A model for cross-border tourism governance in the Greater Bay Area

Abstract

With advances in transportation and information technology, territorial and administrative barriers are being overcome to carve out regions for multi-destination tourism. This study on collaboration and governance within the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) highlights the complexities in developing cross-border tourism destinations under a multi-level administrative structure that comprises one country, two systems, and three jurisdictions. Given the enormous scale of cross-border flows and collaborations, the complexities of developing cross-border tourism destinations underscore the need for integrated tourism governance to address subregional differences in the GBA. Applying the institutional analysis and development framework, this study identifies the core elements and synergy mechanisms of cross-border tourism collaboration and further investigates evaluative criteria in the post-pandemic era for achieving collective and resilient development. Our findings provide key insights for a variety of stakeholders involved in the planning and marketing of cross-border tourism destinations.

Keywords: Cross-border region, Tourism governance, IAD framework, The Greater Bay Area; Tourism and regional development

Introduction

Various forms of cross-border cooperation have emerged over recent decades (Scott, 2002) and have initiated functional interlinks in the transport, business, education and research, environment, and tourism industries (Zumbusch & Scherer, 2015). As cross-border cooperation encompasses a variety of governmental and organisational systems within the respective regions, it poses multiple challenges to governance that require both formal and informal solutions (Perkmann, 2007).

Under new institutional settings for cross-border collaboration, regional entities are required to demonstrate a functional demarcation of network boundaries rather than a clear territorial orientation (Deas & Lord, 2006). Cross-border tourism destinations therefore also require the consolidation of shared governance (Blasco, Guia, & Prats, 2014), which facilitates synergistic cross-border collaborations by enhancing multilateral interactions among different actors and by introducing robust governance mechanisms (Cowell, 2010). Empirical findings from studies of different European countries have contributed to the growing debate on shared tourism governance structures (Blasco et al., 2014; Stoffelen, Ioannides, & Vanneste, 2017;

Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2017). However, to better understand the complexities of governance in hierarchical subregional structures, additional, multidisciplinary research is needed on polycentric regions. While such studies have been conducted on the San Francisco Bay Area, the Emilia-Romagna, and the Randstad region (Cowell, 2010), to the best of our knowledge, research on tourism governance across internal borders within China is lacking.

Given the strategic role that the Hong Kong–Guangdong–Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) plays in China's socio-economic development, effective governance of this mega cross-border area is key to deepening tourism collaborations among the mainland (Guangdong), Hong Kong, and Macao (CPC, 2019). The Chinese Central Government (henceforth the central government) defines the GBA as a 'world-class tourism destination' and an 'exchange hub for cultures of the East and the West' (CPC, 2019). Developing this region into an integrated destination without compromising the unique aspects of each place is a long-standing goal (Hsu & Gu, 2010). Tripartite actions across subregional borders within the GBA are therefore essential for managing network coopetition and developing co-branding strategies to enhance global tourism competitiveness (Hsu & Gu, 2010; Kirillova, Park, Zhu, Dioko, & Zeng, 2020). Under the principle of 'one country, two systems', the GBA is attempting to break new ground to advance its national and global positions. In particular, cross-border collaboration aims to spur people in Hong Kong and Macao to become further involved in national-level rejuvenation and socio-economic reforms, with the overarching aim of building a global base of emerging industries and modern service industries that will serve to create a competitive, world-class city cluster at the global level (CPC, 2019). The GBA consists of nine cities in Guangdong province and the two Special Administrative Regions (SARs) of Hong Kong and Macao. The constituents of the GBA share the Lingnan culture (or Cantonese culture) but have experienced different developmental trajectories due to the varying effects of the Canton System, British and Portuguese imperialism, and the era of reform and opening-up policy (Park & Song, 2021). In particular, the two SARs developed differently from their counterpart cities in Guangdong province both before and after the resumption by China of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macao in 1997 and 1999, respectively. While these socio-political differences impede tourist flows, they also stimulate tourists' novelty-seeking behaviours (Park & Song, 2021). Although this 'border puzzle' (Anderson & Van Wincoop, 2003) between Guangdong and the two SARs may have negative effects on bilateral trade and mobility, it is also a key attraction and unique tourism selling point (Gelbman & Timothy, 2011). An effective cross-border governance system is therefore needed to better address this border puzzle and stimulate tourism for all regions.

Through several landmark projects under the GBA's development plan, internal flows of people, goods, capital, and information across borders have been facilitated by increased physical interconnectivity and improved immigration systems. Exit-entry procedures for cross-

border passengers have been streamlined through the construction of the Passenger Clearance Building in the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, a Chinese immigration and customs facility in the cross-border railway station in Hong Kong, Macao's immigration building in Zhuhai, and the provision of e-channel services. Although physical interconnectivity across borders has been established within the GBA, cross-border governance that harmonises different systems and encourages efficient tourist flows has yet to be developed (KPMG, 2017). In the context of promoting tourism in the GBA, this study aims to explore the process of developing effective cross-border tourism governance under the constraints of polycentric cities and organisations. We integrate Ostrom's 'Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD)' framework and 'common-pool resources (CPRs) design principles' to identify the core elements and their relationships (Ostrom, 1990, 2011). By applying theoretical frameworks to a real-life scenario, this study attempts to answer a critical research question about how effective cross-border tourism collaboration in a complex institutional arrangement could be configured, evaluated, and predicted. Furthermore, our study investigates how the structural dynamics of regional collaborative arrangements can be altered by external shocks—in particular, those created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our study therefore has three objectives. First, we identify and conceptualise the actors and dynamics involved in the changing configuration of the GBA's governance. Second, we identify ways to stimulate cross-border tourism collaboration through the shared use of common resources. Finally, we present holistic and long-term mechanisms for the governance of cross-border tourism.

Literature Review

Cross-border tourism governance

Tourism governance is the process wherein the social actions of tourism stakeholders are regulated and mobilised to produce social order (Bramwell, 2011). For instance, government tourism offices and industry members co-create systems with clear definitions of the competencies and responsibilities of individual entities (Derco, 2013). As per the evolution of governance systems outlined by Kohler-Koch and Rittberger (2006), changes in governance are generally continuous processes that consolidate new modes of governance (e.g., flexibility, a broad range of actors, peer emulation, and peer monitoring) with the mainstreaming of integration (Boussaguet, Dehousse, & Jacquot, 2011). Borges, Eusébio, and Carvalho (2014) further argued that the common features of governance include a focus on the exchanges and interactions among various stakeholders to accomplish social goals, as well as an increase in effectiveness and efficiencies through collaboration.

Considering dynamics of governance system, numerous studies have also discussed the critical success factors for tourism governance. Pechlaner, Herntrei, Pichler, and Volgger (2012)

found that the key factors of effective tourism governance include stakeholder involvement, efficiency, evidence of performance, high levels of cooperation, and the acceptance of the tourism organisation. The individual characteristics of the stakeholders in tourism destinations (Beritelli, Bieger, & Laesser, 2014) and the quality and strength of the relationships among these stakeholders (Scott, Cooper, & Baggio, 2008; Volgger & Pechlaner, 2014; von Friedrichs Grängsjö, 2003) also contribute to good tourism governance. Complex cross-border contexts, however, may constrain the implementation of successful strategies (Liberato et al., 2018; Stoffelen et al., 2017). Despite the geographic proximity between neighbouring regions, the existence of borders may lead to relational distances (Prokkola, 2008), institutional incompatibility (Liberato et al., 2018; Stoffelen et al., 2017), and problems with aligning institutions at multiple levels (Stoffelen et al., 2017).

