

What does the Policy Formulation Process of East Lantau Metropolis and Lantau Tomorrow Vision Policy Imply Hong Kong Policy Style

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The Asian Conference on the Social Sciences 2020
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

East Lantau Metropolis, a Hong Kong reclamation plan of 1,000 ha in the Central Waters, appeared to have reached consensus in a territory-wide consultation. However, the Government did not move forward to policy execution, but introduced a more aggressive and enhanced 1,7000 reclamation proposal of Lantau Tomorrow Vision. Such move received even more grievances in the divided and highly politicised community. The controversies of this issue can be seen and summarised 1) in terms of ideas that why the Government goes far beyond the perceived consensus reached and introduced a brand-new proposal, and 2) in terms of actors and institutions that what are the driving forces behind Lantau Tomorrow Vision. This paper explains and analyses this unconventional change in the policy process according to the four phases of policy formulation process as well as a key stakeholder analysis. Together with the consideration of the current governance in Hong Kong, the unique policy style in Hong Kong under "One Country Two Systems" is conceptualised – implying a conflicting mixture of Chinese Authoritarian style and British Majoritarian Style. This policy style can also be understood and is applicable when looking into other salient issues and the long-lasting anti-Government protest in the polarized society of today's Hong Kong.

Keywords: Land Development, Hong Kong, One Country Two Systems, Policy Formulation, Policy Style

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Introduction

Housing problem in Hong Kong is described as an “Unending crisis”, “modern tragedy” and “chronic failure” (Goodstadt, 2014). Carrie Lam pledged in her election platform to find more land and seek consensus by “establishing a dedicated task force to review a macro review of our land supply options” (Lam, 2017). Two months after she sworn into the office, the Task Force on Land Supply (“the Task Force”) was established and spearheaded a five-month consultation exercise called “Land for Hong Kong: Our Home, Our Say!” in April 2018 to achieve public consensus on what land supply options out of the 18 identified ones. Going forward with the efforts made by previous administration, this consultation was successful in placing this problem onto the official agenda as the John Kingdon’s policy window of opportunity opens from a problem stream (Kingdon, 1984).

East Lantau Metropolis (“ELM”), one of the 18 land supply options, is a reclamation plan of 1,000 ha in the Central Waters – the largest reclamation project in Hong Kong’s history if implemented. However, during the consultation process, Carrie Lam introduced a brand-new proposal of “Lantau Tomorrow Vision” (“LTV”) in her policy address. This vision outlines an enhanced 1,700 ha of East Lantau reclamation of artificial islands for land production in the mid to long term (Lam, 2018). Although ELM received support from slightly more than half of the respondents and was later recommended by the Task Force together with other seven well-received options, a poor impression was created as the public did not perceive a sudden policy change during consultation period. The public may only expect that the Government could bring ELM proposal towards the decision making stage after consensus was made. Given it is the first time for LTV to be placed in the official policy process, this reclamation proposal has also sparked off huge disputes in the general public. This plan was perceived to be more radical but was never discussed in society including during the land supply consultation. As proposed by Harold Laswell that actors, institutions and ideas are critical factors for effective policy development (Harold, 1951), the controversies in this issue can be seen and summarized 1) in terms of ideas that why the Government goes far beyond the perceived consensus reached and introduced a brand-new proposal, and 2) in terms of actors and institutions that what are the driving forces behind the new LTV.

With the above setting, this paper analyzes that this policy formulation process which originates from ELM to LTV and proposes from this incident that what is the policy styles in Hong Kong. Policy style refers to “the understanding of the relationship between politics and policy” and is useful to “describe the policy processes that lead to policy changes” and “capture the relatively enduring nature of many policy arrangements” (Howlett & Tosun, Policy styles: a new approach, 2018). Therefore, the manner in which ideas, actors and institutions present and respond would constitute a policy style.

In order to carefully analyze this issue in this highly politicized society, a throughout analysis on policy formulation process and related stakeholders is of vital importance. Therefore, a timeline of events is mapped to illustrate the policy formulation process from 2014 when ELM was first introduced till the announcement of LTV in 2019. Then, it explores the policy subsystems involved in this issue with key stakeholders analysis. With the abovementioned sections, an analysis and contextualization of

Hong Kong policy style is concluded. It is hoped that this style can be understood and is applicable when looking into other salient issues in the polarized society of today's Hong Kong.

From East Lantau Metropolis to Lantau Tomorrow Vision – An Overview and A Timeline of Events

In today's fragmented world, policy process is “often rite with irrationality, inconsistencies, and lack of coordination” (Wu, Howlett, & Fritzen, 2010) – and this could lead to major controversies and disagreements in our society. Context matters and ideas are considered as crucial factor in the policy development, especially in this case when the policy related to reclamation in the East Lantau has been in the discussion for more than five years.

