such as Ritz-Carlton and Cathy Pacific, are privately-owned tourism businesses, while Hong Kong Disneyland is jointly owned by Hong Kong’s government and the Disney Land Company. There are numerous publicly-owned tourism projects, including Ngong Ping 360, Avenue of Stars and Hong Kong Ocean Park. Tourist numbers increased from 16,566,382 in 2002 to 54,298,804 in 2013 (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2002; Tourism Commission of Hong Kong, 2014a). The city’s most prominent tourist origin locations have shifted to Mainland China: in 2013, 75% of Hong Kong’s tourists were from Mainland China (Tourism Commission of Hong Kong, 2014a). The average length of stay of overnight guests was 3.4 nights. The Tourism Commission of Hong Kong (2014b) estimates that by 2017 over 70 million tourists will visit Hong Kong each year.

3.2. Case study approach and methods

The study examines continuities and changes in Hong Kong’s political economy from the colony’s birth in 1842 to the present, together with their consequences for the overall governance modes relevant to tourism development planning and for the specific governance modes for tourism development planning. The analysis of these evolving governance relationships draws on the previously identified typology of governance modes based on Pierre (1999) and DiGaetano and Klemanski (1999), and also on the four analytical dimensions of modes of governance: (1) the key actors, (2) their policy agendas/objectives, (3) the rules of interaction, and (4) the roles and strategies of government (Bramwell, 2011; Jessop, 2008; Pierre & Peters, 2005; Wan, 2012, 2013). Consideration is also given more specifically to the evolving governance modes for tourism planning, as well as how they were affected by Hong Kong’s political economy and overall governance. Data were collected from multiple sources, allowing for data triangulation. The data were drawn from archival materials, newspapers, government documents on planning laws, procedures and policies, as well as government planning studies, reports and statistics. Academic articles on Hong Kong’s urban and tourism practices were also studied.

4. Political economy and Hong Kong’s governance mode

Relations between Hong Kong’s political economy and its governance modes were evaluated for three phases: 1842–1966, 1967–1997, and post-1997.

4.1. 1842–1966: Executive-led, pro-growth governance without significant challenges

After being ceded by China to the British in 1842, Hong Kong quickly developed its trading and regional financial sectors. Hong Kong attracted many overseas tycoons (especially from Britain) and their businesses, such as Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, and Jardine Matheson. After 1945, China’s civil war brought an influx of cheap labor. Taking advantage of the cheap labor supply, Hong Kong’s economy diversified into manufacturing, into textiles in the 1950s and into clothing, electronics, plastics and exports in the 1960s. The contribution of exports to the city’s GDP increased from 54% in the 1960s to 64% in the 1970s (Schenk, 2008). The boom in commercial and manufacturing activities also promoted a surge in demand for retail and office spaces and a real estate boom. In this period, Hong Kong was not a major tourism destination, in part due to the lack of tourism facilities (Law & Cheung, 1998).

The Hong Kong government’s economic policies emphasized minimum intervention but maximum support for business and economic growth. This involved letting the market lead while protecting the interests of large businesses, including protecting businesses from the real estate sector (Ng, 2008). Yet, as Hong Kong’s largest landlord, the government has relied on land sales for significant amounts of its income (Ng, 1999). Ng (2008, p. 169) comments that the “vested interest of the government in land-related development has led to an emphasis on ‘economic space’ rather than ‘life space’ in land use planning in Hong Kong”.

On the political front, a British government-appointed Governor administered Hong Kong, assisted by an Executive Council and a Legislative Council (Castells, Goh, & Kwok, 1990). The former was responsible for overall policy and law making, while the latter was responsible for the approval of the laws and for public finances. The council members were directly appointed by the Governor. They were senior civil servants and leading businessmen, mainly from big British companies, and they had similar pro-growth interests to those of the government (King, 1981).

These circumstances meant that from 1842 to 1966 Hong Kong had governance characteristics closest to the pro-growth governance mode in the combined Pierre (1999) and DiGaetano and Klemanski (1999) typology. Government officials and business elites were the key actors, and their policy agenda focused on economic growth, including real estate development. The interaction rules involved incorporating the business elites into the major policymaking bodies, which led to an elite consensus politics (Hughes, 1976). The Hong Kong government played a key role, as it
was a major partner in these cooperative and collaborative arrangements. At that time, Hong Kong people generally accepted this pro-growth governance mode because most were migrants from Mainland China who largely put meeting their immediate material needs above that of challenging government (Hughes, 1976).