Limited success has been achieved in cross-border tourism governance (Liberato et al., 2018). A case study by Blasco et al. (2014) revealed the prerequisites for a successful governance structure in a borderland region: institutional similarity, bridging actors, leadership and entrepreneurial capacities, and close relationships. Other decisive elements identified in previous studies include collaboration between public and private actors, the utilisation of public resources, and the combination of hosts and guests (Liberato et al., 2018). However, it is important to note that success in cross-border tourism governance has been rare and unpredictable; serendipity still plays a significant role as a trigger factor in the process of consolidation (Blasco et al., 2014). In addition, several studies that have analysed the effectiveness of cross-border governance and cooperation from the social capital perspective have identified significant role of informal communication and networks in laying the foundation for cross-border cooperation (Koch, 2018; Prokkola, 2008; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2017). Even in borderlands where neighbouring regions are socio-culturally coherent and share historical connections (Prokkola, 2008), different institutional actors must be involved at the vertical level and territorial actors must participate at the horizontal level before cross-border governance can be sustainably established (Liberato et al., 2018). Such multi-level partnerships improve social cohesion and contribute to long-run, cross-border tourism development (Prokkola, 2008; Liberato et al., 2018). As shown in Table 1, most studies have investigated cross-border tourism governance in Western contexts, focusing on complex spatial and institutional structures and destination management in borderlands. In comparison, only a handful of studies have focused on Asia. Furthermore, the emergence of new forms of cross-border destinations, such as those involving different jurisdictions across borders in a single country, underpins the selection of the GBA as the focus of our study. These new forms of destinations necessitate cross-border governance and are likely to require the reconfiguration of existing actors' roles and relationships to create new action spaces and situations (Pikner, 2008).

Table 1. Summary of studies on cross-border tourism governance.

	Author (year)	Research aim	Key findings	Location
Institutional (or social) factor and process	Blasco et al. (2014)	To describe the emergence of cross-border tourism networks and identify factors that foster the consolidation of shared tourism governance structures.	Five factors were identified: institutional similarity, bridging actors, leadership and entrepreneurial capacities, close relationships, and serendipity.	France–Spain Borderland
	Prokkola (2008)	To scrutinize the regional, political, and institutional foundations of cross-border cooperation and sustainable development.	The relational distance and dependency on supranational support across borders creates obstacles to sustainable cross-border tourism development.	Finnish–Swedish Borderland
	Stoffelen and Vanneste (2017)	To analyze the role of tourism in the process of regional development in European cross-border regions with different developmental histories.	Impacts of institutional brokers in the informal network and a high level of institutional thickness of tourism sectors were addressed in the short and long term.	German–Czech Borderland; German–Belgian Borderland
	Stoffelen et al. (2017)	To identify distinct obstacles to the establishment of tourism destination governance (in both transnational and within-country borderlands).	Understanding of destination management in borderlands needs to be built on the identification of the specificities, explicit multi-scalar analysis, and the recognition of both transnational and within-country contexts.	German–Czech Borderland
	Stoffelen and Vanneste (2018)	To analyze the role of socio-cultural relations and identity discourses in cross-border destination development.	Identity discourse facilitates cross-border tourism governance in three ways: reducing perceived barriers, stimulating internal identities, and delivering a univocal destination image.	Vogtland (internal borderland within Germany)
Outcomes	Wong, Mistilis, and Dwyer (2011)	To propose a model for intergovernmental collaboration in ASEAN tourism.	Environments (local, regional, and global) and interactivities (actors, institutional arrangements, and feedback mechanisms) drive tourism collaboration.	ASEAN nations
	Gao, Ryan, Cave, and Zhang (2019)	To identify changes in borderland tourism and their consequence for bordering.	Tourism as a re-bordering force, three stages in cross-border tourism development were identified: rapid growth, stagnation and the collapse of the formal tourism sector, and the resurrection and transition of border tourism.	China–Myanmar Borderland
	Liberato et al. (2018)	To identify obstacles to the establishment of tourism governance policies, and to improve the conceptualization of tourism in border territories transcending the transnational level.	Tourism in the cross-border region acts as a strategic policy tool to strengthen the regional image, shape a common identity and facilitate interactions.	Portugal–Spain Borderland

Institutional analysis and development framework

The IAD framework sheds light on how institutions operate, extending beyond the dominant theories of market orientation and hierarchical structure in the political sciences (McGinnis, 2011; Ostrom, 2005). The framework provides a multi-level conceptual map to individually or holistically examine the hierarchical governance structures of any social system. The IAD framework comprises four components, of which three reflect the connectivity and logical flows that revolve around the core component, the action situations. Contextual factors (also known as external variables) represent all aspects of the institutional context, such as existing configurations of laws and regulations (McGinnis, 2011; Ostrom, 2011). Action situations are affected by contextual factors. In a broader context, an action arena consisting of actors and action situations refers to the social spaces where various actors interact, cooperate, or compete to produce an outcome. Outcomes are the possible results of each action situation, determined by the patterns of interactions among actors and their shared resources. Evaluative criteria are tools or checklists that allow participants or external researchers to evaluate the outcomes and the patterns of interaction; these can be in terms of economic efficiencies, resource redistribution, the adaptability to environmental changes, and the development of social inclusion (McGinnis, 2011; Ostrom, 2011). As suggested by Ostrom (2011), a variety of theories are compatible with the IAD framework. One of these is Ostrom's CPRs design principles. The concept of CPRs is derived from Hardin (1968), who created the expression the 'tragedy of the commons'. To avoid the tragic overuse of resources and provide practical guidelines to assist CPR groups to sustainably manage their resources (Wilson, Ostrom, & Cox, 2013), Ostrom (1990) introduced eight design principles for the sustainable management of CPRs: clearly defined boundaries, proportional equivalence between benefits and costs, collective choice processes, monitoring, graduated sanctions, dispute resolution mechanisms, a minimal recognition of rights to organise, and nested enterprises (McGinnis, 2011; Ostrom, 1990). Although conventional CPRs are composed of natural resources and global commons, there is a growing body of research on non-conventional CPRs, such as transportation systems, urban areas, the Internet, and tourism commons (Briassoulis, 2002). Noting the superiority of the design principles for collective actions in capturing the complexity of tourism activities within a socio-ecological system, Ruiz-Ballesteros and Brondizio (2013) highlight the robustness of the local multi-level institutional framework for CPR management compliant to the design principles.

In sum, the IAD framework serves as a useful tool for exploring the complexity of institutions and the difficulties they face in achieving collective action (Cox, Arnold, & Villamayor-Tomas, 2010; Ostrom, 1990). The framework has also been used to identify institutional issues in CPR management (Grossman, 2019; Lubell, Schneider, Scholz, & Mete, 2002; Ostrom, 1990) and in the implementation of public services in metropolitan areas (Bushouse, 2011; Oakerson & Parks, 2011).

The IAD framework has recently been used in tourism research to analyse complex challenges at both the policy and operational tiers. At the policy tier, the framework has been used to assess the emergence, implementation, and effectiveness of various approaches to tourism governance (Nyaupane, Poudel, & York, 2020; Qian, Sasaki, Shivakoti, & Zhang, 2016; Ruiz-Ballesteros & Brondizio, 2013). At the operational tier, the role of tourism actors in the operational environment (Mensah, Agyeiwaah, & Otoo, 2021) and their interactions regarding shared resources (Damayanti, Scott, & Ruhanen, 2017) have been discussed. Specifically, Nyaupane et al. (2020) adopted the framework to discuss the effectiveness of different forms of governance structures and tailored a multi-goal IAD framework to further evaluate the use of various types of CPRs. Evaluative criteria within the IAD framework were applied by Qian et al. (2016) to assess local perception of the effectiveness of community-based and lease-operation tourism governance in China. In addition to evaluating tourism governance structures, Damayanti et al. (2017) used the action situation as an analytical tool to examine coopetition behaviours among informal economic actors. More recently, Mensah et al. (2021) adopted the IAD framework and the 'Critical Institutional Analysis and Development' framework to explore how volunteer tourism organisations can serve host communities' interests. Together, the above studies demonstrate the applicability and adaptability of the IAD framework across a spectrum of tourism-related analyses, highlighting its strength in conceptualising varied issues in complex institutional involvements and collective actions. However, the existing tourism studies that apply the IAD framework have been fragmented in their approaches; few have attempted a comprehensive approach to diagnosing and predicting the effectiveness of tourism governance (e.g., Nyaupane et al, 2020). As previous applications of the IAD framework have also been limited to analyses at the policy and operational tiers, cross-border territorial differences among destinations pursuing collective actions have seldom been addressed.

Methodology

Study context: The Greater Bay Area

Since the reform and opening-up in 1978, the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao region has received tremendous attention from the central government and experienced several waves of regional planning and development. In 2015, the concept of the GBA was initiated by the central government, and the 'Framework Agreement on Deepening Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Cooperation in the Development of the Bay Area' (henceforth 'Framework Agreement') was signed by the National Development and Reform Commission and the local governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. In 2019, the State Council issued the 'Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area' (henceforth

'Outline Development Plan'), which emphasized the GBA as a major strategic deployment under China's blueprint for national development.