To identify the issue, this section adopts the four phases to policy formulation as identified by Harold Thomas, namely 1) appraisal , 2) dialogue, 3) formulation and 4) consolidation (See Figure 1) (Thomas, 2001). Figure 2 summarizes the key events chronologically when formulating ELM and LTV with reference to this model.

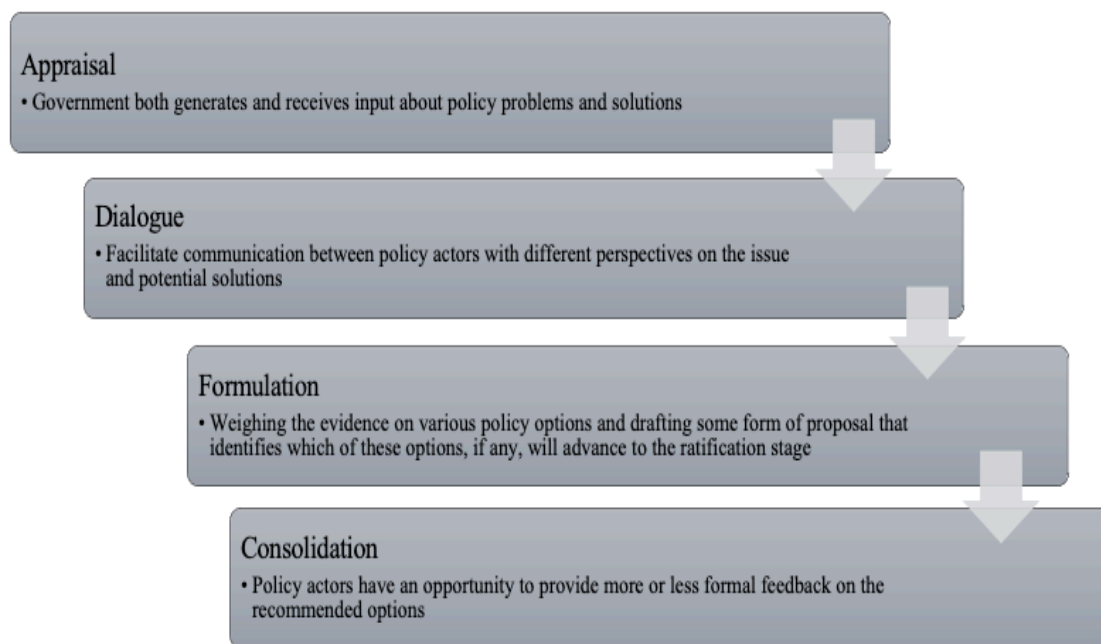


Figure 1: Harold Thomas' four phases of policy formulation process (Thomas, 2001)

Concerned Policies	Date	Events	Phases of Policy Formulation			
			Appraisal	Dialogue	Formulation	Consolidation
ELM	January 2014	1. Introduction to ELM by former Chief Executive CY Leung				
	March 2014	2. Fiscal Budget Application to Legislative Council (“LegCo”) on ELM strategical studies				
	July 2015	3. Launch of Technical Research on Transport Infrastructure at Kennedy Town for Connecting to ELM				
	October 2016	4. Public Consultation and Conceptualization for ELM in HK2030+ Proposal				
	April 2018	5. Launch of Land Supply Consultation by the Task Force				
	August 2018	6. Introduction to LTV by Chief Executive Carrie Lam				
ELM	LTV	December 2018	7. Publication of Report for the Land Supply Consultation			
		February 2019	8. Government’s Announcement on the Full Acceptance of the Report by the Task Force			

Figure 2: Key Events and Timeline of Events of ELM and LTV

Appraisal I – Introducing East Lantau Metropolis (Events 1 – 3)

A kindergartener asks me, “Where will I live when I grow up?” “Nowhere” is definitely not an acceptable answer. (Leung, 2014)

This quote by former Chief Executive CY Leung in his 2014 Policy Address caught eyeballs within Hong Kong’s society that kids may pose questions related to housing, but the agenda setting has been successfully accomplished that the land supply was too severe that policies should be formulated to alleviate the issue. The concept of ELM was then introduced, claiming that it would become the third core business district after 10 years (Leung, 2014).