4.2. 1967–1997: Pro-growth governance, but some community challenges

Hong Kong’s economy was significantly affected by China’s Open Door Policy in 1978 and also by the signing in 1984 of the Joint Declaration between China and Britain, which confirmed that China would regain Hong Kong’s sovereignty on July 1, 1997 (Yeh, 1997). The newly vigorous engagement of China in international trade and investment after the Open Door Policy, and the signal in 1984 of Hong Kong’s future integration with Mainland China, encouraged Hong Kong to provide commercial and financial services support for China’s economic development. But Hong Kong’s growing economic integration with China in this period encouraged manufacturing firms to relocate to China to take advantage of cheaper labor. In part due to this, in the 1980s Hong Kong’s economy substantially shifted from manufacturing to financial services, retailing and tourism. Service sector employment grew from 52% to 80% from 1981 to 2000, while in the same period manufacturing employment fell from 39% to 10% (Schenk, 2008). This period also saw the rise of several powerful local business people, such as those heading Cheung Kong Company and Sun Hung Kai Company (Scott, 1989), as well as a boom in the tourism sector (Law & Cheung, 1998; Mok & Dewald, 1999). Facilitated by the completion of several tourism-related mega-facilities, such as the Cross Harbor Tunnel and Mass Transit Railway, the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Hong Kong Ocean Park and several hotel projects which offered a total of 33,536 hotel rooms in 1996 (Mok & Dewald, 1999), tourist numbers increased very substantially from 505,733 in 1966 to 10,406,261 in 1997 (Law & Cheung, 1998). The city was being described as “a show window of capitalism in the East” (Law & Cheung, 1998: 42). Many tourists wanted to experience Hong Kong while it was still under colonial rule (Mok & Dewald, 1999). In the 1990s Hong Kong was ranked as Asia’s most popular tourist destination (Law & Cheung, 1998).

Several changing circumstances affected the city’s governance in this period. First, an outbreak of riots in 1967, influenced by a slight economic recession and deficient government communication with the population, posed the first intense challenge to Hong Kong’s pro-growth governance mode. Second, pressure to improve communication with civil society encouraged local District Boards to be set up in the 1980s, with these consisting of both popularly elected and appointed councilors, and they sowed seeds for a growth in Hong Kong’s political groups and parties (Scott, 1989). Third, the introduction of elected members to the Legislative Council in the early 1990s allowed Hong Kong residents to have more influence on this higher tier of governance (Cheung, 2005). Fourth, a growth in political groups and parties, the expanding employment and salaries in service sector white collar jobs (the product of Hong Kong’s economic restructuring), and improving education, had nurtured a group of wealthier and better educated Hong Kong residents who actively sought greater democracy and improved environmental conditions, especially as people increasingly realized that past economic success and economic restructuring had brought many social and environmental problems. The problems included poor air quality (partly caused by the wider region’s rapid economic development), the influx of migrants from China, and a surplus of industrial land (Chiu, 2003; Yeh, 1997).

The changing political circumstances encouraged several important institutional initiatives to be adopted over the period. For instance, Hong Kong’s Town Planning Ordinance was amended in 1974 to provide for a planning application system, with powers to consider the applications and to speed up planning being delegated to an independent body, the Town Planning Board (Yeh, 1997). A Planning Department was also established in 1991 to coordinate the city’s planning work, and in that year it carried out a comprehensive review of the Town Planning Ordinance, with the intention “to enhance transparency and public participation in the planning process, to streamline the planning procedures, and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of planning enforcement control in the rural areas of the New Territories” (Fung, 2005, p. 3). Several environmental policies, such as a White Paper on “Pollution in Hong Kong—A Time to Act” and “Sustainable Development for the 21st Century” (SUSDEV21), were also formulated in the late 1980s and early 1990s to address the increasing socio-environmental concerns (Chiu, 2003).