As shown in Table 2, the GBA is a vibrant city cluster comprising 11 member cities across internal borders among Guangdong province and the two SARs. The GBA spans a total area of 56,000 square kilometres and is home to over 72 million people. The GBA's combined regional GDP exceeded USD 1.7 trillion in 2019 (BrandHK, 2020), equivalent to 12% of China's total GDP, making the GBA the 12th largest megalopolis economy in the world (Ngai & Orr, 2020; Tang & Ellison, 2019). To develop a world-class bay area in terms of quality of living, working conditions, and travel opportunities, the consolidation and amalgamation of the GBA has been facilitated by significant improvements in infrastructural interconnectivity among cities across internal borders. Prominent examples of this growing interconnectivity include the Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao bridge and the Guangzhou–Shenzhen–Hong Kong high-speed railway. Information technology and smart management have also been introduced to connect the digital environment and facilitate e-government initiatives.

Table 2. Major social and economic indicators of cities in the GBA in 2019.

City	Area (km²)	Population	Total GDP[a] in billions	Service sector in GDP (%)
Core cities				
Guangzhou	7,249	15,305,900	RMB2,362.9	(71.6)
Shenzhen*	1,997	13,438,800	RMB2,692.7	(60.9)
Hong Kong SAR*	1,107	7,520,800	HK$2,865.7	(93.1)
Macao SAR*	33	679,600	MOP434.7	(95.8)
Node cities				
Dongguan	2,460	8,464,500	RMB948.3	(43.2)
Foshan	3,798	8,158,600	RMB1,075.1	(42.3)
Huizhou	11,347	4,880,000	RMB417.7	(43.2)
Jiangmen	9,507	4,630,000	RMB314.7	(48.9)
Zhaoqing	14,891	4,187,100	RMB224.9	(41.7)
Zhongshan	1,784	3,380,000	RMB310.1	(48.9)
Zhuhai*	1,736	2,023,700	RMB343.6	(53.8)

Note. * Cross-border city; [a] In 2019, the exchange rates of RMB, HK$, and MOP to the U.S. dollar were 0.15, 0.13, and 0.13 respectively.

Following the 'one country, two systems' concept, the GBA is a cross-border megalopolis with a multi-level administrative structure comprised of two systems and three jurisdictions that operate across the internal borders that demarcate Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao (Chu, 2019). Due to the policy subsystems in this region, McKercher and Zhang (2017) described Hong Kong as a supranational destination for Chinese mainland tourists. Tourism flows across the internal border are guided by the tourism policies and agreements negotiated between the mainland and SAR governments (McKercher & Zhang, 2017; Tse & Hobson, 2008). Given the unique characteristics and different tourism institutions of the GBA, a system

of governance that incorporates multilateral government interactions is needed to overcome the challenges and divergent interests among the different cross-border actors (Hong & Fan, 2019).

Data collection

We followed a qualitative approach to gathering data, from both primary and secondary sources (Hennick, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). In accordance with the research objectives, primary data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with tourism-related government officials, academics, and industry executives from Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. The concept of GBA collaboration is relatively new, and its governance system remains in an early stage of development. Hence, the tripartite insights derived these interviews help understand the present institutional structures and current forms of integrated cross-border governance. In addition, secondary sources of information, such as policy statements, blueprints, and newspapers, were collected to triangulate the interview data.

The interview questions were developed based on the theoretical guidelines of the IAD framework and reviews of studies on cross-border tourism governance. Given the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism destinations, additional questions were included to obtain the interviewees' views on how the pandemic has affected cross-border tourism collaboration. The interview questions were classified under three overall themes. The first theme captured the action arena of the IAD framework, including the actors, situations of actions taken, and decisions made in collaborations regarding GBA cross-border tourism. The second theme focused on the patterns of interactions between institutional actors over time. The third theme concerned the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on collaborations in GBA cross-border tourism. A list of common interview questions is provided in Table 3. Additional questions were included for each institution about their current GBA collaborations or policy initiatives. Interviews were conducted either in person or via online videoconferencing and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, depending on the preferences of the interviewees and social-distancing restrictions. Alternatively, a written response was obtained when an interview was impossible to arrange. Before the interviews, the list of questions and a briefing of the interview process were sent to the interviewees, allowing them to prepare detailed responses beforehand (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This semi-structured interview process allowed researchers to ask follow-up questions concerning the interviewees' responses (Grauslund & Hammershøy, 2021).

Table 3. List of common interview questions

Categories / Questions
Institutional role and interests
• Among the 11 GBA cities, what is your institution's role and interests in the GBA tourism planning and development?   • Are there any other institutions closely collaborating with your institution? Please describe the collaboration between your and other institutions within GBA.

Perception of GBA tourism collaboration
- How has tourism collaboration between GBA cities changed over time from 2015 onward?
- How will you rate the effectiveness/challenges of the current structure in GBA tourism collaboration? How can the structure be further improved?
- Each GBA city has its own norms and values, how does your institution manage these differences during the collaboration?
- How does *guanxi* contribute to the collaboration with other GBA cities?
- How will you describe the relationship between GBA cities?

Crisis Management
- How does your institution respond to the crisis (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic) in terms of tourism planning and development?
- What are the potential challenges and opportunities that you could foresee after the pandemic?

Prospect of GBA tourism collaboration
- What is your opinion on the future of GBA tourism collaboration?
- How would the power relation change among the GBA cities?
- In your opinion, should there be an additional authority for GBA tourism collaboration? If yes, what should be its roles and functions?

Potential interviewees were selected based on their expertise, knowledge, and administrative positions in organisations involved in GBA cross-border tourism. To ensure data quality and reliability, the interviewees were recruited using purposive sampling based on a set of criteria established for the interviewees. First, all of the invited interviewees were working in one of the GBA cities currently. Second, those who were heading cross-border collaborations and projects with other counterparts within the GBA region were targeted as preferred interviewees. Third, diversity in experience among the interviewees, ranging from investigating, planning, and implementing cross-border tourism collaborations, was sought to reflect longitudinal participation in GBA development. We conducted 12 interviews with 18 interviewees (excluding one written response) representing governments, tourism and hospitality businesses, and educational institutions in the GBA (see Table 4). The interviews were conducted in English or Mandarin depending on each interviewee's preference; Cantonese (a local dialect of certain populations in the GBA) was also used to describe certain terms. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim into English or Chinese. The interview transcripts and secondary data were then coded using NVivo 12 Pro. To enhance the rigor of the qualitative data analysis, the coding was checked following the initial coding and classification of the data.

Table 4. Summary of the interview participants (n=18)

Pseudonym	Field	Location	Description
E1	Education	Hong Kong	A leader in tourism and hospitality education in Hong Kong who has worked in Hong Kong for over 10 years
E2	Education	Macao	Professor and director who has worked in tourism and hospitality education in Macao for over 20 years
E3	Education	Guangdong	Professor who has worked in tourism and hospitality education in Guangdong province (Zhuhai) for more than 30 years

E4	Education	Guangdong	Professor who has worked in tourism and hospitality education in Guangdong province (Shenzhen) for more than 15 years
G1	Government Office	Hong Kong	G1-1 Top-level manager (tourism development policy and strategy)
			G1-2 High-level government official
			G1-3 Government official
G2	Statutory Body	Hong Kong	G2-1 Top-level manager (government-subvented body tasked to market and promote Hong Kong)
			G2-2 Executive officer
			G2-3 Executive officer
G3	Government Office	Hong Kong	Official in a bureau that maps out the policies relating to Hong Kong's commercial relations with the mainland, including tourism.
G4	Government Office	Macao	G4-1 Top-level manager (manages strategy for positioning and developing Macao tourism)
			G4-2 Government official (with academic background)
			G4-3 Government official
I1	Industry	Hong Kong	Director of global sales and GBA strategy in a hotel chain
I2	Industry	Guangdong	CEO of a Chinese state-owned enterprise in the GBA (specialised in hotel and tourism)
I3	Industry	Guangdong	Executive-level manager in a hotel and tourism enterprise located in the GBA
I4	Industry	Hong Kong	In charge of the Guangzhou–Shenzhen–Hong Kong high-speed railway (Hong Kong section)
n/a	Government Office	Guangdong	(Written response)