After two months, the Development Bureau submitted its proposal to LegCo’s Public Works Subcommittee to review and seek HK\$226.9 million for strategic studies for artificial islands in the central water, including to explore the feasibility of ELM (Development Bureau, 2014). Before so, the Government had conducted a review on the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities Island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge in Q3 2013 and identified the economic benefits associated with new reclamation areas in such area (Legislative Council, 2014). Without any public consultation or debate, different actors especially pro-democratic legislators have expressed discontent for not engaging with the public before putting forward the proposals (Legislative Council, 2017) and environmentalists also stepped in to address their concerns on the impact to fisheries industries (Wong, 2014).

Although such fiscal application for strategical studies was never successful and withdrew later due to diverse views within LegCo, the Government proceeded with “Technical Research on Transport Infrastructure at Kennedy Town for Connecting to ELM”. Such research was conducted to understand the “development parameters, population, employment level and development phasing of the ELM” so as to propose related transport infrastructures and connectivity when ELM was put in place in the future (Civil Engineering and Development Department, 2019).

It is worth noting that no public participations were involved during this process, different actors within the policy subsystems had actively voiced out their concerns or grievances during the process. Preliminary studies or researches were also included to generate output for a more practical ELM plan.

Dialogue and Formulation – Public Consultations on the East Lantau Metropolis (Events 4-5)

Despite a lengthy appraisal phase, the dialogue and formulation phase was nearly combined when the Government proposed a comprehensive and concrete plan of ELM for public consultation in *Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030* (“HK2030+”). Released for public consultation in October 2016, the ELM proposal was conceptualized with a clearer objective to “meet the long-term social, economic and environmental needs of Hong Kong beyond 2030 (Development Bureau, 2016). As a territorial development strategy, HK2030+ was formulated to update the strategy and directions of future planning and development in Hong Kong as well as the built and natural environment beyond 2030 (Development Bureau, 2016).

As one of the key and strategic areas of 1,000 ha development area in HK2030+, ELM has been branded as the third Central Business District (“CBD”) to strengthen Hong Kong’s position as a global financial and business hub. The ELM can also provide housing for a population size of 400,000 to 700,000 and 200,000 employment opportunities. An area in ecologically less sensitive waters near Kau Yi Chau, Hei Ling Chau and Mui Wo were identified, together with a proposed plan of transport and infrastructure between the urban areas, Lantau, western New Territories and the Airport as in Figure 3. The preliminary concept also put forward constraints of ELM, including ecological, environmental, marine and infrastructure difficulties, and such could be addressed in further studies on planning and engineering feasibility (Development Bureau, 2016).



Figure 3: ELM Concept Plan in 2030+ (Development Bureau, 2016)

Despite a clear plan, the Government’s agenda setting changed with a more emphasis on the problem stream as the then Chief Executive Ms Carrie Lam stressed the importance to tackle land shortage in her election campaign by a huge land debate spearheaded by a Task Force (Lam, 2017). This came into action in her maiden policy address and the Task Force soon kickstarted a five-month public engagement exercise since April 2018 with ELM as one of the land supply options.

Although the details in this consultation were the same with HK2030+, this public engagement exercise put an emphasis that ELM could provide the greatest area among all other options and can be used for holistic land use planning. The Task Force also recognized that “reclamation has long been an important source of land supply” and ELM was a feasible solution for reclamation outside Victoria Harbour (Task Force on Land Supply, 2018).

With a mission to gauge wide public consensus, the Task Force conducted 185 public engagement activities, received 29,065 questionnaires, conducted 3,011 telephone surveys and collected 68,300 views by individual groups submitted through mails, fax,

post, telephone or in person for quantitative and qualitative analysis on the popularity of each land supply option. (Task Force on Land Supply, 2019).

Appraisal II – Introducing Lantau Tomorrow Vision (Event 6)

While the Task Force’s public engagement exercise was still undergoing with the ELM as an important land supply option, Carrie Lam introduced a brand new reclamation proposal in East Lantau area which is known as “Lantau Tomorrow Vision” (“LTV”) in her 2018 Policy Address. While LTV also covered areas near Kau Yi Chau and Hei Ling Chau with similar vision to make it CBD3 by 2034 and provide priority to transport infrastructure as in the ELM under consultation, the total area has increased to about 1,700 ha with a more ambitious plan to accommodate a population of 700,000 to 1,100,000 and a much higher cost of HK\$624 billion (See Figure 4) (Lam, 2018). All figures nearly doubled from the ELM as illustrated in next section.