The period 1967–1997 can be characterized as being closest to an emerging hybrid mode of overall governance which combined both pro-growth and pluralist elements, again based on the governance modes in the combined Pierre (1999) and DiGaetano and Zemanek (1999) typology. The pro-growth mode was underpinned by the focus of the government and business sector on promoting capital accumulation through financial services, real estate and tourism, and on assisting with Hong Kong’s economic restructuring. The prevailing interaction rules involved the dominant actors working together to adapt to the changing circumstances so as to secure their interests. The dominant actors were senior government officials and the business elites, but government had the central role as it established the governance arrangements. Yet pluralist elements were also emerging in this period due to civil society demands for wider involvement. Thus, a hybrid governance mode had begun to develop which involved pro-growth and pluralist features. The interaction rules in this hybrid mode included more policy deliberation and bargaining between the increasingly diverse groups and the government as they competed to set the city’s policy agenda (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003). Hong Kong’s government understood that it had to start to listen more to the public and to mediate between the public, business and government interests. The government thus had an increasingly complex metagovernance task in “striking a balance” between the different actors, interests, steering mechanisms and governance modes.

4.3. Post 1997: Pro-growth governance, but with intense community challenges

Business continued as usual after China regained Hong Kong’s sovereignty in 1997. Hong Kong continues to be a major financial center and a leading gateway to China, and the service sector soon contributed over 85% of the city’s GDP (Schenk, 2008). Its economy was hit hard, however, by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, which sparked declines in its GDP, employment rate and major asset values. In 1998 property prices fell nearly 40%, the annual real GDP growth rate fell from 5.1% in 1997 to 3.2% in 2003; and unemployment grew from 2.2% to 7.9% within the same period (CRS Report for Congress, 2007). The outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome negatively affected Hong Kong’s economic recovery and also its tourism industry, with tourist arrivals dropping from 11,702,735 in 1996 to 9,883,436 in 2000 (Law & Cheung, 1998). On the political front, the same administrative arrangements as before the handover have continued since 1997, helping to maintain Hong Kong’s economic and political stability (Cheung, 2005). Hong Kong’s Chief Executive (under British rule, the Governor) and
the Executive and Legislative Councils continued to dominate public policymaking. Executive Council members were directly appointed by the Chief Executive and they were pro-government and pro-Beijing elites, while Legislative Council members were directly elected by local people, but with industry and professional groups forming a different functional constituency. Cheng (2012) suggests that in 2012 as many as 43 of the 70 Legislative Council members were pro-Beijing and only 27 were pro-democracy. Of the 30 seats from the functional constituency, 18 represented the interests of traditional business and professional elites. This incorporation of business people, professional groups and pro-Beijing figures onto Hong Kong’s two important advisory bodies has allowed the government substantially to maintain the former elite consensus politics and to safeguard its pro-growth interests (Cheung, 2005).

Civil society demands for involvement in planning intensified after the 1997 handover of sovereignty, fueled by growth of the well-educated middle classes, increasing organization among interest groups and political parties, and by an increasingly ethnically diverse society (Lai, 1997). The failure of several of the first Chief Executive’s bold initiatives upset many people, as did the generally top-down, paternalistic policymaking (Cheung, 2005). More people became willing to engage in collective action to protest for a more livable and sustainable city. This applied for the Central–Wanchai Reclamation Plan, with tourism-related dimensions including a station for the Airport Express, extension to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, new Star Ferry terminal and new open spaces. Nearly 100 objections to the Plan were received in 1994, arguing that the scale of the associated harbor reclamation was too large, unnecessary and not environmentally sound. Community reactions were even stronger following the 1998 launch of the Southeast Kowloon Development Scheme, a large-scale residential and commercial project with some tourism-related aspects, such as a cruise terminal, on the site of the relocated international airport. Nearly 900 objections were received from the public (Wan & Chiu, 2008), and professional bodies produced alternative plans to urge the government to alter the scheme, and the final Plan had a 59% reduction in the scale of harbor reclamation (Wan & Chiu, 2008). Further, the government’s proposed National Security Bill in 2002 triggered a street protest in 2003 by around half a million people, often middle class and professional, to highlight concerns that the proposal threatened freedoms of speech and association. Since then, petitions and protests have often been used by civil society to exert pressure on government policies (Chan & Lee, 2007; Wan, 2013). And very recently it was possible to suggest that for a time Hong Kong has “literally become a city of protest” (Chan & Lee, 2007; Wan, 2013, p. 169).