We first conducted descriptive coding on the interview transcripts by assigning initial labels to the texts (Cope, 2010). In the first step of the process, we restructured the composite content by theme instead of by source or question through a flexible, iterative, and reflexive set of decisions made by the researchers in our study (Stoffelen, 2019). 473 descriptive codes were generated inductively from the transcripts through the line-by-line open coding of the data. In the second step, the descriptive codes from the first step were compared to one other and then merged (or deleted) and renamed to form pattern codes. This pattern coding established some hierarchy in the themes (topics) and generated 73 pattern codes (sub-categories). Pattern codes are higher-level codes that structure and establish a hierarchy based on the descriptive codes, thus elevating researchers' knowledge of the examined topics (Cope, 2010; Saldaña, 2021). We then compared the pattern codes with insights and findings from the existing literature before reorganising the codes into themes. In the third step, four components of the IAD framework and eight CPR design principles served as the provisional codes and provided theoretical guidelines to create hierarchical codes (categories). By comparing and linking these provisional

codes generated from the theory and the pattern codes generated through our transcripts, some provisional codes irrelevant to our empirical materials, such as 'graduated sanctions', were deleted, and some hierarchical codes were created to capture real-life situations, such as 'COVID-19' and 'border effect'. By adopting a combination of inductive and deductive approaches, this process eventually produced a hierarchical coding scheme and identified patterns of meaning in the data, allowing us to connect these patterns to the theoretical framework (Hamlin, 2015; Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017). In the fourth step, all of the materials were re-read and re-checked using the hierarchical codes to better understand the codes and the interview content. Some hierarchical codes were subsequently adjusted during this iterative process, and we then finalised the 13 hierarchical codes (categories). We moved to the post-coding phase after these four steps, incorporating secondary sources to supplement the interview data and to identify the key results of the GBA case study.

Results and Discussion

Identifying contextual factors: Common opportunities and challenges

Due to unwavering support from the central government and proactive actions taken by local governments in Guangdong province and the two SARs, GBA cross-border tourism collaborations have the potential to produce great socio-economic benefits for the region. The interviewees expressed absolute trust in the central government's definition of the GBA (the 'Outline Development Plan' shown in Figure 1) in terms of its strategic positioning, the specialisations of each city, regional planning, and development. One interviewee from the tourism industry (I2) reflected that "*the positioning of each city in the GBA has been planned by the country with a complete set of information, (...) our organisations know the plan of the GBA, so we are developing our marketing strategy to align with the layout of the GBA*".
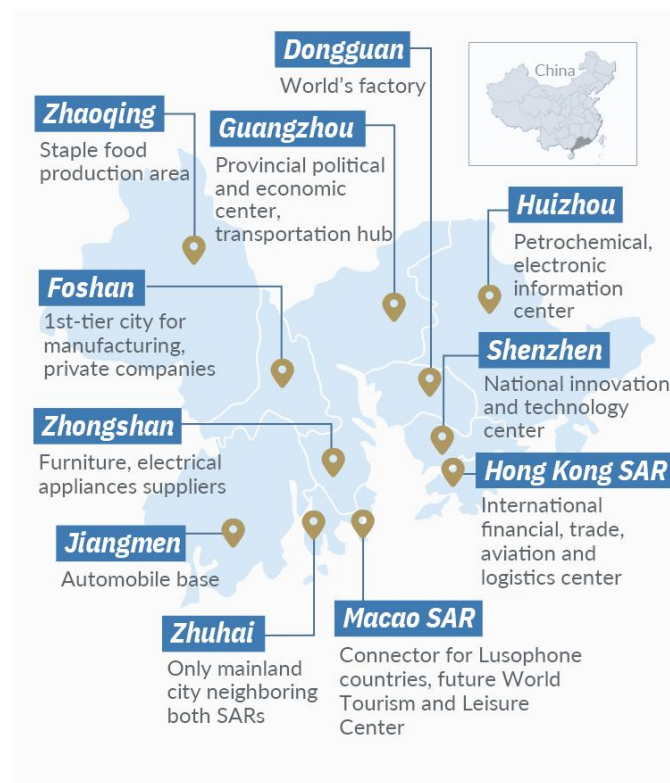
Figure 1. Top-down strategy planning for the GBA
Source: Office of Guangdong Leading Group for Promoting the Development of the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area
(http://www.cnbayarea.org.cn/english/About%20GBA/content/post_165618.html)

The development of connective infrastructure (e.g., high-speed railway and Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao Bridge) within the GBA is regarded as one of the key drivers of cross-border collaboration. The rapid development of transport networks has shortened travel times between the member cities to "*less than an hour. Many of our colleagues commute between work and home* (in the GBA)… *It has changed a lot, not only in terms of tourism but also as a daily route to work*" (industrial interviewee, I4). In addition to changing the dynamics of cross-border mobilities, these transport infrastructure projects are perceived as game-changers that create new tourism products, such as the GBA railway–hotel package. An enormous Chinese domestic market is also boosting new joint products and collaborations within the GBA: "*the extensive human mobilities create huge demand for tourism, which serves as an opportunity for investment* (…) *forming a huge platform to collaborate among Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao*" (interviewee from education sector, E2).

We also identified challenges for GBA tourism collaborations regarding the existence of borders. First, differences in bureaucratic prominence have led to diverging priorities and interests. For instance, while the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau oversees tourism operations in Hong Kong through the Tourism Commission of Hong Kong (TC) and the Hong Kong Tourism Bureau (HKTB), tourism development in Guangdong is planned by

the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province (DCTG). Differences in administrative arrangements lead to diverging objectives for tourism development (i.e., cultural integration in Guangdong versus economic development and market extension in Hong Kong versus product diversification in Macao). Second, challenges concerning working practices and business environments were also noted. For instance, several interviewees from the tourism industry expressed significant concerns over the diverse cultures, inconsistent policies, and distinct styles of strategic management in collaborations for GBA tourism: "*Hong Kong's system is still very distinct from the system of the mainland* (…) *For example, land utilisation and investment taxation are still new and unfamiliar to us. I believe this applies to Hong Kong's and Macao's companies too, when entering Shenzhen or other GBA cities. The differences between systems act as challenges for collaboration*" (industrial interviewee, I1). The "*presence of three governmental systems and three currencies*" (interviewee from education sector, E1) further impedes cross-border collaborations in the GBA. Third, differences in social development were revealed from the interactions between hosts and guests from different parts of the GBA. Such conflicts between the local community and tourists from cities across borders in the GBA hinder attempts at tourism collaboration and integration. This issue was raised by interviewees from Guangdong (E4): "*there are more touchpoints* (in the GBA)*, such as tourism, work, study, and trade, which increase interactions, whereby such negativity will be spread across the area. Opposing views on host-and-guest-relationships create a complicated issue hindering collaboration.*"

Interviewees from the tourism education sector in Hong Kong and Guangdong frequently noted that a collaborative platform for joint actions is required in the governance of GBA cross-border tourism governance to deal with these differences. To this end, stakeholders' common awareness of costs and benefits in GBA tourism collaborations function as the contextual factors and the antecedents of cross-border governance.

Engaging in action arena and impetus for interactions
Actors and institutional reconfiguration
Effective cross-border tourism governance should account for the interactions among multi-dimensional, multi-scalar, and dynamic entities that have different symbolic and material forms, functions, and locations (Laine, 2016). In this complex action arena, governance configurations in the GBA involve multi-level governments, public and private actors. In contrast to previous collaborations in the region—such as the Pearl River Delta (PRD) plan that targeted urban and economic development (Park & Song, 2021)—local governments play pivotal roles as the formal initiators and facilitators of cooperation in GBA cross-border tourism, while public and private actors are intended to be beneficiaries and indirect participants in the policy process. Regarding interactions among government, public and private actors, inter-government

consolidation serves "*as the preliminary groundwork by the central and provincial governments that paves the way for us* (in education)" according to one interviewee from the education sector in Macao (E4), and further facilitates more institutionalised collaborations between different actors in the tourism industry and education. Tourism and hospitality practitioners are also aware that alliances with within-industry competitors will need to be formed to collectively voice their common interests to the local and regional governments. However, as the size of local markets also leads to asymmetric dependencies, there are diverging views in the private sector from different parts of the GBA to collaborate on cross-border tourism.