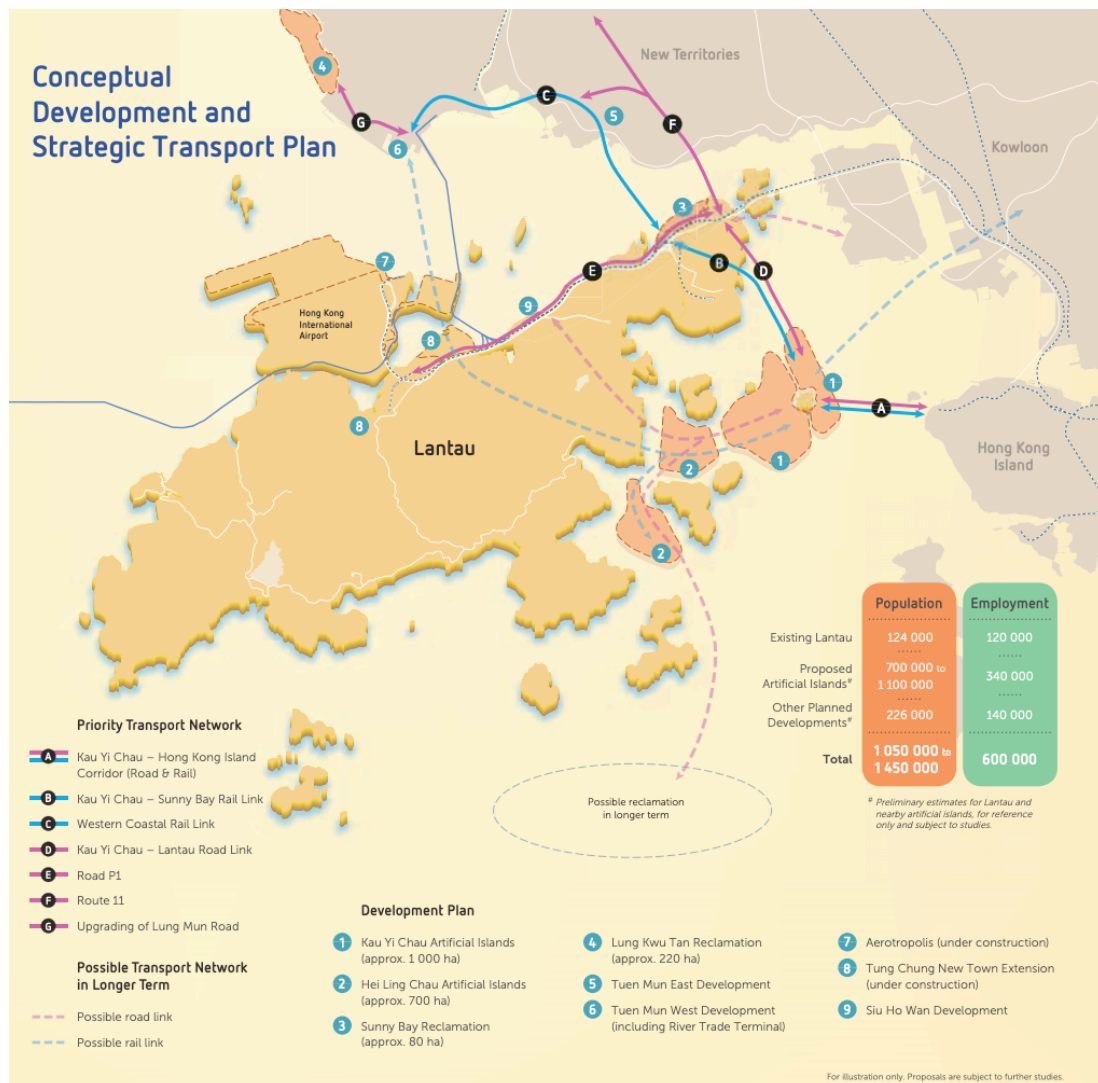


Figure 4: Conceptual Development and Strategic Transport Plan for Lantau Tomorrow Vision (Development Bureau, 2019)

After the announcement of LTV, the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme (“HKUPOP”) conducted a survey on 1-6 November 2018 to understand their views on the proposal and noted that a majority of 49% of respondents opposed to the plan (HKUPOP, 2018). Pro-democratic lawmakers who commissioned this survey argued that the Government should first gauge public views on the current consultation, and urge the Government to consider other feasible land supply options like brownfield sites.

Although LTV seems to be put onto the official agenda without prior notice, a local think tank Our Hong Kong Foundation (“OHKF”) published its report on Enhanced ELM earlier in August 2018. As a powerful think tank led by governors and supporters representing major real estate developers, OHKF’s Enhanced ELM plan was a 2,200 ha reclaimed island between Peng Chau, Kau Yi Chau, Hei Ling Chau and Sunny Island (OHKF, 2018). Since this, many have criticized Carrie Lam for giving a “fast track” approach to the powerful groups in the city even before the end of the current land supply consultation (Yam, 2018). A more in-depth stakeholder analysis on OHKF in this policy process would be explained in next section.