The period after 1997, therefore, saw further growth of the fledgling political community, with increasing criticisms of the Hong Kong government. People from different social groups and with more diverse interests, including interests around housing, social welfare, health, environmental protection and democracy, began to become involved (Chan & Lee, 2007; Cheung, 2005). Groups and parties used social media to mobilize people to express their dissatisfaction through street protests. Professional bodies also produced alternative plans to challenge the government’s proposed urban development and tourism plans (Wan & Chiu, 2008). Faced with these increasingly diversified and openly expressed civil society aspirations, the Hong Kong government has sought stable societal relations so as to maintain its ruling legitimacy and encourage economic growth. It has thus played an important role as a mediator in order to narrow the differences in views. As a result, a more fully hybrid mode of governance involving both pro-growth and pluralist elements emerged after 1997.

5. Hong Kong’s evolving governance mode and tourism development planning

The evolving relationships between Hong Kong’s overall governance modes and tourism development planning over the 1990s and 2000s are discussed next. Analysis focuses on links between the overall governance modes and two processes central to the modes of tourism development planning: tourism planning applications and plan-making. Again use is made of the combined Pierre and DiGaetano and Klemanski typology of modes of governance and of the four analytical dimensions of governance: (1) the key actors, (2) their policy agendas/objectives, (3) the rules of interaction, and (4) the roles and strategies of government.

5.1. Overall tourism planning arrangements

For Hong Kong’s tourism planning institutional arrangements, the Executive Council is responsible for overall public policymaking, and it is made up a Chief Executive and members who predominantly have business interests and are pro-Beijing. Beneath that, a Tourism Commission is responsible for tourism policy issues, and several other departments deal with the varied tourism-related development issues. A Development Bureau is in charge of overall economic development, a Land Department deals with land administration, and a Planning Department coordinates land use planning. Empowered by the Town Planning Ordinance, the Town Planning Board, which comprises both official and non-official members, is responsible for making plans and considering development proposals, but it only has an advisory role because the Executive Council has the power “to accept, revoke and refer an ‘approved’ plan to the Board for revision and alternation” (Tang & Wong, 2008, p. 259).

Hong Kong’s land use development planning follows a three-tier system: territorial, sub-regional and district. At the highest tier there is a territorial development strategy which provides the overall framework, and sub-regional development strategies translate that overall framework into specific planning objectives for the city’s five sub-regions. The district level planning translates the sub-regional strategies into district Outline Zoning Plans, and these are exhibited for public comment. Ng (2008), however, argues that public consultation in these arrangements occurs too late in the planning process as it happens only once the plans are already endorsed by all government departments and the Town Planning Board. Tang and Wong (2008) also note that most public objections collected during the exhibition periods for draft Outline Zoning Plans are dismissed by the Executive Council, with draft plans often approved without amendment. Ng (2008, p. 170) further complains that the “Hong Kong government knows no community planning, and plans are often made according to the Planning Standards and Guidelines (established codes and knowledge) rather than the researched needs and the lived experiences of a community.”

Thus, Hong Kong’s urban development planning as it affects tourism reflects the city’s overall hybrid mode of governance with pro-growth and pluralist elements, but there are limits to the pluralist elements. The key actors are the government and the senior government officials, whose policy agenda is pro-growth. Ng (2008, p. 170) argues that behind the idea that the “market leads and government facilitates is a government with substantial discretionary power vested in law to manipulate the strategic growth directions of the city”. This is because “the legal system has legitimized a set of planning and development processes that deny citizens a right to participate and confine decision-making power to a privileged few at the apex of the power structure”. The main interaction rules involve partnership working, but the Executive
Council and Town Planning Board members largely hold business interests and a pro-Beijing mind set, enabling the Hong Kong government to retain its elite consensus politics. The Hong Kong government is the key actor in the cooperative and collaborative arrangements and it plays a crucial role in the governance mode. However, there were shifts in the general and tourism development planning processes after 2004, which brought in more elements of pluralism and which made the government’s task of overall steering or metagovernance more complex. The changes are now discussed.