In collaborations for cross-border tourism, local government officials have emphasised their responsibilities to help enterprises create a collaborative operating environment within the region. In addition to the traditional roles of destination marketing organisations (DMOs) play in cross-border coordination, such as ensuring governmental approval and support (Timothy, 1999), DMOs within the GBA play a variety of key roles in collaborative tourism planning. The DCTG, TC, and HKTB, as well as the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) are the main governmental organisations responsible for tourism development in their respective areas. In Guangdong province, tourism-related affairs are overseen by the Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism, and Sports Bureau of each city. Hence, "*as the municipal bureaus manage culture, sports, arts, radio, television, tourism, and related industries and activities in the city, the importance of tourism has been pushed back on the priority list.*" (interviewee from Guangdong, E4). The Guangdong provincial government, which possesses extensive executive and administrative capacity for cross-border collaboration, both lays the foundation for the GBA's tourism strategy by implementing the central government's decisions and initiates and formulates tourism projects by working with its counterparts in Hong Kong and Macao. However, the complex and dynamic relationships under a multi-level structure have often impeded collective decision-making. As stated by one interviewee (G2), there are "*too many stakeholders and too many bosses*" in GBA cross-border tourism collaborations, leading these collaborations to be reactive to internal interests and values.

A supra-regional actor is hence needed to address the complexities and issues of exclusiveness in action situations. As strategic actors for collective governance, new cross-border agencies such as the *GBA Urban Tourism Association* and *GBA 9+2 Urban Tourism Market Supervisory Authority* (henceforth 'GBA 9+2 Authority'), assume a coordinating and monitoring role in the overall governance of GBA tourism. The interactions within the GBA 9+2 Authority help to formulate collective actions for dynamic and fluid achievements in the multilateral system (Pikner, 2008). By echoing the spheres of tourism governance by Stoffelen et al. (2017) and the "*two-layered* (internal and external) *coordination*" reflected by several interviewees (e.g., G1 and G3), the features of cross-border agencies can be distinguished from

other interaction patterns as they work in both the horizontal and vertical dimensions (Figure 2). As discussed previously, tourism and hospitality practitioners have expressed concerns about cross-border differences in socio-economic systems and business environments. To address these difficulties, the new agencies can serve as a joint platform for tripartite dialogue in the GBA:

"(We) *signed a joint supervision agreement on the tourism market of the 9+2 cities in the GBA. All parties decided to follow the open cooperation on the principle of mutual benefit. We will jointly establish working mechanisms such as joint meetings, study and exchanges, jointly address prominent problems in the GBA tourism market, jointly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of tourists and operators, and promote joint supervision of the GBA tourism market.*" (interviewee from the government, G1).
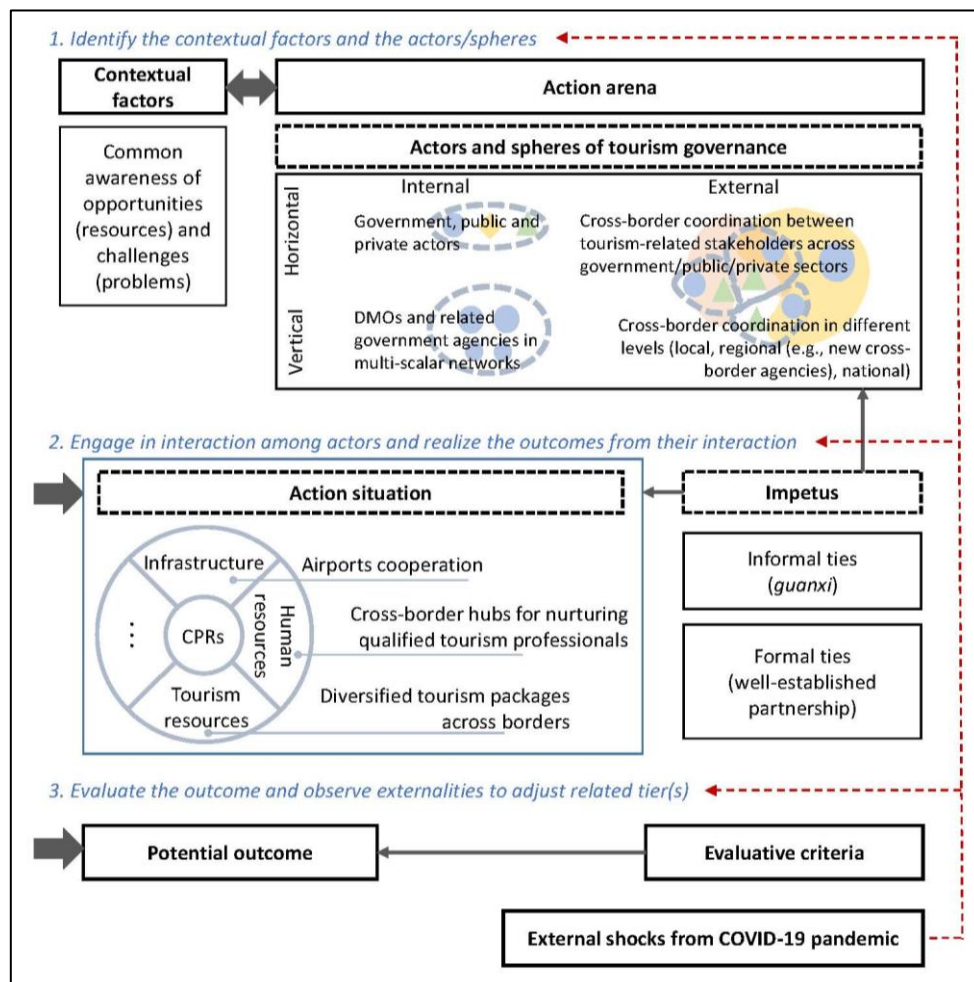

Figure 2. A model for cross-border tourism governance in the GBA

Impetus for interactions

Interactions among the governments, public, and private actors in the action arena of the GBA, bridging capital serves as the impetus and transcends territories and differences. Such

16

capital not only includes historical, cultural, and institutional ties but also the socio-economic exchanges that occur daily to further cement links. Prior to the lockdown of borders during the COVID-19 pandemic, daily cross-boundary passenger trips between Hong Kong and the mainland (666,700 trips) and between Hong Kong and Macao (53,300 trips) exceeded 700,000 (C&SD, 2019). Among outflows from Hong Kong to the mainland, 91.8% of trips were made to visit the south-central part of Guangdong province, the PRD. The same applied to the cross-border flow between Macao and Guangdong. As one interviewee from Macao (E2) reflected:

"*So if we* (Macao) *are going to work together with partners across the border,* (…) *this is considered an external collaboration. Only legal and financial obstacles are large enough to slow down the whole process* (of external collaboration). *I think the other* (obstacles)*, such as work ethic and the language barriers, are far easier to overcome* (through *guanxi*). *Many workers in Macao cross the border with Zhuhai every day. Many Macao people also have second homes or retirement homes in Zhuhai; a large part of the population in Macao were actually migrants from Zhongshan and Jiangmen.*"

The social capital that bridges regions between borders, *guanxi* (meaning 'relationship' or 'contact' in Mandarin), reflects regional human resources and flow. The *guanxi* in institutional interactions emphasises the importance of securing versatile human capital for the success of collaborations in cross-border tourism. In the GBA, individuals ('regional talent') who are familiar with language and culture play key roles as negotiators and institutional brokers across borders. In private sectors, the role of the regional talent is becoming especially significant, given the arrival of newcomers who can bridge different milieus across borders (Blasco et al., 2014). An interviewee from the hospitality industry (I1) reflected that a "third-culture talent"—such as a person who could easily make transitions between Chinese, British, and Portuguese cultures—was in demand in the GBA.

"(to deal with cross-border business) *we are hiring somebody* (…) *who is from the GBA and who can speak Cantonese,* (…) *people who are willing to move or who very recently moved to Hong Kong* (from Guangdong). (In this way,) *the connections, culture, and language will still be* (familiar to) *him or her. It's almost like going home* (when this person travels to Guangdong for business)."