2.4 Consolidation and Appraisal III – Consensus for East Lantau Metropolis but a Yes Still for Lantau Tomorrow Vision (Event 7-8)

After the public engagement exercise, the Task Force submitted its final report on 31 December 2018 and ELM was among one of the eight options put forward by the Task Force on its multi-pronged approach. Quantitatively, ELM received support of 62% and 58% respectively in questionnaires and telephone survey. Qualitatively, respondents particularly professional organizations supported ELM due to its “strategic significance” in terms of economic development and infrastructure. Views against ELM concerned on the rise of sea level, environmental degradation and low cost-effectiveness. Overall, the Task Force considered ELM “the key to breaking the stalemate of land supply” while impact studies on marine environment and cost benefit analysis should be conducted (Task Force on Land Supply, 2019).

The Task Force also remarked that the LTV proposal raised by Carrie Lam in her policy address, but it stressed the importance for the Government to “take into account this report before finalizing details” of LTV. This means the Government should first focus on the 1,000 ha of ELM before engaging in any more ambitious plan (Task Force on Land Supply, 2019). Stanley Wong, the Chairman of the Task Force, stated publicly that the Government should never interpret that supporters of ELM would also agree with LTV and public consultation should be conducted before any preliminary studies for LTV (Un, 2019).

In February 2019, the Government announced that it “has fully accepted the recommendations tendered by the Task Force on land supply strategy and eight land supply options” (HKSAR Government, 2019). However, the Government insisted putting forward LTV, stating that this 1,000 ha reclamation as part of LTV was “of enormous strategic importance to Hong Kong’s long term future”. The Government, in the meantime, provided more details on LTV that it would first take forward the studies for the first 1,000 ha reclamation of Kau Yi Chau and related infrastructure (Development Bureau, 2019).

Section Summary

Despite a perceived consensus on ELM backed by evidence after a territory-wide public consultation, the Government made the decision to scrap policy formulation phase with a more ambitious plan when it regarded that the policy window of opportunity opened during the consultation period. While this paper does not aim at giving judgement on the correctness of Government's actions, it presents facts and evidence to illustrate the policy style of Hong Kong Government, which would be discussed next section.

Although ideas are part of the critical factor for policy making, it is equally important to understand this issue from actors and institutions especially in a politically polarized society like Hong Kong. The next section provides a stakeholder analysis as the complexity of this issue is beyond pure technical analysis.

Stakeholders Analysis: Policy Subsystem and Policy Network

“To understand the bias in the participatory practices, we should not merely focus on the type of arguments that are raised but include the conditions of participants.” (Hajer, 2005) In the context of Hong Kong policy politics, it is essential to understand each stakeholder within the policy subsystem. Not all actors and institutions play the same role in this subsystem - some of them are engaged in the struggle of ideas, while there are also stakeholders which belong to the policy network that engaged actively in the formulation and consideration of policy options and alternatives (Marier, 2008). Figure 5 illustrates this policy subsystem.