5.2. Changing planning application processes and the governance mode

If a public or private sector developer wants to develop land for a purpose other than the intended planning purpose (such as converting green belt to tourism uses), and if the proposed use is under Column 2 of the relevant “Notes of Plan” of the government, then they must submit a planning application to seek consideration by the Town Planning Board. There were significant changes in this application process, however, after the Town Planning Ordinance of 2004, and these have affected the governance modes of tourism development planning. Before the 2004 Ordinance, anyone, and not necessarily property owners, could submit a tourism planning application to the Town Planning Board for consideration (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2005) (Fig. 2). Applications were circulated for comments from other relevant government departments, the applications and associated comments would then be sent to the Town Planning Board for consideration within two months, and then applicants would be notified by the Board whether their applications were deferred, rejected, approved with conditions, or approved without conditions, with stated reasons. Applicants were also advised about their right to seek another review by the Board.

Before 2004, planning applications were dealt with in a system which was strongly pro-growth driven, with senior government officials and Town Planning Board members being the key decision makers, and from 1990 to 2000 between 67.6% and 83% of non-official Board members were business people or professionals, who mostly represented banking, finance and real estate sector interests (Wan, 2005). There was also no legal requirement for applicants to seek the views of affected property and land owners or of nearby residents before submitting planning applications. The rules of interaction of this pro-growth mode, therefore, were to restrict decision-making to the Town Planning Board and to recruit Board members who held interests similar to the government’s pro-growth interests. Government played key roles in these institutional arrangements. It provided the legal planning framework, and the Chief Executive directly appointed the Board members, so it was possible to appoint people with interests and mind sets similar to those of government. Also, the government officials with

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**Fig. 2. Procedures for planning applications.**

Source: By the authors based on the Town Planning Ordinance (Hong Kong Government, 1997, chap. 131), the 2004 Amendment of the Hong Kong Town Planning Ordinance (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2005) and Fung (2005).
planning and development roles provided the Board with crucial information for its decision making.

Proposals to amend the Town Planning Ordinance were made in the 1990s, but a new Ordinance was not passed into law until 2004 and implementation only began in 2005 (Fung, 2005). The 2004 Ordinance included major alterations in the planning application system which entailed some significant changes to Hong Kong’s tourism governance mode. First, applicants for planning approvals were required to obtain written consent from property owners, or to serve a notice to them, before making applications. And, second, all applications needed to be published for public comments for a three-week period. These two changes meant that for the first time all affected owners, nearby residents and other interested parties had the opportunity to be consulted and involved. Thus, unlike before, the public, including affected owners and other interested parties, can now view the applications and express their views to the Board, although final decisions still rest with the Town Planning Board members. Third, while the Town Planning Board members retained the key decisions, there were also changes in the composition of the Board which deals with planning applications. First, there was increasing representation of non-official Board members, who now are from the academic, environmental protection and historical preservation sectors. The non-official Board members for the 2012–2014 term are from the following sectors: real estate, surveying and construction (5), architecture and urban planning (4), law (4), engineering (3), social welfare (2), banking (2), business (2), historical preservation (2), geography and environmental management (2), logistics and transport (2), and education (1) (Wan, 2013). Finally, all the Town Planning Board meetings are open “except for the deliberation parts in the consideration of representations/comments on plans and of planning applications and reviews, and for discussion of confidential items” (Fung, 2005, p. 4). The public can observe the meetings through a live broadcast in a public viewing room.

Thus, the post-2004 system has new interaction rules which entail a mild shift toward pluralist elements. In this new governance mode for tourism development planning the extent of public involvement in the planning application system has expanded, and as a consequence the policy agendas have shifted from purely pro-growth to incorporate wider civil society interests. Hong Kong’s government now plays an increasing role as a mediator between the competing interests, as evidenced by the appointment of Board members with more diverse backgrounds.

5.3. Changes in plan-making and the governance mode

When large-scale tourism developments are initiated, Hong Kong’s government identifies land assigned for such large developments in the territorial and sub-regional plans. But after 1999 and again after 2005 there were significant changes in the processes to develop these plans (see Fig. 3), and these changes have affected the governance mode for tourism development planning.