As common norms and values can help connect actors and foster more effective cooperation in a multi-faceted situation (Carr & Lesniewska, 2020), *guanxi* among public actors serves to mitigate potential frictions, such confusion during communication. Several interviewees described *guanxi* as a universal norm and common language. For instance, one interviewee G1 stated that "*in government-to-government operations, guanxi has survived over the years. I would not say that it is the key, but that it is useful and makes things more efficient*

and better. It is useful all over the world, and not just in the mainland (of China)." To put it more formally, successful experience working in teams united by common goals has led to increased trust and reciprocity. Cooperation among the respective tourism authorities of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao has been ongoing for almost 20 years since the areas were re-bordered in 2003 under the Pan-PRD Regional Cooperation. This well-established cross-border tourism collaboration in the GBA is streamlined to achieve a common goal of jointly promoting the GBA as a unified and multi-destination travel product:

> "(The) *HKTB, the Guangdong tourism authority as well as the MGTO actually set up a Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao tourism marketing organisation back in 1999 to promote the destination appeal of all three places. It actually worked. We thus have a sort of mechanism like this* (…) *that was started 20 years ago. This is not new to us; however we can see some differences in the GBA concept. Before 2015, Hong Kong was already cooperating with the PRD* (in an initiative) *called the Pan-PRD Regional Corporation; however, that* (cooperation) *was not as structured as it is now. We now have institutional structures. Each city is also treated as one of the priorities to work on.*" (interviewee from the Hong Kong, G2)

Evaluating the action situations and potential outcome

Debordering tripartite tourism systems

In the context of cross-border tourism collaboration within a defined boundary such as the GBA, cross-border CPRs (e.g., public infrastructure and/or services) would be shared by regional stakeholders (insiders) through the breaking of borders between local tourism systems. Potential outcome of action situations and interactions in the GBA can achieve the better utilisation of mutual resources and the creation of common benefits through cross-border governance (Figure 2). To facilitate the shared management of common resources and to achieve the institutional process of debordering in the GBA, the governments formulate leverage policies to support an integrated cross-border tourism system, such as the agreement on a 144-hour visa-exemption transit for overseas group tours in the GBA by referencing existing tourism policy in Guangdong province.

The optimum utilisation of resources encourages stakeholders to increase connections across borders and create synergies. In applying this concept to the context of collaborations for cross-border tourism, tourism facilities, services, and attractions within the area become common resources that can be shared and utilised by insiders. As an example, the Hengqin New Area in Zhuhai has been selected for promoting Hengqin as a hub for nurturing qualified tourism professionals in both the border cities of Macao and Hong Kong. Through vertical-internal and horizontal-external interactions between two departments in Guangdong province (the Human Resource and Social Security Department and the DCTG) and among their

counterparts in the two SARs, the 'Implementation Measures (trial) for Hong Kong and Macao Tour Guides and Tour Escorts Practicing in the Hengqin New Area of Zhuhai' was issued in 2020. This measure further extends various horizontal-external collaborations that include tourism educational institutions. For instance, the "*Zhuhai (Hengqin) and Macao Institute for Tourism Studies signed a framework agreement to launch the Tourism Education Collaboration Centre for the GBA to promote the integration and utilisation of resources such as hospitality* (and education)*, and to build a training mode integrating professional courses and practical training base.*" (interviewee from educational sector, E2).

Another impressive example can be found in deepening Hong Kong–Zhuhai airport cooperation, especially the Hong Kong's equity investment in Zhuhai airport as a key plank to enhance the interaction of aviation sectors in the GBA. The coopetitive relationships in the GBA's aviation network were the underlying causes of the underutilisation of airports in Zhuhai, as interviewee G2 indicated: "*Zhuhai and HKIA* (Hong Kong International Airport) *that is an interesting thought. Now I think there has been some history behind it because the Zhuhai airport has always been underutilised for a long time because of* (its highly developed neighbouring cities, like) *Shenzhen, Hong Kong, and Guangzhou. It was a training ground for* (Hong Kong's) *Cathay Pacific pilots* (…) *That's how we sort of started. Now HKIA has been managing that, so I think it's a sort of natural way that* (although there are some obstacles like the custom immigration and quarantine)." The cooperation between the two airports forms a world-class aviation cluster in the GBA by leveraging Zhuhai's domestic flight network with the international reach of Hong Kong, as demonstrated through the Chief Executive of Hong Kong's 2020 Policy Address:

> "*The commissioning of the Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao bridge provides an opportunity for further co-operation between the two airports by integrating the mainland aviation network of the Zhuhai Airport with the international network of the HKIA, strengthening the competitive edge of the entire GBA in aviation, thereby enabling Hong Kong's aviation business to play a key dual role in the 'dual circulation' policy.*"

Collective responses and resilience to crises

The COVID-19 pandemic and border lockdowns prompted concerns about how to restart tourism and mobility, especially between cross-border regions. Given these uncertainties, existing structures and systems might need to be reconfigured in the post-pandemic era. In the GBA, the pandemic has resulted in challenges in governance that require joint solutions. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, border lockdowns in the GBA have curbed the flow of people and put a stop to external collaborations. Instead, the focus has been on local communities in order "*to help the* (internal) *travel trade to survive* (G1)," as one interviewee emphasised. The

region has become more polycentric and fragmented into small groups rather than concentrating on a shared regional identity. One lesson learned from this crisis is that cross-border tourism governance should create spatial continuity and fluidity—not only in the transport and environmental frameworks for tourism planning and development, but also within the mindsets of the public and the private actors in the region. In the interest of deepening cross-border integration and achieving resilient development, shared responses to crises should be established because dependency relations between member cities will remain valid following recovery from the pandemic. This implies that cross-border governance is not only important for successful collaborative promotions or the utilisation of tourism resources, but also for crisis management.

As they face shared challenges, member cities in the region also see opportunities to work together to rekindle cross-border tourism in the GBA. In the short term, the successful implementation of local programs and campaigns such as the 'Holiday at home' campaign in Hong Kong can be extended to promote regional travel among GBA residents. By re-defining the boundary of 'local' from the city to the region, internal and external collaborations across borders within the region can be rekindled. As one of our interviewees proposed, designing "*a deliverable project that all 11 authorities work on together in a limited time frame will bring benefits to travellers* (G2)" as well as to residents and the overall economy. In the long term, mutually recognised standards and professional qualifications should be established to integrate a greater variety of sectors, such as hygiene and public health systems across the GBA (Park & Song, 2020). The interviewees from Hong Kong indicated that amid the COVID-19 pandemic "*there has been no direct conversation with the GBA authority and anyone within the GBA for collective measures* (G1)," and "*unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, everything—all plans and dialogues* (i.e., regular communications, annual meetings, reviews of programs, and proposals for new work plans)—*was stopped. Hopefully afterward, we can regain momentum* (G1)." Representatives of the member cities agreed that a prosperous future lies ahead for GBA cross-border tourism, but that "*many discussions and dialogues with a greater variety of sectors*" (interviewees from both education sector and government, e.g., E1 and G1) must continue. Most of the interviewees suggested that a new authority in the GBA will be needed to facilitate dialogue across borders, although they were uncertain whether this would ever come to fruition. They proposed that an advisory committee or governmental body consisting of different stakeholders from the 11 cities should be built to facilitate relationships and exchanges among the 11 GBA cities, forming a strong network. However, the interviewees emphasised that this new authority should be less political or authoritative. This will allow it to avoid complications in cross-border relationships arising from bureaucracy and to focus more on pragmatic marketing of tourism within the GBA. Furthermore, the interviewees hope to develop collective responses and improve regional tourism resilience, but they still regard

regional pandemic situations as a constant threat to cross-border tourism collaboration. Although several cross-border efforts have been enacted during the pandemic, such as the travel bubble between Macao and Guangdong active since September 2020, and discussions on opening the border between Guangdong and Hong Kong through the mutual recognition of health codes have taken place, our interviewees seldom mentioned these collaborations. This may be due to two factors that a new authority will have to contend with. First, as China holds a 'zero-tolerance' prevention and control strategy for COVID-19, collaborative cross-border efforts tend to be temporary measures undertaken only when the pandemic situation on both sides of the border is stable. Quarantine-free mobility may not always be possible under this strategy, and in turn, the measures may not be beneficial for tourism actors. Second, top-down initiatives during the pandemic have been focused on public health issues rather than cross-border mobility. Consequently, tourism and related sectors have been de-prioritised and received less assistance, greatly reducing the bargaining power of tourism actors. The new authority should therefore act as a negotiator and encourage various actors involved in cross-border tourism to participate in policy initiatives aimed at combating the pandemic and restarting cross-border travel.