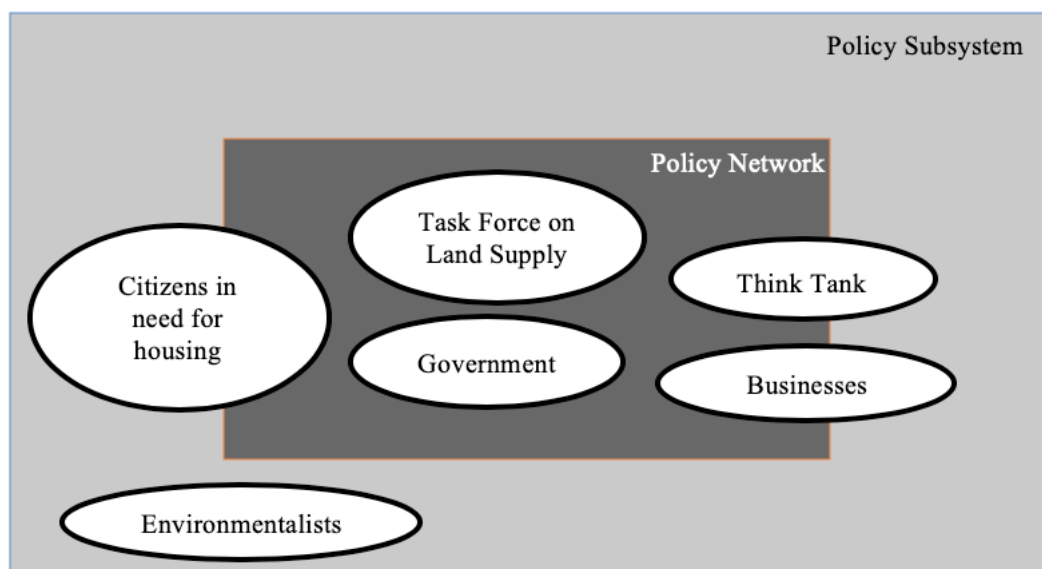


Figure 5: Stakeholders in the Policy Subsystem and Policy Network

The Government

The Government as the institution plays an important role in the policy process. Boosting housing and land supply has been on the top priority and official agenda since CY Leung's administration as he regarded it “the most pressing issues” since he sworn into office in 2012 . He pointed out in his maiden policy address that the

housing shortage and poor living conditions affected tens of thousands of citizens and was the worst problem in the city (Leung, 2013).

Despite proposing a lot of solutions and related strategical studies proposals including the ELM, CY Leung failed to execute and implement them in his tenure as he was deeply unpopular with the public (Ng & Chung, 2017). The Government yet successfully set the agenda through the problem stream on the urgency to tackle land supply.

This passed on to Carrie Lam's administration who also endeavored to "focus on home ownership to enable citizens live happily in Hong Kong and call it their home" (Lam, 2018). Lam is well-known for her "decisive style of governance". She grasped the opportunity and continued the unsolved issues by predecessors with the establishment of the Task Force and subsequently the huge public engagement exercise (Cheng & Tsang, 2018). This style of governance emerges significantly when she was asked if putting forward the LTV in her policy address was being overambitious and had neglected public views when the consultation was undergoing:-

"I really don't think people could blame me as an enemy of the people. I could go for the populist route and not do this sort of controversial things but that's not good for the people." (Lam, 2018)

Lam's paternalistic and decisive governance style was also exhibited when the Government insisted to go forward with LTV although consensus was only made on ELM after the lengthy policy formulation process.

The Task Force on Land Supply

Established in September 2017 for a term till February 2019, the government-appointed Task Force was tasked for a mission to find a solution to tackle the land supply problem by facilitating wide discussions, reaching consensus and finding a solution that benefits the community. Its membership consisted of 22 non-official and eight official members from different disciplines including planning, engineering housing.

To set the context of Hong Kong, the concept of public consultation on land development was introduced back in 1991 with a hope to 1)help the transition from a colonial government to a representative government mode after the handover in 1997, 2)engage public views to meet real needs and demands by citizens, and 3)engage the private sector for public-private partnership (Chiu, 2016). Such means have been effective and mature in Hong Kong, which also explained why detailed strategic studies and proposals for ELM laid out during both HK2030+ and land supply consultations. Despite so, the Task Force acted as an important actor in the policy network to collect and present public's views for consensus. This has been successfully achieved with the publication of the results report as well as the its full acceptance by the Government from a policy formulation perspective.

However, one major problem of the Task Force was that its analysis may have undermined the political considerations and neglect the social and political contexts.

The consultation has intensified the disputes between polarized views and has made the community even more divided (Ip, 2018). This also explains the importance of stakeholder analysis for this paper.

Another problem was that despite being part of the administrative support as a government agency, the Government could introduce its new LTV plan which directly contradicted with the ELM plan as a proposed option in the Task Force's consultation. The influence of the Task Force could be undermined under a paternalistic and decisive governance style.

Citizens In Need of Housing

Hong Kong has been notorious for its poor livability as 209,700 people were crammed into 92,700 subdivided units (Census and Statistics Department, 2018). Although the Government stressed that both ELM and LTV could help ease the grassroots' housing demand, only singular grassroots citizens support these policies (Hong Kong Economics Journal, 2018). 14 political and social groups concerned about citizens in need of housing formed Land Justice United Front in July 2019 to show strong opposition to the ELM.

As a strong coalition with similar social background and same goal, they opposed to ELM for its skyrocketing cost and urged the Government to consider other available short term options especially developing Fanling Golf Course which occupied large piece of land but only tailor-made for the rich. This issue therefore was escalated from the view of social justice and economic equality (Yam, 2018).

Feeling neglected after the announcement of LTV, this group felt that the Government had inclined to the private developers and "took them as an excuse to rationalize its plan. They held numerous press conferences and protests afterwards to advocate on developing Fanling Golf Course and brownfield sites (HK01, 2018).