Before 1999 the Director of Land would make a proposal to the Governor/Chief Executive to develop or amend a territorial or sub-regional plan. The Governor, and after July 1997 the Chief Executive, would then authorize the government’s Planning Department to prepare the draft plan and to circulate it to relevant District Board and government departments for comments. The draft plans would then simultaneously be submitted to the Town Planning Board members for consideration, and also published for public inspection for three weeks. If objections to the draft plan were received, then the Town Planning Board would hold an objection hearing. If the Board did not propose amendments to the draft plan, then it (with or without amendment) together with the objections that were not withdrawn, would be submitted to the Governor/Chief Executive, who could either approve, reject, or refer the amended plans to the Town Planning Board for further amendment. Thus, before 1999 Hong Kong’s tourism development-related plan-making system reflected a pro-growth mode based on cooperative arrangements between government and business which allowed these partners to safeguard their economic interests. However, unlike the case for planning applications, when it came to final decisions about plan-making the Governor/Chief Executive had the final say and not the Town Planning Board.

After 1999 the plan-making system changed due to the Town Planning Ordinance being amended, and also due to the intense public debates about the Central–Wanchai Reclamation Plan and the Southeast Kowloon Development Scheme. As already mentioned, there was opposition to the large-scale harbor reclamation for these schemes, and there was pressure on the government to delegate more power to the public for larger-scale planning.

Fig. 3 shows the new plan-making system. Under the old system, plans would be exhibited for public inspection only after the draft plan had been submitted to the Town Planning Board for consideration. But after 1999, the Board could ask the Planning Department to first prepare a “concept plan” and a “preliminary layout plan” through extensive public consultation, such as through using roadshows, radio broadcasts, district consultations, and seminars. Based on the collected public comments, the Town Planning Board would then prepare an Outline Zoning Plan for formal public inspection and consultation for two months. This gave the Board greater flexibility to decide if the concept plan and a preliminary layout plan were needed, depending on the circumstances.

The new Town Planning Ordinance which was implemented in 2005 also changed the statutory plan-making procedures after that date. First, all draft plans prepared by the Town Planning Board had to be published for two months instead of three weeks. Second, all people could submit comments to the Board, instead of just people directly affected. Third, the collected public comments needed to be exhibited for public inspection for three weeks, while previously they were not published. Fourth, if the board decided to amend a draft plan after an objection hearing, the proposed amendments would have to be published again for further representations. The process is meant to continue until some form of broad community agreement can be reached. Finally, whereas previously only directly affected land owners could submit further objections to the Board, the new Town Planning Ordinance allows any person, other than the original objectors, to do so within a three-week period, and a further hearing would then be held to consider these representations.

It is argued here that the new plan-making system for tourism development largely continued in a pro-growth mode of governance, probably even after 1999, with the Town Planning Board elites and the Executive Council’s Chief Executive primarily reflecting economic interests and holding key decision-making powers. However, the new system especially under the 2004 Town Planning Ordinance had new rules of interaction, with an expanded scope for public involvement and incorporation of wider community interests in decision-making. Hence, since 2005 Hong Kong’s plan-making system for tourism development has shifted from a pro-growth mode to a hybrid mode with pro-growth and pluralist elements. The government’s role in this hybrid mode of tourism governance has shifted towards that of a mediator between the different interests.
6. Conclusion

This article makes several theoretical contributions. First, relatively few studies in tourism have explored the modes of tourism governance in destinations, and the typology of such modes and the associated analytical framework that were explained here can assist researchers in examining this issue. The typology of tourism governance modes was linked with an analytical framework of four attributes (the key actors, their policy agendas/objectives, the rules of interaction, and the roles and strategies of government) as an operational tool to assist with identifying which governance mode might be closest to the specific circumstances in different cases. The few previous studies of tourism governance modes have limitations in this respect. Erkus¸-Oztürk (2011), for example, also adopts Pierre (1999)’s typology in an assessment of tourism governance in Amsterdam and Antalya, but he does not identify an analytical framework of attributes in order to assist in evaluating the governance processes in specific places. Hall (2011) identifies from the policy science literature another valuable typology of modes of governance which can be applied to tourism, namely, hierarchies, communities, networks and markets, but these are rather broad for the specific task of distinguishing between the particular characteristics of different destinations.