Conclusion

In response to a need for better tourism governance for cross-border destinations, our study explores the dynamics of cross-border governance structures under the complex institutional arrangements in the GBA. Referencing Ostrom's IAD framework and CPR design principles as theoretical guidelines, we provide an analytical model for evaluating the successful long-term governance of cross-border destinations and for constructing effective governance mechanisms. This extends the IAD framework to incorporate cross-border tourism governance and provides implications for stakeholders in cross-border destinations.

At the conceptual level, by intertwining the IAD framework with CPR design principles, the findings contribute to the literature on shared governance of cross-border tourism regions and identify the process of tourism governance for CPR management. Beyond the existing CPRs, from natural resources to the Internet, this study sheds new light on the various tourism commons in cross-border destinations. Debordering tourism systems hence has been proposed to create sustainable synergistic mechanisms across borders and avoid the tragedies of tourism commons. Specifically, it may provide the solution to the debate over ideal interregional governance processes: the well-known approach of region-building with a common identity and economic, social, and spatial cohesion in the region (Liberato et al., 2018) versus fragmented and multi-scalar governance which avoids stretching processes into a region-building scheme (Pikner, 2008). In line with the concept of 'fragmegration' (fragmentation plus

integration) advanced by Rosenau (2000), our empirical findings show that the relationships among local stakeholders tend to be 'separately together' under the central government's political goal of region-building. Local governments and private sector actors have constructed flexible and efficient cross-border governance networks by fusing the boundaries of local tourism systems, thus creating a territorially unbounded tourism system within the region. This process contributes to economic efficiency and equity through the co-utilisation of tourism resources with various stakeholders and through the redistribution of the benefits. Ostrom (2011) emphasised efficiency and equity as principal measurements for evaluating outcomes. Through the integrated cross-border tourism systems, the greatest net benefit can be distributed to all parties involved; from core to neighbouring cities, from developed industries and technologies to start-up businesses, as well as a variety of stakeholders involved in cross-border tourism. The concept of an integrated tourism system under the approach of umbrella planning and branding could be applied in various collaborative alliances for tourism and in new initiatives such as multi-national firms, tourism coalitions, or cooperative marketing strategies (Selin, 1994).

Our findings thus provide three practical implications for governments, industries, and academics. First, our findings underscore that stakeholders' common perceptions of opportunities and challenges across borders form the cornerstone of cross-border tourism governance. The initial stage of policy formulation should serve to embrace and enlighten regional stakeholders. This will help to cement cross-border collaboration between governments and create opportunities for private sector actors to capitalise on common resources shared by regions across borders. Second, action arena analysis demonstrates that institutional reconfigurations in the GBA not only involve changing the capacity of existing actors' to assume leading roles, but also involve the emergence of new strategic actors to serve in coordinating roles in the holistic governance system. An active coalition of DMOs is especially important for minimising sectionalism and streamlining tourism activities under different systems. However, the interviews with industry executives reveal that private sector actors remain slow to construct a sense of community and external partnerships. The design of more cross-border public–private partnership projects is therefore recommended to consolidate public resources and private expertise. These external cross-border consolidations can be strengthened through both formal and informal ties, symbolised by flows of intra-regional human resources and knowledge. The supra-regional authorities should adopt more inclusive regulatory interventions to jointly stimulate flow networks for more than human elements, for instance, co-building an open data platform and digital ecosystem within the GBA. Third, lessons learnt during crisis management and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic further emphasise that the successful formation of an integrated cross-border tourism system does not only depend on physical connections across borders. It also requires all actors to conform to a collective goal. External collaborations without a sense of community are by and large transient

events, as each member city may re-define its boundaries to include only a small 'insider' group, especially during times of crisis. Governance of cross-border tourism should therefore accumulate successful external collaborations with deliverable goals that fit the values of local actors. The collective participation of local actors in designing rules, monitoring strategies, and sanctioning mechanisms will be critical to the governance of cross-border tourism and will be more effective than relying exclusively on a powerful external authority with a limited day-to-day operational presence.

Our case study is not without its limitations. The GBA is still in the early stages of integrated regional development, despite the existence of collaborations in cross-border tourism in the region since the PRD plan of 1994. As such, the interactions among national, regional, and local governments are likely to evolve during later stages of the GBA's development, which should be explored in future studies. The selection of informants in this study was constrained by their willingness to participate in the interviews, especially, the government officials in Guangdong province, the information collected may be subject to a certain bias. Hence, the results of the study need to be reviewed with caution. As another caveat, the interviews were conducted between late 2020 and early 2021 when Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao were all experiencing different COVID-19 situations. While our findings can be leveraged to rekindle cross-border tourism in the GBA when borders reopen and cross-border collaboration resumes, their implications should be assessed and adjusted to cope with future challenges. Future studies should examine COVID-19 issues and cross-border risk management and collaborations as new action situations.

References

Anderson, J. E., & Van Wincoop, E. (2003). Gravity with gravitas: A solution to the border puzzle. *American Economic Review, 93*(1), 170-192.

Beritelli, P., Bieger, T., & Laesser, C. (2014). The new frontiers of destination management: Applying variable geometry as a function-based approach. *Journal of Travel Research, 53*(4), 403-417.

Blasco, D., Guia, J., & Prats, L. (2014). Emergence of governance in cross-border destinations. *Annals of Tourism Research, 49*, 159-173.

Borges, M., Eusébio, C., & Carvalho, N. (2014). Governance for sustainable tourism: A review and directions for future research. *European Journal of Tourism Research, 7*(1), 45-56.

Boussaguet, L., Dehousse, R., & Jacquot, S. (2011). The 'Governance Turn' revisited. In R. Dehousse (Ed.), *The 'Community Method': Obstinate or obsolete?* (pp. 186-198): Springer.

Bramwell, B. (2011). Governance, the state and sustainable tourism: A political economy approach. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 19*(4-5), 459-477.

BrandHK. (2020). *Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area: Fact sheet*. Retrieved from

https://www.brandhk.gov.hk/uploads/brandhk/files/factsheets/Hong_Kong_Themes/Guangdong-Hong-Kong-Macao-Greater-Bay-Area-E.pdf

Briassoulis, H. (2002). Sustainable tourism and the question of the commons. *Annals of Tourism Research, 29*(4), 1065-1085.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). Conducting an interview. In S. Brinkmann & S. Kvale (Eds.), *Doing Interviews* (2nd ed., pp. 149-166).

Bushouse, B. K. (2011). Governance structures: Using IAD to understand variation in service delivery for club goods with information asymmetry. *Policy Studies Journal, 39*(1), 105-119.

C&SD. (2019). *Cross-boundary Travel Survey 2017*. Hong Kong SAR. Retrieved from https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/data/stat_report/product/FA100267/att/B71908FC2019XXXXB0100.pdf

Carr, M., & Lesniewska, F. (2020). Internet of Things, cybersecurity and governing wicked problems: Learning from climate change governance. *International Relations, 34*(3), 391-412.

Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address (2020). Striving ahead with renewed perseverance. Hong Kong SAR. Retrieved from https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2020/eng/pdf/PA2020.pdf

Chu, W. (2019). Leveraging the "One Country, Two Systems" advantage to drive Greater Bay Area development [Press release]. Retrieved from https://research.hktdc.com/en/article/MzM1MjkyNDAy

Cope, M. (2010). Coding transcripts and diaries. In N. Clifford, S. French, & G. Valentine (Eds.), *Key Methods in Geography* (pp. 440–452). London, UK: Sage.

Cowell, M. (2010). Polycentric regions: Comparing complementarity and institutional governance in the San Francisco Bay area, the Randstad and Emilia-Romagna. *Urban Studies, 47*(5), 945-965.

Cox, M. E., Arnold, G., & Villamayor-Tomas, S. (2010). A review of design principles for community-based natural resource management. *Ecology and Society, 15*(4), 38.

CPC. (2019). *Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area*. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council. Retrieved from https://www.bayarea.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/pdf/Outline_Development_Plan.pdf

Damayanti, M., Scott, N., & Ruhanen, L. (2017). Coopetitive behaviours in an informal tourism economy. *Annals of Tourism Research, 65*, 25-35.