Environmentalists

Environmentalists successfully raised awareness among the community on potential environmental hazards for the ELM and LTV including the rising sea level and potential hazard to dolphins. These groups include not only traditional environmental groups like Greenpeace, the Conservancy Association, Greenpower and WWF (HK01, 2019), but also a new group called "Save Lantau Alliance" which was established in 2014 after the ELM announcement by CY Leung. It consistently advocated for the abolishment of ELM and LTV and generated environmental reports with empirical data to prove that the Government may have underestimated the cost of reclamation and the damage to the ecological systems (Savage Lantau Alliance, 2018). These groups also organized protests with Land Justice Unit as just mentioned.

Despite putting much concerted efforts and raised public awareness, business interests have been considered as more important in the heart of Hong Kong's policy formulation. Unless there are grave concerns from the business perspective, it is less likely that environmentalists could enter the policy network or advocacy coalition.

Businesses

Businesses have been the steadfast supporter for both the ELM and LTV. As the largest business organization with more than 4,000 members and half of the corporations listed in the Hang Seng Index (HKGCC, 2019), Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce (“HKGCC”) first showed its support to ELM in the HK2030+ consultation by appreciating its ambitious plan to build a smart and livable city, and urged the Government to align with other master plans including the Smart City Blueprint (HKGCC, 2017). Same stance persisted during the land supply consultation in 2018 as ELM could create new and large piece of land available and would not affect existing land users including businesses (HKGCC, 2018). These two submissions stressed that the Government should expedite its process for all land supply options to increase its competitiveness in the interest of the private developers. Therefore, after the announcement of LTV in the 2018 Policy Address, HKGCC welcomed its decision as it exhibited “Government’s clear determination to solve our city’s acute land supply problem”.

Hong Kong is well known to be an international financial centre and therefore policymakers “intentionally and unintentionally transformed and financialized the Hong Kong economy” (Yu, To, & Yu, 2018). The governance style inclined to benefiting the business community and creating an investment environment responsive to interests of finance and property. Under pluralism, HKGCC and other related business organizations have built strong relationships with the Government and successfully placed their solutions onto the agenda. As an important and key actor in the policy network that influences the policy style, this will be further discussed next section.

Think Tank

Influences of think tanks in Hong Kong varied, but the most powerful ones are funded with considerable resources for its researches and advocacy work. Despite stressing the importance to “maintain its image of intellectual autonomy from governments, private corporations or any political party” (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2009), as noted in previous section, the management of OHKF was formed by these people who are the most influential characters in town as it was led by the first Chief Executive CH Tung. Ranked the highest amongst all Hong Kong-based think tanks (McGann, 2017), it maintained a robust and vibrant research and advocacy team which pulled all efforts on its Enhanced ELM proposal.

According to its research report, it advocated the importance of creating a new city that accommodate up to 1.1 million people with at least 70% of its 32% residential land for public housing. OHKF also conducted its technical feasibilities from transport infrastructure, marine and reclamation requirements and environmental impacts (OHKF, 2018). Such report resembled high similarities with LTV and was therefore criticized for government’s stance on its strong inclination to influential groups in the community (Yam, 2018), and therefore OHKF strongly backed Lam’s LTV plan. Similar to businesses, think tank which is composed of key and influential actors, regardless its population in the community, showed explicitly its importance in changing and influencing the policy process.

Section Summary

During the whole process, numerous parties involved including various government departments, political parties and professional organizations. This section however highlights the major groups in this issue only as they clearly show the polarized views and their roles in this complex issue. Analyzing these actors were vital to understand the policy style of the Hong Kong Government from who and how different actors entered into the policy process.

Analysis of Policy Style in Hong Kong

After looking into ideas, actors and institutions, this section identifies and evaluates policy style in Hong Kong and also its dynamics during the policy formulation process of ELM and LTV. While policy styles was known to be “standard operating procedures” for policy making processes (Richardson, 1982), contemporary studies concern the “institutional arrangements and the characteristics of political regimes” (Howlett & Tosun, 2018), and below summarizes two policy styles in this case study.

The Government under “One Country Two Systems” exhibits A Mixture of Chinese Authoritarian Style and British Majoritarian Style

Although no literature reviews presented the policy style of Hong Kong, such researches had been conducted for different countries and was summarized in the following dimension as in Figure 6.