The article has also advanced our understanding of tourism governance modes by using the notion of hybridity. The typologies of modes of governance are “ideal types” (Erkus¸-Oztürk, 2011; Hall, 2011; Wan, 2013), and the case of Hong Kong demonstrates that in practice tourism governance can resemble more than one “ideal type” mode. From being governed by what can usefully be depicted as a broadly pro-growth mode before 1966, it is helpful analytically to argue that Hong Kong has shifted since the early 1970s to a hybrid pro-growth and pluralist mode. The paper suggested that this reflects pressures to strengthen the city’s economy through restructuring in the context of capital accumulation and global capitalism, including the shift to services due to Hong Kong’s cost structure and the emerging prominence of financial services, real estate and tourism, and also that it reflects the overlapping but differing interests of entrepreneurs, the rising middle classes, and the less well-off. A largely pro-growth mode was seen as unable to address the increasingly diversified community demands. The Hong Kong authorities judged that it had to respond to some of the calls for greater democracy, and this has helped the authorities largely to retain social stability and political legitimacy. Yet, a pure pluralist mode might be considered sub-optimal for the city’s overall economic development as it could hamper the prominence of

![Fig. 3. Procedures for plan-making.](source: By the authors based on the Town Planning Ordinance (Hong Kong Government, 1997, chap. 131), the 2004 Amendment of the Hong Kong Town Planning Ordinance (Hong Kong SAR Government, 2005) and Fung (2005).)
economic efficiency objectives in the city’s planning, objectives which have boosted economic development since the 1980s and 1990s in the face of rapid changes associated with the increasing ties with China and economic restructuring. The government has steered a course which helps to maintain its ruling legitimacy and avoids various crises by adopting a strategy that adequately addresses both economic and societal interests. The adoption of a hybrid mode, both pro-growth and pluralist, has helped the government to deal with the changing situation.

The Hong Kong case illustrates how actual governance in a tourism destination may more closely resemble a hybrid mode rather than a single “ideal type” mode. Indeed, more generally it may well be the case that hybridity is usually the closest analytical description for the situations found within tourist destinations. The case study further illustrates how the relationships may reflect the objectives behind the overall steering of governance.

The relationships between the constituent elements of hybrid governance were also explored in the study. For example, it was found that the strategies and processes for widening the potential influence or power of civil society after 2004 varied between different constituent parts of Hong Kong’s tourism planning system. This is consistent with Pierre’s (1999, p. 277) argument that “cities frequently display conflicts between different models of governance supported by different segments of the city administration”. The new system for planning applications has widened participation to include affected land owners and parties, but with the ultimate say left to the Town Planning Board; and the new process for plan-making has expanded the potential for public involvement, but the final plan still needs to be approved by the Chief Executive. It can be suggested that greater room for public involvement is permitted in plan-making than is the case for planning applications because plan-making involves a larger scale of development and it affects many more interests and people than do specific planning applications. Thus, in a society that has increasingly diversified demands the government sees the need to include wider public views in the plan-making processes, although the Chief Executive still has the ultimate power to control the final plan-making decisions. The hybrid mode of tourism governance, therefore, involved hybridity between its plan-making and planning application systems. Through the combination of these two strategies and processes in the two planning systems the Hong Kong government has been able to strike a new relationship between efficiency and equity without losing its power and legitimacy to steer.

Tourism governance was assessed here by combining analysis at two levels of abstraction in order to achieve greater analytical purchase: a more specific level of conceptual analysis of modes of governance, together with a more general level of theoretical analysis using a political economy perspective. Political economy approaches are quite frequently applied in tourism (Bramwell, 2011; Sharpley, 2008; Wan, 2013; Wang & Bramwell, 2012), but this perspective was seen to be very useful here in understanding how the modes of governance evolved in the city. It was suggested that the shifting from a pro-growth governance mode to a hybrid mode with more pluralist elements has enabled Hong Kong’s government to alter its strategies to stabilize the economy and social relations while securing its ruling legitimacy. Nevertheless, while the economic and political circumstances were important, it was also argued that much also depends fundamentally on social practices, the agency of actors, and the contingency of particular circumstances (Bramwell, 2011). This study also indicates the merits of relating temporal continuities and changes in a tourism destination’s modes of governance to the destination’s overall evolving political economy. A carefully

traced historical perspective on political economy can greatly assist in explaining how and why tourism governance in specific places retains its essential character or evolves over time (Pastras & Bramwell, 2013).

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Professor Rebecca L.H. Chiu, Director of the Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning at the University of Hong Kong, for offering her insights on the study framework for this research. Also, we are grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments on an earlier version of the paper.

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