Deas, L., & Lord, A. (2006). From a new regionalism to an unusual regionalism? The emergence of non-standard regional spaces and lessons for the territorial reorganisation of the state. *Urban Studies, 43*(10), 1847-1877.

Derco, J. (2013). Destination governance in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. *Tourism Planning & Development, 10*(3), 354-364.

Gao, J., Ryan, C., Cave, J., & Zhang, C. (2019). Tourism border-making: A political economy of China's border tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 76*, 1-13.

Gelbman, A., & Timothy, D. J. (2011). Border complexity, tourism and international exclaves: A case study. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(1), 110-131.

Grauslund, D., & Hammershøy, A. (2021). Patterns of network coopetition in a merged tourism destination. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2021.1877192

Grossman, P. Z. (2019). Utilizing Ostrom's institutional analysis and development framework toward an understanding of crisis-driven policy. *Policy Sciences, 52*(1), 3-20.

Hamlin, B. (2015). Paradigms, philosophical prisms and pragmatism in HRD research. In *Handbook of Research Methods on Human Resource Development*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Hennick, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative Research Paradigm*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Hong, C. Y., & Fan, H. Y. (2019). Public coordination and institution innovation: An institutional approach for hub-and-spokes logistics network in the Greater Bay Area. *Journal of Public Policy and Administration, 3*(2), 39.

Hsu, C. H., & Gu, Z. (2010). Ride on the gaming boom: How can Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai join hands to develop tourism in the region? *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 15*(1), 57-77.

Kirillova, K., Park, J., Zhu, M., Dioko, L. D., & Zeng, G. (2020). Developing the coopetitive destination brand for the Greater Bay Area. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 17*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100439

Koch, K. (2018). The spatiality of trust in EU external cross-border cooperation. *European Planning Studies, 26*(3), 591-610.

Kohler-Koch, B., & Rittberger, B. (2006). The governance turn in EU studies. *Journal of Common Market Studies, 44*, 27-49.

KPMG. (2017). The Greater Bay Area Initiative: A survey on key drivers for success. KPMG and HKGCC. Retrieved from https://home.kpmg/cn/en/home/insights/2017/09/the-greater-bay-area-initiative.html

Laine, J. P. (2016). The multiscalar production of borders. *Geopolitics, 21*(3), 465-482.

Liberato, D., Alén, E., Liberato, P., & Domínguez, T. (2018). Governance and cooperation in Euroregions: Border tourism between Spain and Portugal. *European Planning Studies, 26*(7), 1347-1365.

Lubell, M., Schneider, M., Scholz, J. T., & Mete, M. (2002). Watershed partnerships and the emergence of collective action institutions. *American Journal of Political Science, 46*(1), 148-163.

Matteucci, X., & Gnoth, J. (2017). Elaborating on grounded theory in tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research, 65*, 49-59.

McGinnis, M. D. (2011). An introduction to IAD and the language of the Ostrom workshop: A simple guide to a complex framework. *Policy Studies Journal, 39*(1), 169-183.

McKercher, B., & Zhang, R. (2017). Hong Kong as a supranational destination for Chinese tourists. *Journal of China Tourism Research, 13*(2), 178-192.

Mensah, E. A., Agyeiwaah, E., & Otoo, F. E. (2021). Re-conceptualizing volunteer tourism organizations roles: A host perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 37*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100785

Ngai, J., & Orr, G. (2020). The rise of China's Greater Bay Area. *McKinsey & Company*. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/cn/our-insights/perspectives-on-china-blog/the-rise-of-chinas-greater-bay-area

Nyaupane, G. P., Poudel, S., & York, A. (2020). Governance of protected areas: An institutional analysis of conservation, community livelihood, and tourism outcomes. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1858089

Oakerson, R. J., & Parks, R. B. (2011). The study of local public economies: Multi-organizational multi-level institutional analysis and development. *Policy Studies Journal, 39*(1), 147-167.

Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ostrom, E. (2005). Doing institutional analysis digging deeper than markets and hierarchies. In *Handbook of New Institutional Economics* (pp. 819-848). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Ostrom, E. (2011). Background on the institutional analysis and development framework. *Policy Studies Journal, 39*(1), 7-27.

Park, J., & Song, H. (2020). Urban tourism development in Hong Kong and its implication for GBA. In H. Xu & J. Bao (Eds.), *Blue Book of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area: Report on Tourist Industry of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in China (2020)* (pp. 337-350). Beijing, China: Social Science Academic Press.

Park, J., & Song, H. (2021). Variance of destination region image according to multi-dimensional proximity: A case of the Greater Bay Area. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 20*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2021.100600

Pechlaner, H., Herntrei, M., Pichler, S., & Volgger, M. (2012). From destination management towards governance of regional innovation systems–the case of South Tyrol, Italy. *Tourism Review, 67*(2), 22-33.

Perkmann, M. (2007). Policy entrepreneurship and multilevel governance: A comparative study of European cross-border regions. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, 25*(6), 861-879.

Pikner, T. (2008). Reorganizing cross-border governance capacity: The case of the Helsinki-Tallinn Euregio. *European Urban and Regional Studies, 15*(3), 211-227.

Prokkola, E.-K. (2008). Resources and barriers in tourism development: cross-border cooperation, regionalization and destination building at the Finnish-Swedish border. *Fennia - International Journal of Geography, 186*(1), 31-46.

Qian, C., Sasaki, N., Shivakoti, G., & Zhang, Y. (2016). Effective governance in tourism development – An analysis of local perception in the Huangshan mountain area. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 20*, 112-123.

Rosenau, J. N. (2000). Change, complexity, and governance in globalizing space. In J. Pierre (Ed.), *Debating governance* (pp. 167-200). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ruiz-Ballesteros, E., & Brondizio, E. S. (2013). Building negotiated agreement: The emergence of community-based tourism in Floreana (Galápagos Islands). *Human Organization, 72*(4), 323-335.

Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). London, UK: Sage.

Scott, J. (2002). Cross-border governance in the Baltic Sea Region. *Regional & Federal Studies, 12*(4), 135-153.

Scott, N., Cooper, C., & Baggio, R. (2008). Destination networks: Four Australian cases. *Annals of Tourism Research, 35*(1), 169-188.

Selin, S. (1994). Collaborative alliances: New interorganizational forms in tourism. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 2*(2-3), 217-227.

Stoffelen, A. (2019). Disentangling the tourism sector's fragmentation: A hands-on coding/post-coding guide for interview and policy document analysis in tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism, 22*(18), 2197-2210.

Stoffelen, A., Ioannides, D., & Vanneste, D. (2017). Obstacles to achieving cross-border tourism governance: A multi-scalar approach focusing on the German-Czech borderlands. *Annals of Tourism Research, 64*, 126-138.

Stoffelen, A., & Vanneste, D. (2017). Tourism and cross-border regional development: Insights in European contexts. *European Planning Studies, 25*(6), 1013-1033.

Stoffelen, A., & Vanneste, D. (2018). The role of history and identity discourses in cross-border tourism destination development: A Vogtland case study. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 8*, 204-213.

Tang, R., & Ellison, S. (2019). *Greater Bay Area: A 2030 Outlook*. Retrieved from https://www.colliers.com/download-research?itemId=61b7e16c-91a2-483f-b4da-8230896d5945

Timothy, D. J. (1999). Cross-border partnership in tourism resource management: International parks along the US-Canada border. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 7*(3-4), 182-205.

Tse, T. S. M., & Hobson, J. S. P. (2008). The forces shaping China's outbound tourism. *Journal of China Tourism Research, 4*(2), 136-155.

Volgger, M., & Pechlaner, H. (2014). Requirements for destination management organizations in destination governance: Understanding DMO success. *Tourism Management, 41*, 64-75.

von Friedrichs Grängsjö, Y. (2003). Destination networking: Co-opetition in peripheral surroundings. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management., 33*(5), 427-448.

Wilson, D. S., Ostrom, E., & Cox, M. E. (2013). Generalizing the core design principles for the efficacy of groups. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, *90*, S21-S32.

Wong, E. P., Mistilis, N., & Dwyer, L. (2011). A model of ASEAN collaboration in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research, 38*(3), 882-899.

Zumbusch, K., & Scherer, R. (2015). Cross-border governance: Balancing formalized and less formalized co-operations. *Social Sciences, 4*(3), 499-519.