		Inclusiveness of policy processes	
		High	Low
Key Policy Actors	Bureaucrats & Experts	Type 1 – Representative Democracies E.g. United Kingdom	Type 3 – Closed-centralist E.g. China
	Politician & Public	Type 2 – Participatory or Consultative Democracies E.g. United States of America	Type 4 – Competitive electoral authorities E.g. Singapore

Figure 6: Dimensions of generalized policy styles (Howlett & Tosun, 2018)

Hong Kong used to be ruled under British colonial administration, but in order to prepare Hong Kong for a transition to a representational government after 1997, democracy in elections and public consultation in urban planning were introduced to the community. During this period, bureaucrats exhibited representative democracies policy style in the UK. This “top-down” policy style was described as “a mix of majoritarianism and pragmatism” especially in the post-Thatcher era as the Government mostly delegate policy works to external bodies rather than devising itself, but remain control on the final decisions (Cairney, 2018). In relation to this issue, the Task Force acted as the “external body” and was put in charge to this important mission to engage public consensus during the policy formulation. However, the Government still got the final decision on the new LTV plan from a pragmatic approach.

While the British policy style persists, Hong Kong, as part of China under “One Country Two Systems”, was also influenced by its authoritarian style and institutions are crucial in understanding Chinese policy style. Imposed from “top down”, the Chinese administration established “leading small groups” approach that principal-agent approach could work well within different government departments and key actors with proactive and consensus building and may not be reactive to the public so that citizens got the minimal participation in the policy making process (Qian, 2018). Despite authoritarian in nature, this policy style results in successful economic and social development in China over the last decade. Despite the existence of the Task Force, in case of the introduction to both ELM and LTV respectively, both Leung and Lam’s administration did not engage with the public on any plans and both have either conducted preliminary researches or incorporated opinions from key actors – a sign of the “leading small groups” framework with the goal to push forward their policies.

The Basic Law affirms the executive-led government system in the colonial era, and has given extensive power to the Chief Executive and give popular expectations for the public to establish strong governance to maintain capitalism and resolve long-term structural problems of land and housing supply (Yau, 2018). All these summarize that policy styles in Hong Kong are categorized as a mixture of representative democracies and closed-centralist.

Key actors in the policy network are more important than other actors in policy subsystem

The Basic Law affirms that Hong Kong has three branches in which the Legislative Council controls the passing of legislations by the administration. With the characteristic of majoritarian policy style, the Government effectively pleased the majority legislators who were the post-establishment camps at the moment for effective governance, making them the key actors in the policy network. Although legislators were not analyzed in previous section, many of them belong to the business sector or involve in the think tank in the policy process.

As in Figure 6, this indeed goes in line with the policy style as the policy networks are composed with mainly bureaucrats and experts, regardless their inclusiveness during the process. As bureaucrats were not elected with high concerns on engaging all actors, the British style tended to pay disproportionately to particular key actors and fail to gather enough information to warn the Government potential problems ahead (Cairney, 2018). Unlike the Chinese style which concerned effectiveness due to vast control, the policy style exhibited when introducing both ELM and LTV concerned on both engaging the public but fail to include all views from different actors into the policy network, regardless its quantity or quality as a whole in the community.

Discussions – Reflection on Today’s Hong Kong Anti-Government Protest

While the Hong Kong Government’s policy style is identified and is also exhibited in other major events in the city. The anti-government protest in Hong Kong is escalating by the time this paper is writing, and the infamous quote by Carrie Lam in late August 2019 that she “has to serve two masters” has vividly imply the accuracy of policy style exhibited. In this policy setting, the Government only provided a 2-

month consultation in an attempt for a representative style. Yet, a closed-centralist style was exhibited as discussions with the Government were not open to public and limited to key actors in the policy networks like businesses and pro-establishment politicians.

“Windows do not stay open long. If a chance is missed, another must be awaited.” (Kingdon, 1984) Although we recognize the success by the Government in seizing the policy window of opportunity, such policy styles may lead to an over-ambition and exaggerated plan during policy formulation and may lead to side effects like the riots at the moment.

The concept of policy style is dynamic and timely, meaning that this helps us understand the relationship between politics and policy and may change due to change in ideas, institutions and actors. The current turmoil may lead to a change in policy style to a heavier focus on either the British or Chinese policy style. With a huge governance and institutional change due to the anti-extradition law protests and distrust to government’s responses to COVID-19, the Hong Kong policy style can be further investigated by analyzing these events as a whole after the situation ends.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that Hong Kong Government’s policy style exhibits a mixture of British majoritarian style and Chinese authoritarian style. This policy style has shown its uniqueness under robust diverse of ideas between different stakeholders and a unique political system under “One Country Two Systems” . While this article does not aim to provide a judgement call on whether the ELM or LTV is a better approach to solve Hong Kong’s land supply problem, it looks at a wider approach to explain why a sudden change in terms of plan occur with policy style.

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